



RESEARCH ARTICLE

FACTORS INFLUENCING DROPOUT OF PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KAKAMEGA MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

Although progress has been made in increasing enrollment in many countries, these gains are undermined by large number of pupils who take more than one year to complete a particular grade or dropout before completing the primary cycle. In Kakamega District, where Kakamega Municipality is located, the high enrollment was short lived as the dropout rate rose from 2.4% in 2003 to 10.9% in 2004 and then declined to 1.2% in 2007. The purpose of this study was therefore to find out factors influencing dropout in public primary schools in Kakamega Municipality. The objective of the study was to determine factors that influence dropout of pupils in public primary schools in Kakamega Municipality. A Conceptual Framework consisting of independent variables and dependent variables was used to guide the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised of 25 head teachers, 457 teachers, 1548 standard 8 pupils, 50 class 5 to 7 dropouts and one Assistant Education Officer. Simple random sampling was used to select 480 standard 8 pupils and 115 teachers while saturated sampling was used to select 23 head teachers and one Assistant Education Officer. Snowball sampling was used to select 25 dropouts. Questionnaires were used to collect information from Head teachers, teachers, dropouts and pupils. In-depth interview schedules assisted in getting information from the Assistant Education Officer. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts and percentages. Face and content validity of the instruments was assessed by three experts in Planning and Economics of Education. Reliability of the instruments was determined through pilot survey in 2(8.0%) schools using test re-test method. The Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was 0.9 for Head teachers' questionnaire, 0.7 for teachers' questionnaire, 0.75 for pupil dropout questionnaire and 0.8 for pupil's questionnaire. Qualitative data was transcribed into emergent themes and sub-themes and reported. The findings from this study indicated that the factors that influenced drop out were; poor parental care, poverty, child labour, death of parents, pregnancy, peer influence and indiscipline. The study concluded that dropout was influenced by poor parental care, peer influence, child labour, poverty and pupil indiscipline. The study recommended the need for deliberate efforts to eliminate dropout, sensitization of teachers and parents on the implications of repetition and dropout, better methods of handling indiscipline. These findings are useful to Head teachers, teachers, parents, students and to the Ministry of Education in the formulation and strengthening of policies to eliminate dropout in the public primary educational sub-sector.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social well being and laying the basis for building democratic societies and dynamic, globally competitive economies (World Bank, 2002). Leaders in developing countries recognize the importance of investing in basic education. However they face an uphill task in building educational systems that are capable of providing basic education for all children, youths and adults. Finance and human resources are scarce and therefore they must be used as efficiently as possible. Although progress has been made in

increasing enrollment, these gains are undermined by large number of pupils who take more than one year to complete a particular grade or dropout before completing the primary cycle (UNESCO, 1998). There are several factors that influence dropout and no single factor can completely account for students' decision to continue in school until graduation. Further, students also report different factors (Rumberger and Lim, 2008). Dropouts are generally higher for blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans than for Asians and Whites yet these differences may be related to other characteristics of students, their families, schools and community (Rumberger and Lim, 2008). Family structure, resources and practices will affect the dropout. For instance students with both parents that have adequate resources tend to show low dropout. This is also the same to schools with adequate resources. The implementation of policies in a school will affect the

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enrolment. The community characteristics cannot be ruled out. An affluent community will provide more resources to a school than a relatively poor one. In a study in Kenya, Acholla (2012) found out that curriculum, teaching methods, teacher attributes, teaching resources and parental support influence dropout of learners with disability in primary schools. In Latin America 60 out of every 100 students who enter primary school dropout before completion (Todaro, 1985). In the developing countries, a third or even a half of all pupils repeat the first grade and a quarter or more repeat subsequent grades. In USA, it was found out that overall 29 percent of all primary students are repeating their grade each year. This was mainly due to inadequate learning brought about by low quality of the factor inputs into the system (Hanushek and WoBmann, 2007). Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) allude that dropout and repetition appear to be most common among students from low socio-economic background and are more prevalent in rural than in urban areas and among females than males. The causes include poverty, high opportunity cost, cultural factors, inappropriate curriculum and examinations, badly trained teachers, overcrowded classrooms, lack of textbooks and a shortage of secondary places.

Nyamesa (2008) in his study found out that lack of mastery of content due to absenteeism and poor academic performance influenced repetition. Akinyi (2011) on the other hand found out that repetition was as a result of floods; poor time management and destruction of infrastructures that affected both teachers and pupils. From the studies it was found out that no single factor can explain why students continue or dropout of the educational system (Rumberger and Lim, 2008). In Kakamega Municipality the factors influencing dropout had not been established. In Sub-Saharan Africa, poor quality of education and persistent inequities in the distribution of educational opportunities and human capital assets compounded with the problems of governance and geography have made these countries risk being caught in a low-equilibrium trap, where the education system, in the face of increasing enrollment and constrained resources, is incapable of producing the personnel necessary to increase productivity (Verspoor, 2008). For developing countries like Kenya where the government spends quite a colossal amount of money in education (38% of Gross National Budget) the performance of the learners is expected to match the heavy investment. However, this is never the case due to dropout and repetition (Ongeti, 2008). The high population growth rate of 3.4% per annum and increased incidences of poverty further complicates the efficiency levels in most schools as resources are diverted to the urgent consumable goods (Abagi and Olweya, 1999).

**Table 1. Primary Schools Dropout Rates in selected Kenya’s Municipalities 2003 -2007**

Municipality	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Thika Municipality	1.2	4.2	1.9	12.0	11.7
Kitale Municipality	3.2	8.5	1.8	7.0	13.8
Nakuru Municipality	0.9	9.9	0.9	2.9	1.0
Eldoret Municipality	1.6	3.5	7.7	7.0	8.8
Kisumu Municipality	1.8	7.5	4.4	7.3	3.3
Kakamega District*	2.4	10.9	7.0	3.7	1.2

Source: Ministry of Education, Education Statistical Booklet 2003-2007  
 \*There was no data available for Kakamega Municipality but was however captured under Kakamega District.

Simmons and Leigh (1983) on the other hand, according to a study that was done in Tunisia, attribute the home background, or parental socioeconomic status to have a stronger influence on student performance at primary school and lower secondary grades than the policy controlled schooling variables.

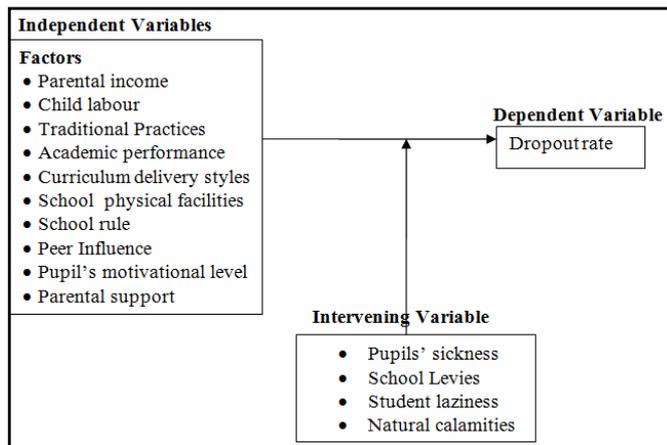
From Table 1 the dropout rates were on the decline for Kakamega District where Kakamega Municipality was located. However for the Municipalities the dropout rates were on the upward trend except for Nakuru and Kisumu, hence the need for the study of Kakamega Municipality on pupil dropouts, repetition rates and factors responsible.

**Research Question**

The Research question responded to was: What factors influence drop out of pupils in public primary schools in Kakamega Municipality?

**Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships among the factors influencing learner dropout.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework showing factors influencing Dropout of Pupils in Schools**

In education, efficiency refers to the relationship between the input into the educational system and the outputs from the same (Gropello, 2006). A perfectly efficient system is one where 100% of pupils that begin go on to complete the cycle in a timely fashion. Zavala, Patrinos, Sakellaviour and Shapiro (2006) attribute the efficiency to student, family and school factors. Atkinson (1983) adds that apart from school environment, family background and Students ability; peer groups, purposeful attempts to make schools child friendly and use of Information and Communication Technology can enhance output from institutions. Simmons and Leigh (1983) assert that student achievement is determined by family background characteristics, school inputs, peer group characteristics, and pre-school age abilities. As the pupils move from home to school they encounter several factors that can interfere with their studies. These factors are moderated by the intervening factors like sickness, school levies, laziness and natural calamities such as landslides, mudslides and lightning.

## Synthesis of literature review on dropout of learners in schools

Aggarwal (2003) outlines causes of dropout and stagnation to unfriendly conditions both at home and school. For instance, defective system of examination and poor parents can have negative influence on the progression of the pupils. Cardoso and Verner (2007) attribute this kind of wastage to extreme poverty, early parenthood, child labour and the child's ability, motivation and personal preferences. Rumberger and Lim (2008) assert that the reasons linked to whether a student drops out or graduates may be related to student's, family's, schools' and community's characteristics. The studies showed that no single factor can explain why students continue or dropout of the educational system. In Kisumu East, Acholla (2012) found out that lack of curriculum adaptation, teacher attributes and parental support influenced dropout of children with disabilities. In Kenya drop out, results from economic, social-cultural and pedagogical factors, including the inability to pay for the cost of education, lack of interest in schooling, poor health, cultural and nomadic practices, pregnancies and early marriages (Chege and Sifuna, 2006). Ayiro (2008) emphasizes the toll of HIV/AIDS on the educational sector when he stresses that as children get sick themselves as well as caring for sick parents the rate of absenteeism and dropping out escalates to high levels. These costs are even higher when the number of teachers dying as a result of contracting HIV/AIDS is considered. The decision to leave school also depends on the opportunity cost of education (UNESCO, 2008). In certain regions, the potential pupils consider being out of school more lucrative as it comes with a lot of employment opportunities. In such kind of scenarios when personal financial, home or employment problems coincide with children's lack of confidence in the school's ability to give adequate support he will drop out of school.

The social class of the family will affect the education of the children. Inadequate income among low class affects the provision of tuition fees, texts books, and materials necessary to ensure good academic performance. Due to low income, children from poor families are forced to work in farms to supplement crop output for subsistence (Barasa, 2003). Sang (2007) alludes to this when he asserts that pupils from large families had low income and therefore had a higher dropout rates due to their inability to pay school fees and other levies. In Nandi District he found out that 42% of the pupils dropped due to lack of fees while 20% dropped out to allow their siblings to go to school. Nyae (2012) in his study on repeater and dropout rates in Kwale showed that 60% of Head teachers and 80% of class teachers indicated that poverty influenced dropout. Otula (2007) emphasizes the role of the parent in the education of the children. A parental involvement at each and every stage of the child's physical, social, and emotional development will go a long way in keeping the child at school thereby helping the child to perform better. This further confirms the notion that poor parental educational backgrounds have negative impact on pupils' educational performance. Walque (2005) in a study done in Rwanda asserts that educated parents tend to have educated children. Infrastructural facilities may also play a role in the sustenance of pupils in a school. Owiye (2005) ascertains that provision of material inputs like

staffrooms, computers, classrooms and toilets are important for the efficiency of education in those institutions. Such facilities like computers may improve attitude and interest of pupils towards their school and therefore they may not think of leaving the school. In certain places the dropout was influenced by the environment. Akinyi (2011) found out that floods in Nyando had an influence on dropout at 20.17%. The floods disrupted the daily routine, as pupils were unable to reach schools on time. Further evidence suggests that educational indicators are directly related to school qualities. In a study that was done in Brazil it was found out that higher cognitive skill in primary school lead to lower repetition rates while lower cognitive skills lead to higher dropout rates in primary schools (Hanushek and WoBmann, 2005). In other words a primary school with better performance has a lower dropout rates than the one with lower performance other factors taken constant. Acholla (2012), Akinyi (2011), Nyae (2012), and Owiye (2005) conducted their studies in Kisumu East, Nyando, Kwale and Siaya respectively on factors influencing dropout and repetition in primary schools. The knowledge gap that this study sought to fill was on factors influencing dropout of pupils in primary schools in Kakamega Municipality which was unknown.

## Research methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design in addition to cohort analysis approach. Snowball sampling was used to select 25 dropouts. Questionnaire were used to collect information from Head teachers, teachers, dropouts and pupils. In-depth interview schedules assisted in getting information from the Assistant Education Officer. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts and percentages. Face and content validity of the instruments was assessed by three experts in Planning and Economics of Education. Reliability of the instruments was determined through pilot survey in 2(8.0%) schools using test re-test method. The Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was 0.9 for Head teachers' questionnaire, 0.7 for teachers' questionnaire, 0.75 for pupil dropout questionnaire and 0.8 for pupil's questionnaire. Qualitative data was transcribed, analyzed and reported into emergent themes and sub-themes.

## RESULTS

In order to address the issue of pupil dropout in Kakamega Municipality, the dropout rates were first determined (Tables 2, and 3). The data from the Head teachers on enrollment and repeaters was tabulated as shown in Table 2.

The enrollment and the repeater figures were used to calculate the dropout rates using the formula below and results were given in Table 3.

$$\text{Grade Dropout Rate} = \frac{N_t^k - [(N_{t+1}^{k+1} - R_{t+2}^{k+1}) + R_{t+1}^k]}{N_t^k}$$

### Where;

N = Total Grade enrollment t+1 = Subsequent year 1

R = Grade Repeaters t+2 = Subsequent year 2

k= Previous grade k+1 = Subsequent grade in year 1

t = Previous year

Table 2. Enrollment and Repeaters 2003-2010

Class	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5	Standard 6	Standard 7	Standard 8	Graduates
2003	2838	2602	2408	2246	2095	2006	2031	1546	1542
	264	239	209	209	191	156	223	136	
2004	2612	2317	1858	1873	1749	1732	1756	1524	1521
	240	209	160	170	157	131	191	131	
2005	2562	2310	1852	1866	1741	1727	1751	1515	1511
	236	208	161	172	158	133	189	132	
2006	2642	2372	1902	1922	1797	1783	1807	1574	1568
	243	216	162	173	160	136	190	134	
2007	2620	2367	1894	1913	1791	1777	1798	1584	1581
	236	211	142	161	152	124	192	127	
2008	2242	2262	1966	2131	2190	1997	1886	1434	1429
	206	204	169	196	197	156	194	118	
2009	2563	2250	2157	2112	2095	1947	1941	1262	1253
	233	203	186	177	178	148	202	105	
2010	2354	2321	2143	2158	2079	2072	2147	1548	1539
	214	209	184	191	175	155	225	126	

Source: Primary Schools Head Teachers

Table 3. Dropout Rates

YEAR	I-II	II-III	III-IV	IV-V	V-VI	VI-VII	VII-VIII
2004	0.173						
2005		0.180					
2006			-0.032				
2007				0.063			
2008					-0.138		
2009						0.055	
2010							0.151

Table 4. Factors Influencing Pupil drop out as indicated by Teachers (n=115) and Head Teachers (n=23)

Factors	Resp.	Responses							
		LE (3)		UD (2)		SE (1)		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poor parental care	Trs	77	66.96	14	12.17	24	21.87	115	100
	H/T	12	52.17	09	13.04	08	34.78	23	100
Indiscipline	Trs	77	66.96	09	7.83	29	25.22	115	100
	H/T	15	65.22	03	13.04	05	21.74	23	100
Lack of Motivation	Trs	63	54.78	19	16.52	33	28.70	115	100
	H/T	09	39.13	03	13.04	11	47.83	23	100
Peer influences	Trs	58	50.43	14	12.17	43	37.40	115	100
	H/T	12	52.17	02	8.70	09	39.13	23	100
Abuse of drugs	Trs	58	50.43	14	12.17	43	37.40	115	100
	H/T	02	8.69	01	4.35	20	86.96	23	100
Poverty at home	Trs	58	50.43	09	7.83	48	41.74	115	100
	H/T	17	73.92	03	13.04	03	13.04	23	100
Death of parents	Trs	63	54.78	19	16.52	33	28.70	115	100
	H/T	15	65.22	05	21.74	03	13.04	23	100
Early Marriage	Trs	43	37.40	14	12.17	58	50.43	115	100
	H/T	00	0.00	05	21.74	18	78.26	23	100
Early Pregnancy	Trs	43	37.39	05	4.35	67	58.26	115	100
	H/T	17	73.92	03	13.04	3	13.04	23	100
Strict school rules	Trs	24	20.87	19	16.52	72	62.61	115	100
	H/T	00	0.00	05	21.74	18	78.26	23	100
Traditional Cultural Practices	Trs	39	33.91	05	4.35	71	61.74	115	100
	H/T	03	13.04	00	0.00	20	86.96	23	100
Child Labour	Trs	83	72.18	16	13.91	16	13.91	115	100
	H/T	19	82.61	03	13.04	01	4.35	23	100
School levies	Trs	15	13.04	10	8.70	90	78.26	115	100
	H/T	18	78.26	00	00	05	21.74	23	100
Absenteeism	Trs	16	13.91	9	7.83	90	78.26	115	100
	H/T	05	21.74	1	4.35	17	73.91	23	100
Poor academic performance	Trs	10	8.70	14	12.17	91	79.13	115	100
	H/T	03	13.04	01	4.35	19	82.61	23	100
Non-co-operation by parents	Trs	10	8.70	05	4.35	95	82.61	115	100
	H/T	01	4.35	00	0.00	22	95.65	23	100
Poor school facilities	Trs	15	13.04	10	8.70	90	78.26	115	100
	H/T	02	8.69	01	4.35	20	86.96	23	100
Political violence	Trs	11	9.57	14	12.17	90	78.26	115	100
	H/T	00	00	01	4.35	22	95.65	23	100
Harsh teachers	Trs	11	9.57	14	12.17	90	78.26	115	100
	H/T	01	4.35	01	4.35	21	91.30	23	100
Lack of money for High School	Trs	15	13.04	07	6.09	93	80.87	115	100
	H/T	01	4.35	00	0.00	22	95.65	23	100

Key: Resp. – Respondents LE= Large Extent UD= Undecided F= Frequency SE= Small Extent Trs= Teachers H/T = Head teachers

Example 1: Grade Dropout between Standards I and II in 2004 using the formula:

$$\frac{2838 - [(2317 - 209) + 240]}{2838}$$

0.173 (to 3 decimal places)

The dropout rate is the proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school year who are no longer enrolled in the following school year. Ideally, the rate should approach 0%; a high dropout rate reveals problems in the internal efficiency of the educational system. The Dropout Rate is calculated to measure the phenomenon of pupils from cohort leaving school without completion of an education cycle. In this case, the primary school education cycle and its effect on the internal efficiency of educational systems (UNESCO, 2009b).

The year 2006 and 2008 saw a negative dropout rate at negative 3.2% and 13.8% respectively. Negative dropout therefore indicate that enrollment were higher in the subsequent year than in the previous year. The year 2009 saw the dropout rate reduce to a low of 5.5 percent. It was also noted that the dropout rates were high in standard seven to eight at 15.1%. This was due to the insistence on academic performance by teachers for any pupil to be promoted. Quite important was also the high dropout in standard II-III at 18.0%. This was because teachers insisted in the promotion of the pupils with good grades as it was believed that these classes formed the foundation. Myers and Harbison (1964) confirm this by asserting that in most schools the teaching fails to interest or inspire pupils. Some parents may also not see the incentives of keeping children in school. Unlike the dropout rates in other municipalities (Table 2) the dropout rate in Kakamega Municipality was noted to be on a general downward trend from the year 2004. Having determined the dropout rates the research question was "factors influence dropouts in public primary schools in Kakamega Municipality" was now dealt with.

The responses of teachers and Head teachers on the factors influencing dropout were as shown in Table 4.

From Table 4 it is shown that 66.96% and 52.17% of the teachers and head teachers respectively indicated that poor parental care influenced dropout to a large extent while 21.87% of teachers and 34.78% head teachers stated that poor parental care influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 12.17% of teachers and 13.04% of Head teachers were Undecided. Indiscipline was another factor that influenced dropout. Teachers (66.96%) and Head teachers (65.22%) indicated that indiscipline influenced dropout to a large extent. To a small extent 25.22% of teachers and 21.74% of Head teachers influenced dropout while those who were undecided were teachers (7.83%) and Head teachers (13.04%). Learning requires a lot of self-drive. This needs one to be motivated. To a large extent 54.78% of teachers and 39.13% of Head teachers indicated that lack of motivation influenced dropout to a large extent while almost half (47.83%) Head teachers and 28.70% teachers indicated that lack of motivation influenced dropout to

a small extent. Only 16.52% of teachers and 13.04% of Head teachers were undecided. For peer influence as a factor that influenced dropout, more than half of teachers (50.43%) and Head teachers (52.17%) indicated that peer influence was a factor that resulted in pupils dropping out of school to a large extent. A total of 37.40% teachers and 39.13% Head teachers showed that peer influence influenced dropout to a small extent while 12.17% teachers and 8.70% Head teachers were undecided. Abuse of drugs was another factor that influenced drop out. It was found out that teachers (50.43%) and only 8.69% Head teachers indicated that abuse of drugs influenced dropout to a large extent. Head teachers (86.96%) and teachers (37.40%) indicated that drugs influenced dropout to a small extent while 12.17% teachers and 4.35% were undecided. Another factor that influenced dropout was poverty at home. Education ought to be given a lot of priority as it leads to higher economic growth and better standards of living since an additional year in school results in average growth of Gross Domestic Product of 0.37% (UNESCO, 2009a). Head teachers (73.92%) and teachers (50.43%) asserted that poverty influences dropout to a large extent.

Only 7.83% teachers and 13.04% Head teachers were undecided while 41.74% teachers and 13.04% Head teachers indicated that poverty influenced dropout to a small extent. The death of parents was another factor that influenced dropout. In some communities the girl child was adversely affected by death of parents as they were expected to take care of the younger siblings (Too, 2007). The Head teachers (65.22%) and teachers (54.78%) agreed that to a large extent, death of a parent led to pupil's dropping out of school. To a small extent teachers (28.70%) and Head teachers (13.04%) indicated that death of parents influenced dropout while 16.52% Teachers and 21.74% Head teachers were undecided. Teachers (37.40%) and Head teachers (0%) alluded that early marriage influenced dropout to a large extent while 50.43% of teachers and 78.26% of Head teachers indicated that early marriage influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 12.17% teachers and 21.74% of Head teachers were undecided. This showed that this practice was minimal in the area hence its limited influence on dropout. On the factor of early pregnancy 37.40% teachers and 3.92% Head teachers indicated that it influenced dropout to a large extent while 58.25% teachers and 13.04% Head teachers showed that the factor influenced dropout to a small extent. Teachers (4.35%) and Head teachers (13.04%) were undecided. For this factor the teachers and Head teachers were on the opposite sides. Head teachers (73.92%) strongly agreed that early pregnancy influences dropout while more than half of the teachers (58.25%) agreed that it influences dropout to a small extent. Nyae (2012) findings were different in that 15% of Head teachers, 65% of class teachers and 7.42% of the pupils showed that pregnancy influenced dropout. However, in both studies the percentage of teachers agreeing that pregnancy influenced dropout was well above 50%.

With regard to the environment of school through strict rules, 20.87% of teachers and 0% Head teachers showed that strict school rules influenced dropout to a large extent. This factor influenced dropout to a small extent at teachers (62.61%) and Head teachers (78.26%). A total of 16.52% teachers and 21.74% Head teachers were Undecided. In most schools

therefore the school rules were fairly friendly to the pupils. On the traditional cultural practices as a factor, 33.91% of teachers and 13.04% of Head teachers indicated that it influenced dropout to a large extent while 61.74% of teachers and 86.96% of Head teachers showed that traditional cultural practices influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 4.35% of teachers and 0% Head teachers were Undecided. With regard to child labour, 72.18% of teachers and 82.61% Head teachers indicated that child labour influences dropout to a large extent while only 13.91% of teachers and 4.35% of Head teachers showed that child labour influenced dropout to a small extent. A total of 13.91% teachers 13.04% Head teachers were undecided. In Kakamega Municipality 78.26% of Head teachers and 13.04% teachers agreed by stating that school levies influenced dropout to a large extent while 78.26% teachers and 21.74% Head teachers indicated that school levies influenced dropout to a small extent. A total of 8.70% teachers and 0% Head teachers were Undecided. On absenteeism, 13.91% of teachers and 21.74% of Head teachers stated that it influenced dropout to a large extent while 78.26% of teachers and 73.91% of Head teachers indicated that absenteeism influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 7.83% of teachers and 4.35% of Head teachers were Undecided. In Kakamega Municipality absenteeism had limited influence on dropout. Teachers (8.70%) and Head teachers (13.04%) indicated that poor academic performance influenced dropout to a large extent while 79.13% of teachers and 82.61% of Head teachers stated that poor academic performance influenced dropout to a small extent. A total of 12.17% of teachers and 4.35% Head teachers were undecided.

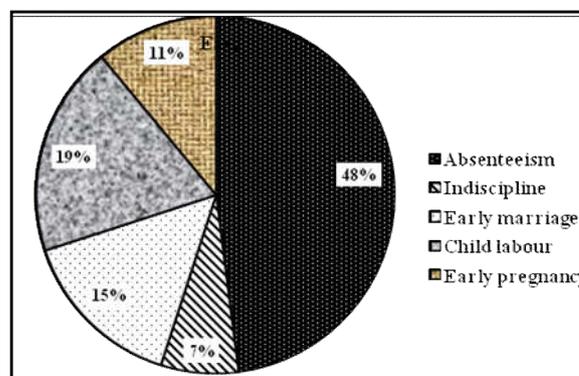
Non-co-operation by parents was stated as a factor influencing dropout to a large extent by 13.04% teachers and 4.35% Head teachers. To a small extent 82.61% of teachers and 95.65% of Head teachers indicated that non-co-operation influenced dropout. Teachers (4.35%) and Head teachers (0%) were undecided. This implied that parents were generally co-operative to teachers and Head teachers on the education of their children. On the state of the school facilities 13.04% of teachers and 8.69% of Head teachers indicated that poor school facilities influenced dropout to a large extent while 78.26% of teachers and 86.96% of Head teachers stated that poor school facilities influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 8.70% of teachers and 4.35% of Head teachers were undecided. For political violence, 9.57% of teachers and 0% Head teachers indicated that political violence influenced dropout to a large extent while 78.26% of teachers and 95.65% of Head teachers stated that political violence influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 12.17% of teachers and 4.35% of Head teachers were undecided. For the harsh teachers only 9.57% of teachers and 4.35% of Head teachers stated that it influenced dropout to a large extent while 78.26% of teachers and 91.30% of Head teachers indicated that harsh teachers influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 12.17% of teachers and 4.35% of Head teachers were undecided. To the lack of money for high school, only 13.04% of teachers and 4.35% of Head teachers indicated that it influenced dropout to a large extent while 80.87% of teachers and 95.65% of Head teachers influenced dropout to a small extent. Only 6.09% of teachers and 0% of Head teachers were undecided. The pupils were also asked why

some of their classmates' drop out of school and the responses were as outlined in Table 5.

**Table 5. Factors Influencing Drop out as indicated by Pupils (n=480)**

Factors Indicated by Pupils	Frequency	(%)
Absenteeism	302	48
Child Labour	123	19
Early Marriage	97	15
Early Pregnancy	68	11
Indiscipline	46	7

Table 5 shows that 302(48%) of the pupils attributed drop out to absenteeism. Majority of the pupils mentioned absenteeism because many dropouts started by coming to school irregularly. This was found to be on the contrary with the teachers and Head teachers who indicated that absenteeism influenced dropout to a small extent. This was followed by those that leave school to go and work at 123(19%) and early marriage at 97(15%). Pregnancy and discipline accounted for the dropouts at 11% and 7 respectively as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Factors Influencing Dropout as indicated by Pupils**

A total of 23 pupils who had dropped out of primary schools were sampled using the Snowball method and questionnaire was administered to them and the results were tabulated as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Factors influencing Dropout as stated by the Pupils who had dropped out**

Factors	Responses	
	F	%
Poor Parental Care	14	23
Child Labour	12	20
Peer Influence	11	18
Death of Parents	9	15
Lack of Motivation	7	11
Indiscipline	5	8
Poor Academic Performance	3	5

From Table 6, the dropouts indicated that 23% of them moved out of school due to poor parental care. Some of the dropouts (15%) left school due to death of parents. Indiscipline (8%) and poor academic performance (5%) made the dropouts to move out of the educational system.

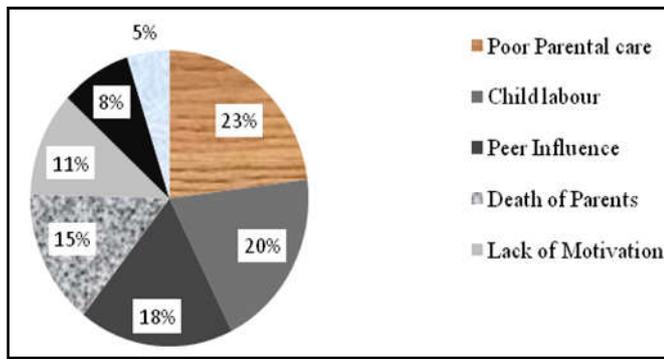


Figure 3. Factors Influencing Drop out as Indicated by Dropouts

## DISCUSSION

Barasa (2003) found out that dropout rates were high in examination classes. However, Nyamesa (2008) found out that for both boys and girls dropout rates were highest at grade 6. Nyae (2012) in a study of Kubo division found out that at grades 7 and 8 the dropout rate was 10.33%. All the studies found out that the dropout rates were high in the examination classes. More than half of teachers and Head teachers alluded to the fact that parental support was important on the education of a pupil. Parental support includes provision of basics like food, uniform and even at times assisting the pupils in doing their assignments at home. Non-provision of these services leaves the child frustrated and neglected hence the tendency to dropout since the home environment becomes unfriendly. According to Republic of Kenya (2005) the parents, thought that with introduction of Free Primary Education the government was to cater for every cost in education. This was never to be. For instance a non-supported child can go back home for lunch only to find that there is nothing to be taken. This kind of scenario therefore denies the child the energy they very much require for the afternoon lessons. A supportive family should give the child time to play and time to do studies. The pupil needs also to be encouraged and guided in his studies. When all these are not forthcoming from the parents the pupils can dropout. Hungi (2010) asserts that the environment where pupils operate greatly influences their performance. Aggarwal (2003) agrees with this notion as well. Walque (2005) goes further to state that even the level of education of parents have a bearing on the level of education of the children in that educated parents tend to have educated children. The environment provided at home by parent therefore affects the progress of the pupil. According to Omote (2005) pupils subjected to domestic duties were bound to be exhausted and unlikely to spend evening hours for study and or do school assignment pursuits. If these conditions persist, pupils will perform poorly or dropout of school. It was noted that as much as the government provided Free Primary Education the parents and community were expected to meet their obligations of providing clothing, food and health care to the pupils. Pupils who came from poor background could not therefore afford these basic costs and therefore had a high propensity of dropping out. In most instances indiscipline pupils were sent home to call their guardians. These same pupils were observed to have had discipline issues with their parents and therefore the parents were not very prompt in responding when they were called. In some cases the pupils did

not bother to divulge the correct messages to their parents. Discipline issues therefore took long to be solved resulting in the pupil losing interest in education thereby staying out of school completely. UNESCO (2008) asserts that when pupils have no confidence in the educational system especially when their financial urge supersedes the academic gain they will tend to dropout. A pupil that is less motivated towards academics may not see the need of being in school. This kind of pupil will quite often move out of school hence form the bulk of the dropout. The parents' level of education can therefore be a motivating factor Walque (2005).

Peer influence make pupils loss interest in education and therefore end up dropping out of school (Olembo, 1985). When a child operates in an environment where there are dropouts the chances of them being influenced by the group is quite high. This occurs due to the strong tendency of individuals to obey group rules of behavior so that they become acceptable as members of the group. If doing what the teacher says conflicts with group rules, pupils may choose to ignore the teacher's wishes or even defy the teacher (Atkinson, 1983). In their endeavor to cope with school demands some pupils may resort to substance and drug abuse. This in most cases may be noted by the class teachers. Too (2007) hinted that discipline can be such a challenge to teachers especially where pupils come from different social backgrounds, and as teachers attempt to bring them back to their normal conditions these pupils may become so deviant that eventually they dropout of school. With poverty comes the vicious cycle of hopelessness. Despite the government intervention in the Primary sector through Free Secondary Education several challenges like growing number of orphans and poverty still force children to dropout of school (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Due to poverty at home a pupil may not see the need of going to school because going to school may not bring immediate benefits like *Ugali* on the table. This finding was found to be consistent with those of Cardoso and Verner (2007), UNESCO (2010), Masha (2011) and Wasanga, Ogle and Wambua (2010) which alluded to the fact that parental wealth strongly influences prospects of being out of school. Head teachers were undecided. This was as a result of the fact that through Free Primary Education all pupils were expected to go to school whether they were orphaned or not since the allocation catered for all pupils irrespective of their economic social background. However, absence of a parent may result in the pupil's loss of focus thereby dropping out of school. The traditional cultural practices therefore had minimal influence on dropout mainly due to the urban location of Kakamega Municipality. Child labour takes away children away from school and when they find being away from school more paying they are likely to dropout.

Achoka and Ogenga (2008) emphasized the fact that the success in the provision of quality education is impeded by high levies imposed on parents through cost-sharing. Children from poor families in their endeavor to look for these levies must therefore miss education as they go out to look for employment to make ends meet. The teachers believed that through FPE pupils should not dropout while Head teachers were of the opinion that school levies resulted in pupils dropping out of the educational system. This was because in

most schools it was the Head teachers that handled issues to do with finances. Teachers and the Head teachers therefore agreed that poor academic performance influenced dropout to a small extent. Lack of money for high school was therefore not a major factor in making pupils dropout of school. Absenteeism leads to pupils missing out in the classes and therefore ends up covering very little content in the curriculum hence the tendency to drop out. Nyae (2012) and Acholla (2012) did not show the influence of absenteeism on dropout. However, it influenced repetition at 4.55% of the pupils in Nyae's study. Studies by Barasa (2003) confirmed that 86.2% of the dropouts were due to lack of school fees; this was closely followed by poor academic performance and lack of encouragement at 51.8%. This was true because the studies were done before FPE went a full cycle. For this study it was noted that pupils were still sent home hence the high level of absenteeism at 61%. Schools still charged levies despite the Ministry's directive that no pupil should be sent home for any money. These levies make the cost of education a huge burden on many households and for many parents who can not afford the high cost, their children dropout to go and work so as to supplement household's budgets (Republic of Kenya, 2001b).

Some of the dropouts indicated that they left school because their mothers had gotten married elsewhere and therefore were not caring for them. Others simply wrote that the grandmothers they were forced to stay with could not provide for the items they required while in school. Most parents do have reliable source of income to take care of their pupils' needs. This was also established by Nyae (2012), Psacharopoulos (1985). In their endeavour to provide for themselves, 19.67% of the dropouts left school to go and work. A number indicated that because they were staying with grandmothers they were forced to look for manual jobs so as to make ends meet. The dropouts (18.03%) also indicated that they left school because of peer influence. Some of their age mates were living a good life by riding motor cycles and owning mobile phones hence they were lured to join them. Others indicated they wanted to live a life without restrictions mainly because at home they had to do what their parents dictated.

The death of the parents forced them to leave school so as to take care of their siblings especially in a situation where there were no relatives to take charge of the orphaned children. Lack of motivation also took toll on the dropout as 11.48% indicated that they simply did not have interest in education. This factor was also mentioned by the Assistant Education Officer that some of the dropouts simply left school due lack of interest. Motivation is the process whereby, goal directed activity is instigated and sustained. It provides impetus for and direction to action (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996). In this case the dropouts had set a goal of leaving school by sustaining that thought. It was noted from the dropouts that at times their parents would take indiscipline issues like when one refuses to do domestic chores to school. This made them to abscond going to school for fear of being reprimanded by teachers. When the Assistant Education Officer was asked, during the interview, to give some of the factors that make pupils to dropout he said; Lack of parental care make pupils loss focus and therefore they end up as drop outs. Quite a number of pupils also leave school to go and look for employment so as to support the family. Death

of parents, early pregnancy and lack of interest are other reasons that made pupils leave school. According to Yugi (2012) failure of parents to meet parental obligations resulted in students dropout. This therefore agreed with the findings above. School environment plays a key role in retaining the pupils in school. Forced repetition was still being practiced by schools as a way of improving performance. This was found to be against the Ministry of Education policy on repetition.

The introduction of Free Primary Education like in other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had a positive impact in public primary schools in Kakamega Municipality as there was an increase in enrollment by 36.1% in 2003. However even with the increased enrollment schools experienced high dropout and repetition rates at 15.1% and 11.6% respectively in 2010.

## Conclusion

The factors influencing dropout were; poor parental care, poverty, child labour, death of parents, pregnancy, peer influence and indiscipline while the factors that influenced repetition were; poor academic performance, absenteeism, indiscipline, child labour, peer influence, poverty and poor parental care. Both dropout and repetition were influenced by poverty, peer influence, indiscipline child labour and poor parental care.

## Recommendations

Deliberate efforts by stakeholders should be put in place to eliminate the dropout rates. Such as efforts include making primary education truly free and compulsory with practically penalties meted on those who violate these regulations. Parents should be sensitized to take up their parental obligations in catering for the needs of the pupils. The sensitization can be effected through Community Based Organizations, churches and local government agencies.

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