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Full Length Research Paper

Home-based Factors for Students' Dropout in Public Secondary Schools in Itilima District, Simiyu Region-Tanzania

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed at exploring specific home-based factors for students' dropout in public secondary schools in Itilima District, Simiyu Region-Tanzania. The study was guided by expectancy theory. The study employed a mixed approach and a convergent parallel design. The study involved 104 participants including 3 WEO, 3 heads of school, 18 teachers, 18 teachers and 62 students. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews and document checklists were used to collect data. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that poverty, ignorance of some parents, parents' attitude, peer influence, family conflicts and separation, distance from home to school, early marriage and agricultural activities and livestock keeping were among the home-based factors for students' dropout. The study concluded that most of the public secondary schools are facing students' dropout of the school due to home-based related factors. Therefore, the study recommends that to reduce the problem of students dropping out of school, the government should build hostels and parents be sensitized on the importance of educating their children.

Keywords: Home-based factors, students' dropout

INTRODUCTION

Education is regarded as a significant tool toward achieving the development of any nation as well as individual achievements (HakiElimu, 2015). Furthermore, education is the means to develop an individual's full potential and personality, physical and mental abilities, and preparing individuals to be responsible members of society (United Nations, 1989). Therefore, education involves the development of all abilities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his duties.

In third world countries, education is regarded as a tool for achieving social transformation, thus vital in changing an individual to recognize his or her roles in the society and the world in general (Carnoy and Samoff, 1990).

In Sub Saharan African countries, education is considered a major force in achieving economic growth and development (Galabawa and Narman, 2004). Education has the power to change a life of a person as well as the whole society. This is because when a person is educated he or she becomes an active member of society. Hence, they will participate in the ongoing changes and development in society.

In considering that education is a vital tool for the development of an individual and the nation. The United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights pointed out education as one of the basic human rights which means that every individual has the right to access to education (UNICEF, 2015).

In achieving the United Nations' goal is where the education for all (EFA), emerged. Tanzania is among the countries which accepted the objectives of EFA, by expanding and investing in education starting with primary education to reduce poverty (Wedgwood, 2005).

Despite the international efforts to universalize education, dropout is still a challenge of EFA all over the world. This is because, despite the increase in enrolment, many students are said to drop out of school every year (UNESCO, 2015). Students' dropout is a situation that occurs when a student leaves school before completion of a program he or she was taking (Ajaja, 2012).

EFA Global Monitor Report (2015), estimates show 57 million pupils and 61 million lower secondary adolescents dropped out of school in 2015. The report elaborates that in every 3 students in low and middle-income countries, 1 failed to complete lower secondary education in 2015 as a result of dropout (UNESCO, 2015).

Students' dropout can be influenced by different factors such as school factors, socio-cultural factors and home-based factors. In India, the problem of student dropout is big due to the factors identified by the researcher which include financial problem, death of parents are the common causes which increase students' dropout in school (Latif et al., 2015). On the other hand, (Sateesh and Sekher, 2014) added that long distance from home to school, early marriage, schooling cost, and household work were the factors for student dropout in India. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of students' dropout in school remains a problem in the progress of education in India. Sadly, the millennium year had come and gone, yet the UPE goal is not yet achieved.

Likewise, the problem of student dropout has been in Nigeria for a long time even before their independence in 1960 (Ajaja, 2012). In his study found that poverty, immoral relationship among students, early marriage and parents' illiterate was the factors for students' dropout. Hence, the students' dropout contributed to the increase of large numbers of school-aged children that are out of school (UNICEF, 2012).

Similarly, in Ghana, student dropout has become a serious problem especially in rural areas (Adam et al., 2016). The study revealed that poverty, and child labor, sickness, early marriage, death of parents, and long-distance from home to school were the factors for high students' dropout. As a result, the students dropped in Ghana contributed to the increase of unemployed youth as well as the increase of crime in the society.

Moreover, the high school dropout rate remains a big challenge for Uganda's education sector as reported by (Musimenta, 2018). In her study, the researcher found that the death of parents, poverty, parent education level and early marriage were the factors that lead to students' dropout. However, the study by (Nabugoomu, 2019) demonstrates that students' dropout in rural areas is high compared to urban areas.

The researcher indicated poor attitude towards education, child labor, lack of school meals, and long-distance from home to school as the factors that cause high students' dropout in rural Uganda.

In Tanzania, students' dropout in secondary school is still a problem (URT, 2010). Moreover, the study by Chuwa (2018) demonstrated early marriage, distance from home to school, poverty, child labor, and polygamy as the major factors which influence high students' to dropout in Geita Region. Similarly, Tanzania Youth Vision Association (2017) emphasizes this arguing that, early pregnancy, forced marriage, a long distance from home to school, domestic activities and poverty were being the factors that contributed to girls' school dropout in Dodoma, Singida, Lindi, and Pwani. The danger associated with a higher rate of students' continuing to dropout is that it increases economic dependence and crime in the society (Rutakinikwa, 2016).

However, the government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Education made an effort to increase access to secondary education in Tanzania, whereby the Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) was introduced to reduce secondary school students' dropout (HakiElimu, 2017). Despite the efforts made by the Tanzanian government in increasing secondary school accessibility and addressing dropout, it is still an issue and a major barrier in achieving the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Referring to the study conducted in Tanzania in 2018, the statistics show a total of 3.9 million children dropped out of school, whereby in 2015, 2.2 million students dropped out of school at the primary age of 7 – 13 and 1.7 million students dropped out of school at 14 -17 (UNICEF, 2018).

Data from the Presidents' Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) known as Basic Education Statistics of 2017 and 2018 shows that the dropout rate at secondary schools had increased by 2.8 percent to 65,700 in 2018 from 63,900 in 2017 (Letea, 2019). Furthermore, a report by URT (2018) shows dropout in primary and secondary school students persist which becomes a challenge in achieving the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) and Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) programme. This shows that the problem of students' dropout of school persists in Tanzania.

The establishment of community secondary schools in Tanzania, better known as ward schools was an advantage to all children in Tanzania including Itilima district (URT, 2004). Despite all efforts made by the government of Tanzania, the problem of secondary school students' dropout remains a challenge in Itilima district.

Data from the statistics office in Itilima District shows that 1535 students were enrolled to join form one in 2014, but only 1029 managed to complete form four; 1457 students were enrolled to join form one in 2015, but only

941 managed to complete form four 2018; 2144 students were enrolled to join form one in 2016 but only 1351 managed to complete form four in 2019. Out of the students enrolled in 2014, 2015 and 2016, only 3321 students managed to complete form four (Itilima District Statistics Office, 2019).

Literature review

This section presents several studies that have been done by different scholars relating to home-based factors contributing to students' dropout in secondary schools.

Parent attitude

A study by Dinesh and Chandrashekar (2015) conducted a study on parents' attitudes and perceptions toward primary education in rural Karnataka, India. In the results, it was observed that parents believed that investing in education is a waste of money and time. So they encouraged their children to engage in different activities that will contribute to the family income. This led students to drop out of school and start engaging in performing different activities that will give money to contribute to the family income. The finding conquers with Samal (2012) who conducted a study on parent's attitudes toward the schooling and education of children in Rourkela, India. Equally, the researcher found out that most of the parents consider investing in education as a wastage of money and time since the outcome was unclear and unimportant.

In Tanzania, Mwandunga (2016) conducted a study on parents' attitudes toward girls' access to secondary education in Tabora, Tanzania. From the study, it was observed that parents do not see any importance in educating girls because they believe that she is not a permanent member of the family; so, if you educate her, all resources will be taken to her husband. Also, educating girls was considered a risk because sometimes girls would fail to complete secondary school because of early pregnancy which will bring losses in the family due to the money spent on the school fees and other expenses.

Long distance from home to school

Shahidul and Karim (2015) conducted a study on factors contributing to school dropout among girls in Malaysia. It was discovered that the long distance from home to school was among the factors contributing to female students' dropout at school. The distance from home to school discouraged girl students to attend school because it makes them tired as a result they will fail to capture what will be taught; hence, they will drop out of school. Also, parents were afraid of the safety of their children because they used to travel long distances to school. This goes hand in hand with Cheneket (2017) on the study about factors influencing dropout rate among boys in public primary schools in Sabot, Kenya. The researcher discovered that long-distance was among the factors which lead the student to dropout in Sabot-Kenya. However, Mosha (2014) conducted a study on factors that cause dropout in secondary schools in Meru District - Tanzania. The researcher discovered that a long distance from home to school contributed to dropout of secondary school students. Schools are located far from home. Consequently, more time is wasted on traveling to school. This situation makes students tired; hence, they fail to capture what is taught at school. As a result, they decide to drop out of school.

Household size

Sateesh and Sekher (2014) conducted a study on factors leading to school dropouts in India. The researcher observed that household size was among the factors contributing to students' dropout. It was observed that dropout was higher among the households having six and more children compared to households having one or two children. Equally, Rasmy, Selvadurai and Sulehan (2017) conducted a study about social-environmental determinants of students' dropout in the plantation settlement in Malaysia. In their study, household size was among the factors contributing to the students' dropout. It is true that the family with larger household sizes, their parents cannot afford to provide the school requirements; as a result, the students may decide to drop out of school. The finding concurs with Mike et al. (2016) on the study about socioeconomic determinants of primary school dropout in Uganda. The researcher found that household size was a factor that contributed to the students dropping out.

Moreover, Mutinda (2013) conducted a study on Institutional and Home-based factors influencing students' dropout in day secondary schools in Kathiani District, Kenya. The researcher found out that household size was a contributing factor to students' dropout in secondary schools. This is because when the household size is large, parents may not be in a position to provide school requirements to every child. Hence some students from large household families are highly likely to drop out of school. It true that children especially from large household families' dropout of school to work for income to support their big families.

Household income

Shah et al. (2019) conducted a study on the causes of the dropout rate at the primary level in Pakistan. The researcher observed that the low income of the parents

caused the students to drop out of school. The researcher reported that 88% of the respondents said that the students who dropped out were coming from the family with low income. This makes it difficult in providing learning materials to the students. Similarly, Sarker, Wu and Hossin (2019) did a study on the economic effect of school dropout in Bangladesh. The researcher reported lower household income was the main reason for students' dropout in schools. The students from low household income were reported to drop out of school because their parents fail to provide learning material which leads them to drop out of school. Therefore, low income of the household influences the students' dropout. This is because parents face difficulty in providing school requirements to their children, hence they decide to quit school.

Nevertheless, Chuwa (2018) conducted a study examining the causes and effects of rural students' dropout in secondary schools in Geita, Tanzania. The researcher found out that poverty was among the factors which caused students to drop out of school in Geita. It was reported that parents failed even to buy food for their children. This made most of the students decide to engage in different activities to get the basic needs, this accelerated students' dropout of school. Equally, Masamalo (2017) researched persistent dropout in rural community secondary schools in Makete District. The researcher found that poverty was the main factor for students' dropout in Makete district. He reported that only a few students managed education expenses such as buying school uniforms, exercise books, textbooks, pens and food at school. Therefore, most of the students indeed dropout of school because their families are not able to provide school requirements as well as basic needs. This makes them dropout of school and start engaging in different activities so as they can get money.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed approach and convergent parallel design. The design allowed quantitative and qualitative data collection simultaneously then analyzed separately and merged for comparison and interpretation of the results as proposed by (Creswell, 2012). The target population of this study consisted of teachers, heads of school, WEO, parents and students. This population was considered adequate to provide key information related to the objective of the study.

Sampling procedure and sample size

Both probability and non-probability sampling were employed in this study. The study sampled 18 teachers, 3 heads of school, 3 WEO, 18 parents and 62 students which make a total of 104 respondents.

Data collection techniques

In this study questionnaires, interviews and document review were employed.

Data analysis

Quantitative data from the survey was analyzed using SPSS version 20 software. The analysis was done with descriptive statistics mode which computed frequencies and tables. While the qualitative analysis was done through content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings on home-based factors for students' dropout in public secondary schools in Itilima District, Simiyu Region-Tanzania. The finding on the demographic variables of the respondents is shown in (Table 1). Table 1 shows the gender of the teachers who participated in the study. In this study, the gender of teachers was not balanced because of the shortage of female teachers in the selected schools for the study. That is why only one (1) female teacher was included in the study. This shows that there is unequal distribution of teachers basing on their gender. So there is a need for the government to consider equal distribution basing on gender when employing teachers.

Nevertheless, the study categorized work duration in years from which respondents were asked to identify his or her group. The groups were 5 years and below, 6 years to 11 years, 12 years to 16 years and 17 years and above. The findings showed that 33.3 percent of the respondents had the duration of 5 years and below, 55.6 percent of the respondents had been there for 6 to 11 years, 5.6 percent of the respondents had been there for 12 to 16 years while 5.6 percent of the respondents had been there for 17 years and above. This indicated that a large number of teachers had experience with the area enough to provide the researcher with reliable information on home-based factors contributing to students' dropout of school.

Table 2 shows the gender of the students who participated in the study. In this study, the gender of students was balanced as they were selected through stratified random sampling, whereby, they were divided into stratums basing on their gender and randomly selected to ensure the equal representation of each gender.

Moreover, the respondents of this study were from public secondary schools whereby students from form one to form four were involved. Table 2 presents the class level of the respondents whereby 29.0 percent of the respondents were in form two, 25.8 percent were in form one, 21.0 percent were in form three and 24.2 percent of respondents were in four. This shows that the

Table 1: Demographic information of the teachers.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	17	94.4
Female	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0
Working Experience		
5 years and below	6	33.3
6 -11 years	10	55.6
12-16 years	1	5.6
17 years and above	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

Table 2: Demographic Information of the Students.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	31	50.0
Female	31	50.0
Total	62	100.0
Grade level		
Form one	16	25.8
Form two	18	29.0
Form three	13	21.0
Form four	15	24.2
Total	62	100.0

Table 3: Gender of the Parents.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9	50.0
Female	9	50.0
Total	18	100.0

number of respondents in form two was higher compared to form one, two, three and four.

Table 3 shows the gender of parents who participated in the study whereby 9 parents were male and 9 parents were female. This shows that there was equal representation of parents basing on their gender and the selected parents were ready to provide the information on home-based factors contributing to students' dropout of school to the researcher.

Home-based factors for students' dropout in public secondary schools

In this objective, the researcher aimed at exploring the specific home-based factors for students' dropout of public secondary schools at Itilima District, Simiyu Region. The researcher collected information through a series of questions provided on the questionnaires to teachers, parents and students and interviews with WEO and heads of school. The responses were analyzed, interpreted and discussed in the subsection. The researcher started by testing the agreement of participants on the home-based factors for students' dropout. The responses are tabulated in (Tables 4, 5 and 6) and then qualitatively the researcher administered open-ended questions, interviews and document reviews. Table 4 elaborates on the home-based factors contributing to students' dropout of public secondary school. The table indicates that the majority of the respondents 77.8 percent agreed that long distance from home to school encourages students to dropout, whereas, 16.7 percent of the respondents' responses were moderate and 5.6 percent disagreed. This is an indication that students' dropout of school because of the long distance from home to school.

In the same manner, 66.7 percent of teachers agreed that parents' attitudes contribute to students' dropout while 16.7 percent were moderate and 16.7 percent of the respondents disagreed. This indicates that when parents have a negative attitude toward secondary education their children will drop out of school. Moreover, 61.1 percent of the respondents agreed with the household income as one of the factors leading to students' dropout, 16.7 percent of the respondents were

Table 4: Number (in frequency) and percentage of Teachers' Response on the Home-based Factors for Students Dropout (n= 18).

Variables	1 F %	2 F %	3 F %	4 F %	5 F %
Long-distance from home to school encourages students to drop out	1(5.6)	- -	3(16.7)	7(38.9)	7(38.9)
Parents attitudes contribute to students dropout	1(5.6)	2(11.1)	3(16.7)	5(27.8)	7(38.9)
Household income leads to students dropout	1(5.6)	3(16.7)	3(16.7)	7(38.9)	4(22.2)
Family size contributes to students dropout	- -	3(16.7)	3(16.7)	8(44.4)	4(22.2)
Family separation leads to students dropout	1(5.6)	2(11.1)	3(16.7)	2(11.1)	10(55.6)

Source: Field Data (2020)
KEY: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 =Moderate, 4 =Agree, 5 =Strongly Agree, F= Frequency

Table 5: Number (in frequency) and Percentage of Students Response on the Home-based Factors for Students Dropout (n= 62).

Variables	1 F %	2 F %	3 F %	4 F %	5 F %
Economic activities such as agriculture, livestock keeping, and entrepreneurs may lead to students dropout	2(3.2)	8(12.9)	2 (3.2)	32(51.6)	18 (29.0)
Long-distance from home to school contributes to students dropout	9(14.5)	9 (14.5)	2(3.2)	22(35.5)	20 (32.3)
Separation of family leads to students dropout	6 (9.7)	16(25.8)	- -	14(22.6)	26 (41.9)
Parents attitude toward secondary education contributes to students dropout	10(16.1)	12(19.4)	- -	21(33.9)	19 (30.6)
Failure to be given school requirements lead to students dropout	4 (6.5)	2 (3.2)	-	21(33.8)	35 (56.5)

Source: Field Data (2020)

Table 6: Number (in frequency) and Percentage of Parents' Responses on the Home-based Factors for Students' dropout (n= 18).

Variables	1 F%	2 F%	3 F%	4 F%	5 F%
Failure to provide school requirements leads to the students drop out	-	-	-	9 (50.0)	9 (50.0)
Separation of family contributes to students drop out	-	1 (5.6)	3 (16.7)	9 (50.0)	5 (27.8)
Long-distance from home to school leads to students dropout	-	1 (5.6)	3 (16.7)	6 (33.3)	8 (44.4)
Unfriendly home environment contribute to the students' dropout	-	-	-	11 (61.1)	7 (38.9)
Household size leads to the students' dropout	-	1 (5.6)	3 (16.7)	9 (50.0)	5 (27.8)
A negative attitude toward secondary education contributes to the students' dropout	-	-	-	12 (66.7)	6 (33.4)
Household income leads to the students' dropout	-	-	-	7 (33.4)	11 (61.1)

Source: Field Data (2020)

moderate and 22.3 percent of the respondents disagreed. This shows that most of the respondents agreed that household income has a greater impact on the students' dropout. This is because parents are unable to provide school requirements to their children. Hence, the students decide to drop out of school.

Nevertheless, 66.6 percent of the respondents agreed that family size leads to the students' dropout, 16.7 percent of the respondents were moderate and 16.7 percent of the respondents disagreed. This shows that most teachers strongly agreed that family size contributes to students' dropout. Most of the students' dropout of school because they came from big families whereby parents or guardians are unable to provide basic needs to their family, so they decide to drop out of school to work for income to support their families. Furthermore, 66.7 percent of the respondents agreed that family separation leads to students' dropout, 16.7 percent of the respondents were moderate and 16.7 percent of the respondents disagreed. This implied that most of the respondents strongly agreed that family separation hurts students. Table 5 shows the majority of the students at 80.6 percent agreed with the statement that economic activities influenced the students to dropout of public secondary school, 3.2 percent of the respondents were moderate and 16.1 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that economic activities influenced the students' dropout. This means that when students are involved in economic activities like agriculture and livestock keeping, it will contribute to their dropout of school because they will concentrate on those activities.

However, the majority of the respondents at 67.8 percent agreed with the statement that long distance from home to school contribute to the students' dropout, 3.2 percent of the respondents were moderate and 29 percent of the respondents disagreed. This implies that distance from home to school influences students to dropout because students were using to walk for a long time going to school. After all, the school was far from where they lived. So they used to walk 11 kilometers, 12 kilometers and others 13 kilometers when going to school. This makes them tired; hence, they will drop out of school.

Besides, 64.5 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that the separation of the family influenced the students' dropout and 35.5 percent disagreed. This means that when a parent is divorced, it is difficult for the students to continue with studies because they are separated from the one who was insisting them to attend

school he or she is not living with them. So it will be easy for them to dropout the school. Moreover, 64.5 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that parents' attitudes toward secondary education contribute to the students' dropout and 35.5 percent disagreed. This means that when parents had a negative attitude toward secondary education, their children will drop out of school because their parents will convince them to drop out of school and when the students refuse to drop out of school their parents stop providing school requirements to them.

Nevertheless, 90.3 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that failure to be given school requirements contribute to the students' dropout while 9.7 percent disagreed. This means when parents fail to provide the school requirements such as school uniforms, exercise books, pen and pencil, the students will drop out of school. For example, when a student does not have school uniform, he or she will not go to school because has nothing to wear. As a result, he or she loses interests and eventually drops out of school. Table 6 shows the response of parents on the statement that failure to provide school requirements lead to students' dropout whereby 100 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement. This means that when parents or guardians fail to provide school requirements to their children, it will be difficult for them to proceed with studies because of failure to be given school requirements.

Moreover, 77.8 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that the separation of the family contributes to the students' dropout, 16.7 percent of the respondents were moderate and 5.6 percent of the respondent disagreed. This is an indication that family separation influenced the students' dropout. On the other hand, 77.7 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that long distance from home to school leads to the students' dropout, 16.7 percent of the respondents were moderate and 5.6 percent of the respondents disagreed. This means that students' dropout was influenced by long distances from home to school because students were living far from where the school is located.

In the same manner, 100 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that unfriendly home environment influenced the students' dropout. This implies that students' dropout of school because of the unfriendly environment at home. This means that when the environment at home is not conducive, it will be impossible for the students to proceed with their studies.

Nevertheless, 77.8 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that household size leads to the students' dropout, 16.7 percent of the respondents were moderate and 5.6 percent of the respondent disagreed. This means that household size influences students to drop out of school because some parents or guardians can face difficulty in providing for school basic needs which results in the students decide to drop out of school. Besides, 100 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that negative attitudes toward secondary education contributes to the students' dropout. This means that students' dropout of school because their parents have a negative attitude toward secondary education. Furthermore, 100 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that household income leads to students' dropout. This is an indication that household income influenced students' dropout. This is true most of the students dropped out of school because of the financial challenge in families. Parents are unable to provide school requirements to their children because they don't have money. Hence, the students decide to drop out of school.

Likewise, qualitative data were gathered from participants on how home-based factors lead to the students' dropout. The finding from an open-ended questionnaire administered to teachers, parents and students, as well as an interview with the head of school and WEO, revealed that poverty, distance from home to school, ignorance of some parents, parent's attitude, early marriage, agricultural activities and livestock keeping, family conflict and separation among the home-based factors for students' dropout.

Poverty

From the findings, most of the respondents pointed out poverty as the major factor that contributed to secondary school students' dropout. Poverty was pointed out by the school heads, ward educational officers, and teachers through the interview as one of the home-based factors for secondary school students to drop out of school. Students drop out of school because their parents or guardians fail to provide basic needs as well as school requirements. For instance, one of the heads of the school said:

Poverty is the main reason that leads to students' dropout in this district where the majority of families depend much on agricultural activities and animal keeping. Agricultural activities are conducted during the rainy season and animal keeping is used for paying the bride price. Failure of parents to engage in other activities makes the students lack basic needs (23 September, 2020).

Also, a teacher from school A added, "some parents or guardians are not able to fulfill the basic needs of their children as a result children decide to quit school and look for a job to fulfill their requirement". This implies that poverty was among the factors for students' dropout in Itilima District. This means that when parents fail to fulfill providing basic needs for the students and school requirements, students tend to drop out of school. The finding was supported by Casey (2014) on a study about understanding high dropout rates in primary school education in Mozambique. The study revealed that poverty was one of the main factors which contributed

much to student dropout.

Distance from home to school

The majority of the students pointed out in the open-ended questionnaire that school distance was among the factors for students to drop out of school. Students are walking for a long time which makes them become tired and fail to capture what is taught in class. Also, it was pointed out by most interviewees such as WEO and heads of school that distance from home to school was among the factors for secondary school students to drop out of school. One of the interviewees commented, “Some of the students live far from school, so they use much time walking to school which motivates them to be truant and finally, they drop out of school”.

Basing on the finding presented, it is evident that long distances from students’ homes to where the school is located contribute much to students dropping out of school in the study area and also it can be the reason for other places. This finding correlates with the finding of Basumatary (2017) who pointed out that distance from home to school was among the factors which contribute to students’ dropout. The school was far so it was difficult for the students to walk for a long time which makes them tired and hence fail to capture what is taught in class, as a result, they decided to drop out of school.

Ignorance of some parents

From the study, it was pointed out that ignorance was among the factors contributing to the students’ dropout. It was pointed out in an open-ended questionnaire and the interview by most of the respondents. The majority of the students from school C through an open-ended questionnaire commented, “Some of the parents or guardians know nothing about the importance of education to their children; they didn’t see the importance of sending their children to school because they don’t know the outcome of education”.

Also, through interviews, one of the heads of the school said, “Some of the parents or guardians are ignorant of education they think that sending their children to school is wastage of time so it is better to stay at home. This indicates that when parents or guardians didn’t see the importance or the outcome of education, it will be possible for them to allow their children to proceed with schooling.

The finding is supported by Hailu, Kassaw and Wondimu (2019) who revealed that ignorance or lack of awareness about the future benefit of education or the outcome of education is among the factors for students’ dropout. Most of the parents convinced their children to drop out of school and start looking for income-generating jobs at an early age before completing school.

Parents’ attitude

Findings from the interview with school heads and WEO revealed that a negative attitude of parents was one of the factors for secondary school students to drop out of school. One of the interviewees said, “Parents have a negative attitude toward secondary education; they think that when the students proceed with studies they will waste their money for buying school requirements since they think that education is nothing to them”. Moreover, most of the students and teachers through open-ended questions pointed out parents’ attitude as a factor contributing to students’ dropout. One of the teachers from school C commented: Some of the family did not send their children to school even though they succeed to join secondary school; they stay at school for a short period because their parents provide school requirements for a short period and stop providing those requirements to their children because they didn’t value secondary education (23 September, 2020).

The finding from the study revealed that most of the parents or guardians in Itilima District have a negative attitude toward secondary education which contributed much to students’ dropout. The finding concurs with Dakwa et al. (2014) who found that negative attitude toward education was among the factors which contributed to the students’ dropout.

Early marriage

From the findings, early marriage was mentioned as a factor for students to drop out of school especially for girls. Most of the respondents pointed out during the interview as a factor that contributes to students dropping out in their area. One of the WEO during the interview commented, “Early marriage leads to the girls’ students to drop out of school. Some of the parents used to convince their children to drop out of school so as they can be married.” On the other hand, through interviews, one of the heads of the school said: “Some of the parents termed their girl children as a source of income through bride price. So they convince their girl children to quit school so as they can be married”. This indicates that parents or guardians believe a girl child is a source of income in the family, so it will be impossible for a girl student to complete her studies because her parents need her children to be married so as they can bride price. The finding is supported by Sigei and Tikoko (2014) on the study about the influence of home-based factors on the dropout rate of students in Kenya. The study establishes that early marriage is among the factors for the high rate of secondary school dropout in Kenya.

Agricultural activities and livestock keeping

Most of the family in the area where the researcher

conducted research depends much on agricultural activities as well as livestock keeping. From the finding, it was pointed out that agricultural activities and livestock keeping as a factor for students to drop out of school. From the interview, one of the heads of the school said, “Some of the parents during the agriculture period tell their children not to go to school so as they can help their parents’ agriculture activities”.

Also, on the other hand, the students from school A through open-ended questionnaires added, “During the farming season, some of the parents prohibit their children from attending school to help them in the agricultural activities”. Additionally, through the interview one of the interviewees commented:

Some of the parents used to tell their children not to attend school so as they can help their agricultural activities and for other parents who engage in animal keeping as well as agriculture, their male children didn’t attend school so that they could help them in grazing cattle as well as agricultural activities (23 September, 2020).

This means that when the students miss classes for three consecutive weeks, it will be impossible for those students to understand what others were taught when they were not at school. As a result, they decided to drop out of school because they face difficulty in understanding what is already taught when they were not at school. This was revealed by the researcher when reviewed the attendance register of the selected schools and found that during the agriculture period in January, February and March most of the students’ miss classes for two consecutive weeks and others for three consecutive weeks.

The finding is supported by Rutakinikwa (2016) and those of Tanzania Youth Vision Association (TYVA), (2017) who discovered non-formal duties such as agricultural, livestock keeping and entrepreneurs were among the factor for students’ dropout. This situation led to lessened concentration in studying which resulted in students’ dropout in school.

Family conflict and separation

The questionnaire was administered to teachers and continuing students from three secondary schools. From the finding, most of the respondents pointed out family conflict and separation as among the factor for students’ dropout. Also, through the interview with the WEO and head of school, it was pointed out that family conflict and separation were among the factors for students’ dropout. For instance, one of the interviewees commented, “Some of the students’ dropout of school because of family separation. As a result, they had to take the parental role of caring for their young siblings and hence they dropped out of school”. This means that family conflict and separation of the parents influences the students’ dropout of school. This is because the one who was responsible for providing the school requirement and taking care of the family is the one who decided to live, so it will be impossible for them to proceed with studies. As a result, he or she will drop out of school to take care of the young siblings.

The finding concurs with Maziku (2013) in Kahama and those of Babimpa (2018) in Uganda who observed that family separation was among the factor for students’ dropout of schools. This is true that separation of parents influences students' dropout this is because the children find themselves with no one to take care of them.

Conclusion

The study concluded that most of the public secondary schools are facing students’ dropout of the school due to home-based related factors which lead to the students dropping out. The findings in this study revealed that poverty, family conflict and separation, agricultural activities and livestock keeping, peer pressure and a negative attitude toward secondary education among parents or guardians have motivated secondary school dropout among students.

Recommendation

This study makes the following recommendations that required practical actions:

The government should provide loans to poor family to raise the standard of the family. As a result, they will be able to provide basic needs as well as school requirements to their children. Moreover, the Government and community members should struggle to establish hostels in schools. This will help to eliminate the problem of distance from home to school and enable students to concentrate more during the teaching and learning process.

Head of school, WEO, teachers and local authority leaders are required to work together in mobilizing and sensitizing the parents on the importance of educating their children. This could be done through the parents' regular meeting. This will help remove negative attitudes toward education that parents have, hence they will value education and they will encourage their children to school regularly.

Parents and guardians should provide guidance and counseling services to their children to help students to manage different problems they face. This can be achieved if the parents will be taught or given education on the importance of educating their children. Nevertheless, parents should provide full support to their children and also work hand in hand with teachers to curb the problem of truancy and enable students’ complete

school.

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