

# Stakeholders' Perception of Policy Articulations Influence on student Dropout in Secondary Schools in Rongo Sub-County Kenya

**Kennedy N. Getange**  
Kisii University, Kenya  
kgetange@yahoo.com

**Paul A. Oguta**  
Rongo University, Kenya

**Abstract:** Secondary School dropout is a critical issue in today's world. Students who drop out of secondary schools face a lot of challenges. In Rongo Sub-County, Kenya, in the year 2016, 7,946 boys and 5,344 girls were enrolled in schools against sub-county census of 21,603 boys and 22,017 girls. This study investigated policy articulation influence on student dropout in secondary schools. The objective established influence of government's policy articulation on dropout in the sub-county. The study used concurrent triangulation design. The target population was 24 public secondary schools, 183 teachers and 8083 students. The sample were 12 public schools, 12 principals (11 responded), 126 teachers (100 responded) and 420 students (382 responded). Sampling exploited purposive sampling and stratified sampling method. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The data collected was summarized and analysed quantitatively. The study established that students do drop out from the Kenyan secondary schools. Factors influencing dropout was failure to articulate government policies that could counter dropout. Therefore, the government and stakeholders should put measures in place to articulate policies so that students understand their rights to and be in school.

**Keywords:** *Dropout, Policy, Academic Achievement, Secondary, Education*

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## Introduction

Dropout from secondary school education is a worldwide problem. In recent studies reported by United States Department of Education (USDOE,2019) and (NCES, 2018) revealed

that nearly 2.1 million students drop out of school between ages of 16-24 years every year whereby 54 percent and 46 percent of dropouts were boys and girls respectively (USDOE, 2019). Further, USDOE statistical findings suggest that in every five students, one will drop out of the education system. In the United Kingdom dropout is evidenced in higher institutions where high levels of dropout persisted as revealed by the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE, 2021) Report entitled *Student completion rates (2021)*, but also indicated that overall 13 percent of students had withdrawn within six months of enrolment in high school. NCES (2018) admits that gender dropout in the world countries shows the same scenario where cumulative dropout across gender is highest in Yemen at 52 percent and lowest in Gaza and Iraq at 28 percent.

According to Rumberger, (2001), poor performance is causing dropout in secondary segment of education. Wanjohi (2002) through the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools (CCROSS) a Non-Governmental Organization notes that violence in schools is aggravated by students who want to pay back the society real and imagined ills meted against them. WOLREC (2004), a non-governmental organization based in Blantyre Malawi, notes that deficiency of female teachers caused girls to lack character models to enable them achieve their goals whereby they end up dropping out of school.

Further, Onger (2009) noted that in Sub Saharan Africa, 10 million school going students drop out of school every year. The breakdown shows that 49 percent and 51 percent of the 10 million dropouts are boys and girls respectively. Sub Saharan Africa countries account for more than 45 percent of the 69 million school age children who are out of school worldwide. In the

same breadth, a report by UNICEF (2015) for fourteen African countries noted that there is evidence of large variation in secondary school dropouts across the countries.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Nature of Dropout in Education**

A study entitled *Factors Contributing to Educational Wastage in Public and Private Schools in Municipality Division, Nyeri District, Kenya*; noted that delivery of secondary education in Kenya face many challenges, some have culminated in dropout (Gachungi, 2011). Dropout in secondary schools has resulted from non-enrolment, declining retention, declining completion rates, grade repetition and dropout in schools. The study by Gachungi (2011) isolated lack of fees, indiscipline, and teenage pregnancy as major causes of wastage. However, repetition was attributed to improved chances in obtaining better grades in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

Despite extensive literature on dropout from secondary education, much is not known about nature of dropout progression in Rongo Sub-County. Failure of the past research to delineate multiple characteristic of dropout can be traced to two major inadequacies; namely insufficient attention given to questions of definition and inadequacies on development of theoretical models that seek to explain processes that bring individuals to dropout (Tinto, 2000: USDOE, 2019). Therefore, this study needs to find out stakeholders perception on dropout in secondary school's education in Rongo Sub-County.

### **Consequences of Dropout in Education.**

According to Bridgeland, Dilulio & Morison (2006) and UNESCO, (2016), the cost of dropout for communities is devastating. A country may lose £150 million or more from low earnings from education dropouts in lost revenue each year. Children of dropouts are likely to drop out of school. Further, for communities, a decrease of dropout by 1 percent would reduce crime by 100,000 annually. For a country, each youth who drop out and becomes a drug addict or

criminal costs the nation in question an average of 1.5 million dollars in crime control and health expenditure (USDOE 2019).

Consequences of leaving school have grave outcome for students, immediate family members and society. Dropouts face stigma, become social single parents or get divorced, have less job opportunities; earn poor salaries, likely to join crime, have poor health and more often are on public assistance. Dropping out of school influences student self-worth and well-being (Kreysing, 2018).

Currently, in Kenya, the unemployment rate increased to 40 percent in 2018 from 12.7 percent in 2008. Among the unemployed in Kenya 64% are the youth. Major causes listed in the Youth Banner website rates school dropout cases at second position to rural urban migration.

### **Government's Policy effect on dropout**

In 2010, Kenyans promulgated a new constitution. The following are some of the spelt out purposes of education arising from the constitution:

- 1.1.1 No. 43(I): Every individual has a right to education,
- 1.1.2 No.53: Every child has a right to free and obligatory education,
- 1.1.3 No.55: The state shall take measures, including affirmative action programmes to ensure that the youth access education and training, and;
- 1.1.4 No.56: The state shall put in place affirmative action. (Constitution of Kenya2010)

The Government of Kenya in trying to achieve the above has come up with the following measures:

- i. Constituency Development Fund (CDF) bursary.
- ii. Free and compulsory education envisaged in Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE).

- iii. Pregnant girls and teen mothers back to school.
- iv. Involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations in supporting some aspects of education.
- v. Introduction of CBC

Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was designed to be administered at constituency level to meet development challenges. CDF in addition to assisting in infrastructure development also gives bursaries to needy students on equity basis thus reducing dropout in secondary schools. The fund has enabled many students to access education. Though the criterion for the award is not formalized within law.

CDF is a good intervention but lingering questions abound whether the government has clear cut distributive policies and both capacity and goodwill to ensure that the funds are well managed. Also to reduce dropout in secondary education process, the government of Kenya introduced FPE and FDSE. This increased enrolment rate to 89% in primary school and a higher transition rate to secondary education (UNESCO 2010). In the same light, the girl child has a policy that enables her access education even after falling pregnant. Pregnant girls and teen mothers back to school policy have had a positive effect since its inception. Barbara (2010) admits that girl child dropout from secondary school education arising from pregnancy is a worldwide problem.

A study conducted by Achoka (2007) concluded that one of the perennial causes of secondary school education dropouts include inability to pay school fees due to poverty. This research assessed the effect of family background on dropout rate by gender of students in public secondary school education in Rongo Sub-County.

In Kenya, in view of the constitution, all measures are in place to fight dropout. However, dropout still persists in many regions of Kenya. This research assessed policy articulation influence on student dropout in secondary schools and suggested corrective measures.

## Methodology

This section presents research method used, sampling process, data collection and ethical considerations that was considered in this research

### Research Design

The study utilized concurrent triangulation research method (Mixed methods). Triangulation research method was selected since it offers chance to inject both quantitative and qualitative data as a means to recreate a research outcome in order to find a solution to the relevant issues in a study. In addition, concurrent triangulation research method offers an exceptional means of data collection since it gives vision to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and offer two crucial pathways for data analysis.

### Sampling

The target population of 24 principals (24 public secondary schools), 183 teachers and 8083 students. The sample was 12 public secondary schools, 12 principals (11 responded), 126 teachers (100 responded) and 420 students (382 responded). Therefore, the research used 11 principals, 100 teachers and 382 students who responded by returning questionnaires. This is based on Best and Khan (2009) who proffered that 30% is statistically convenient for making generalizations. Purposive sampling was used to get the principals and teachers; while students were sampled using stratified random sampling method. Data was collected by use of specific questionnaire prepared by the researcher.

### Data Collection

Data for the study was collected by the use of questionnaires. The questionnaires used were designed in such a way that the items in the questionnaires captured the objective of the study which was useful in answering the pertinent questions raised in this study. The researcher used three different sets of questionnaires. The first set of questionnaire was used to collect data from the principals, the second one for teachers, and the final set questionnaire for students. The researcher consulted widely with supervisors, lecturers and the World Wide Web (www) to

develop the questionnaires. The instruments were structured according to the principles advanced for questionnaires construction by Oppenheim (2000) and Wuensch (2005).

**Ethical Considerations**

The data collected from the respondents was treated with confidentiality and was used for study purposes. Further, the researcher ensured that collected data was not fabricated or distorted in any way. Acceptable research rules were applied to permit clear and precise outcomes that were aimed at promoting societal development.

**Data Analysis and Findings**

This section presented result based on data analysis, governments policy effect on dropout, respondent’s awareness of policy, and results based on hypothesis coefficients whereby chi-square was used to assess if there were significant difference between teachers and student’s perception of how policy impacted on students.

**Government’s policy effect on dropout**

The research investigated influence of government’s policy articulation on dropout in public secondary school education in Rongo District, Migori County, Kenya. The discussion basically focused on whether the respondent’s principals; the respondent teachers and the respondent students knew the implication of six policies that affect student’s programmes in schools. The six policies were as follows:

*Table 1*

*Student’s awareness of government’s policy on education*

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Yes Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>
Policy on payment of fees	282	73.8	98	25.7	382
Policy on Bursaries	237	62.4	143	37.6	380
Policy on girl child education	257	67.8	122	32.2	379
Policy on student pregnancy	217	57	164	43	381
Policy on role of parents in education	283	74.9	95	25.1	378
Policy on FDSE	190	49.7	191	51.1	381

Policy on fee payment, policy on government bursaries, policy on girl child education, policy on pregnancy of the girl child, policy on the role of parents and policies that govern Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE).

**Respondent Students awareness of government policy.**

Respondent Students awareness of government policy on education was considered in this study because students dropped out despite proactive policies that could enable students to access education and graduate. Government policies are designed to enhance retention but students still drooped out and failed to graduate.

Table 1 shows the respondent students awareness of government’s policy that influence the extent of dropout in secondary school.

Table 1 indicates that 51.1 percent of the respondents were not aware of government policy on Free Day Secondary Education followed by Policy on student pregnancy (43 percent), policy on Bursaries (37.6 percent), and policy on girl child education (32.2 percent) in that order. 25.7 percent of respondent students were not aware of government policy on payment of fees and 25.1 percent on role of parents in education. 73.8 percent and 74.9 percent were aware of government’s policy on role of parents on payment of fees and government policy on payment of fees respectively

Table 2

Teachers' view on student's awareness of government policies on education

Policies	Yes Frequency	%	No Frequency	%	Total
Policy on payment of fees	72	72	28	28	100
Policy on Bursaries	56	56	44	44	100
Policy on girl child education	56	58.3	40	41.7	96
Policy on student pregnancy	47	49	49	51	96
Policy on role of parents in education	60	60	40	40	100
Policy on FDSE	67	69	33	33	100

The findings in Table 2 indicates that teachers felt that the students were aware of policies as follows: Policy on payment of fees (72 percent), Policy on FDSE (69 percent), Policy on role of parents in education (60 percent); Policy on girl child education (58.3 percent) and policy on Bursaries (56 percent). Respondent teacher's supported that student respondents significantly knew the policies in question. In the same breath, a good percentage was also not aware of the same policies. They were fully supportive of the fact that the respondents who were not aware of the government policy on fee payment were few (28 percent). The teachers need to do more in sensitizing students on their rights because students who were not aware of government policies were quite significant in four areas that is policy on student pregnancy (51 percent) policy on Bursaries (44 percent), Policy on girl child education (41.7 percent); Policy on role of parents in education (40 percent) and Policy on

FDSE (33 percent). This supports the Education for All (EFA) assessment for Kenya that notes that there is deterioration of standards of teacher's professional conduct and poor professional conduct.

Table 3 indicates that principals informed students of all policies ascribed to by the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, students who were not aware of on policy on role of parents in education (63.6 percent) Policy on student pregnancy (54.5 percent) and policy on Bursaries (45.5 percent) were notably high.

Kenya Constitution (2010) further postulates that government shall ensure that the youth access education and training with a vision to providing quality education and training (Sessional Paper No. 1, 2005).

Therefore, the government needs to articulate through its agents the content of various policies

Table 3

Principals view on student's awareness of government's policv on education.

Policy	Yes Frequency	%	No Frequency	%	Total
Policy on payment of fees	9	81.8	2	18.2	11
Policy on Bursaries	6	54.5	5	45.5	11
Policy on girl child education	8	72.7	3	27.3	11
Policy on student pregnancy	5	45.5	6	54.5	11
Policy on role of parents in education	4	36.4	7	63.6	11
Policy on FDSE	8	72.7	3	27.3	11

consumed by students for their academic pursuits. In Rongo Sub-County, a number of respondents did not know the implication of policies that would govern their study programmes.

**Hypothesis Output**

Respondents’ views were subjected to a chi-square test to ascertain whether issues of policy were a concern for both the managers and the students. The hypothesis was:

There is no significant difference between teachers and students view on policy articulation processes

The above data was subjected to a chi-square test

The table value of  $\chi^2$  for  $v=12-1=11$  whereby the degree of freedom is 11 and the  $p<.05$  is 24.73. The computed value of  $\chi^2$  is 35.834. The computed value is higher than the table value. The null hypothesis is rejected

**Discussions**

The study was set to assess articulation of governments policy influence on dropout in public secondary school education in Rongo Sub-County. The study found out that critical policies that could counter dropout in Rongo Sub-County were not efficiently delivered to students; thus, several students dropped out because they did not know those critical policies. The policies governing secondary school education which were critical and were not well expressed to students were on payment of fees, provision of bursaries, girl child education, role of parents, and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE). The most articulated policy was on payment of fees and girl child education; on the other hand, the least articulated was on role of parents and girl child pregnancy. It is evident that the government should ensure policies are well articulated to students.

Table 4

Teachers and student’s agreement that they were aware of policies

	Policy on Fee Payment	Policy on Bursaries	Policy on girl child education	Policy on student pregnancy	Policy on role of parents	Policy on FDSE
TEACHERS	75	56	56	47	60	67
STUDENTS	282	237	257	217	283	190

**Conclusion**

The study concluded that critical policies that could have enabled students to stay on in secondary school education and graduate were not well articulated. Policy’s on fee payment and girl child education were well known to students. Furthermore, other policies which were relevant were not well articulated to students and could not be exploited by students to access secondary school education and graduate. The school administrators did not articulate the policies to enable students to internalize them for their own good. This study suggests that relevant policies be generated to govern how proper dissemination of relevant policies could reach the student.

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