



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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COMMUNITY BASED FACTORS AND EDUCATIONAL WASTAGE: A STUDY OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MBOONI WEST SUB-COUNTY, MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of community based factors on educational wastage in public secondary schools in Mbooni West Sub County, Makeni County, Kenya. Descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The target population comprised of 41 public secondary schools. Stratified technique was employed from which systematically random sampling employed produced 15 principals, 15 academic deans and 15 form three class teachers giving a total of 45 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires and document analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. From the study it was established that community based factors do influence educational wastage in public secondary schools in the Sub County. Founded on this finding, the study recommends that public secondary schools management in Mbooni West Sub County should consider community based factors since the culture of the community is a life-long attribute and at the same time likely to influence students turn out negatively as a result of the values and norms inculcated. Communities around schools should also be sensitized on their important role of supporting schools and creating a conducive environment that encourages learning and retention of learners in school.

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INTRODUCTION

The provision of education and training in any country is vital for the development of her human capital which is crucial for nation building. Nations therefore are constantly trying to address the many challenges that face the education sector which include among other issues access, quality, equity, inefficiency, cost and financing which manifest themselves in form of wastage in the education sector. Thus educators are mandated to plan and try to govern their student intakes and outputs to ensure efficiency and avoid any wastage (Ministry of Education, 2005). The Government of Kenya invests immensely every year in the education sector to provide the appropriate training to its citizens. Despite the Government's high expenditure in financing secondary education, it continues to lose money through wastage in education which manifests through dropouts, repetition and poor academic performance. Indeed Muyanga (2010) notes that the Kenyan education system has been characterized by high dropout, repetition and poor academic performance which lead to educational wastage. According to Ajayi and Mbah (2008) wastage arising from repetition and drop out is a sign of internal inefficiency in the education system.

Hornby (2001) explains that wastage is the act of losing or destroying something, especially when it has been used or dealt with carelessly. Hence wastage in education connotes inefficiency in the use of educational resources by school administrators. In other words, poor relationship of educational inputs with outputs is wastage. Education wastage creates negative performance or outcomes. Obviously, education wastage is clearly seen in the following negative attitudes; students' drop-out, carry-over of courses because of students' inability to perform as expected, hence failure to achieve, unemployment for graduates, employment without success in the area of work, brain-drain and poor utilization of educational resources such as personnel, time, physical, material and financial resources among others. Several studies have been conducted on determinants of educational wastage in the Kenyan education System. Factors such as socio economic, home based, school based and student based have been focused on and established as significant influencers of educational wastage. However, research on the influence of community based factors on educational wastage is scanty, hence, this study.

Community based factors and educational wastage: The school and the community interact closely and should

therefore work together to mold students to be responsible and dependable members of the society. However, some community factors may positively or negatively impact on students' participation in education. A study conducted by Alam (2015) in Bangladesh identified key factors of the community that affect quality of primary education as the community environment, financial position of the community, educational status of the community, communication and support given to the school and unity and cooperation exhibited amongst the community's population. From this research a parent complained that due to the community environment (availability of play station shops), many children do not go to school but watch cinema and play video games in the shops near the school, a practice which affects children learning negatively. Alam (2015) notes that good environment both inside and outside the school is necessary for ensuring quality education. Children learn from the community members. The behaviour of inhabitants of a community reflects the climate of that community and therefore community environment is important for children learning. If a community is occupied by educated people more children from that community attend school. On the other hand illiterate parents and an uneducated community send their children to work instead of school because they are not aware of the value of education. Market centres within communities with lots of entertainment activities such as cinemas and video games may also affect children's school attendance. The environment of a community is related to the availability of resources in the community. Communities with recreational facilities such as sports fields and educational facilities such as libraries may help create a supportive environment for children learning. Therefore, the environment of a community is an important element in helping to maintain quality education in schools. Communities play a crucial role in adolescent development along with families, schools, and peers. Rumberger (2008) further argued that Population characteristics of communities are associated with dropping out, but not in a straight forward manner: living in a high poverty neighbourhood is not necessarily detrimental to completing high school, but rather living in an affluent neighbourhood is beneficial to school success. This suggests that affluent neighbourhoods provide more access to community resources and positive role models from affluent neighbours.

The education status of a community influences children's school attendance, retention and completion. If neighbourhoods are uneducated, children can't study well. Some children may accompany or imitate the uneducated peers in the community. Uneducated people are not aware of the value of education thus may not support their children's education. They may also become negative role models to the children as members of the community. On the other hand, educated people are aware of the value of education and therefore support their children education (Alam, 2015). Community population can extend support and cooperation to schools in many ways. Local support is important for children's success. Community can support through participation in school management committee and parent teacher association. There should be good communication between the school and community because community communication and support has enormous potential to assist children's success. The impact of support and cooperation of a community to a school depends on the characteristics of the particular community. The characteristics of a community prepare the mind of the population to do something to enhance

children's education. Alam (2015) discovered that community members were not willing to communicate and cooperate with the schools for quality children's education. The causes of the unwillingness may be lack of faith between the community population and teachers, a lack of awareness amongst the community's population regarding their responsibilities to schools and their inability to carry these out due to their poverty and illiteracy. Some parents also perceive the school as a Government's organization which does not require parental assistance to ensure the school's success. Henderson and Mapp (2002) noted that there is a significant positive correlation between school, family, and community involvement and student success. Oftentimes, the onus for providing a well-rounded educational experience for every student falls directly on the shoulders of the school administrators, teachers, faculty and staff. However, this limited perspective overlooks the fact that much of a child's life and education occurs outside the classroom. What happens before the school day starts and after it ends can be just as important and impactful in the lives of your students as what happens during the traditional school day. This is why community engagement and involvement in schools is such an important facet of the educational process. Previous researches that focus on the contribution of community based factors on educational wastage are scanty, hence this study, and with particular focus to public schools in Mbooni West Sub County.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopted descriptive survey design as it aimed at description of state of affairs as they exist (Kombo and Tromp, 2007). Descriptive research design describes the key features of an occurrence, people, society or a target population (Chandran, 2004). This design was considered appropriate because it gives a great deal of accurate information and is appropriate for community and educational fact findings. The target population for this study comprised of all the forty one (41) public secondary schools in Mbooni West Sub County as shown through Table 1 below.

Table 1. Target Population

Schools' Category	Frequency
Girls' boarding	4
Boys' boarding	3
Mixed boarding	2
Mixed day	25
Mixed day and boarding	7
Total	41

Source: Ministry of Education, Mbooni West Sub-County (2018)

Stratified random sampling was used to select fifteen (15) schools out of forty one (41) public secondary schools that are in the sub-county. The fifteen (15) schools constituted 37% of the total number of schools. The distribution of the sample is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Population and Sample Size

School category	Population	Sample size	Percentage
Girls' boarding	4	2	50%
Boys' boarding	3	2	67%
Mixed boarding	2	2	100%
Mixed day	25	6	24%
Mixed day and boarding	7	3	43%
Total	41	15	37%

Table 3. Target Respondents

	Girls' boarding	Boys' boarding	Mixed boarding	Mixed day	Mixed day and boarding	Total
Principals	2	2	2	6	3	15
Dean/ Senior teacher	2	2	2	6	3	15
Class teachers	2	2	2	6	3	15
Total						45

From the sampled schools, respondents were sampled as indicated in Table 3. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Questionnaires were used as the main tool for collecting primary data while secondary data was obtained through document analysis. Three sets of questionnaires were used; a questionnaire for the principals, academic dean or senior teacher and class teachers.

RESULTS

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of community factors on educational wastage. Therefore respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the extent to which community based factors influenced wastage in their respective schools on a likert scale running from 1 to 5 (where 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 represented Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree respectively). Table 4 shows the descriptive analysis results.

Table 4. Community Based Factors and Educational Wastage

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Community environment	42	1.00	5.00	3.6667	1.09693
Educational status of community	42	1.00	5.00	3.5000	.83374
Communication and support by community	42	1.00	5.00	3.7857	1.02495
Valid N (listwise)	42			3.6508	0.98520

As revealed from table 4, according to the respondents of the community based factors interrogated, communication and support by community was considered to have the strongest influence on educational wastage with a mean of 3.79 (out of a maximum score of 5) and standard deviation of 1.025. This implies that community communication and support for schools has enormous potential to assist children's success in education. A community that cares about its schools creates a conducive environment for learning thus helps in improving academic performance and reducing educational wastage. A community with an unconducive environment for learning contributes to education wastage through dropouts, repetition, non enrolment and poor academic performance.

The mean score on community environment was 3.67 with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.097. Accordingly this was considered the second community based factor that influences educational wastage. Good environment outside and inside the school is necessary for ensuring quality education. Respondents cited that due to poverty some learners leave school to engage in income generating activities to support their poverty stricken families. Many of those who live under such situations engage in motor bike riding which eventually attracts other youths who are unfortunately school-going. Findings further shows that educational status of the community (with a mean of 3.500 and standard deviation of 0.834) was ranked as the third community based factor that influences educational wastage. Generally, the study findings through the composite score of mean=3.65 and standard deviation of 0.985 reveals that community based factors influenced educational wastage.

DISCUSSION

Although respondents agreed that community communication and support to schools is critical in the wellbeing of learners, some cited that the community has negative attitude towards their schools and do not support the school as expected. This finding concurs with the findings of Alam (2015) who discovered that community members were not willing to communicate and cooperate with the schools for quality children's education. The causes of the unwillingness may be lack of faith between the community population and teachers, a lack of awareness amongst the community's population regarding their responsibilities to schools and their inability to carry these out due to their poverty and illiteracy. The finding that community environment influences educational wastage is in tandem with that of Alam (2015) who noted that the behaviour of inhabitants of a community reflects the climate of that community. This implies that a community environment can positively or negatively affect learners. The finding that educational status of the community influences educational wastage supports the finding by Alam (2015) who pointed out that if a community is occupied by educated people more children are likely to attend school from that community. On the other hand illiterate parents send their children to work instead of school as they are not aware of the value of education. Overall, the study findings indicates that community based factors do influence educational wastage. In line with this finding, Alam (2015) note that community environment, financial position of the community, educational status of the community and communication and support given to schools by the community were community factors affecting educational wastage. This is further supported by research finding of Henderson and Mapp (2002) that there is a significant positive correlation between school, family and community involvement and student success.

Conclusion

From the study findings presented and discussed above it can be concluded that, indeed community based factors are significant influencers of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Mbooni West Sub County.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the study recommends that;

1. School management should consider these factors since the culture of the community is a life-long attribute and at the same time likely to influence students turn out negatively as a result of the values and norms inculcated in them. There should be deliberate efforts and strategies to communicate and share with the various stakeholders on their responsibility to support the expected positive outcomes in public secondary schools.
2. The relevant regulatory agencies (such as NEMA, Ministry of Education, local government administration

among others) should monitor, promote and ensure a conducive community environment is nurtured to minimize obstructions and interference for smooth learning. Children entertainment shops should be well regulated and controlled.

3. Community entities such as the church, community based groupings and residential associations around schools should be sensitized on their important role of supporting schools and creating a conducive environment that encourages learning and retention of learners in school.
4. Managers of schools should pursue a stakeholder involvement and participatory approach to the running of the schools. This is towards realizing their buy-in and support on strategies aimed at improving efficiency and minimizing educational wastage.

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