

Family Size and Boy-Child Drop Out Rate in Public Day Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya

Rose Kaindi Mueni

Machakos University

Email: muenirose2014@gmail.com

Redempta Maithya

Department of Educational Administration and Planning, School of Education

South Eastern Kenya University

Email: rmaithya@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

School dropout for both boys and girls is an area of concern not only in Kenya but also in the whole world. The government of Kenya has placed certain measures to give basic education to its citizens by introducing Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education. Despite this effort, students both boys and girls have been dropping out of school. The main purpose for the study was to investigate the influence of family size on boy-child dropout in public day secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised of all 11 day secondary schools in Kilungu Sub-County, Makueni County. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 6 public day secondary schools out of 11; 6 principals and 6 class teachers while 300 boys were selected making a total of 318 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings of the study were that family size influences boy-child drop out from public day secondary schools ($r = +0.512$). From the findings of this study the researchers recommended that the parents should be sensitized on the importance of boy-child education and that the government should provide funds to support boys-child education from poor families.

Key words: Family size, boy-child dropout, day secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education has been cited by economic experts as the corner stone for all economic and social stability within any country. Furthermore education has the power to alleviate poverty all over the world through developing people's skills that increase personal income and therefore the best way to attain self reliance in economic growth and development (World Bank, 2004). Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment that strives to ensure that all children have access to education. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 declares that every child has a right to education. The world conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 sparked off a new motivation towards education for all.

Kamanja (2012), argues that the boy-child of the 21st Century is faced with many problems which unless properly addressed will result in the society losing him. In America, educational systems are losing half of the students through school dropout. A recent study by the US Department of

Education found that 3% of American students were dropping out or failing to graduate in the nation's largest public district schools (Education Alliance, 2012). School dropout especially for boys is widely recognized as a negative event followed by various life problems. Although there has been progress in improving school participation since 1990 after the world conference on EFA in Jomtien, there are still high rates of drop out especially for boys which may be as a result of various socio-economic factors in many African countries (Smith, 2011). According to Kanesh (2004), the problem of boy-child drop out globally has been on the rise. He pointed out that both high and low social classes of people are affected by the drop out of boys from school. According to his study, 30 % of students in United States leave school before completing the intended education cycle. A research carried out by Siddhu (2011) found that India has boy-child dropout rate of 12% while Asia has a dropout rate of 5%. In Kenya, education has been declared as a basic need to all children and is a legal requirement that each child should attend school and any person who fails to take his/her child to school will have committed an offence and can be taken to court (Basic Education Act, 2013).

Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani (2009), observe that causes of boy-child wastage vary from one country to another. A report appearing in The Standard Newspaper, November 8th 2013 showed that the dropout rate of girls in Kenya is 2% while that of boys is 2.1%. Another report in Standard Newspaper of 29th May 2014 indicated that the dropout rates in 23 sampled counties stood at 3.3% among boys compared to 2.5% for girls. A child's dropout rate means that the resources used for providing education for that particular child are wasted because the child has not acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to effectively participate in the total development of the nation (Parr, 2013). Wastage due to dropping out from school has caused concern to many governments, and other education stakeholders.

According to Mutwol (2013), overall wastage rates in Kenya ranges from 30% - 40 %. This is very discouraging because the government uses a huge amount of public expenditure on education. According to 2011 Economic Survey report, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) takes the lion's share of the budget. For example, in the financial year 2002 – 2003 the ministry was allocated 64.1 Billion shillings, with this figure rising to 193.3 billion shillings in the financial year 2010 – 2011 (Mudemb, 2013). Findings from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology reveal that not all the students who enroll in secondary schools finish with their education cycle (MoEST, 2007). It is thus clear that some students drop out due to varying individual reasons. Moreover, despite the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) disbursement and bursary allocations to the needy students in Kenyan schools, boys in public day secondary schools have continued to drop out and thus a cause for alarm.

Over the years the boy-child has become vulnerable and endangered as far as education is concerned (World Bank, 2004). A report from the District Education Officer (DEO) Kilungu sub-county education office on enrolment and dropout (2013) indicated that more boys than girls are dropping out of school, a matter of concern for this study. The report shows that between 2010 and 2013, there has been a consistently high dropout rate among boys from public day secondary schools within Kilungu sub-county. For example in the year 2010 there were 1,489 boys at the beginning of the year and 1,480 at the end of the year showing a drop out of nine boys in the sub-

county. While in 2011 the number of boys in the sub-county at the beginning of the year were 1,479 and 1,469 at the close of the year meaning 11 boys had dropped out. In 2012 the number of boys at the start of the year were 1,457 and 1,450 at the end of the year an indication that 7 boys dropped out of school; whereas at the beginning of year 2013 the number of boys were 1,444 and the figure dropped to 1,436 at the end of the year meaning that 8 boys dropped out from school. This trend is an indication that the number of boys in public day secondary schools in Kilungu sub-county is consistently declining and therefore the need to investigate the influence of family size on boy-child drop-out rate in public day secondary schools in Kilungu sub-county, Makueni County.

Objective of the Study

The specific objective of the study was to find out the influence of family size on boy-child dropout rate in public day secondary schools in Kilungu Sub-County, Makueni County.

Research Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no relationship between the family size and boy-child dropout rate in public day secondary schools in Kilungu sub-county.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several factors for school dropout have been identified in previous researches. Saliwanchik-Brown (2009), for example found that family socio-economic factors, family composition, student engagement in school, retention and age all contributed to boy-child drop out. In a study by Pharris-Ciurej, Hirschman and Willhoft (2012), it was found that grade retention is the strongest predictor of boys dropout. In general status attainment and drop out, literature points out three main factors predictive of school success. Foley, Gallipoli, & Green (2009) indicate it is due to parental attainment; Inglis (2009) says it is intelligence while Saliwanchik-Brown (2009) says it is socio-economic status that leads to success in education. Researchers are therefore urged to assess the importance of all these factors and the extent to which they cause dropout of boys from public day secondary schools and thus the motivation for this study to investigate the influence of family size on boy-child dropout in public day secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

In the U.S.A., a White House Secretariat office report of 2010 quoted president Obama announcing that the rate at which boys were dropping out of school was a question of concern to all the stakeholders in the education sector. He argued that the Americans could not ignore the big problem of the boy-child dropping out of school. He therefore called on all the stakeholders: parents, guardians, teachers, school principals, students, business leaders and elected officials to join hands and end the boy-child dropout crisis in America. In addition, he noted that for every school day, about seventy school children decide to drop out of school and a total of 1.2 million dropped out in America without attaining the required grade. To address this problem, President Obama proposed four reform models which included the transfer of the principal and the staff, closing and re-opening of schools; and reviewing the managerial skills applied in the affected schools. The Obama administration therefore committed itself to curb this problem by emphasizing on the importance of investing in dropout prevention and recovery strategies, and to help make learning more engaging and relevant for learners. He therefore committed \$ 3.5 Million and \$50 Million in transformational changes and prevention strategies respectively.

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been struggling to finding out ways of improving their educational systems in order to achieve the Education for All goals (E.F.A.). These countries have laid strategies to meet the set goals by 2015. These strategies include offering free primary education (FPE), providing lunch and snacks in marginalized areas and monitoring whether the children attend school regularly. This has motivated children from poor families to go to school (Wang & Fredricks, 2013). This effort eventually has attracted the attention of the donors from various parts of the world especially in the developed countries, which include World Education Forum, UNICEF and WHO (World Bank, 2004). The most affected are boys from poor families and orphans (Cameron, 2009), hence the concern on boy-child drop out from public day secondary schools in Makueni County.

School dropout has become a major educational problem in developing countries. It has been noticed that there has been a high enrollment and low completion cycle especially for boys in public day secondary schools (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009). Dropout rates depend on the number of children enrolled and so in countries where there is low initial enrolment, actual number of students who drop may be lower than where initial enrolment is high (Joshi, 2010). In Malawi, dropout rates are still high though free primary education was started earlier than in any other African country (Siddhu, 2011). High enrolment in Malawi led to poor education because there weren't enough teachers to handle the students and therefore temporal teachers were employed to curb this problem. This made many students especially boys, lose interest in school hence dropping out. The main reason of boy-child drop out in Malawi is lack of interest in learning and lack of role models among family members (Smith, 2011).

Having a big family may lead to boys drop out of school especially if the family income is low. Symeou, Martinez and Alvarez (2012) say that many children especially boys from big sized families dropout of school to work for income to support their families. This comes as a result of parents being unable to provide basic needs to their children and hence force the older sons to drop, search for casual jobs and help them (parents) bring up their children in the big family. Once the boys get these casual jobs which they can do after school, they feel that they have become adults and therefore drop out completely from secondary schools (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009). This will therefore lead boys' to dropout so that they can help their parents in providing for their siblings. If getting food is a problem, then it would not be possible to cater for education of the children, especially boys because it is more expensive (Mudemb, 2013). Boys from big families may be encouraged by their parents to drop out of school to go and work to supplement the family income and make it easier for the parents to take care of the young siblings (Symeou *et al.*, 2012). Research done by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2006 showed that as boys grow older their needs increase and if they come from a big family their parents may not be able to provide for their needs and therefore they might drop out of school to search for casual jobs so as to cater for their own needs. Most boys in Kilungu Sub-County may be dropping out of school to indulge in casual work like sand harvesting, loading and unloading the sand Lorries. Sand is being harvested in big rivers around the sub-county like Kaiti River and the sand is taken to construction sites around the county headquarters. This study set out to establish how family size influences boy-child dropout from public day secondary schools in Makueni County.

In Kenya, the dropout of boys in public day secondary schools draws back the achievement of Vision 2030 which was set by the Kenyan government to industrialize the nation and to improve education and training for all (Vision, 2030). This leads to wastage of potential human resources necessary for development (Business Daily, 2013). The initiation of free primary education by the government in 2003 and free day secondary school education in 2008 resulted into increased school enrolment but boys are still dropping out of school due to factors like poverty, insecurity, lack of basic needs and natural catastrophes (Symeou, Martínez-González, & Álvarez-Blanco, 2012). Dropout of boys in Kenyan public day schools has been on the higher side in spite of the government's effort to attain universal education by introducing free public day secondary education (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009).

The government of Kenya spends a lot of money on free day secondary education. According to Mutwol (2013) the economic survey of Kenya indicates that MOEST takes the lion's share of the national budget. This is to support free primary education and free day secondary education.

Expenditure on education accounts for a significant portion of the county's resources. For example in Kenya 2012-2013 year's budget, education sector was allocated 233.1 billion which is 16% of the total budget of 1,459.9 billion. Among the allocations 8.3 billion went to free primary education, 19.7 billion went to free day secondary education, 1.6 billion went to early child development education, 118.7 billion went to teachers' salaries and 84.8 billion went to other projects including research (Ramsey, 2012). Failure to address issues affecting boy-child school dropout will mean that government resources are wasted and therefore the need for this study.

METHODOLOGY

The target population for the study was 11 Day secondary schools, 11 principals from these schools, 25 class teachers (Form 3 & 4) and 550 boys (Form 3 & 4) in Kilungu Sub-county, Makeni County. The 6 principals in the sampled schools were selected to participate in the study. Given that some schools have more than one stream, simple random sampling was used to select 12 out of 25 class teachers and 300 boys from the selected schools. The sample size was 318 respondents including school principals, class teachers and students as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sampling Frame Table

Respondents	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage
Principals	11	6	54.54
Class Teachers	25	12	48.00
Boys	550	300	54.54
Total	586	318	54.26

Data was collected using questionnaires, document analysis and interviews. There were two different sets of questionnaires for class teachers and students (Form 3 & 4 boys). Document analysis was based on records obtained from the principals' offices in the selected schools. These documents included class registers and admission records for the years 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. The main purpose of examining these records was to establish the trend of boys' enrollment in Form one, retention rate in the school and dropout rate in the school in these years. The information gathered was basically made to supplement data collected using the questionnaires for teachers and students, and interviews with school principals.

The data collected from the field was coded and processed by computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Analyzed data was presented in the form of frequency distribution tables and percentages which were in line with the questionnaires. The null hypothesis was tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to find out the influence of family size on boy-child drop out from public day secondary schools in Kilungu sub-county, Makueni County. To achieve this objective the researcher investigated the number of members in a family. The respondents were required to indicate the number of family members. The results are presented in figure 1.

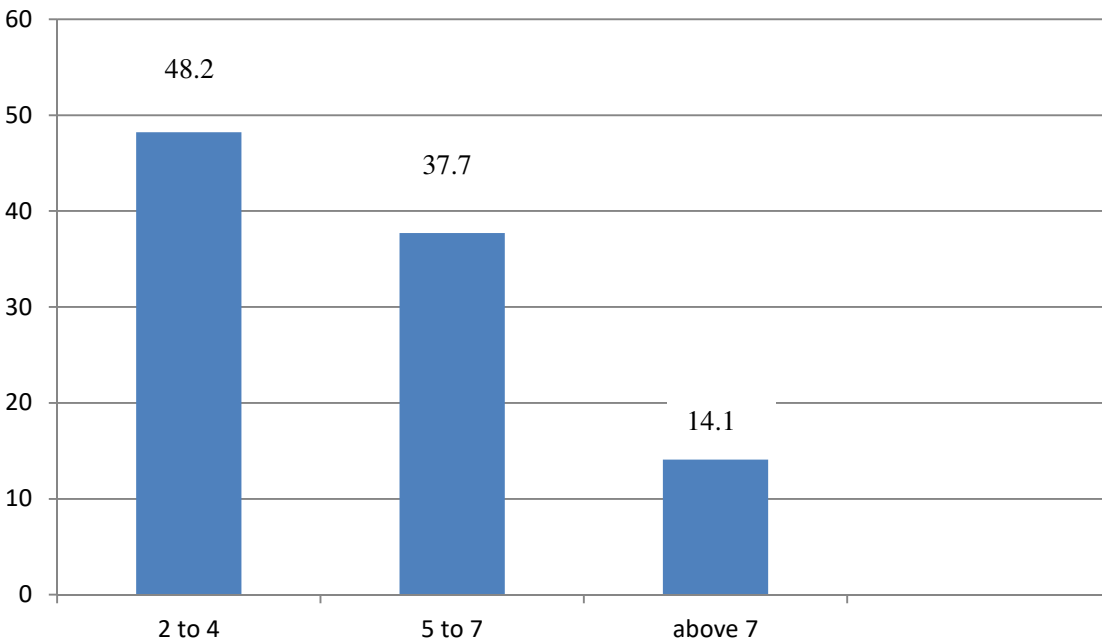


Figure 1: Family members (%) in a family

The main objective for this study was to find out the influence of family size on boy-child dropout from public day secondary schools in Kilungu Sub-county, Makueni County. The study revealed that most of the families, 100 (48.2%) had between 2 – 4 children, followed by 79 (37.7%) with 5-7 children, while 29 (14.1%) had more than 7 children. However, the principals through an interview indicated that the average number of children as given by the parents was 5 children per family. This implies that most families in Kilungu sub-county have 5 children per family which is relatively a big number. This finding concurs with those of Symeou, Martinez & Alvarez (2012) who argue that many children especially boys from big families drop out of school to work for income to support their big families. From the findings, boy-children who come from big families do not complete secondary education because it may be hard to pay the fees. This goes hand in hand with the findings of Mudemb (2013) who argued; that it may be hard to educate children in big families because if getting food is a problem, then it cannot be possible to cater for education which is more expensive.

It was also found that it was also established that 102.5 (49%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements: boys from families with 2-4 children drop out of school, boys from families of 5 and above children do not complete Form 4 while parents with 7 children and above do not pay fees for their sons as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Family Size and Dropout

STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Boys from families of 2-4 children drop out of school	100 (48%)	50 (24%)	5 (2.4%)	30 (15%)	23 (11%)	208 (100%)
Boys from families with 5 children and above members do not complete Form 4	140 (67%)	20 (10%)	0 (0%)	30 (15%)	18 (8%)	208 (100%)
Parents with 7 children and above do not pay school fees for their sons	120 (58%)	40 (19%)	0 (0%)	48 (23%)	0 (0%)	208 (100%)
There is likelihood of boys who have all their basic needs met drop out of school before completing Form 4	50 (24%)	50 (24%)	0 (0%)	18 (8%)	90 (44%)	208 (100%)
Mean Response	102.5 (49%)	40 (19.4%)	1.25 (0.6%)	31.5 (15%)	32.7 (16%)	208 (100%)

Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents, mean 102.5 (49%) strongly agreed with the statements given, 40 (19.4%) agreed, 1.25 (0.6%) undecided, 31.5 (15%) disagreed and 32.7 (16 %) strongly disagreed respectively.

The null hypothesis was tested to establish whether there is a significant relationship between family size and boy-child dropout. The null hypothesis stated that; there is no significant relationship between family size and boy-child drop out. The relationship in the variables; family

size and boy-child drop out showed that there is significant relationship between family size and boy-child drop out and thus the null hypothesis was rejected. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between Family Size and Boy-child Drop Out

		Family Size	Boy-child drop out
Family Size	Pearson's correlation	1	0.512
	Sig(2 tailed)		0.0023
	N	208	208
Boy-child drop out	Pearson's correlation	0.5120	1
	Sig(2 tailed)	0.0023	
	N	208	208

Correlation significance value = 0.05

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between family size and boy-child drop out is $r=+0.512$, implying that there is a strong positive correlation between family size and boy-child drop out. Big family or small family therefore may influence boy-child drop out from public day secondary schools in Makueni Sub-County. The the null hypothesis was thus rejected that because there is a positive relationship between the variables; family size and boy-child drop out from public day schools in Kilungu sub-county. A big family therefore influences dropout of boy-child from public day secondary school and this concurs with Symeou et al (2012) who stated that, having a big family size may lead to boys drop out of school especially if the family income is low.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings therefore, it was concluded that boys from day public secondary schools in Kilungu sub-county, Makueni County dropped out of school, especially those from big families, due to inadequate resources for the large number of children in a family. The study recommends that parents should be encouraged to come up with new strategies of increasing their earnings so as to increase their income and be able to pay fees for their sons. This can be communicated during parents meetings in the school. The parents should also be made aware of the importance of boy-child education at the County level. The government and private agencies should intervene and provide more funds in the schools as bursaries so as to help boys from low income families finish their education.

REFERENCES

- Archambault, I., Janosz, M., Fallu, J., & Pagani, L. (2009). Student engagement and its relationship with early high school dropout. *Journal of Adolescence*. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197108000651>
- Cameron, L. (2009). Can a public scholarship program successfully reduce school drop-outs in a time of economic crisis? Evidence from Indonesia. *Economics of Education Review*, 28(3), 308–317.

- Education Alliance (2010). *Promoting, Protecting and Strengthening Home Schooling*. Powered by the World Pre-mobile Pack.
- Foley, K. Gallipoli, G. & Green, D. (2009). Ability, parental valuation of education and the high school dropout decision.
Retrieved from <http://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/47470>
- Inglis, D. (2009). *Exploring the dropout phenomenon in a secondary school situated in a high-risk community*. Stellenbosch University.
- Joshi, K. (2010). Indigenous children of India: enrolment, gender parity and drop-out in school education. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=1876639&show=abstract>
- Kamanja, P. W. (2012). *Factors influencing the boy – child secondary education in the rice-growing region of Kirinyaga South district , Kirinyaga County , Kenya*.
- Kanes. (2004). *Boys Education in Africa, What do we Know About Strategies that Work*. Washington DC : World Bank.
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology. (2007). *A Report on the Task Force on Affordable Secondary Education*. Nairobi: MOEST.
- Mudemb, E. V. (2013). *Causes of dropout among boys and girls from secondary schools in Ugenya district , Siaya County , Kenya*. University of Nairobi.
- Mutwol, L. C. (2013). *Socio- Economic Factors Influencing Participation and Dropout of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Marakwet District*. Kenyatta University.
- Oteyo, J. & Kariuki, M. (2009). Extent to which selected factors contribute to alcohol and cigarette use among public day secondary schools male students: A case of Nakuru municipality, Kenya 1344. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 4(6), 327–333.
Retrieved from <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-70349126356&partnerID=40&md5=223521299a226a593018caa16c458e94>
- Parr, A. (2013). Academic Achievement Motivation and High School Dropout: An Integrative Model Academic Achievement Motivation and High School Dropout.
- Pharris-Ciurej, N., Hirschman, C., & Willhoft, J. (2012). The 9th grade shock and the high school dropout crisis. *Social Science Research*, 41(3), 709–30.
doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2011.11.014
- Ramsey, (2012). *Insight from Modeling can Address Controversial Observations*. Auckland Bio-Engineering Institute. The University of Auckland; New Zealand
- Republic of Kenya (2013). *The Basic Education Act 2013 No:14 of 2013, Nairobi*
- Republic of Kenya (2014). *Kilungu Sub-county secondary schools enrolment* Kilungu:Government Printers
- Saliwanchik-Brown, C. (2009). From K-GED: Maine teenagers describe social, emotional, and relational factors and conditions involved in their decisions to drop out and complete with a GED 1188. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*.
- Siddhu, G. (2011). Who makes it to secondary school? Determinants of transition to secondary schools in rural India. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31(4), 394–401.
- Smith, M. C. (2011). Which in- and out-of-school factors explain variations in learning across different socio-economic groups? Findings from South

- Symeou, L. Martínez-González, R.-A., & Álvarez-Blanco, L. (2012). Dropping out of high school in Cyprus: do parents and the family matter? *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 19(1), 113–131. doi:10.1080/02673843.2012.717899
- The Standard Newspaper, Nov 8th, 2013. *More Boys Dropping Out of School Than Girls*
- The Standard Newspaper, May 29th, 2014. *Alarming Boy Child Drop-Out Rate Than Girls in Sampled Counties.*
- Wang, M., & Fredricks, J. A. (2013). The Reciprocal Links Between School Engagement , Youth Problem Behaviors, and School Dropout During Adolescence, 00(0), 1–16. doi:10.1111/cdev.12138
- White House Secretariat Office Report. (2010) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-cose-garden>
- World Bank. (2004). *Kenya Free Education Support Project*. Retrieved from www.narag.org/db
- Vision, (2030). *The Popular Version pg 16. Flagship Projects for Education and Training.*