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*Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>***INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH****RESEARCH ARTICLE****A Conceptual Framework on the Effect of School Characteristics on Student Dropout in Vihiga County, Kenya****Tom Shavisa**

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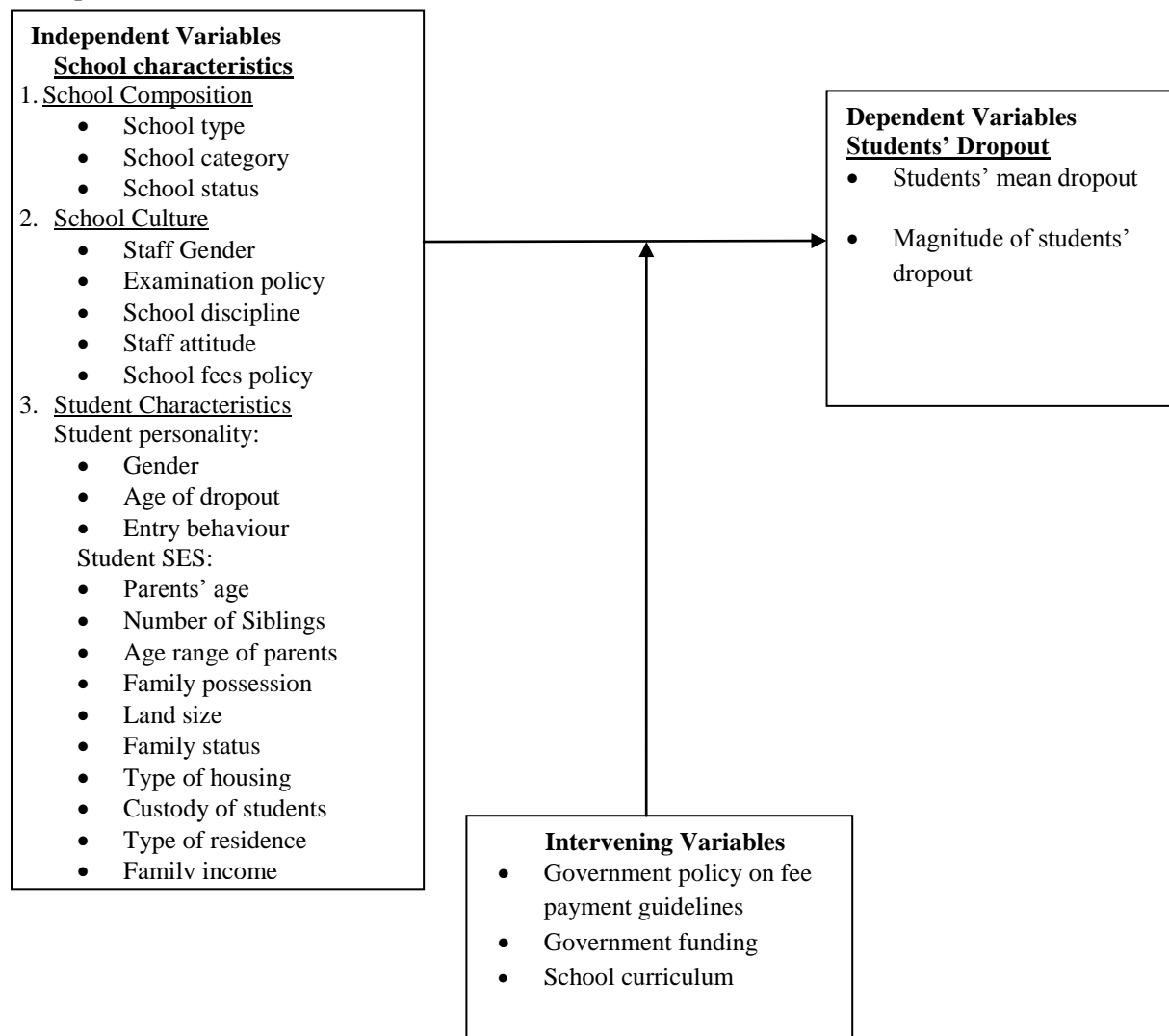
School Characteristics, Student
Personality, School Culture.

****Corresponding Author*****Tom Shavisa.*****Abstract***

The conceptual framework was derived from the author's doctoral thesis which adopted three pronged variables, namely; independent, dependent and intervening variables whose interplay influenced students' dropout in the sampled public secondary schools in Vihiga County, Kenya. The study was undertaken in January 2015. The study adopted a descriptive research design to enable data collection from students who had dropped out of public secondary schools between 2011 and 2014. Snowball sampling technique was used to locate the dropouts for responses. The Independent variables, herein referred to as school characteristics were stratified in various subsets that consisted school composition, school culture and student characteristics to determine their respective influence on students' dropout, the dependent variable. The effect of Independent variables on dependent variables was measured in student mean dropout and the magnitude of dropout.

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Conceptual framework



Source: own concept 2015

Explanation:-

Many education stakeholders face challenges in conceptualizing the effect of key aspects of school characteristics that affect student dropout in public secondary schools in vihiga county, kenya. Often, reasons for students' dropout in vihiga county are speculated without justifiable empirical indicators. It is for this reason that the author illustrated a mind map indicating with definite magnitude for various variables on students' dropout. The independent variables were stratified under school composition, school culture and school characteristics.

The school characteristics were stratified in school composition which consisted school type (mixed and single sex schools), school category (day and boarding schools) and school status (county and sub-county schools).

Mixed schools, day schools and sub-county schools recorded significant student wastage rate subsequently showing that their operations were inefficient in the management of student retention.

On school culture, the framework outlined key variables that influence student dropout. The ratio of teachers' gender staffed in particular school and their attitude in relation to the sex of students enrolled in the school had significant impact on student dropout. The mean contribution for teachers' gender and attitude was 43%. However, the prevailing examination policy in sampled schools accounted for 73% while school discipline accounted for 67% of the student wastage. Students had developed phobic tendencies towards frequent examination subjected to them with stringent pass mark whose failure to attain led to exclusion from school. The contributor effect of school fees

policy on student dropout was placed at 49%, contradicting a conventional belief that school fees was the main cause for student dropout in Kenya. The legal and fiscal framework that favors retention of female gender in school and the government provision of bursaries and fee subsidies cushions vulnerable students against dropout.

The framework dichotomized student's personality traits on gender, age and entry behavior against those related to socio-economic status (SES). The traits on student SES include; age of parents, number of siblings, age range of parents, family possession in terms of vehicular property and livestock. The other SES variables were acreage of land, family status whether single or married, type of housing designated by either permanent or temporal artifact including the locality of residence, whether rural or urban. Other factors investigated included whether the students' custody was with biological parents or other relatives. The level and sources of family income were considered too. It was found that the student personality and SES traits respectively affected dropout negatively irrespective of the size land owned by the family, whose differentiated effect on dropout was minimal. Therefore family demographic composition, possession, area and type of residence were reflective indicators on its affluence and ability to fund the cost of education or not.

Conclusion:-

Much student wastage was reported in mixed secondary schools, day schools and sub-county schools as opposed to single sex schools, boarding schools and county schools. It was observed that the latter sets of schools had an adequate endowment of both human and infrastructural resources that prorate a school culture which attracted students of high achievement from family background that cherished and supported secondary schooling.

In most schools, pre-existing examination policies impeded optimum student retention. Most of the examination policies had a punitive appendage to students who failed accustomed by flogging, reprimanding or exclusion. Similarly, the vicious effect of school fees policy greatly diminished on account of economic ability of parents and the prevailing government framework through bursaries and subsidies towards secondary education.

However, student discipline indicated a significantly negative effect on student wastage whose magnitude was not only worrisome but had to be retracted.

Male students were more prone (27%) to wastage as opposed to the female ones (74%). The KCPE entry mark had a remarkable contribution on student wastage besides their age. Notably overage and underage students were more prone to dropout than the moderate aged student admitted in secondary schools.

Recommendation:-

There is need for the government in Kenya to undertake the full cost of secondary education to curb students' wastage due to inability to effectively fund their education on the basis of SES and the composition of schools the seek admission to.

Oral and written examinations be discarded in all forms at secondary level instead, emphasis on student psychomotor ability in student evaluation take a centre stage.

A definite priority in the forecast of the quota and professional skills in training of secondary school teachers to regard gender equity and retraining to ensure emotional stability amongst them.

To provide teachers keen on role modeling learners with a positive professional attitude.

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