INDIVIDUAL DOMAIN FACTORS AND SCHOOL DROPOUT IN KENYAN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF KAKAMEGA CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY; KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Globally, education wastage arising from repetition and drop out is a sign of internal inefficiency in the education system. Every year, the Government of Kenya invests heavily in public secondary education. In spite of this heavy investment, the delivery of quality secondary education faces various challenges. One of the biggest challenges is dropout. Cases of school dropouts have been on the rise in the recent past, especially among students in public day secondary schools in Kakamega Central sub-county. This has a potential to negatively affect many aspects of development. This study investigated the Individual Domain factors affecting school dropout in Kenyan public secondary schools in Kakamega Central sub-county; Kenya. This study adopted Description research survey design. The target population included former students in Kakamega Central Sub-County, who dropped out of secondary school. The study applied simple random method according to Krejcie and Morgan determination table and snowball sampling techniques. The study was piloted within Kakamega Central Sub-County on the population that was not meant for the main study. The Questionnaire was an instrument for primary data collection. The study descriptive and inferential statistics was analyzed by use of SPSS software version 24. Further; a regression equation model was developed to test the relationships between the variables. The results of the findings indicated Individual Domain Factors had significant effect on school drop out of the sub county of Kakamega Central; Kenya. The study recommended for County Governments to embrace the understanding of individual domain factors on the school dropout, further the study recommended for more studies on the same considering same variables but different methodologies.

Key words: Individual Domain Factors, Socio Cultural Factors, School Dropout

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INTRODUCTION

The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in 2001, stipulated that every person has a right to be educated to his or her fullest potential (UNESCO, 2001). According to the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000, all children, must have access to and complete education of good quality by the year 2015 (UNESCO, 2000). Education plays a vital role in development. It empowers individuals to realize more productive lives and is also a primary driver of national economic development. Receiving a good education is the lifeline by which many youths can lift themselves out of poverty. It is also seen as a primary means of social mobility, national cohesion and social economic development (UNESCO, 2001).

A school dropout is a learner who permanently discontinues schooling without sitting for their summative examination at their level in the education curriculum. Dropout rates have been examined from several perspectives (Morrison, 2022). Event dropout rates measure the proportion of students who drop out of school in a single year without completing a certain level of schooling. Status dropout rates measure the proportion of the entire population of a given age who have not completed a certain level of schooling and are not currently enrolled. Cohort dropout rates measure dropping out among a single group or cohort of students over a given period. High school completion rates measure the proportion of an entire population of a given age who have left high school and earned a high school diploma or its equivalent. According to UNICEF report (2018), the number of students who are not in school in South Asia is the fifth highest in the world. South Asia features among the world's regions with worst disparity in the rates of secondary school enrolment and completion of any third world regions. For example, Bangladesh which is a densely populated and low-income country in South Asia, is characterized by low enrolment and high dropout rate in secondary school level (Sarker, 2019). According to Sarker, the factors that lead to the dropout of students at secondary level include, tuition fees, book expenses, transportation fee, the presence of a son in the family and uniform expenses.

According to UNESCO (2003), the rates of dropouts in Canada based on 3 surveys established that the rate of dropout was at 18%. This was a representation of those people who are aged between 10-24 and had not graduated and are not in school or undertaking any training course. This kind of situation has a great effect on the country and the individual because there is an increasing demand for workers with skills and there are decreasing opportunities for those workers who possesses no skill or are not literate (Bhorat, 2003). Bhorat further stated that in United States more than 30% of students at high school level leave before completing their studies and this was attributed to marginal culture and their lifestyle.

The United States Department of Education reports measurement of the status dropout rate as the percentage of 16-24 years old who are not enrolled in school and have not earned high school credentials (Education Encyclopedia, 2022 and Wikipedia, 2022). The status high school dropout rate in 2009 was 8.1%. There are many risk factors for high school dropouts which can be categorized in to social and academic risk factors. According to Wikipedia (2022), Whites and specific members of racial and ethnic minority groups, dropout at higher rates than Asian American students, as those from low-income families, from single- parent households, mentally disabled students and from families in which one or both parents also did not complete high school. Students at risk for dropout based on academic risk factors are those who often have a history of absenteeism and grade retention, academic trouble and disengagement from school life. It further states that, high school dropouts in the US, are more likely to be unemployed, have low paying jobs, have children at an early age and or become single parents. There is no single race in the US that as of 2019, has 90% graduation.

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Dachi and Garret (2003); Hunter and May (2003); highlighted the link between poverty and dropping out from school. They state out poverty as a factor of school disruption in most schools. Looking at the issue from how people regard schooling and its importance, Ampiah and Pryor (2003) explain that the interactions between schooling, household income and school may or may not lead to student's dropout. For example, in some villages in Ghana, education is regarded as "relative luxury" with many villages considering education not worthwhile. Depending on the environment, the school can open or close doors therefore leading to dropout (Barr, 2005). Sociocultural factors differ from one community to another or from one region to another.

According to a recent report by South Africa's National Income Dynamic Study- Corona Virus Rapid Mobile (NIDS-CRAM 2021), an estimated 750,000 school children in South Africa may have dropped out of school as a result of the pandemic. This is a vast increase from the pre-pandemic figure of 230,000. In November 2020, South Africa's minister of Basic Education, confirmed that more than 300000 children had potentially dropped out of school across South Africa over a period of over six months. The NIDS-CRAM report indicates that student dropout rates are the highest they have been in 20 years.

In Nigeria reports indicate that students' dropout rate is high for reasons including; religion, cultural, socio-economic and school related factors (Osakwe and Osagie, 2016). In the entire West African region, over 10 million children do not go to school as it is reported that a student may be withdrawn from school if a good marriage opportunity comes by. Early marriage being a sociocultural factor hinders the child access to school, which calls for multi-agency efforts to ensure that students who are enrolled in secondary school, should complete without interference because this will reduce poverty and ignorance and social advancement and civilization will prosper (Mohammad, Rizwan and Minhaj, 2021).

Kachembele (2015) denotes that, education gives a lot of advantages to individuals, societies and the country. Education is viewed as being so crucial to the development of individuals and as such most countries including Zambia have guaranteed every person the right to education. While students are guaranteed the right to education, it is sad to note that, a number of them are dropping out. The continued high numbers of school dropout make school retention and completion hard to maintain in Zambia (MOE, 2010). Despite the government providing free primary education, training, recruiting and supplying teachers, providing school infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, learners are still dropping out of school. In the year 2010, Zambia basic school dropout rate was at 2.0% (UNESCO, 2010). Several factors contributed to school dropouts in Zambia, among them being school related factors.

A country like Tanzania, students school achievements are attributed to socio-cultural factors notably parents' level of education, mother tongue and gender (UNESCO 2005). Parents level of education have an influence in child's education because it acts as a guide to the child to further move in his/her education journey.

Basic education is viewed as an important life process that strives to develop an individual into a better being by acquisition of knowledge, skills and social moral values. According to Tumuti, Gecaga and Manguriu (2013), the colonial government introduced series of examinations in whose motive was to make sure as many Africans as possible did not complete schooling. The dropout affected both the female and male students. Though girls had more problems that prevented them from acquiring education so as to compete with boys favorably, both genders were adversely affected by the colonial government policy. Wainaina (2011), observes that during the colonial days, enrolment in missionary education was adversely affected by cultural beliefs and practices that kept a good number of children out of school.

In Kenya, which is a developing nation, the situation is no better, the dropout in mixed day secondary schools is also on the rise, despite efforts by the Government of Kenya to ensure access to education by provision of subsidized secondary education (Mutsotso, 2020). According to Republic of Kenya, (2019), education is one of the most effective instruments a nation can have at its disposal in promoting sustainable social and economic development. High school dropout is therefore a major impediment to the development agenda of any nation, since the dropouts miss out on important skills required to implement the development agenda of their places of origin (World bank, 2022). (Chemwolo, 2018) denotes that, since the introduction of FPE and FSE in Keiyo County, there is high enrollment in early years but the dropout of the same students is very high before they complete the upper level of education. She has attributed the dropout in Keiyo to socio-cultural factors affecting the Keiyo community.

Kakamega Central sub-county in Kakamega County is one of the regions that is adversely affected on matters school completion rates, since the number of students dropping out, especially in mixed day secondary schools therein has been on the rise for the last three years (UNICEF, 2021). This is in contrast to the rising secondary school enrolment each year, brought about by the 100% primary to secondary school transition initiative by the Ministry of Education (Republic of Kenya, 2019). This implies that a significant number of students are unable to complete their secondary education due to a number of social factors like cultural beliefs, sexual abuse, pregnancy, early marriages, child labor, poverty, poor performance and unsupported learning environment.

To address this situation, several measures have been put in place to arrest the challenge of students dropping out at secondary level among them being provision of free text books, free registration of national examinations among others (Republic of Kenya, 2019). Unfortunately, many cases of students not completing their secondary education

is still rife, a situation that calls for urgent review of current policies on matters of secondary school completion.

Statement of the Problem

School dropout is a widespread global phenomenon resulting in various social and cultural challenges in the society from which the individual hails from (Witte, Cabus, Thyssen, Groot and Brink, 2013). If the number of school dropout cases is large in a given country region, the resultant consequences are detrimental and far reaching in terms of victim's participation in meaningful development activities that will uplift the social and cultural standards (Fernandez, Herrero, Perez, Juarros-Basterretxea & Rodríguez-Díaz, 2016)). The most common factors affecting the student dropouts include rural-urban divide, gender bias and distance to school (MoES, 2018). The rates of dropout in all government aided schools for girls and boys are almost equal in Kenya. The total number of male dropouts in 2017 was 164986 (50.6%), while that of female was 160932 (49.4%) giving a national total of 325,918. Nyanzi (2018) revealed that marriage, pregnancy and sickness are major causes of drop out among girl children while among the boys include; in search of jobs, lack of interest in academics, dismissal due to indiscipline and lack of school fees; hence, in the year 2010, school dropout rate in Kenya stood at 2.1% for boys and 2.0% for girls. Cases of students dropping out of school has been on the rise in the recent past, especially in mixed day secondary schools in Kakamega Central sub-county (Kakamega QASO Office, 2022). This implies that the development in the area hangs in the balance, since some of the potential providers of skills and manpower to implement development projects in the sub-county are not completing their basic education for various reasons. This therefore calls for urgent policy measures to be put in place in order to curtail this situation, given that the individuals dropping out of school are young Kenyans, who are supposed to provide manpower to implement the country's development agenda (Republic of Kenya, 2019).This

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gives rise to a researchable gap that necessitates the study to be undertaken.

Objective of the Study

The study established how individual domain factors, affect school dropout among students in mixed day secondary schools in Kakamega Central Sub-County. The study was guided by the following research hypothesis;

- H_{01}: Individual domain factors have no statistically significant influence on school dropout among students in Kenyan public secondary schools

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review;

The Systems Theory

Bertalanffy (1968) defined a system as a set of elements standing in interrelation. A major assumption of the system is that all systems are purposeful and goal directed.The school system exists to achieve objectives through the collective efforts of individuals embedded in larger community and institutional settings. School dropout cases are one such phenomenon that can be explained as a product of dysfunctional elements within the education system (Bertalanffy, 1968)

Using the system theory perspective, there are three general classes of factors that affect the dropout in a school system. These are (i) the characteristics of the students entering the system which could be viewed as input factors, (ii) the programs of the system itself, which could be viewed as institutional-related factors and (iii) the social conditions of the surrounding community, which could be viewed as environmental factors Bertalanffy (1968).

Dropout is an output or result of the school's educational activities and function of the processes and environmental factors associated with the system. Dropout is therefore the study's dependent variable. The elements posited in systems theory do not operate in isolation but are interrelated making school dropout as a process. This theory therefore

shows how a school as a social system can function in dynamic equilibrium with their environments to regulate the drop out cases process.

Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) aims to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action. It is mainly used to predict how individuals will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intentions. An individual's decision to engage in a particular behavior is based on the outcomes the individual expects will come as a result of performing the behavior. Developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967, the theory seeks to understand an individual's voluntary behavior by examining the underlying basic motivation to perform an action. TRA states that a person's intention to perform a behavior is the main predictor of whether or not they actually perform that behavior. Additionally, the normative component (i.e. social norms surrounding the act) also contributes to whether or not the person will actually perform the behavior. According to the theory, intention to perform a certain behavior precedes the actual behavior. This intention is known as behavioral intention and comes as a result of a belief that performing the behavior will lead to a specific outcome (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Behavioral intention is important to the theory because these intentions "are determined by attitudes to behaviors and subjective norms". TRA suggests that stronger intentions lead to increased effort to perform the behavior, which also increases the likelihood for the behavior to be performed.

In this study the decision to drop out of school is the variable that was measured as per the postulates of TRA since it is thought to be influenced by socio-cultural factors.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a psychological theory that links beliefs to behavior. The theory maintains that three core components, namely, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived

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behavioral control, together shape an individual's behavioral intentions. In turn, a tenet of TPB is that behavioral intention is the most proximal determinant of human social behavior. The theory was elaborated by Ajzen (1985) for the purpose of improving the predictive power of the theory of reasoned action (TRA). Ajzen's idea was to include perceived behavioral control in TPB.

Conceptual Framework

Individual Domain Factors	School Dropout
▪ Personal engagement ▪ Discipline ▪ Health factors ▪ Motivation	▪ Truancy ▪ Absenteeism ▪ Lateness ▪ Stopping School

Independent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Review of study variables

Individual Factors and School Dropout

Several personal factors have also been found to affect school dropout among students in different parts of the world. This section presents the specific individual factors.

Pregnancy

Students' dropout due to early pregnancy has been on the rise especially among adolescent girls, (Ferguson, 2019). In South Africa in 2002, 66000 teenage girls could not attend education institution due to pregnancy. The figure rose to 86,000 in 2004and dropped slightly to 71000 in 2006. This means that in 2002 about 12% of South African teenage girls who did not attend educational institution reported pregnant as the main reason raising to 17% in 2004 and declining to14% in 2006. The dropout among pregnant girls cuts across all ages in Kenya. The girls who are forced to withdraw because of pregnancy could have continued being in school had they not become pregnant, (Meeker & Ahmed, 1999).

Mensch (2001), explains that Kenya a gender-neutral atmosphere in school appeared to reduce

In this study, the eventual decision or reason(s) for dropping out of school by respondents of the study are the planned actions as asserted in the TPB. The contribution of socio-cultural factors towards this planned behavior according to TRA forms the basis of investigation in all the four research objectives, as their interplay with socio-cultural factors would drive the data collection and analysis procedures.
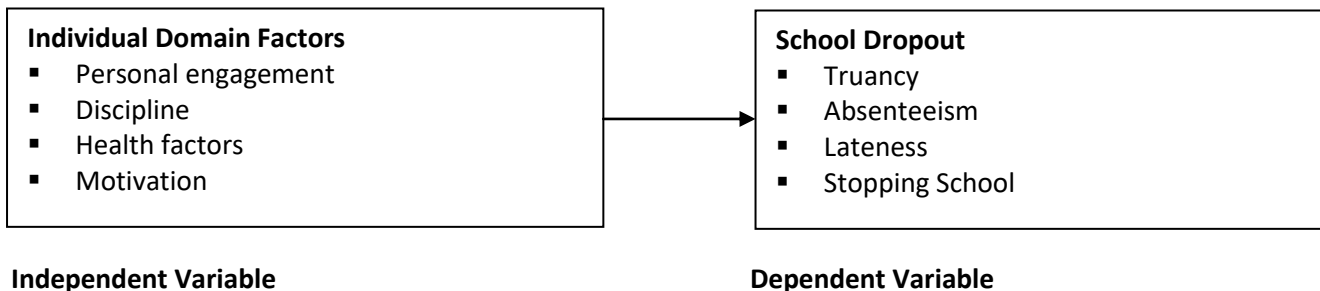
Dependent Variable

the risk that girls will engage in premarital sex and early marriages have negatively affected the girls. The Girls are at greater risk of such abuse when they are not in school than the boys. School provides the best environment for learning. It can instill in them, a sense of self-esteem power, and hope for the future. The next section looks at the gendered decision that influences school dropout cases.

Lack of Personal Initiative

Due to laziness, some students have recorded poor academic performance in their academic work, causing some of them to discontinue their education. Ananga (2010), indicated that having a good personal initiative plays a crucial role in retention and completion of school. The head teacher has a formal responsibility to build good relationship with parents, members of the community which the school serves and educational officers to cub drop out cases in schools. As a remedy to this problem, the teachers should teach better and turn up for all classes. They should also encourage child-to-child cooperation in learning. The head teacher should ensure that classes should be de-congested and more qualified

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teachers should teach. Most countries require that pupils successfully complete primary school before allowing them to gain secondary education.

Drug Abuse

Drugs such as alcohol and tobacco are the most abused by school going children across the world (WHO, 2021). Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. It further states that cigarette smoking alone is estimated to take the lives of more people than all drugs. The pupils may have used the drugs in order to conform to pressure from peer to make them feel good when they are depressed, lack of self-esteem and emotional problems. The abused drug leads the pupil in decreasing academic performance, loose of interesting in school, seeking out drug-using friends, change in clothing habits and behaviors and eventually drop out of school. Glue causes psychological and physiological effects to the pupil leading one to drop out of school. Another challenge experiences by the teachers in curding drop put is teacher attitude.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research survey design was therefore used to determine an association between the conceptualized independent and dependent variables as shown in the study's conceptual model. This study targeted 200 students of County Government of Kakamega Central; Kenya. A sampling frame is a list of all the items in the population (Cooper & Schinder, (2007). That is, it is a complete list of everyone or everything you want to study or a list of things that you draw a sample from. In this study it consisted of school dropouts of the Kakamega Central Sub County; Kenya. The study employed Krejcie and Morgan Formula technique to determine a sample of 132 of the school dropouts in the Kakamega Central Sub County; Kenya. Primary data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires had structured questions. These questionnaires were structured and designed in multiple choice formats. Section one introduced the researcher, topic of research and its purpose to the respondent.

Data collected from the field was coded, cleaned, tabulated and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of specialized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).version 24 software. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages as well as measures of central tendency (means) and dispersion (standard deviation) was used. Data was also organized into graphs and tables for easy reference. Further, inferential statistics such as regression and correlation analyses was used to determine both the nature and the strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Correlation analysis is usually used together with regression analysis to measure how well the regression line explains the variation of the dependent variable. The linear and multiple regression plus correlation analyses were based on the association between two (or more) variables. SPSS version 24 is the analysis computer software that was used to compute statistical data.

Study conceptualized Regression Model;

$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$

y = School Dropouts

β_0 = Constant

X_1 = Individual Domain Factors

$\{\beta_1\}$ = Beta coefficients

ε = the error term

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 132 questionnaires were self-administered to school dropouts in Kakamega Central Sub-County. Out of those, 128 questionnaires were successfully completed and returned giving a response rate of 96.96%.

Descriptive Statistics;

Individual Domain Factors influencing school dropout

The first objective was to establish the influence of individual domain factors on students' drop-out in

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public secondary schools in Kakamega Central Sub-County. Questionnaire helped collect raw data for this objective from the school dropout students.

Respondents were requested to rate the subsequent attributes on the influence of individual domain factors on student's drop-out rate on a scale where 5 represented Strongly Agree, 4 represented Agree, 3 represented Neutral, 2 represented Disagree and 1 represented Strongly Disagree. Their responses are presented in Table 1 where the frequencies, percentages mean and standard deviations of the responses are presented.

Table 1: Individual domain factors influencing school dropout

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personal engagement	12%	10%	2%	48%	28%	3.24	0.81
Discipline	11%	15%	2%	21%	51%	3.61	0.88
Health factors	16%%	8%	2%	20%	52%	4.32	0.96
Motivation	48%	22%	3%	15%	12%	1.87	0.66
N	**128**						

The results in Table 1 indicated that majority of the learners (52%) strongly agreed that health factors influenced the dropout rates of the learners as supported by a mean of 4.32, discipline cases discouraged students from attending schools as indicated by 51% and supported by a mean of 3.61 and personal engagements influenced school dropout with 48% agreeing supported by a mean of 3.24. On the other hand, 48% of respondents strongly disagreed that motivation led to school dropout with a mean of 1.87.

Inferential Statistics

Table 2: Individual domain factors on dropout rate

Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.822[a]	.635	.629	.47763	.635	79.874	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), individual domain factors							

The findings obtained from the correlation regression in Table 2 indicated the measure of variation of the predicted variable (school dropout) as explained by the predictor variable (individual domain factors). The regression output yielded a coefficient R-value of 0.822 and R^2 of 0.635, which implies that 64% in corresponding variation in school dropout can be predicted by individual domain factors. The rest of the percentage could be explained by other variables not included in this model. Nonetheless, the F test statistic gave a value of F= 79.874, P< 0.001, which was sufficient to support the goodness of fit of the model in explaining the variance in the dependent variable (school dropout) by the independent variable (individual domain factors). These finding tends to validate the fact that timely identification of individual domain factors can be a very useful predictor of school dropouts. This means that schools that do not manage students' individual domain factors on time automatically experience higher levels of dropouts.

From the findings, students' individual level factors which impact on early school dropout behavior were school engagement, school misbehaviors, health problem and preschool experience. Health factors were perceived to be major influences to students' dropout. Students' dropout due to early pregnancy has been on the rise especially among adolescent girls. Other health factors include

menstruation, terminal illness and mental illness that could influence students' dropout from schools.

School misconduct was found to be a major predictor of students' dropout. Students who had been sent to the office for misbehaving were more likely to drop out than students who had never been sent to the office on discipline cases. In addition, the chances of dropping out dramatically increased with the number of times they got into trouble. Early aggression was also linked to dropout in two studies, particularly for males.

On personal engagement, students who participated in both athletics and fine arts extracurricular activities were found to be less likely to drop out than were those who did not participate. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) argued that engagement was reflected in participation in extracurricular activities and attributed school dropout to a lack of engagement. They found that dropouts participated in significantly fewer extracurricular activities at all grades than did non-dropouts.

Other factors such as laziness causing some of them to discontinue their education. Ananga (2010), indicated that having a good personal initiative plays a crucial role in retention and completion of school. Drugs such as alcohol and tobacco are the most abused by school going children across the world (WHO, 2021). The abused drug leads to students' decrease in academic performance, loose of interesting in school, seeking out drug-using friends, change in clothing habits and behaviors and eventually drop out of school.

These findings corroborate with those of Mutwota (2013) who noted that students are ever sent home due to misbehavior and other issues are highly considered to drop-out of school. This finding coincides with the finding of study done by Henry (2015) who concluded that students' personal acts may influence school drop-out.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients of Individual domain factors

Coefficients'

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.784	.256		3.059	.003
	Individual factors	.820	.067	.809	12.169	.000

a. Dependent Variable: School dropout

Similarly, the results obtained in Table 3 revealed that the unstandardized regression coefficients β value of the computed scores of individual factors was 0.820 with a t-value of 12.169, at a significance level of $p < 0.01$. This implied that for every 1 per cent increase in individual domain factors, there was a predicted increase in the percentage of school dropout.

The regression model would be as below;

$$Y = 0.784 + .820X_1$$

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the individual domain factors influencing school dropout, majority of the respondents agreed that individual factors influenced the dropout rates of the learners. From the findings, students' individual level factors which impact on early school dropout behavior were school engagement, school misbehaviors, health problem and preschool experience. Other factors such as laziness and drug abuse caused some of them to discontinue their education. The findings obtained from the correlation analysis indicated that the individual domain factor over the school dropout rate was positive and significant. This implies that increase in individual domain factors such as indiscipline and

drug abuse will have a great significant influence on school dropout in public secondary schools.

Individual domain factors are significant influencers of educational dropout and should be put into account while dealing with dropout. Schools must have adequate teaching and learning facilities, enough teaching staff, and a conducive learning environment, ability to motivate students as well as ability to create team spirit are all vital considerations if the students are to be efficient.

Schools should provide conducive teaching and learning environment. This should include adequate teaching and learning equipment, proper staffing that ensures gender balance and consultative decision making which incorporates all stakeholders.

Areas for further research

A comparative study be conducted in other sub-counties and counties to assess Individual Domain Factors influencing students' dropout in public secondary schools**.**

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