

Abstract

The problem of school dropout is experienced in both the rich and poor countries, though some reasons may differ. As adolescents transit this turbulent stage they increasingly seek to be free from their parents and gain more autonomy. This study investigated parenting styles, as predictors of students drop out rate among public secondary school students in Embu County. Questionnaires were used to collect data from students on parenting style and students' and dropout tendencies, focus group discussion schedule was used to collect in-depth views of students while interview schedule were used to collect views of guidance and counseling teachers. A population of 8820 Form Two and Three students distributed in 132 public secondary schools in Embu County was targeted. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 15 schools. The schools selected were those which hand reported more cases of school dropout. Stratified random sampling and systematic random sampling were used to select 399 participants. Purposive sampling was used to select 70 secondary school dropouts. Reliability for the parenting styles questionnaires and dropout tendencies were calculated and an average cronbach alpha (α) of $\alpha = 0.82$ for parenting styles questionnaires was reported and for dropout rate $\alpha = 0.71$. Linear multiple regression analysis showed that, parenting styles accounts for; 86.2% ($R^2 = 0.862$, p