FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' ABANDONMENT OF STUDIES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF MOROGORO REGION

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Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to explore the factors influencing students' dropout in secondary schools in Tanzania using Morogoro municipality as a case study. There exist studies in Tanzania, which have explored such factors, but almost all use descriptive analysis. On contrary this study intended to examine such factors quantitatively using binary logistic regression analysis. Data were collected from students in eight secondary schools at one point in time. In each class where data were collected students were asked to name the dropped students and a follow up was made on dropped students. The same questionnaire was used to collect data from both types of students (dropped ones and continuing ones). The findings showed that parents' education level had a slight and negative influence on a student drop out while distance had a slight and positive influence on drop out. No evidence was found on the influence of a student age, but sex had influence where female students were more likely to drop than their counterparts. Other factors which contributed to drop out were a student's performance which was the most influential followed by a student's behaviour. It is recommended that parents should be educated on the importance of education to girl students by reducing the domestic chores attached to them. Furthermore, parents should work together with teachers in monitoring the behaviour of the students by checking their adherence to school assignments and activities. Lastly, the government should look into the possibility of increasing more boarding schools so as to save not only the students' travel time and travel costs, but also to save students who come from homes where there is little possibility of getting food.*

Key Words: *Abandoning, drop out, performance, behavior.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The government of Tanzania has been trying to put efforts to promote both primary and secondary education with a view of increasing   number of graduates at college and university levels. Some of the efforts which the government has done include increasing number of secondary schools especially ward schools, increasing number of science teachers, construction of laboratory rooms for ward secondary schools, provision of chairs/desks and books(especially science and mathematics books) to most of the secondary schools. However such efforts are hampered by a number of factors including students' dropping out from schools.

The government of Tanzania   is putting more efforts to avoid dropout of the students including law enforcement to force the students and their parent to ensure students are not dropping from schools. However sometimes the parents and the students collude to avoid such enforcement. This scenario is a call to approach the problem in slight different way by uncovering factors leading to students' drop out.

A number of studies have been carried out both globally and in Tanzanian to uncover factors contributing to students' 'drop out. For example in Tanzania, studies such as Khamsini (2010), Rutakanikwa (2016) and Segumba (2015) have all established a number of sound factors for a student drop out in Tanzania. Unfortunately however, almost all of these studies have established such factors descriptively relying on either teachers and /or students' opinion without using inferential statistics.

The strength of inferential analysis against descriptive analysis is quite indisputable much as inferential analysis makes the findings more applicable at population level unlike the findings using descriptive analysis. This study intended to model causes of students' drop out in secondary schools of Morogoro region of Tanzania using binary logistic regression, unlike previous studies which simply used descriptive analysis. The use of a binary logistic model would further inform us of the relative importance of each factor in contributing to students' drop out unlike the case in descriptive analysis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

A number of studies have been done to uncover factors influencing students' drop out both in Tanzania and globally. Keraita and Gakunga (2016) found that social economic factors including family background and individual students' factors such as age, gender and school factors including facilities, sanitation and fees were the main factors

influencing students drop out in Masaba north district-Kenya. Sigei and Betty (2014), studied causes of students' drop out in Co-Educational Public Day Secondary Schools in Rongai District, Nakuru County in Kenya. Using descriptive analysis, the study established that highest causes of dropouts were early marriages and teenage pregnancy. Soares et al. (2015) using logit model and Cox proportional hazards regression model on national household survey data in Minas Gerais, Brazil, established that students drop out is influenced by among other factors , difficulties faced with subjects.

Shahidul and Zehadul Karim (2015),established conceptual model for girls drop out in which the study identified economic factors, household factors, school level factors and cultural factors as contributing to girls drop out. As for economic factors parents' investment on female students is biased, while on household factors, domestic chores occupy female students' time. For school factors teachers attitudes on female students, distance to school and lack of feminine facilities in schools contributes to the problem. Similar factors were established by Seka (2012), who did a study in day secondary schools in Kasarani district at Nairobi County, Kenya and found that, despite the government efforts to provide equal access for boys and girls, the latter are disadvantaged due to socio-economic, socio-cultural and school based factors. Likewise, Magwa and Ngara (2015) established descriptively that poverty, cultural preference in educating boys , teen pregnancy and early marriages are the main factors influencing girls drop out in Masvingo district of Zimbabwe.

Apart from studies done globally, in Tanzania, a number of studies have also addressed the issue of students' dropout in schools. Khamsini (2010) using descriptive analysis based on the respondents' opinion, identify parent low incomes, single-parent families, sibling's education level, distance from home to school and a student academic performance as main factors responsible for students' drop out in Kisarawe district of Pwani region of Tanzania. Similarly Rutakanikwa (2016) indicated descriptively, that parent's economic situation, culture and school factors lead to girls' dropout from secondary schools in Bagamoyo district of Pwani region in Tanzania. Also Segumba (2015) studied factors influencing students drop out from primary schools in Temeke district and established descriptively that factors contributing to students' drop out include overcrowded students, lack of facilities such as textbooks and chairs, poor students performance, students humiliation by teacher such as calling them names, distance from home to school, corporal punishment, parents education level, gender of the student, poor school management and poor teaching approaches.

Similarly Ouma (2017), establishes descriptively that factors influencing students' drop out in gold mining communities of Tanzania include loss of interest to education alongside several factors such as migration, school absenteeism, death of both parents, and separation of parents, community's poor perception to education, lack of school necessities, peer pressure, family obligations, early pregnancies and early marriages. Likewise Kalinga (2013), assessed factors leading to students drop out in three regions of Dar salaam, Mbeya and Kilimanjaro using descriptive analysis and concluded that many factors influence a student drop out including lack of awareness by both students and parents, poverty, divorce, polygamy, early marriages, parents death, and poor family planning.

Summary of literature review

It is evident that from the review of literature that there are many factors that contributes to students' dropout. Studies done both globally and in Tanzania have well established such factors. However, for Tanzania most of these studies have been done descriptively without using inferential statistics which is a key to sound statistical findings. This study intend to do a similar study by modelling the causes to a student drop out. By so doing this study would hopefully come out with similar factors, but it would also justify them scientifically and possibly discern their relative importance.

3. METHODOLOGY:
3.1 Research design and Area of study

The research design was a cross sectional design where students were interviewed once in time. The research was focused on finding out factors leading to students' dropout in secondary schools. The study was conducted in Morogoro municipal in Tanzania involving public secondary schools which were found in Morogoro municipal. Eventually the study focused on eight secondary schools   which were selected at random from a list of public secondary schools within Morogoro Municipality.

3.2 Sample size and Sampling Procedure

The minimum sample size as established by the sample size formulae for proportions was 384. However for convenience purpose the study opted to have 448 students out of 8 secondary schools. Therefore the sampling scheme was a two stage cluster sampling in the sense that the first stage of sampling involved selecting 8 secondary schools randomly from a total of 40 secondary schools found in Morogoro Municipality. A second stage of sampling involved selecting 56 students from each school so as to get 448 students. For each school, 56 students were picked out of which 28 were continuing students and 28 were the dropouts. In each class (I-IV), 7 continuing students were randomly taken and the class was asked to name 7 students who have dropped from the school. However, for some

schools the number of drop out students could not reach 7 in either class III or IV and thus majority of dropouts were taken from class I and II to make the number reach 28.

3.3 Methods of data capture

The dissemination of questionnaire was a major means of data collection. However where necessary interview was used to clarify some of the answered questions. This was done for both continuing students and those who dropped from school.

3.4 Data analysis

Data were processed and summarized using SPSS and later analyzed using binary logistic regression. The binary logistic regression was used because the response variable was binary ("1" if a student dropped out and "0" if the student did not drop out).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

4.1 Characteristics of respondent

The study involved 448 students both still in schools and those dropped out of schools. 233 (52%) were aged between 13 and 16 years while 215 (48%) were aged between 17 and 20 years. In terms of   sex, 251 (56%) were female students and 197 were male students. In terms of performance 269 (60%) of the students had relatively good performance (average above 50%) while 179 (40%) had poor performance. Discipline wise 345 (77%) had good discipline (i.e. adherence to schools laws and school activities) and 103 (23%) had poor discipline. 228 (51%) were leaving near the school while 220 (49%) were far away from the schools. 211 (47%) students had a parent/guardian/ a family member who had a secondary education or above while 237 (53%) had no any relative in their family who had acquired such level of education.

4.2 Results from Binary Logistic Regression on Factors Influencing Students' Drop Out

Table 1 shows results from binary logistic regression. As shown under the table the model is highly significant (p=0.000) and that the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test which shows an agreement between the actual data and the predicted ones does not reject the null hypothesis of agreement. The Nagelkerke pseudo R square measures shows that explanatory variables in their totality do reasonably explain the variation in the dependent variable (61%). Even Cox & Snell R square does not show that a model has poor explanation of the dependent variable (46%). All these justify the use of the model results to explain reasons for students drop out.

Table1: Binary Logistic Regression Results on Factors Influencing Students' Drop Out

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
	Sex	.671	.328	4.189	1	.041	1.956
	Age	-.114	.120	.894	1	.344	.893
	Behavior -3.368		.794	17.998	1	.000	.034
	Performance -2.688		.379	50.308	1	.000	.068
	Distance	.541	.328	2.720	1	.099	1.718
	Parent's education	-.557	.323	2.970	1	.085	.573
	Constant	7.689	2.139	12.920	1	.000	2.184E3

Chi-square=196.677, Cox & Snell R square =0.459, Nagelkerke R =0.612, p=0.000
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test (Chi-square   = 8.284, df=8, p-value=   .406)

Table 1 shows that a student performance has a highly significant (p=0.000) and negative influence (-2.688) on a student drop out. Performance of a student was coded "0" for poor performance and "1" for good performance implying that a student with good performance is unlikely to dropout compared with the student with poor performance. The respondents argued that most of those who dropout, drop due to poor performance. Most of the droppers find the schools to be worthless when they observe a persistent poor performance for a two or three year's period. The same observation was made by Kalinga (2013). The performance of a student apart from being significant has the highest Wald value (50) indicating that it is the most influential factor for students' drop out

Although not captured by this study an influence of a student's performance on drop out could be also reflecting an influence of all other factors contributing to drop out through a student's performance. A student's poor performance might be reflecting, lack of facilities such as textbooks and chairs, student's humiliation by teacher such calling them names, mockery, corporal punishment, poor school management and poor teaching approaches which also may encourage a student's drop out (Segumba, 2015). Similarly as pointed by Ouma (2017), a student drop out could be caused by loss of interest to education owing to factors such as relocation, death of both parents, and parting

of parents, community's poor awareness to education, lack of school necessities, peer pressure, family responsibilities, early pregnancies and early marriages, factors which also contribute to a student's poor performance.

The study also examined the influence of a student behavior and performance on a student drop out. Table 1 shows that the influence of a student behavior to student dropout is highly significant (p=0.000) and having a negative influence (-3.368). It is in fact the second most influential variable on students' dropout based on the Wald value. Behavior of a student was coded "1" for good manners "and "0" for bad manners which means that a student with good manners is unlikely to drop out compared to the one with bad manners. Bad manners could make a student drop out easily because he/she becomes much occupied with non-school activities such as smoking, drugs abuse, and prostitution and therefore lack time to study and concentrate on education. Lehr et al. (2004) in their study of dropouts in Northern Ghana found that students who drop out are more likely to have exhibited behavioral and disciplinary problems in school. For example, child behavior researchers in America observed that early-school-age children with early assault conduct problems (aggressive behavior in early years of life) are at high risk for school dropout as well as substance abuse, violence, and delinquency in their later years.

The educational level of parents or guardians as indicated in Table 1 had slightly significant (p=0.085) and negative influence (-557) in the contribution of student dropout in secondary school. Education variable was coded "1" for educated parents and "0" for non-educated parents, implying that students whose parents were educated are unlikely to drop out from schools compared to students whose parents are not educated. This is so because educated parents tend to take care of the children school development, by providing proper studying environment like providing books, checking assignments and providing other school facilities. According to Kalinga (2013), a student's performance in school is directly affected by his family history, including divorce, stress, and parental behavior. The most important aspects is the education level of the student's parents and their aspirations for their child. If neither of the two parents has finished high school, it is easy to see why the student would drop out himself because none of the parents would care.

Again results in Table 1 show that the influence of distance to student dropout is slightly significant far distance which tends to suggest that the further the distance the school is from where the student lives the more likely he/she going to drop out of school. Distance influence students' drop out because they get tired while travelling to schools. But also on their way to school they can easily get spoiled by bad guys. According to Boyle et al (2002) and Porteus et al (2000) as quoted by Kalinga (2013) distance to school is an important factor in educational access, particularly for rural populations. This assessment is especially true for developing countries where transport is still a problem for most developing countries.

Table 1 shows that the influence of sex is significant (p=0.041) to student dropout and has a positive influence (0.671). Gender variable was coded as "0" for male and "1" for female, meaning that according the results, female students are the most droppers. There could a lot of reasons causing this but most likely due to early marriage and/or early pregnancies which forces them out of schools**.** Hekela (2014) has identified various challenges regarding the investment in girl's education world wide ranging from those related to the demand for education to those related to supply. On the other side there are domestic responsibilities which force girls to drop out of school earlier than boys. These challenges are linked to high cost of girls education in that, girls perform a vast array of unpaid domestic tasks to the social norms that discourage female autonomy and hence education and to practice such as early marriage, taboos, and those harmful to sexual maturation.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

The study was sat to investigate factors influencing secondary students' dropout. A number of factors were considered, but the following turned out to be significant: parents' education, distance from school, gender, student performance and behavior. Among these the most influential factors were a students' performance and behavior. It is recommended that parents and the community in general should be educated on the importance of education to girl students by reducing the domestic chores attached to them and a wrong perception that girls are simply meant for marriage. Furthermore parents should work together with teachers in controlling the behavior of the students by checking their adherence to school assignments and activities. Lastly the government should look into the possibility of increasing more boarding schools so as to save the students' travel time and travel costs, but also to save students who comes from homes where there is little possibility of getting food.

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