

Assessing factors leading to school dropout around bunda education essay

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Education is regarded as one of the keys to success and development of individuals as well as nations. This implies that children need to be educated for them to live a better life in future. However, there are many current existing problems experienced in the world of education for example, school dropout, lack of education necessities mainly in developing countries, lack of infrastructures like school blocks, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of motivation by teachers and many more. Amongst many challenges that education is facing is dropout which is major focus of the researcher's proposal. The researcher is committed to find out the factors that lead to drop out of children around Bunda area despite the primary schools and Bunda college of Agriculture they have within locality. Around Bunda area, the school dropout rate is going at a faster rate though the government of Malawi introduced the free primary school in 1994. (Kaperemera, 1994, p. 2). School dropout has been the biggest problem in the education in Malawi and other sub-Sahara African countries like Mozambique and Kenya. In Malawi, the problem is almost in every district. The problem need to be looked into and find means of fighting against it, otherwise it will continue in the years coming. In addition, the study will find ways and strategies in addressing the problem. It will also look for ways of retaining pupils in schools and mechanisms of increasing the number of pupils to go to secondary schools and to colleges as well.

A. Background information

Education started long time ago, when our parents were only told and they memorized the things taught. Education came to Africa by the Missionaries, who came with the purpose of spreading Christianity. Some of the

Missionaries were; Sir Robert Laws, David Livingstone, and Joseph Booth. Despite the introduction of education in Malawi by the early missionaries, there has been so many challenges. For instance, lack of school fees, ignorance, and shortage of teachers in some schools which led to school dropout. However, the government of Malawi in 1994 introduced free primary education for all and recruited over 22, 000 untrained teachers in order to match with the enrolment of learners in schools. Regardless of introduction of free primary education for all, the school dropout is still a problem up to date. Upon looking at the problem, the researcher wanted to find out why the problem still exists around Bunda area despite the primary schools, secondary schools, and the Bunda College of Agriculture they have within the locality. In addition, Bunda College students visit several primary schools doing their research and other school activities. Some of them teach the learners some subjects in their classrooms but all these do not motivate them to stay in school and get educated.

B. Purpose of the study

This research will be done with the aim of finding out reasons for the drop out of school in primary schools around Bunda area despite the introduction of Free Primary Education and existence of Mitundu Secondary School and Bunda College. The other aim of the study is to provide knowledge of the context in which education is provided and various ways if ensuring that learners remain in class. It will also look at what the chiefs, teachers, parents and guardians do to fight against the problem of dropout in primary schools.

C. Hypothesis

Considering the nature of the research, the following are the Hypotheses:

Lack of role models
Ignorance
Initiation ceremonies
Lack of parental care
Peer pressure
Early marriages and pregnancies
HIV/AIDS pandemic
Long distances to school
Poverty, resulting in getting employed in peoples' houses and Bunda farm
Fear of sexual abuse for girls
Inability to pay school materials.

(I) Theoretical framework. The preconditions that necessitate class retention in schools for learners are very important. There are varying requirements that contribute to a learner in order to remain in school. A variety of social or learned sources of motivation have been identified including need to affiliate with others and to explore one's surroundings. Particularly significant for students and many others is the need for achievement. For example, having enough resources like clothing, food and school materials just to mention a few. According to Abraham Maslow theory of human needs and his conception of self-actualization, states that, " significant for students and many others is the need for achievement". Maslow proposed two major types of motivation for learners to continue with school and these are; deficiency and growth needs. (Lefrancois, 2007, p. 358) Deficiency needs include physical essentials such as food, rest and safety, alongside with social needs such a sense of belonging, worth, and esteem. According to Maslow, growth needs become prominent when deficiency needs have been largely satisfied. (Faw, 2007, p. 101) Most learners drop out of school due to lack of some needs like enough food, clothing, lack of school materials and many more. Another theory complementing on the concept of needs for learners to stay in school is that of Vygotsky which states that, " children develop more

systematic, logical and rational concepts as a result of dialogue with a skilled helper. In this theory other people and language play key roles in a child's cognitive development.(Santrock, 2007, p. 101) This means that parents or guardians and all other people who are close to the child have a role to play so that the child cannot dropout of school because of some problems he or she is facing at school and at home as well.

D. Significance of the study

The findings of the proposed study will provide educators and other decision makers with information concerning what learners believe are the attributes to their drop out of school. The information will help in improving the already existing suggested solutions to the problem. This will also help in the education sector in advancing the quality of education in the country.

E. Limitations of the study

Some of the limitations of the study are money, time, and availability of data. As a student at a college, the schedule for the researcher is always busy and tight. The necessary information will not be gathered because time will be enough. In addition, money will be a problem because the research will need it for transport and also for communication with some participants through phone calls, printing and photocopying questionnaires. Lastly, the data will not be accurately provided for fear of unknown and parents which can affect the findings negatively.

(i) Delimitation

The researcher will not hold a debate or a group discussion in order to find the reasons for drop out in order to avoid unnecessary answers like languages which are not accepted publically in our culture.

E. Operational definitions

In this study the following terms will apply: Pupils will mean learners from standard one to eight. Teachers shall mean all teachers teaching standard 1 to 8 Guardian will mean all parents with children learning at schools under study.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Every child has the human right to a basic education. Following the elections in 1994, Malawi introduced Free Primary education for all in order to deal with the problem of dropout, since the government thought that many pupils dropped out of school due to lack of school fees. The school population of 1.9million suddenly rose by 70% to 3.2million. In order to staff our school, the government recruited 22,000 untrained teachers and provided them with an intensive two week "Teaching Skills" orientation. (Student teachers' handbook 1) During that time, over half of our 50,000 teachers were not certified but over 10,000 started Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Program (MIITEP) The new two year Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Program (MIITEP) course has been designed to provide untrained teachers with formal training to certification. (Student teachers' handbook 1) Besides introducing the Free Primary for all, still pupils drop out

of school for various reasons. However, there are various researches done by different individuals in the area of school dropout. These have brought huge information necessary and essential to understand the practice in order to find ways of eliminating it. The research was and is still conducted in area of school dropout. This chapter reviews the related literature, and it is divided into sections. The first section presents an overview of the factors influencing the dropout and retention, the second section focuses on some patterns or precursors to dropping out. The third section discusses the examples of good practice around dropout.

A. Factors Influencing Dropout and Retention.

Based on Hunt Frances in Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity (CREATE), came up with various factors for dropping out of school and Retention. The factors include; household income and financial circumstances, household contexts and motivation, health, social and political contexts, supply of schools, the role of school in dropping out like school quality, processes and practices.(i). Household income and financial circumstances. This is an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. An example of upfront costs is school fees and hidden costs include uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Household income is linked to a range of factors, for example, when children start school, how often they attend whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop out.(Croft, 2002, p. 87-88) There is a link between poverty and dropping out from school.(Birdsall et al, 2005; Boyle et al, 2003) While describing exclusions rather than

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dropout, poverty is painted as the most common primary and contributory reason for students to be out of school. Hunter and May call poverty " a plausible explanation of school disruption."(2003)(ii). School fees and Indirect Costs of Schooling. Schooling costs like fees and other indirect costs impact on household decisions around access. Both indirect and direct schooling costs are important factors in whether children enroll in and attend school.(Dachi & Garrett, 2003, p. 16) In addition, other researchers also found that the costs of schooling including fees, is a central reason for dropping out.(Brock & Cammish, 2004) In Ethiopia and Guinea some researchers found that an inability to pay the direct costs of schooling was one of the most important causes of non-attendance in both countries, with those dropping out most frequently citing a lack of money to pay for school expenses as an important reason for dropping out, School fees do not only lead to under-enrolment and dropout, they also limit attendance at school and temporary withdraw, for example, Obasi found that children may be locked out of school if they cannot pay schooling fees.(2000) Another researcher, Boyce et al found that in Uganda and Zambia the inability to ; pay school fees meant children withdrawing from school for periods of time but on temporary basis. Schooling costs link with gendered patterns of access, with households less willing to pay fees for girls' education. For example, in China, the researchers have found that in rural areas inability to pay school fees had led to the decision to drop out for 47% of girls and 33% boys in primary schools.(Brown & Parks, 2002).(iii). Income shocks. There are various ways of maintaining school access. Research has shown that vulnerable households can withdraw children from school as part of their

coping strategy to deal with shocks to income. Some of the strategies of coping up with income shock are; taking out loans, asking for assistance and using household assets. When these ways are not present, it is difficult for the household to run away from income shock, and as a result children are forced to leave school as part of a household coping strategy.(Hunter &May, 2003). While these coping strategies often attend to short term shocks, the consequences of withdrawing children from school can have longer term implications, because these temporary withdraws often lead to more permanent dropout. iv. Child work. Child labor contributes negatively to the education access. For instance, some children more especially in rural areas juggle work with school. Boys also from poor urban household have particular pressures on them to work.(Cammish, 1997) Research has shown that forms of child labor create pressure on a child's time, for example, children who combine work with school, depending on nature and volume of work, can have erratic school attendance, regular school absences,(Croft, 2002) or increased instances of lateness.(Guarcello et al, 2005) All these are seen as precursors to dropping out of school temporarily which lead to more permanent withdrawals from school.(PROBE team, 1999; Brock &Cammish, 1997; Boyle et al, 2002, p. ix)However, in some household child labor is helpful, because it allows children to gain access to school, for they earn money through the tasks they did like selling firewood which help to free up other household members to go to school. On the other hand, child labor is not helpful or not enabling, for it is an active factor leading to dropout. For example, full time child care and work in peak agricultural times are less easy to reconcile with schooling. According to Fentiman et al, child labor is

seen as the prime reason for non enrolment and dropout in Ghana (1999), and also in Delhi. (Municipal Corporation of Dehli, 1999) Some research shows that girls dropout from school due to increased household demands placed on them, for example, taking on some domestic duties the mother may have previously carried out (Fuller & Liang, 1999) In addition, girl children dropout from school frequently in order to look after younger siblings (Brock & Cammish, 1999) (v.) Migration. The other factor influencing dropout is migration. For example, children may move into urban areas to access education and employment which may limit educational chances. Children living in slum areas or without permanent residence may move frequently resulting in leaving school. (Chitnis & Suvan, 1984)

(Vi) Bereavement and orphan hood. Bereavement amongst family members and in particular parents often makes children more vulnerable to dropout, non enrolment, late enrolment and slow progress (Hunter & May, 2003).

Orphan hood often exacerbates financial constraints for poorer households and increases the demands for child labor and dropout. (Bennel et al, 2002)

(Vii) Pregnancy. Research has shown that pregnancy is a significant cause of dropout for teenage girls from school. (Fentiman et al, 1999) In addition, Dunne and Leach found out that secondary schools in Botswana and Ghana, the predominant reason for female dropout was pregnancy. (2005, p. 38)

B. Patterns or processes and precursors to dropping out from school

Dropout is not a distinct event, but rather a process of events, situations and contents which work together to produce drop out. However, there are signs or precursors that a child might dropout. Some of the signs are; (i). Repetition

versus promotion. When children repeat the same grade without allowing them to gain access to the higher grade, withdrawals are high.(UNESCO, 2002) Some researchers have found that repetition may also be a deterrent to completion. If children have to repeat a grade they will be older before they reach the last grade of primary school which increases the chances of girls withdrawing when they reach puberty. Furthermore, promotion of children to repeat in early grades causes them to lose interest in school.(ii)Late enrolment. Children who start school beyond the official age of entry are more likely to dropout of school than those who start at the official age.(UIS &UNICEF, 2005) As children get older pressure to work increases.(iii.) Low achievement. Children with low achievement are likely dropout more than those with higher achievement.(Hunter &May, 2003) Low achievement might be caused by factors such as absenteeism, repetition, quality issues, household contexts, and demands on children's time.

C. Ways or interventions to prevent dropping out and encouraging dropping in.

Dropout can be intervened in different stages both directly and indirectly. It can be done either before or after dropout has occurred. Some of the ways are; Firstly, school related factors like introducing pre- school centres, flexible schooling hours or systems, automatic promotion rather than repetition, language instruction and post primary education.(World Bank, 2002)Secondly, financial support, for example; access to credit, conditional child support, unconditional child support and scholarship programmes. Other education programmes like adult education programmes and alternative forms of education (Birdsall et al, 2005)Another research was

done in Mauritius through ministerial consultation on School dropout and Adolescent Pregnancy under the theme, ' Counting the Cost.' The research was done in September, 1994 and was convened by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), whose members were greatly concerned by the high rate of dropout in African Education systems and apparent lack of appropriate attention to this serious problem. According to FAWE, Education for All (EFA) is a goal that has yet to be achieved in many countries of the developing world, with Sub-Saharan African comparing unfavorably with other regions of the world. FAWE quoted the studies showing that the Primary School dropout rate in Sub- Saharan Africa stands at 8. 6 for girls and 7. 3 for boys. According to FAWE's reports dropout is caused by factors like female circumcision, early marriage and early child bearing. The heavier work load that girls are burdened with within the household economy is responsible for tardiness, absenteeism; poor concentration and hence lower examination performance leading to either self or enforced withdraw of girls from school. The report also noted that family poverty induces girls not only to drop out of school, but often to drop out in favor of their brothers (p. 14)

Cost of dropout

The report showed that the failure to arrest the high attrition of children, especially children from the education systems of African, exacts an immense development cost to the continent. For females, the cost of dropping out is enormous both in quantitative and qualitative terms. It results in wastage of scarce financial and material resources and has negative social and psychological consequences. By dropping out, girls remain entrapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, losing out on the

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transformative and liberative aspects of education. The researchers found out that school dropout can be tackled by keeping girls in school. Sexual harassment can be dealt out by accepting the concept of gender equity. In Malawi, the research was also done concerning the dropout. The District Education Plan (DEP) conducted a research on educational problems and priorities for Lilongwe Rural East. The research was conducted at zone level, for example, Balang'ombe, Chadabwa, Chikanga, Chiseka, Chowo and Kunthulu just to mention a few. The researchers found out the problems such as inadequate teachers' houses, inadequate classrooms, high dropout rate just to mention a few. The researchers found out that pupils dropout of school due to inadequate latrine, for pupils are more as compared to the number of latrines available which make schools not conducive to effective learning especially girls. The other reason for dropping out of school is that girls get married early and boys join gule wamkulu. Researchers also found out that some dropout of school due to high pupil- teacher ratios due to geographical positioning of some schools which are difficult to access making it less attractive to teachers and also inadequate teachers' houses which makes teachers to move out of the school. However, the researchers came with the solutions to the problems; for example, high dropout rate was to be tackled by sensitizing the communities on the importance and their role in education and also lobbying government to post more qualified teachers. Their expected outcome was to see reduction in dropout rate.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

According to the data that the researcher seeks to find, surely the research will be in qualitative design. The researcher will go to various schools and villages around Bunda College to search for the reasons of dropping out of school. At the school, the researcher will single out some teachers to complete the questionnaire and some will answer questions orally. In the village the researcher will interview chiefs and some few parents and guardians. The researcher will employ questionnaires and interviews as instruments for data collection. These instruments will be designed to find out the reasons why they drop out of school, and how has it affected their future. For the success of the study, the researcher will seek permission from the schools and villages identified before administering the questionnaires and conducting the interviews. Data collection will be in two phases. The first phase will involve administration of questionnaires to the participants. The second stage of data collection will engage conducting interviews. The sample of the study will include equal proportion of male and female drop outs in order to find out if at all gender has effects on the perspectives pupils on school dropout. Morgan and Krejcie's table for determining sample size will be used by the researcher in singling out the number of participants. The purpose of the study will be clearly explained to the participants so that they will be aware that the objectives of the research will be used to help students and teachers come up with the ways that will reduce school dropout. The questionnaires will not be administered as a take home assignment because the drop outsgiven at the end of the class of the day and collected the

following morning upon arrival at school. This will prevent the participants from sharing ideas as they attempt the questions. Their after interviews will be conducted during break time which will help in cross checking their written perspectives against their oral perspectives.

B. Participants

There will be professional and non-professionals, male and females. For example, teachers, chiefs, parents, educational advisers and children who dropped out of school.

B. Materials

The researcher will use the following: PencilsTipexPapersPensSchool bag

c. Procedure

Participants will be given questionnaires and they will answer according to their knowledge and experience. The study will take place in various primary schools around Bunda, in Chiseka Zone, Lilongwe rural east.

d. Implications

Some of the implications after the hypotheses are confirmed will be that almost every child under the school age will go back to school. If my hypotheses are not confirmed, the implications will be that students who dropped out of school will not go back to school and the problem will not come to an end or it will not be reduced.