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Original Article

Impact of Cultural Attachment on Intention to Drop Out of School in Public Primary Schools: A Cross-sectional Study Kazo district, Uganda

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Intention to drop out of school and consequential child dropout due to cultural attachment, particularly among cattle keepers is a global challenge in various contextual settings. The study investigated the contributions of cultural attachment on intention to drop out of school in the primary schools in the Kazo district. Analytical cross-sectional design using a quantitative approach was conducted in January 2022 among 338 children in primary six and primary seven in the six public primary schools in Kazo district. Pearson product-moment correlations and linear regression were conducted using Stata 15. The study findings were that cultural attachment had a moderate positive impact on intention to drop out of school in the primary schools in Kazo district ($r = .0.10$, $p = .242$) and explained only 1% of the variance of intention to drop out of school in the primary schools in Kazo district ($r^2 = .01$). Therefore, various cultural attachment influence intention to drop out of school. Strategies for cultural attachment are paramount.

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INTRODUCTION

Intention to drop out of school encompass consideration and intent of dropping out of school or unsure to continue in school (Khalkhali, Sharifi, & Nikyar, 2013). There is growing concern around the world about how to educate everyone and understand the complexity of human learning (Eilam, 2022). Given this fact, cultural practices have become an important factor in understanding human learning. Education plays a big role in people's lives. Education helps individuals understand the world and the environment in order to live their lives properly. It makes the individual aware of the various values, norms, customs and traditions that are essential to his existence and development. It provides individuals with all kinds of knowledge, information, and resources they need to learn to move forward (Torres & Bosio, 2020). Education is an important shaper of the social system, shaping the individuality of the younger generation and their culture, educating them for life, and preparing for the kind of society in which they live. In other words, through educational means, individuals learn to follow cultural values.

Unlike the United Nations (UN) Convention on Children's Rights (Blanchfield, 2013), cultural practices do not respect the education of children with special needs. Some groups of learners with a particular cultural and linguistic backgrounds, commonly referred to as ethnicity, have a general perception that they have a cultural predisposition to achieve.

Uganda introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 to minimize dropouts for children. More schools were built, teachers were trained and fees were abolished (Nguyen & King, 2022). School-aged children graduating from school or dropping out of school early, despite the Ugandan government's efforts to achieve UPE as part of an education and sustainable development goal for 44.44 million people. There are still many. For

example, the latest UNHS 2016/17 shows that 12% of school-aged children have never attended school and 48.2% have dropped out (Musimenta, 2018). According to the Education department of Kazo district, pupils enrolment has been declining over the years and it has been realized that the number of pupils who begin the lower primary do not all complete primary level. In lower primary, pupil enrolment is always over 100 but at Primary 7 enrolment drastically goes below 60 (Inspector of Schools of Kazo district, 2020). Currently, learner enrolment in various schools do not reach even 600 pupils as it ranges in 578, 558, 528, 451, 433 and 283 (DEOs Office Kazo district, 2021). Failure to complete the basic cycle of education not only limits the future prospects of the child, but also significantly wastes the limited resources available to the country to provide education (Sabates, Westbrook, Akyeampong, & Hunt, 2010). Furthermore, it is assumed that dropouts are associated with cultural practices within Kazo district such as parent's mentality, which prohibits girl-child education at higher levels, boys leaving schools in favour of looking after cows, among other practices (Namukwaya & Kibirige, 2014). This study will therefore explore the relationship between Cultural attachment and Intention to drop out of school in the selected primary schools in Kazo District, Southwestern Uganda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was an analytical cross-sectional study among 342 primary six and seven children in Kazo district using quantitative methods in January 2022. Kazo district is one of the new districts in Uganda characterized by people who are cattle keepers. Higher child dropouts due to early marriages are common in the area.

Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970), 342 as sample size was selected from 2,822 population of children in primary six and primary seven in six

selected public primary schools in Kazo district. Disproportionate random sampling method was used to select respondents. This method enabled the researcher to obtain a sample of 342 respondents during the study period. The questionnaire was adopted (Khalkhali et al., 2013). However, the section for Cultural attachment was based on the behaviours reported by Rapid Response Brief report on the causes of child dropout (Uganda Education Management Information System (EMIS) report, 2009). Data were collected by the trained social scientists together with a principal investigator who is a trained teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience. The questionnaire was developed in English. Face –to – face interviews were used to collect the data. The Mbarara University of Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee approved this study. Participation in the study was voluntary and head teachers provided written

informed consent on behalf of parents/guardians after being provided with information about the study aims, benefits and potential risks. Data was entered into Microsoft Excel 10.0 and imported into Stata version 15 for analysis. Frequencies were performed to determine the proportions of social characteristics Pearson product moment correlation and linear regression were performed.

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Pupils in Public Primary School Kazo District

Table 1 shows that of the 338 pupils, the majority of the respondents that participated in the study were females (54.7%). Majority of these pupils were aged <15 years (55.0%). Most pupils were in Primary six (61.0%).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Socio-demographic Characteristics of Pupils in Public Primary school Kazo district

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	185	54.7
	Male	153	45.3
Age (Years) Range (10-18), Mean = 14.3, SD = 1.2) years.	<15 years	186	55.0
	15 years +	152	45.0
Class	P6	206	61.0
	P7	132	39.0

Relationship between Cultural attachment and Intention to drop out of school in Primary Schools in Kazo district

Findings in Table 2 show that there was a moderate significant positive correlation between Cultural attachment and Intention to drop out of school in primary schools in the Kazo district ($r = .0.10, p = 0.242$). The coefficient of determination (adjusted r^2

$= .01$) shows that Cultural attachment accounted for a 15% change in Intention to drop out of school in primary schools in the Kazo district. These findings were subjected to a test of significance (p) and it is shown that the significance of the correlation ($p = .242$) is more than the recommended critical significance at $.05$. Because of this, the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Table 2: Results for the relationship between Cultural attachment and Intention to drop out of school among pupils in Primary schools in Kazo district

Dependent variable	Independent variable (Cultural attachment)
	$r = 0.10$
	$r^2 = 0.01$
	$p = 0.242$
	$n = 338$

DISCUSSION

This is an analytical cross-sectional study to find the extent to which cultural attachment influenced intention to drop out of school in selected 6 public primary schools in Kazo district revealed that there was a non-significant positive influence of Cultural attachment on dropout in selected public primary schools in Kazo district. Despite the positive influence of cultural behavioural, practices accounted for only 1% of the change in dropout in selected public primary schools in Kazo district. Such findings concur with previous findings, for example, in a study in in Lira district in Northern Uganda, early marriages were the biggest cultural behavioural practice in which girls were exchanged for livestock and forcing girls to dropout out of school (Neema et al., 2021).

Chemwolo (2018) and Mutai (2010) in a study of girls' social and cultural factors and gender differences in the Keiyo area found that teacher harassment, lack of role models, and early pregnancy were the leading causes of girl exhaustion. In fact, students believed that teachers had false expectations and standards for a particular group of learners. Students believed that teachers were prejudiced in making decisions about their discipline. They jump to conclusions and give up some problems that can lead to dropping out of school without proper investigation.

Moreover, Patterson, Hale, and Stessman (2007) explains that while standards and stereotypes are rarely fulfilled, conflict and frustration occurs. additionally, the economic and social circumstance of the circle of relatives is the most crucial variable affecting dropout. Besides, family size influences children's schooling cycle greatly. Gender disparities is also an issue whereby in pastoral areas with similar setting as Kazo district favours boys' schooling rather than girls, mainly if the sources are restrained, the girl is then given out for early marriage, causing high dropout and disadvantaging to girls' education (Kagoda, 2012). An implication of these findings is that just like in Kazo district, Cultural attachment are a greater contributor to child dropout in primary schools.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that cultural attachment and drop out intention were actually low with limited relationship between them. Strategies to keep cultural attachment and intentions to dropout low such as free education are paramount.

Recommendations

All stakeholders in the primary schools in Kazo district are urged to sensitize parents/guardians and children on the prevailing Cultural attachment, such as early marriages and how they relate to child dropout in the area.

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