

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO CAUSES OF STUDENT DROPOUT IN
PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF GATUNDU
NORTH DISTRICT
KIAMBU COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

Dropping out of schools permeates all levels of any education system. Dropping out of school threatens the realization of Education for All by 2015, the socio-economic well being and health of a society. The study's statement of the problem highlights the importance of identifying causes of student dropout in public day secondary schools in Gatundu North district, Kiambu County. Gatundu North district is selected because despite the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education in 2008, the district continued to experience dropout challenges. Between 2009 and 2012, there were 234 dropouts from the district's 20 public day secondary schools. The objectives of the study are to: find out the family-related factors that cause dropouts in public day secondary schools in the district, establish the school-related factors that cause dropouts in public day secondary schools in the district, determine the socio-environmental factors that cause dropouts in the district and find out the student-related factors that cause dropouts in the district. Four research questions are answered. The scope, limitations, delimitations as well as assumptions of the study are well outlined. Literature review is based on the research objectives. Research gap and theoretical framework are also shown. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive survey design. The target population is 234 dropouts and 20 public day secondary school principals. The sample population is five principals and 25 dropouts. The sampling technique used is purposive. Data collection tool is interview guides for both the principals and the dropouts. Piloting involved two principals and three dropouts. Reliability of the instruments is verified using the test- re-test method and Pearson's correlation coefficient formula is used to determine reliability. Correlations coefficient of 0.840 was obtained from male dropouts, female dropout and principals. Content validity has been determined by the supervisor and a panel of experts during presentation and defence of the proposal. Data is analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to generate frequencies, tables and percentages. Data is presented in form of tables, graphs and pie charts. Results and discussion are also given. Chapter five contains summary, conclusion and recommendations. The study concludes that the leading factors that cause students dropout in Gatundu North district, Kiambu County are student related factors like poor academic performance, being over age and girls wanting to get married. Family related factors are in the second position with poverty as the main cause while socio-environmental factors fall in the third position with pregnancy in girls being the main cause. Discipline problems, which is a school related factor falls in the fourth position. The study recommends that teachers trained in special needs education be posted to public day secondary schools in order to lower the number of students dropping out due to student related factors like poor academic performance and being over-age. In order to minimize the number of students abandoning school due poverty, the government should increase school bursaries and increase finance for Free Day Secondary Education.