

Full Length Research Paper

The effect of school dropout on the lives of the youth in Akim Tafo community

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Empowering the youth through education is exceptionally worthwhile as education is a strategic investment in human resource with high social returns and acts as a facilitator in almost every aspect of development. Education has become one of the key development objectives in recent times. School dropout is a social canker that many governments seek to redeem. Most government policies including free and compulsory primary education, capitation grants, the school feeding programme and other policies were instituted into the country for nationwide benefits. Despite all these measures, the foundation of school dropout is enlarging. The aim of this study was to examine the effect of school dropout on the lives of the youth in Akim Tafo community in the East Akim Municipal in the Eastern Region. To achieve this, a quantitative cross-sectional design was conducted. The study adopted the mixed method sampling technique approach. That is, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed. The simple random sampling and convenient techniques which are probability and non-probability sampling methods respectively were employed to select the sample. Questionnaires were administered to 80 teachers and students of some selected Basic and Senior High Schools as well as other residents (people) of Akim Tafo. The data used for this study included both primary and secondary sources. Data obtained from the field survey was later analyzed and discussed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16v) and Microsoft Word (2010v). The study revealed that indeed the quantity of resources that the society and parents are endowed with might have an effect on academic environment and also poverty is the largest factor which causes school dropout. Again, the study found that, school dropouts have problems securing employment and also dropouts engage in crime and other social vices such as armed robbery, prostitution and many others. The study therefore concluded that, as a basic necessity in the lives of the youth in Ghana, education should be seen as a key factor for development. The researcher recommends that parents are given soft loans and grants in order to help reduce school dropout and again, government is urged to put in place the necessary measures for the realization of free and compulsory education at all levels of education.

Keywords: School dropout, youth, Akim Tafo community, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

This topic has been discussed from time to time and there are many varied views as to why youth or children are dropped out from school. The general understanding of the word dropout is a student who leaves school or college without graduating (Encarta dictionary).

The Education For All (EFA) shows that 28.5 million of

the 57 million children out of school in 2011, live in conflict-affected countries, the majority of whom are girls (Global Monitoring Report, 2012). It says any progress that has been made in reducing out-of-school numbers in recent years had not reached children living in conflict-affected countries. The report says they now make up

50% of children who are denied an education, an increase from 42% in 2008 (ibid).

Entitled “Children battling to go to school,” the report, which was made available to the Ghana News Agency (GNA) by the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) Team; reveals a persistence of the ‘hidden crisis’ presented since 2011. “This hidden crisis is exemplified by a continued failure to recognize education as part of a humanitarian response. “Education accounted for just 1.4% of humanitarian aid in 2012, down from 2% in 2009,” it states. It notes that these funds only reach around a quarter of the amount requested – the smallest proportion of any sector. The GMR team released the report in cooperation with the Save the Children to mark Malala Yousafzai’s 16th birthday, which fell on July 12. Malala, who was shot by the Taliban as she was exercising her right to go to school in Pakistan in October 2012, is not alone in her fight to go to school (GNA, 2013).

In a survey by Bruneforth (2006) on Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Nigeria on the characteristics of children who are out of school, a number of conclusions were drawn. More than half of all children aged 10 to 19 who had already left primary school did so without completion in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and many other African countries. In Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, more than 80% of rural children who had left primary school dropped out.

In view of the increasing cost of education the persistent phenomenon of school dropout has become a constant worry to all stakeholders in Ghana. According to Ghana Business News (GBN), Parliament urged government to deal with the debacle of early school dropouts to enhance the country’s strategic aim of using education to eradicate extreme poverty. The Legislators contend that the marked rise in early school dropouts, particularly at the Primary and Junior High School (JHS) levels in rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana could in the long term deepen the cycle of indigence (GBN, 2013). The focus of this research is to assess the effect of school dropout in Akim Tafo and to further determine the main causes and policy implications of the phenomenon in the community.

Problem Statement

Amongst the numerous problems the researcher noted, the issue of the effect of school dropout on the youth in Akim Tafo community caught his attention. In this community, the researcher has noted the prevailing conditions of streetism, alms begging and many others that the children engage in during school hours. These have incapacitated most parents in the community, resulting in them losing control over their children since

they are not able to provide the basic needs of the children, resulting in poor parental care in the area.

The problem of school dropout has been felt by almost if not all countries around the world. This social phenomenon has affected negatively on the children or the youth in the world. It has affected the people in Ghana for decades and it has kept on increasing due to increasing problems such as financial issues, despite many efforts being made by successive governments to nip the canker in the bud. This has created a wide room where most children engage in economic activities like commercial vehicle assistance, selling on streets and other social vices involving the dealing of drugs, engaging in prostitution and early marriages. This however, breeds unwanted pregnancy with some of them attracting some diseases and infections such as Aids, gonorrhoea and others. More so, those who drop out of school may tend to have children who have less aspiration for education and in life as a whole (Acquilano, 2009).

According to Acquilano (2009), a student who failed to graduate from high school experiences a tremendous loss of income over a lifetime. In Ghana, school dropout is not exempted at all with respect to the fact that, in the principal streets of big cities such as Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi, there are however, a lot of children selling on streets, in traffics during school hours which is child labour. This means that, while such children are supposed to be in school, they rather engage in those menial activities during school hours. Most of them are even knocked down by vehicles due to the selling on the roadside. Moreover, news reported by a TV3 news reporter on June 2006 revealed that, most of the children on the street selling or hawking have either not being to school or have dropped out due to certain issues such as parents not paying fees, non-performance and the likes.

This situation has created the atmosphere which has motivated the researcher to embark on research into the problem and come out with the causes and the possible means to curb or minimize the problem.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of school dropout on the lives of the youth in Akim Tafo community.

The study specifically seeks to:

1. Examine the academic environment of Akim Tafo.
2. Identify the causes of school dropout.
3. Identify effects associated with school dropout.
4. Examine the challenges in curbing school dropout.

Leading Research Questions

1. How is the academic environment look like at Akim Tafo?
2. What are the causes of school dropout in the area?
3. What are the effects associated with school dropout in the area?
4. What are the challenges in curbing the effects?

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is to understand the reasons why some children are out of school and how this is going to affect them in future. This will go a long way to inform the parents, the local authorities as well as the government about the possible threat and the reasons why the children are out of school. It will enable them to avoid the negative repercussions ahead of time and so doing that would positively affect the lives of the youth in Akim Tafo and that of many other communities where this phenomenon is rampant.

“Nothing is done just for doing sake” goes the popular dictum. School dropout adversely affects the youth and the community at large and so undertaken this study is very important to help bring the problem to the notice of the appropriate authorities for it to be addressed.

The study is also expected to bring to light how school dropout came about and the measures that could be put in place to ameliorate the problem which is affecting the people's lives especially the youth.

Scope of the Study

This study will be targeted on only the inhabitants of Akim Tafo community. The population of this study comprises as earlier indicated, the people of Akim Tafo community. In terms of content, the study focuses on selected Basic and Senior High Schools in Akim Tafo. These include, M/A Mix JHS, Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) JHS, W. B. M. Zion SHS and Ofori Panin SHS. Respondents would be teachers, students and anybody who would show interest in responding.

The study will focus on the academic environment of Akim Tafo; the causes of school dropout, the effects associated with school dropout and the challenges in curbing school dropout in the community.

Organization of the Study

This study is structured to provide a critical review of relevant information regarding the effect of school dropout. The study comprises five chapters and it is presented as follows: The chapter one deals with the

introduction, giving the background to the study along with the statement of the problem. The chapter also outlines the research objectives together with the research questions, significance of the study, research scope and organization of the study. Also, chapter two reviews related literature regarding many aspects of school dropout which include definition and statistics on school dropout, the various theories and models of school dropout, factors that cause school dropout, how school dropout affects the lives of the people and means to deal with it. Besides, the chapter three presents the research methodology and focuses on research design and measurement as well as the justification of choices and usage. In addition, the study population and area, sampling technique and sample size determination, sources of data, data collection activities and data analysis methods. Again, the chapter four presents the data which would be subsequently interpreted and analyzed in relation to the research objectives and questions, and discussion of findings of the study. Finally, chapter five provides a summary to the entire study, drawing conclusions and also making recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review is carried out in sections; the first section depicts causes of school dropout. The second section reveals the effects of school dropout on the economic and the social lives of the youth and on parents and securities. The final section will also reveal the challenges of curbing the effects.

Some Theories of Education and Statistics on School Dropouts of Some Countries

According to Vey (2005), educational philosophies tend towards eight major precepts of theoretical research: Humanism, Behaviourism, Cognitivism, Essentialism, Perennialism, Progressivism, Constructivism and Postmodernism (Reconstruction or Critical Pedagogy).

- Humanism contends that humans are innately good; born free but become enslaved by institutions. Humanists believe that how a person feels about learning is as important as how the person thinks or behaves.

- Behaviourism deals with the student adapting to the environment and learning is a relatively permanent change due to the experience. Contemporary behaviourists view the environment as the key to learning. Human nature, according to behaviourism, is neither good nor bad, but merely the product of one's environment.

- Cognitivism is a learning theory that is based on thought processes behind behaviour. In other words, the focus is more on the student as an active participant in the learning process.
- Essentialism stresses the basics of life. It focuses on fundamental knowledge and skills. Basic subjects, such as mathematics, natural science, history, foreign languages and literature are taught. Everyone needs to be taught what is wrong and what is right
- Perennialist theories seek to help students discover those ideas most insightful and timeless in understanding the human experience.
- Progressivism provides an approach, which is more student-centered, and that learning is entrenched in answering questions developed by the student.
- Constructivism is the idea that the environment needs to be highly adaptive to the student. In constructivism knowledge is seen as relativistic (nothing is absolute but varies according to time and space) and fallibilist (nothing can be taken for granted).
- Postmodernism or Reconstruction is the idea that learning results from an emphasis on criticism rather than evaluation with a focus on constantly rethinking and deconstructing beliefs, resources and values to reveal strategies used to represent truth claims in texts.

Over the years, many studies have been conducted on education and school dropout and these include; a study by John J. Brown from University of South Florida on school-based leaders' perspective of high school dropout in 2010. Again, John Locke's work "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" and Research on learning in Formal and informal setting (National Science Foundation, 2010) and also, Alan Fleisher's study on substance abuse and psychosocial predictors of high school dropout in Cape Town.

With regard to the problem of school dropout around the world more records about it are kept. Most countries have a large proportion of children out of school, which means that initial enrolment rates are low, school dropout rates are relatively high and the proportion of over age children is relatively small (Hunt et al, 2008). Therefore, between 1999 and 2006, the worldwide number of children not in school declined at a very fast pace of about 100 million to 77 million (World Bank Ed States, 2008). The extremely remarkable decline took place in south and west Asia, where a number of children not enrolled in school decreased by almost half from 31 million in 1999 to 17 million in 2005. An increase in enrollment in India contributed to this positive trend. However, India is still among the countries with the largest number of out of school children with over 7 million in 2006, Pakistan with 6.8 million in 2006 and also, in 2007 Ethiopia had 3.7 million school dropouts, (ibid). This means that, school dropout is a massive social problem affecting many countries which have the effect of retarding economic growth and development.

In a survey in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Nigeria in 2006 on the statistics of children who drop out of school. The conclusions were that more than half of all children aged 10 to 19 who had already left primary school without completion were available in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique. In Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, more than 80% of rural children who had left primary school dropped out. Percentages are less than half of this amount for urban children. Differences were also vast between the two poorest and richest wealth quintiles (Hunt et al, 2008).

In Burkina Faso, Mali and Mozambique, more than 90% of children from the poorest 40% of households (the two poorest quintiles) who left primary school did not complete it. Dropout is much less for the richest 40% of households, (Create, 2007). This shows that, the problem of school dropout is more prevalent among the poor than the rich and it is affecting most African countries if not all which is keeping back our growth and development. However, for children from poorer backgrounds in particular, the pressure on them to withdraw from school increases as they get older, particularly as then opportunity cost of their time increases, (ibid).

In Ghana, school dropout is a serious problem where it is attributed to many factors which are problematic and keeping many people's lives especially the youth or children stand still and not productive (Colclough et al., 2000). Also, in Ghana it was revealed that a relatively low proportion of 16 and 17 year old who did not have access to school and had low to moderate levels of dropout and over age for these cohorts (ibid).

Moreover, there are categories of school dropout which are experienced around the world. According to Voss (1966) it was exhibited in United States; that school dropout did not form a homogeneous group. He identified three categories of school dropouts. The first type is involuntary dropouts that are those who leave school as a consequence of personal crisis. Also, retarded dropouts are those who lacked sufficient ability to handle academic pressure and as a result retarded in their grade placement and are poor readers. Finally, capable dropouts are those who terminate their education prior to high school graduation despite the fact that they had the ability to do the required academic work. Most at times, children or young people within 10 and 17 years become victims of school dropout.

In Ghana, using data from 1997 Core Indicators questionnaire on 17,866 School-aged children, estimated that 11% nationally 56.5% of rural northern children in Ghana engaged in work that provide them with income (ILO, 2004). National data shows that 13.2% of children had stopped schooling. Also, in 2003 dropout rate in secondary school was 13.8% and 0.5% was for those who dropout at the primary school level

(DHS, 2003).

The Academic Environment

These theories and statistics show that, the problem of school dropout has gained an international attention. This means that, school dropout is felt by almost if not all countries.

Ghana is not an exception to this problem; school dropout is a social canker meaning that is a problem which many governments seek to redeem. Most government policies including free and compulsory primary education, capitation grants, the school feeding programme and other policies were instituted into the country for nationwide benefits. Despite all these measures, the foundation of school dropout is enlarging. There are rampant theft cases which are as a result of increasing school dropout, (Agnew, 2000). School dropouts exert or pose threat to communities because such communities experience high crime rates (Thornberry et al, 1985). This however shows that, school dropout affects the youth who are supposed to take over from the elderly people (generation). The fact is that, education gives enlightenment and knowledge which will help the youth to develop the society. Also, it is said that, the youth is the future of every nation and without the youth experiencing good education the future of the nation is doom.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that, environmental and the school surroundings in the society are the several societal routines that youngsters partake in and these two possess an ecological interaction with one another. The quantity of resources that the society and the parents are endowed with might have an effect of healthiness and capabilities at childbirth. A student attitude towards school may change when there is progress or growth at home and also changes in society population and resources might one way or another result in changes in the school setting. The willingness of societies, households and schools to play a role in children's capability, readiness and favourable chances to put into education also helps both the students and the school. Inadequate or lack of inspiration, reasonable sponsorship and educational fortunes may probably lead to student's educational failure (ibid).

However, this does not imply that schools, homes and communities should all perform perfectly to avoid educational failure. Resources in one social context might be seen as threat in another social context. For instance, an academically motivating household might be compensated for insufficient schooling and a supportive, orderly school may alleviate the effects of a hazardous and anarchic community.

Study shows that the level of education of family members is very prominent determinant for children's

willingness to attend school or vice versa. Ersado (2005: 469) accepts the idea that, the parents' educational background determines their ward's education and the job that that child decides to do in future. The level of education of the family heads influences the child's educational level. That is, parents or family heads with higher education level encourage their children to also achieve higher level in education or vice versa. Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Juneja, 2001; Pryor and Ampiah, 2003).

Investing in student is vital to educational success and student perseverance. The possibility that students will succeed academically increases when students devote time and effort to school events. The key to investing in education is the students' willingness to study. The lack of students' skills or desire to be involved in schoolroom (classroom) coursework (assignments) makes their investment in these activities probably low.

Furthermore, the degree and quality of student investment may be influenced by a student's household and school. Similarly, the degrees of students endeavor to the educational investments with exceptional academic opportunities are to large extent more beneficial than students with deprived academic opportunities. Ineffectiveness of unveiling (exposure to) demanding (challenging) subject areas or insufficient tutoring in these areas might restrain cleverness attainment. Household exposure to demanding (challenging) academic opportunities might be compensated for or accompanied school exposure or conversely.

Causes of School Dropout

Dropout is often a process rather than the result of one single event and therefore has more than one proximate cause (Hunt et al, 2008). It is clear that the number of children enrolled in school has increased over time (Create, 2007). In Africa more than 80% of children in the rural areas who had left primary school dropout (ibid). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of children who start primary school are not completing this cycle. One of the problems which are pertinent that have attracted the world attention is school dropout. This advances the fact that, education is of much importance.

Children are the leaders of their families and nations in future (Lindon, 2003). The national interest therefore was safely preserved if the needs of children were to be properly attended to; especially their educational needs (Cotton and Wikeniuund, 2001). This is due to the fact that, education which is a global vehicle that catapults every nation into development and advancement in technology cannot see the dreams of countries through to that

expected level if the problem of school dropout is felt heavily among such countries (Lenzen, 2000).

There is not one single cause of dropout. There are several factors that stand as the causes of school dropout and some have been explained below.

Poverty

First and foremost, poverty also interacts with other points of social disadvantage with the interaction of factors putting further pressure on vulnerable and marginalized children to drop out of school. Therefore, succinctly poverty has become the largest factor which causes school dropout. This however has created the atmosphere, where most poor parents could not afford school fees and uniforms as well as other basic needs necessary to send their children to school, (Hunt et al, 2008).

Besides, poverty appears to influence the demand for schooling, not only because it affects the inability of households to pay school fees and other costs associated with education but also, because it is associated with a high opportunity cost of schooling for children. With much regard to this kind of problem, most of the children are compelled to withdraw from schooling. This means that, most parents are inadequately and financially not sound to support the children schooling (UNICEF, 2007). This shows that, poverty is a social canker which discourages and makes many children to experience school dropout.

Furthermore, most parents are not gainfully employed due to the fact that, they are illiterate and hence engage themselves in petty trading where incomes gain cannot cover all their expenses. This is because each household had about five or more children to cater for. As a result of low income earned which cannot cater for the children in school, they are compelled to duck out schooling and help their parents in their work while others engaged in dubious activities to earn a living. This support the idea that, most poor families could not withstand the loss of income or labour contributed by their children and therefore asked them to stop or duck out schooling (UNICEF, 2007). Likewise, most of the children engaged in those activities end up with unacceptable behaviour that derails their future development.

Moreover, due to poverty most school children trade their body for money in order to access school. However, most of them get themselves impregnated while others get contracted to infectious diseases such as HIV and other chronic diseases (Pridmore et al, 2007). This unfortunately compels them to drop out of school in order to avoid shame. This situation becomes a problem to society. This means that, shutting schooling or dropping out of school hinder development of people

and society as a whole. Therefore, the definition of poverty connotes inadequate educational access and lack of acquiring knowledge and skill.

Poor Academic Performance

Access to basic education is the heart of development and also sustaining access to meaningful learning that has benefit is vital to improvement in outcome (Hunt et al, 2008). This depicts that, children who quit schooling as a result of their inability to meet the standard of learning in school are low productive. With respect to the fact that poor academic performance is in existence; poor attendance on the part of the children is much experienced or felt. Most children absent themselves from school because of low capabilities and abilities to learn perfectly (Akyeampong et al, 2007). This discourages them from continuing schooling. Besides, with this situation at hand, some children journey from a distant to attend school at different place. More so, they move from their communities afar to attend school in another community and as they are not performing as expected make them less optimistic. This therefore results in school dropout. Besides, most children especially the Muslim children journey to another community to attend Muslim schools (ibid). The fact is that, the area is surrounded by Muslim communities where we have "Zongo" in those areas (ibid). As most of them do not perform academically they are compelled to stop schooling. Due to such situation some of them are even forced into early marriage especially those in Junior High School.

Moreover, most children leave school because they are unable to cope with or tolerate the conditions existing within the school's environment (ibid). For instance, most children find difficulties with some subjects taught and also large number of children in one class discourages most children to have full participation in what is being taught (Akyeampong et al, 2007).

Teenage Pregnancy

One of the factors that hinder children from continuing schooling and also affecting their educational life is teenage pregnancy. Research shows that teenage pregnancy is one of the important sources of dropout among teenagers. Also, research had shown that girls who mostly become pregnant dropped out of school because they have to care for the new born child (Create, 2007). Times like this, teenagers in such situation are labeled or tagged and are laughed at by the colleagues. Thus they will be hooting at them and therefore become discouraged and often absent themselves from school and subsequently dropout of

school. The fact is that, such a person may be brilliant student but the unfortunate has set in (ibid).

In South Africa, while students cannot be victimized as a result of being pregnant, with an interview, some tutors and principals ruled that students were expected to leave school as the pregnancy start to show (Hunt et al, 2008). It can also happen that, some girls might choose to become pregnant so that their partners take care of them, this is because they lack what it takes to make a good living. Therefore to them, becoming pregnant is a dependent on the individuals' standard of living. According to Lloyd and Mensch (2006), the deprivation of social and economic prospects for girls and housekeeping responsibilities placed on them, alongside gender inequality of educational structure, might be the basis for non-academic performing that might validate premature maternity. This shows that school dropout is related to pregnancy only with girls.

On the other hand, the guys who bear the responsibility for the pregnancy also face some consequences when they are in school. For instance, Malawi and Botswana had laws which prohibit the guy from schooling, along with the girl for a period of time. Also, the Ex-President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania said that, dropouts due to pregnancy were higher in some areas than others, citing the southern region of Mtwara where at least 400 school girls become pregnant in 2006. In Rukwa in the south west, 200 school girls discontinued their education because of pregnancy (Dares, 2007).

Health Condition of Children

Cognitive development as a result of better health condition of the children helps promote their performance in school (Pridmore et al, 2007). This revealed the point that, when children experiences unhealthy condition, it affects their regular attendance in class which in the long run exert negative influence on their academic performance making them performing poorly in class.

Furthermore, health is very paramount to the development of every human life and therefore children with severe diseases can be delayed or even denied access to schooling. A research carried out by Glewwe and Jacoby (1995) about the effect of the physical conditions on the age at which children are first sent to school shows that many children begin schooling when they have far passed school age. This investigation indicated that some children are not sent to school at right age due to the fact that parents fear or feel that their wards are not bodily (physically) strong to be enrolled in school even when they are of school age. This shows that, health condition has direct correlation with children's school dropout. Unfortunately, the

educational future of these children becomes shuttered and this impacts society negatively as they become burden.

Research indicates that school-aged children who suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, hunger or who lack certain micronutrients in their diet do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children (Pridmore et al, 2007). Studies suggest that these children attend school less frequently, are more likely to repeat grades, drop out early and fail to learn adequately due to poor levels of attention, low motivation and poor cognitive function (Pridmore et al, 2007).

However, some of the children may not necessarily be the victim of poor health condition but rather may suffer from it. Children, especially girls, become caregivers for relations such as father, mother, brother, sister or grandparents who fall sick and this leads to the dropout of those children in most cases. An example is the interview that was conducted in Mongolia with a number of dropouts which revealed that caregiving for family members had resulted in many children dropping out of school. This is a situation where the children have no option than to dropping out of school to attend to his or her dear ones who are not feeling well. It may be that, these affected children may be brilliant in school but since they have no alternative than to avoid or dropout from school to take care of the affected love ones. It may be related to the fact that, the sick person is the one who looks after the child and as a result of this situation the child has to duck out schooling.

Effect of School Dropout on the Economic Life of the Youth

The long term economic implications of school dropout are and continue to be bleaker. The youth leaving the school without completion have brought negative bearing on their economic lives. In recent years, advancement in technology which has fueled the demand for a highly skilled labour force, transforming a high school education into a minimum requirement for entry into the labour market has worsened the economic insignificance of school dropouts (Vermont, 2011).

With respect to this situation, the completion of Senior High School has an essential requirement for numerous jobs and tertiary education entry. The economic outcomes of not having a diploma are very difficult. This situation has put many young people behind the access to good and well-paid jobs (Create, 2007). This becomes a serious case, where young people or students who are devoid of intellectual skills because of dropping out of school become unfit to take any challenging position in their societies which demand the educated personalities. Besides, the unemployment rate for dropouts is very

high as compared to the unemployment rate of high school graduates. Even when the dropouts are employed, they earn less salary (ibid). This eventually affects dropout youths who earn low income and they are therefore not able to meet their daily needs making their economic life unbearable and unaffordable. Therefore, their future becomes shuttered where most youth engage in dubious activities in order to meet the necessities of daily life (Acquilano, 2009).

Others also find themselves in trading activities that cannot even provide for them the basic necessities because of low capital for their trading. This shows that, most of the young people

who completed school are able to find themselves in business and other industrial work where they are well paid later for their daily needs to the extent that they are able to save (Antwi 2002). Also, having a senior high school certificate makes people acquire basic skills that enable them to be either admitted into an advanced level of education or be recruited into any of the forces work being it military or police. Again, the Human Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of investment in human capital, such as a high school education therefore determines "economic success in life." This however means that, parents who have low human capital affect their children by also becoming young people with low human capital. In furtherance, parents who did not attend school or better still have little education to large extent do not have the zeal for education. Relatively, the children of these parents would also have no interest for schooling and to a greater extent drop out of senior high school. This indicates that, children with low educational attainment because of school dropout are not able to find professional jobs where monthly salary is high. Besides this, most of them become jobless in the sense that, they don't have the requisite knowledge and skills to gain better job to make good living. This makes them experience low standard of living as their economic life is not of the good one (Ingrum, 2011).

It is generally believed that, those young people who did not complete high school cannot even find lucrative job to make a living. The fact is that, they become less attractive to employers because of low or lack of skills. This makes some engage in dangerous activities like hunting for bush meats and also cutting logs for sale while others find themselves in social vices by developing illegitimate routines such as prostitution that even end in pregnancy or contracting sexually transmitted diseases like Aids and gonorrhoea, armed robbery or other socially shameful acts to earn a living. Therefore, according to the Human Capital Theory, people with less educational investment would not do well in the economy as compare to people whose level of education is high (Ingrum, 2011).

Effect of School Dropout on the Society

Society or community is diversely being affected by the behaviour and other social activities of the people residing in it. This however shows that, the safety mode of society is not spared when school dropout is on the increase. School dropout exert burden on the community or the public where especially young people whose parents are in the state of extinct and have nowhere to go but to rely on people to have a living (Thornberry et al, 1985). This upsurged dependence on public assistance is to be expected, due to the fact that young women who drop out of school are more likely to have children at younger ages and more likely to be single parents than high school graduates (NCES, 1998). The implication here is that, they create a worrying responsibility for the community where the public have to take care of the young people when it is very impossible or difficult if not easy for someone to take care of these young people especially when these children's parents do not exist.

In addition, a community is not spared especially when the rates of school dropout were high; such a community experiences higher crime rates (Thornberry et al, 1985). This appears more with the issue of delinquency and drug related crime and other highly risky behaviours such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse and sexual activities. Specific communities also saw a decrease in property values, which ultimately led to homes which were poorly maintained, urban blight and transient neighborhood, (Acquilano, 2009). With respect to this issue, there are threats on social stability of community where robbery becomes the order of the day.

The issue of school dropout has strong or direct implication on the social life of the youth. Most of the young people engage in various activities to make a living. However, some find themselves in prostitution, drug selling, smuggling, robbery and even practising occultism and "blood money" in order to have a living (Hunt, 2007). This however, makes them unfit in the face of social rules of society which makes most of them end their lives in prison while others are got killed through robbery. Besides, the individual strains and weariness related to dropout have social repercussions: dropouts make up uneven percentages of every nation's prisons and death row inmates (Hunt et al, 2007).

One research study pointed out that 82% of America's prisoners are high school dropouts (Vermont, 1999). The serious and worried situation is that, many of the young people used to be brilliant students when they were in school but financial constraints among others compel them to duck out schooling and get themselves involved in social vices. This destroys their bright future which would have had a good bearing on society but rather the opposite felt.

The Challenges of Curbing the Effects

There are many issues that are impediment to the diminution of the effects of school dropout. The following discussion reviews some factors that can help curb school dropout and their challenges.

School Related Factors

Preschool: Preschool centers can be of help to eliminate dropouts, as elder girls with childcare obligations are normally taken out from school to take care of their little brothers or sisters (Andvig et al., n.d.). Also, for children from socio-economically disadvantaged families, the compensatory role of preschool seeks to minimize later school failure. Thus, preschools must foster a foundation of learning skills that are built upon in elementary school and beyond. In contrast, for children from more advantaged families, the role of preschool is viewed as enrichment. That is, without preschool, there is little chance that this latter group of children will fail in school. Rather, preschool will help these children simply be more prepared to succeed in school and to transition to formal schooling more easily. For these reasons, preschools might alleviate some of these pressures that lead to school dropout. On the other hand, children who go to preschool to a certain degree stay in school for a lengthy period in numerous environments and as a result they probably stop schooling at basic level. Preschool under school related factors can be reviewed using flexible schooling hours or systems.

Helpful schooling periods or timetables: Most kids, especially the ones who are from agrarian or pastoral communities are pressurized to work on the time that collides with conventional school schedules or hours. Perpetual departures of parents or guidance from one community to the other lead to dropout. Helpful schooling periods help to eliminate or decrease dropout rates. For instance, the day-to-day schooling timetable may be scheduled or structured such that it does not conflict with the working hours of children. Therefore, the morning, afternoon and evening schooling must be introduced in such areas or communities in order to avoid dropout. As indicated by Kane in 2004, helpful schooling timetables have increased the number of girls in school and have therefore, declined the degree of dropouts.

Monetary Assistance

Loan accessibility: Children who are from families that gain access to loans from banks or any other form of financial assistance are to large extent unlikely to be taken out of school. As proposed by Ersado in 2005, this

affects those in the rural communities as loans become very difficult to access.

Some families do have access to credit yet they give support to their wards on condition. This explains that conditional child support (provisional assistance) is an important intervention on school dropout.

Provisional assistance: There are some forms of assistance such as monetary, food and many others which facilitate or help parents to send their wards to school. This assistance of parents by either government or cooperate entities helps increase the number of children who attend school. For example, monies were sent to families that are willing to send their wards to schools and who aimed at protective healthcare in the PROGRESA program in Mexico.

Excellent (Quality) Intervention

Intensive care: It is important to improve monitoring, accountability measures or systems and motivation (Banerjee and Duflo, 2006; Birsdall et al, 2005). Parents' involvement and frequent accurate information from the school authorities are of very imperative in intensive care.

Monitoring is not the only factor that can be used to resolve the problem of school dropout under quality intervention rather community involvement can be used to review.

Also, community participation in the school activities or collaboration between school authorities and the community can help increase enrolment into education and moderate dropouts as well as improving teachers' attendance. Examples are Kane's 'mother education committees' in India in 2004 and the EDUCO programme in El Salvador which has encouraged a lot of girls to school and as a result reduced the dropout rate of girls.

Conceptual Framework for Causes and Effects of School Dropout

After reviewing related materials, it came to light that school dropout as a problem was not only found in Ghana or African continent but a global phenomenon (see figure 1). There are various causes of school dropout which include poverty; unexpected teenage pregnancy; health condition of children; poor performance in school; inadequate facilities and distance from homes to the schools; attitudes of parents toward education of their wards; school environment to mention but few. Besides, the problem of school dropout affects the social life of the youth making them engage in unaccepted social activities which even can end them in death. The community and parents are not spared of the

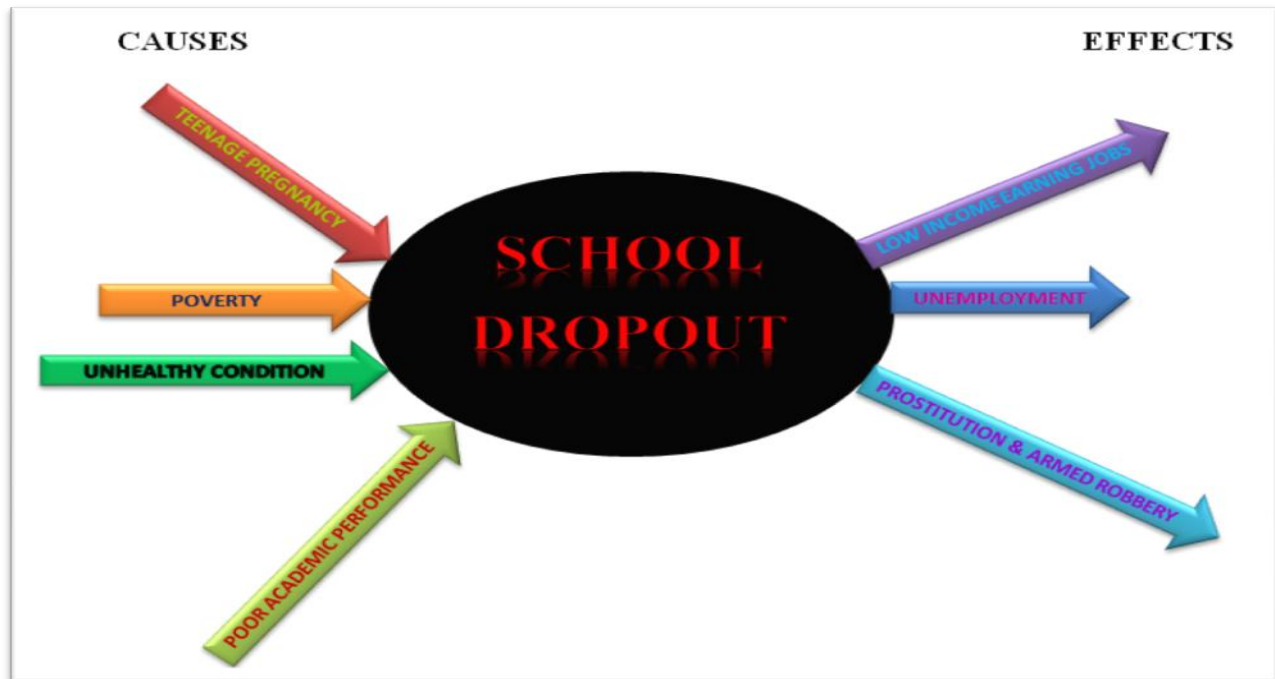


Figure 1: A framework showing causes and effects of education

Source: Researcher's own construct.

effects of school dropout and also the economic life of the youth is adversely affected where those who were able to complete school get good and highly paid jobs as compared to victims of school dropout who earn less income or none. Therefore, the researcher suffices that, school dropout leaves no good effects on people and the society as a whole and can be curbed through financial support, quality interventions among others from the parents, the communities and the government at large.

METHODOLOGY

This aspect will look at the methods or various techniques that will be employed to collect and analyze the data for the study. These methods include research design, population, sampling technique, sample size, sources of data, data gathering instrument and data analysis. The chapter will also capture the profile of research organization and limitations.

Research Design

For the purpose of this study the Cross-Sectional design will be employed in the study. This is because the researcher's data collection will be based on questionnaire. Also, in relation to the topic "school

dropout on the lives of the youth," it can be classified under a Cross-Sectional or a social study due to the fact that, Cross-Sectional entails the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to detect patterns of association. Therefore, as the researcher has more than one case or variable to study and also the quantitative data will be collected simultaneously, Cross-Sectional is the appropriate design for this study.

Population

The population for the study constitutes teachers, students, parents and anyone who would be willing to contribute.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique that will be employed for the research will be mixed method. That is both probability and non-probability will be used. The probability gives the respondents an equal chance of being selected. On the other hand, with respect to non-probability, there is no way of specifying the probability of each unit's

Table 1: Showing the Sampling Technique Used To Obtain the Sample Size from Each Category of People

CATEGORY	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE	SAMPLING TECHNIQUE
TEACHERS	50	15	CONVENIENT
STUDENTS	250	40	SIMPLE RANDOM
OTHER PEOPLE	100	25	SIMPLE RANDOM
TOTAL	400	80	

Source: Researcher's own construct

inclusion in the sample and there is no assurance that every respondent has some chance of being included .

Table 1 depicts that out of 50 teachers, convenient sampling under non-probability sampling technique will be used to select 15 teachers as sample size. The simple random sampling under probability sampling technique will also be used to select 40 students as sample size from 250 students. Again, out of 100 people, simple random sampling under probability sampling technique will be used to select 25 people as sample size.

With respect to the simple random technique, 'Yes' or 'No' will be written on pieces of papers and will be sent round to respondents. Picking 'Yes' will give you automatic chance to be included in the respondents. With regard to convenient technique, selection is purely at the discretion of the researcher and therefore, the researcher will select whatever units which are conveniently available. Therefore, the sample size for the study will constitute 80 people from the population so as to get a clear picture of what is actually happening on the ground.

Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study will be both the primary and the secondary sources of data. The primary source includes material that is closest to the person, period or idea being studied. In relation to the research survey, the source of primary data will be the questionnaire that will be answered by the people of Akim Tafo. These people would provide first-hand information concerning the research topic under investigation. The secondary source materials, then, interpret, assign value to, conjecture upon and draw conclusions about the events reported in primary sources. These are usually in the form of published works such as journal articles or books, but may include radio or television documentaries or conference proceedings. The analysis and generalization on the topic would be on the original testimony obtained from the questionnaire.

Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument that the researcher will be employed to

collect the data is a survey. Therefore, questionnaire will be the method upon which the researcher will gather information as this source of data is one of the frequently used sources of data in surveys. There are, however, several important factors to consider in making effective use of questionnaire in the survey of school dropout on the lives of the youth. In drawing out the questionnaire, the researcher will consider the resident of the respondents. The respondents will be both literate and illiterates. Therefore, among illiterates, filling out the questionnaire could be conducted by the researcher or any literate relation of the respondent through the use of local language (Twi) and translate it into English. Again, the behaviour will be in a more private setting, it will also be convenient to give out questionnaire to respondents in the evening when they have retrieved from normal stressful activities and on Sundays when they have returned from church and are less busy. In the case of teachers and students, it will be appropriate to administer questionnaire to them during school hours. It would be necessary to begin the questionnaire with a cover letter explaining the motive of the research to eradicate doubts.

Once introduced, the questionnaire would be presented in such a way that, the respondents will be interested in participating. The respondents will be assured of confidentiality so that their confidence will be increased. It is important to establish a good rapport with respondents, therefore the researcher will employ friendly and mutual attitude using familiar jovial languages to set respondents at ease. The researcher endeavors to receive the most efficient response in the questionnaire, thus the researcher would make them easy to follow and unambiguous. The language of the questions will therefore be meaningful and orderly. The questions will be fairly simple to prevent the wondering attention of respondents in the process.

Data Analysis

The research will use frequency tables, charts and descriptive tools to analyze the data. The research will also use SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, 16.0 version) as well as Microsoft Word 2010 version in the analysis of its data. The SPSS will enable the researcher to enter data and also define the variables through the data view and variable view respectively.

The SPSS will be used to generate summaries of descriptive statistics (frequency tables and charts) of the variables that will be studied. At the end of the entire data collection process, the data will be entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical tools such as charts and frequency tables will be used to show the results of the data. The Microsoft Word will be used to interpret and analyze the information collected from the field and discuss the findings in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two.

Profile of Research Organization

The study area is Akim Tafo in the East Akim Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The name of the traditional ruler of Akim Tafo is Osabarima Adusei Peasah IV. They celebrate Ohum Festival and their language is Akim/Akyem (Twi). The indigenous people are mostly engaged in subsistence farming. However, there are others who engage in petty trading. The community has three sub-areas; Old Tafo, Mid Tafo and New Tafo and has a population of about 10, 500 people. Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) is located in Akim Tafo. The Cocoa Research Institute at New Tafo with its arboreta welcomes visitors. Akim Tafo is situated in Abuakwa in the Eastern Region of Ghana and its geographical coordinates are 6° 14' 0" North, 0° 24' 0" West. The community which is about ten square miles in area is about eight miles (13 km) from Koforidua, Eastern Regional capital.

According to oral tradition, the people of Tafo emerged from the 7th abyss (deepest depth) of the River Birim at Bunso called "Afriyem" on the 7th day of the 7th month of 1435 with 77 people and their stools.

They were said to have settled at the sacred grove before the arrival of the 1st European in 1471. Their first chief Nana Okru Banin I came with his four (4) sisters; Baawa Firi, Asabea Adikyem, Dadebea and Amoakoa Panin. They were accompanied by a fetish priest called Okomfo Asare who was in charge of the rites performed during the celebration of the Ohum Festival. The people of Tafo led by a dog with a burning firewood in the mouth (Gyentia edii kan no, tua kraman ano) which signified that they were of the Aduana clan.

After emerging from the river, the people moved about metres away and the water that stripped from their bodies created a pool of about 5 feet deep which is still

in existence. According to oral sources, it is forbidden to fish in that pond using nets or hook.

After staying there for some time the Tafo people led by their 5th chief, Nana Kofi Badu Asare who was also called "Kontibaako" moved from Afriyem to settle at Awansawaso which is between Osiem and Anyinasin. The appellation; "Tafo Awansa, Etwie a oda ne pomu" depicts their settlement at Awansawaso. They had a deity by name Oboo Yaw whose shrine can still be located at Awansawaso.

According to oral tradition, the Akyem Abuakwa people came to meet the Tafo people when Nana Duodu Amoah I was chief of the Tafo people. The name Tafo emerged from a word 'Taforo' which means licking and 'Taforo' was given by Nana Duodu Amoah I which was used to mean that the people loved themselves and had been licking each other as dogs have been doing.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The fourth chapter of the study presents the background analysis of data and proceeds to present the results and its interpretation in the light of the research objectives and questions in the same sequence as listed in chapter one. The chapter continues by linking the findings of the study to the literature reviewed in chapter two.

This chapter has been divided into sections. Section A examines the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents; Section B examines the academic environment of Akim Tafo; Section C identifies the causes of school dropout; Section D identifies effects associated with school dropout and Section E examines the recommendations for curbing school dropout. The use of charts and tables are employed to give more meaning to the findings and the analysis. All the data in this section are primary source (that is first-hand information) gathered by the researcher.

Background Analysis of Data

A total of 80 people participated in the study with an equal number of questionnaires sent out and responded to by the people of Akim Tafo (respondents who constitute teachers, students and other people from all walks of life in Akim Tafo). After the field survey 68

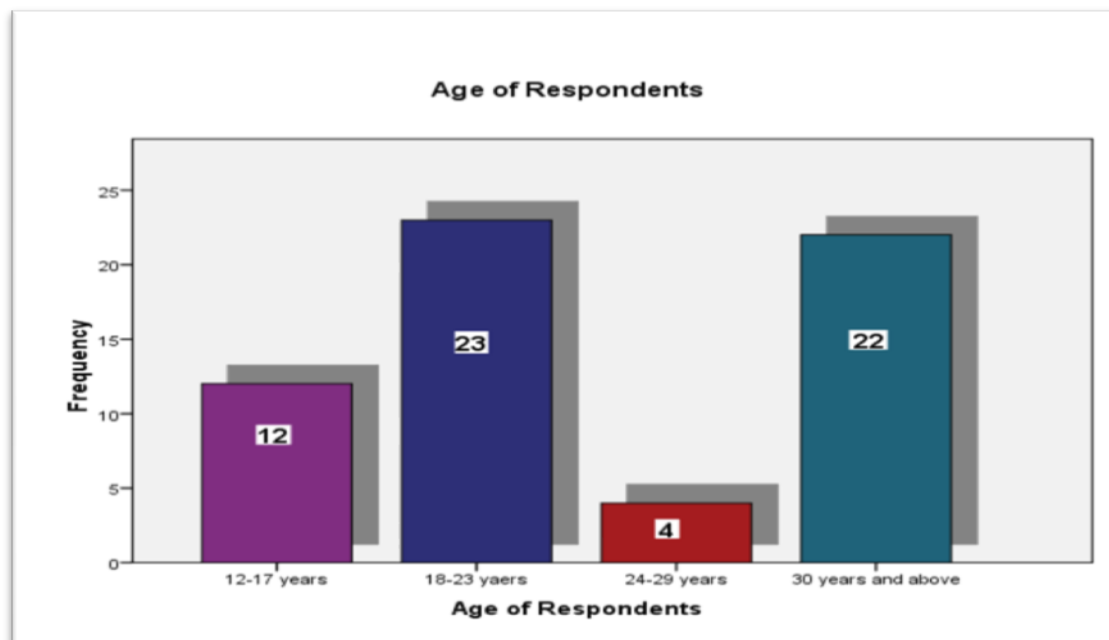


Figure 2: Bar Chart Depicting the Age Distribution of Respondents

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (March, 2015)

questionnaires were returned, out of this number 61 were well answered representing a response rate of 76% of the 80 sample size and it is in good shape for serious analysis. This showed a favourable response rate as compared to what was established by ILO (2004) in the literature. Bailey asserted that the minimal acceptable response rate was 75%. Schutt indicated that below 60% was unacceptable but Babbie stated that a 50% response rate was adequate. As noted in the Canadian Medical Association Journal's (CMAJ) editorial policy, "Except for in unusual circumstances, surveys are not considered for publication in CMAJ if the response rate is less than 60% of eligible participants." All these were the reasons that made the research use the 76% response rate.

The remaining 7 were not usable as some of them were not touched at all by the respondents and others answered 4 or 5 questions out of the 26 questions asked.

Socio-Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

The behaviour and perception of people are to large extent influenced by their socio-demographic background. This statement reinforces the widespread contention of sociological models noted by Mainoo (2011) that people emanate from and are influenced by their background. Therefore, the researcher decided to give credence to the socio-demographic features of the

respondents. These include age, sex, marital status, educational background and religious affiliation as well as the occupation of respondents. These features were considered in order to give the researcher an insight into different people's (being males or females, married or single among others) take on the issue of school dropout.

Age of Respondents

The figure 2 above illustrates the data collected from the field and the respondents who participated in the survey and responded to issues raised had majority of them thus 23(37.7%) between the age range of 18-23 years and most of them were students, followed closely on its heels by those who were 30 years and above forming 22(36.1%). Also, 12(19.7%) were between the age range of 12-17 years which most of them were students and 4(6.6%) were between the age range of 24-29 years. The age of respondents helped the researcher to differentiate between the different categories of respondents.

Sex of Respondents

The statistics shown in figure 3 indicates that 50.8% of respondents were males as against 49.2% of females. These percentages were gotten from 31 males and 30

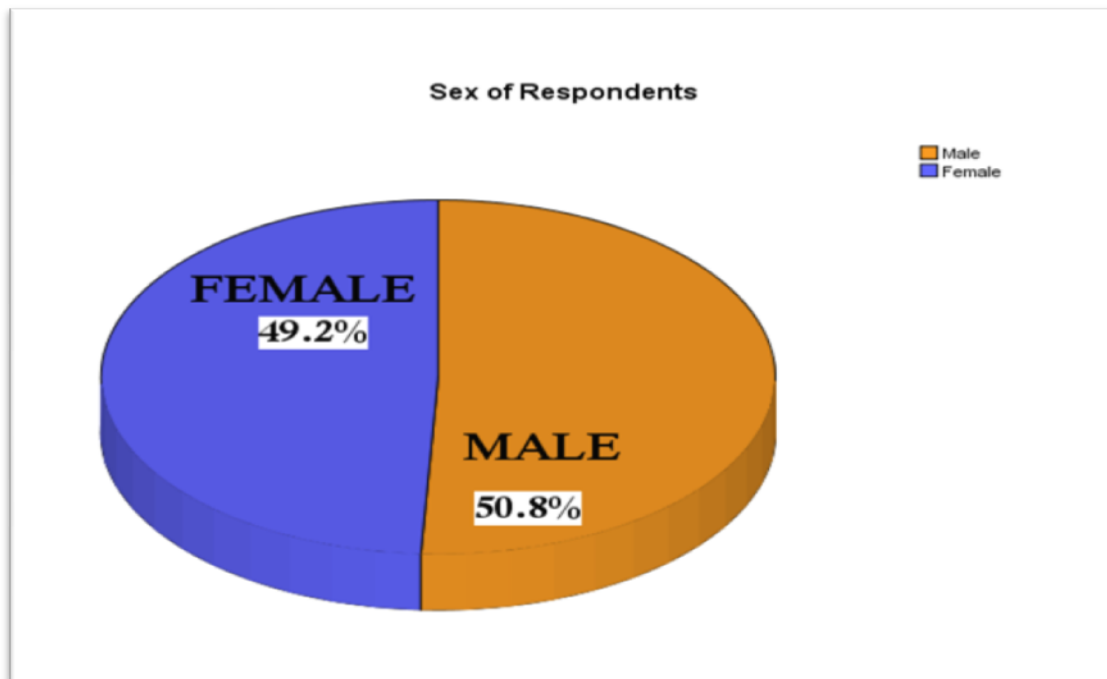


Figure 3: Pie Chart Representing the Sex of Respondents

females respectively. This would make the study devoid of gender inequality. Therefore, sex of respondent was useful as the researcher was able to know the gender balance so as to make constructive analysis devoid of gender disparity.

Marital Status of Respondents

Table 12: Marital Status of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Married	16	26.2
Single	41	67.2
Divorced/Separated	3	4.9
Widow/Widower	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (March, 2015)

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they are married or not and out of 61 respondents, 41 respondents representing 67.2% were single. However, 16 respondents representing 26.2% were married. 3 were divorced or separated and 1 was a widow representing 4.9% and 1.6% respectively. It can be deduced from the table 2 that majority of the respondents were single since students constitute the greatest number of the sample size as evident in the sample size and sampling technique of chapter three of

the study. As useful as it was, marital status helped the researcher to distinguish between students and other respondents.

Educational Background of Respondents

Table 3: Educational Background of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
No education	1	1.6
JHS/SHS	41	67.2
Tertiary	18	29.5
Other specify	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (March, 2015)

The research revealed that, most respondents had attained one form of education or the other. Statistics confirmed that 41(67.2%) of the respondents have had either basic or secondary education, followed by 18(29.5%) constituting those with tertiary education. Also, 1(1.6%) indicates no education and a similar proportion was indicated for RSA stage two. It can be again deduced from the finding of table 3 that most respondents were students as evident in the sample size and sampling technique of chapter three of the study. As positive as it was, educational background of the respondents gave the researcher the insight to separate the literates from the dropouts.

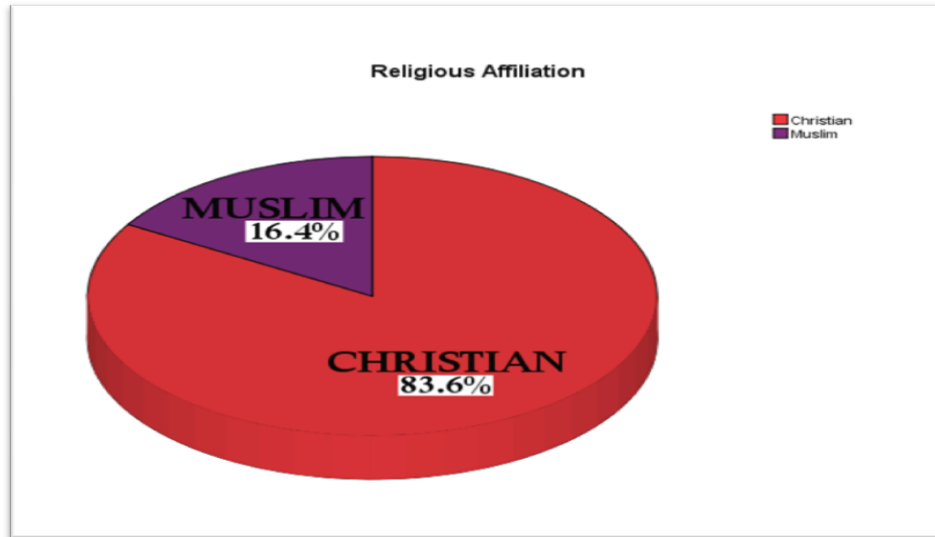


Figure 4: Pie Chart Illustrating the Religious Affiliation of Respondents
Source: Researcher’s Field Survey (March, 2015)

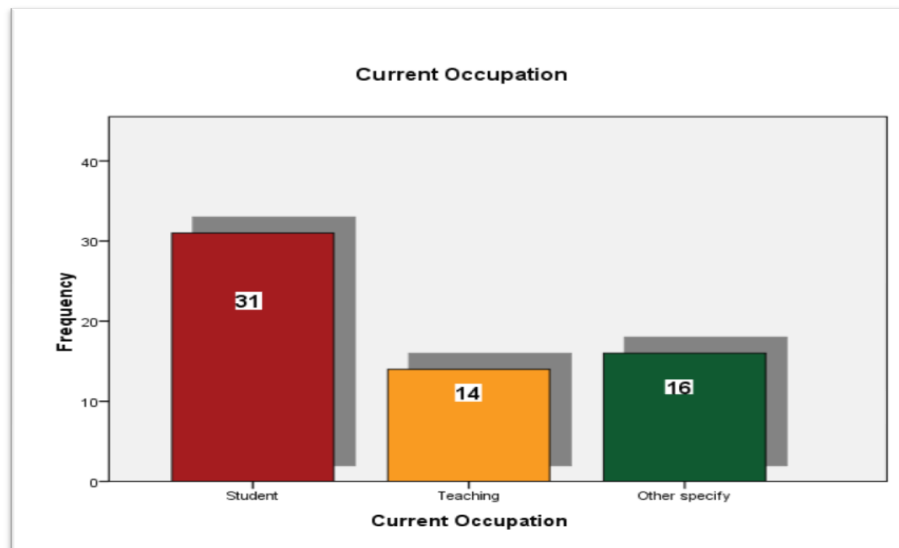


Figure 5: Bar Chart Showing the Current Occupation of Respondents
Source: Researcher’s Field Survey (March, 2015)

Religious Affiliation of Respondents

Most of the respondents who took part in the research survey were Christians and few of them were Muslims constituting 51(83.6%) and 10(16.4%) respectively. It is quite clear from figure 4 that, Akim Tafo is predominantly Christian dominated community. This helped the researcher to know how some people responded to certain questions the way they did as religion to large extent influences the thought of many people.

Current Occupation of Respondents

The figure 5 displays findings on the occupations of respondents. Out of 61 respondents, 31(50.8%) were students, followed by 16(26.2%) respondents from all walks of life including nurses, police personnel, farmers, traders, bankers, hair dressers, taxi drivers and a carpenter. 14(23.0%) of the respondents were teachers and this appears to be the true reflection of the number of people in each category evident in the table which

Table 4: Academic Environment of Akim Tafo

STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
School dropout is a prevalent (common) phenomenon in this community	2(3.3%)	1(1.6%)	8(13.1%)	19(31.1%)	31(50.8%)
The level of education of parents is a very important determinant for children's willingness to attend school	8(13.1%)	4(6.6%)	6(9.8%)	14(23.0%)	29(47.5%)
The quantity of resources that the society and parents are endowed with might have an effect on academic environment	4(6.6%)	5(8.2%)	4(6.6%)	23(37.7%)	25(41.0%)
Changes in society population and resources might result in changes in the school setting	3(4.9%)	7(11.5%)	7(11.5%)	28(45.9%)	16(26.2%)
Inadequate or lack of inspiration, reasonable sponsorship and educational fortunes may likely lead to student's educational failure	0(0.0%)	5(8.2%)	1(1.6%)	18(29.5%)	37(60.7%)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (March, 2015)

shows sample size and sampling technique in the chapter three of the study. As important as it was, current occupation did inform the researcher the kind of people who answered the questions so as to make proactive analysis.

Academic Environment

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that, environmental and the school surroundings in the society are the several societal routines that youngsters partake in and these two possess an ecological interaction with one another. Also, according to Thornberry et al., (1985), school dropouts exert or pose threat to communities because such communities experience high crime rates. It is evident from those two statements that both the societal and school surroundings are intertwined. Therefore, this section examines the academic environment of Akim Tafo. Using a Likert Scale, the respondents were asked to tick whether they strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree to issues raised (Table 4).

School Dropout Is a Prevalent (Common) Phenomenon in This Community

The views of respondents on the issue of school dropout being prevalent in Akim Tafo saw 50(81.9%) of the 61 respondents agreeing to that. Yet, 3(4.9%) respondents disagreed and 8(13.1%) were uncertain. The results from the survey as presented above shows that majority (81.9%) of the respondents (that is those who strongly agreed plus those who agreed) admitted that school dropout is a common phenomenon in Akim Tafo community. It can therefore be confirmed strongly that in spite of the most government policies including free and

compulsory primary education, capitation grants, the school feeding programme and other policies from successive governments the issue of school dropout is enlarging.

The Level of Education of Parents is a Very Important Determinant for Children's Willingness to Attend School

The table 4 above shows that, out of the 61 respondents, 43(70.5%) agreed that the parents' level of education determine their wards willingness to be enrolled in school. However, 12(19.7%) respondents disagreed and 6(9.8%) were uncertain about the notion. It can be deduced from the finding that majority (70.5%) of the respondents agreed that the level of education of parents factors. This endorses the idea by Ersado (2005) that the parents' educational background determines their ward's education and the job that that child decides to do in future. It also authenticates research conducted by Juneja (2001); Pryor and Ampiah (2003) which indicated that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling. This means that, illiterates have less aspiration for education

The Quantity of Resources That the Society and Parents Are Endowed With Might Have an Effect on Academic Environment

The data presented in Table 4 above indicates that, out of 61 respondents 48(78.7%) agreed to the assertion that quantity of resources that the society and parents have might have an effect on academic environment. Then again, 9(14.8%) respondents disagreed and 4(6.6%) were uncertain about the assertion. From the

Table 5: Causes of School Dropout

STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Poverty is the largest factor which causes school dropout	7(11.5%)	4(6.6%)	1(1.6%)	11(18.0%)	38(62.3%)
Poor academic performance leads to school dropout	2(3.3%)	2(3.3%)	4(6.6%)	27(44.3%)	26(42.6%)
Teenage pregnancy holds back or hinders children from continuing schooling	2(3.3%)	4(6.6%)	1(1.6%)	22(36.1%)	32(52.5%)
Unhealthy condition of children is likely to delay or even deny them access to schooling	5(8.2%)	7(11.5%)	7(11.5%)	27(44.3%)	15(24.6%)
School dropout is as a result of broken homes and poor parental care	5(8.2%)	1(1.6%)	1(1.6%)	18(29.5%)	36(59.0%)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (March, 2015)

available information, it can be established that majority of the respondents (78.7%) agreed that the quantity of resources has direct impact on academic environment. This finding is in line with a study by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Bronfenbrenner pointed out that the quantity of resources that the society and the parents are endowed with might have an effect of healthiness and capabilities at childbirth. This revealed that one becomes active in school when one is physically, mentally and socially strong and all these are attainable depending on the quantity and of course the quality of resources that the person is endowed with. These resources might come from one's society or household.

Changes in Society Population and Resources Might Result In Changes in the School Setting

The information illustrated in Table 4 above gives a picture of 44 respondents representing 72.1% of the total number of respondents agreeing to the claim that, changes in society population and resources might result in changes in the school setting. Even so, 10 respondents representing 16.4% disagreed and 7 respondents representing 11.5% were uncertain about the claim. Considering the outcome of the study, it was established that majority of the respondents (72.1%) accepted the fact that changes in society population and resources have impact on school setting. Again, this validates the view of Bronfenbrenner (1979) that, a student attitude towards school may change when there is progress or growth at home and also changes in society population and resources might one way or the other result in changes in the school setting. The research revealed that parents who have lucrative job send their wards to good schools and also when there is increased in population it exerts pressure on the few schools that are available in the society.

Inadequate or Lack of Inspiration, Reasonable Sponsorship and Educational Fortunes May Likely Lead to Student's educational Failure

As depicted in table 4 above, it is evident that, respondents accepted the view that inadequate or lack

of inspiration, reasonable sponsorship and educational fortunes may likely lead to student's educational failure as 55(90.2%) of the total respondents agreeing to that. Nonetheless, 5(8.2%) disagreed to the view and 1(1.6%) was uncertain about that. The overwhelming majority (90.2%) indicates that, again Bronfenbrenner (1979) was right as he stated that inadequate or lack of inspiration, reasonable sponsorship and educational fortunes may lead to educational failure. It can be concluded from the information gathered that, children who have been inspired to aspire the benefit of education and as well have educational opportunities go higher and vice versa.

Causes of School Dropout

According to Hunt et al., (2008), school dropout is often a process rather than the result of one single event and therefore has more than one proximate cause. That is, there is not one and only cause of school dropout. Therefore, there are several factors that stand as the causes of school dropout. This section identifies some of the causes of school dropout and as well has respondents being quizzed on what they perceived as causes of school dropout. Using a Likert Scale, the respondents were asked to tick whether they strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree to issues raised (table 5).

Poverty is the Largest Factor Which Causes School Dropout

It is evident from the table 5 that, respondents believe that poverty is the largest factor which causes school dropout. In response to the statement, an overwhelming majority 49(80.3%) made their intentions known by agreeing to the contention. The reason was that most of the respondents who were dropped out of school were as a result of financial constraints. In spite of these positive responses, 11(18.1%) of the respondents disagreed and 1(1.6%) was uncertain about it. The position stand taken by the majority of the respondents attests the statement put forward by Hunt et al., (2008), that poverty has created the atmosphere, where most poor parents could not afford school fees and uniforms

as well as other basic needs necessary to send their children to school. Again, as indicated by UNICEF (2007), most parents are inadequately and financially not sound to support the children schooling. This implies that, poverty is still a major problem confronting Ghana as country in relation to school dropout

Poor Academic Performance Leads to School Dropout

As depicted in table 5, out of 61 respondents, 53(86.9%) of them agreed to the assertion that poor academic performance leads to school dropout. Nevertheless, 4(6.6%) disagreed to the assertion and equivalent proportion was obtained for those who were uncertain. After examining the data revealed by the study, it was quite clear that the largest part of the respondents (86.9%) consented that poor academic performance leads to school dropout. This finding upholds the research outcome of Akyeampong et al., (2007), that most children absent themselves from school because of low capabilities and abilities to learn perfectly. This depicts that, children who quit schooling as a result of their inability to meet the standard of learning in school are low productive.

Teenage Pregnancy Holds back or Hinders Children from Continuing Schooling

From the statistics shown in the Table 5 above, out of 61 respondents, 54 representing 88.6% contended that, teenage pregnancy hinders children from continuing schooling by agreeing to that. However, 6(9.9%) and 1(1.6%) respondents disagreed and were uncertain respectively. This finding support the research findings by Create (2007), which is the view that girls who mostly become pregnant dropped out of school because they have to care for the new born child and the overwhelming proportion (88.6%) of the respondents also share same view. According to respondents, times like this, teenagers in such situation are labeled or tagged and are laughed at by the colleagues. Thus, they will be hooting at them and therefore become discouraged and often absent themselves from school and subsequently drop out of school.

Unhealthy Condition of Children is likely to Delay or even Deny them Access to Schooling

The data presented in Table 5 above indicates that, out of 61 respondents 42(68.9%) agreed to the assertion that unhealthy condition of children is likely to delay or even deny them access to schooling. Then again,

12(19.7%) respondents disagreed and 7(11.5%) were uncertain about the assertion. After examining the data revealed by the study, it was marked that, a greater portion (68.9%) of the respondents approve the assertion which is linked up to a research carried out by Glewwe and Jacoby (1995) about the effect of the physical conditions on the age at which children are first sent to school shows that many children begin schooling when they have far passed school age. This investigation indicated that some children are not sent to school at right age due to the fact that parents fear or feel that their wards are not physically strong to be enrolled in school even when they are of school age. This shows that, health condition has direct correlation with dropout of such children.

School Dropout is as a Result of Broken Homes and Poor Parental Care

The information illustrated in Table 5 above gives a picture of 54(88.5%) respondents of the total number of respondents agreeing to the claim that, school dropout is as a result of broken homes and poor parental care. Yet, 6(9.8%) respondents disagreed to the claim and 1(1.6%) was uncertain about it. Considering the outcome of the study, it was marked that majority (88.5%) of the respondents accepted the claim. To these respondents, whenever there is separation or divorce, it is the children who suffer as both parents would be relinquishing responsibilities to one another and as a result such children's upbringing in relation to their educational needs become problematic. Again, to them, parents who do not pay the requisite attention in terms of psychological, emotional and situational (environmental) needs of their wards in relation to their education gradually distant such children from schooling. Therefore, both broken home and poor parenting is possible issues that engender school dropout.

Effect of School Dropout

As indicated by Human Capital Theory, people with less educational investment would not do well in the economy as compare to people whose level of education is high (Ingrum, 2011). This implies that, the youth leaving the school without completion have negative bearing on their economic lives. Also, a community is not spared especially when the rates of school dropout were high; such a community experiences higher crime rates (Thornberry et al, 1985). Society or community is diversely being affected by the behaviour and other social activities of the people residing in it. This however shows that, the safety mode of society is not spared when school dropout is on the increase. The section

Table 6: Effect of School Dropout

STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
School dropouts have problems securing employment	0(0.0%)	1(1.6%)	5(8.2%)	22(36.1%)	33(54.1%)
School dropouts are more likely to be employed in low income job	0(0.0%)	3(4.9%)	2(3.3%)	22(36.1%)	34(55.7%)
Most prisoners are school dropouts	9(14.8%)	9(14.8%)	10(16.4%)	20(32.8%)	13(21.3%)
School dropouts engage in crime and other social vices such as armed robbery, prostitution and many others	0(0.0%)	2(3.3%)	2(3.3%)	18(29.5%)	39(63.9%)
School dropout destroys the bright future of the young people who used to be brilliant students	0(0.0%)	1(1.6%)	4(6.6%)	24(39.3%)	32(52.5%)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (March, 2015)

identifies the negative effects associated with school dropout in relation to the economic life of the youth and the society at large. Using a Likert Scale, the respondents were asked to tick whether they strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree to issues raised (table 6).

School Dropouts have Problems Securing Employment

As depicted in table 6 above, it is evident that, respondents admitted to the contention that school dropouts have problems securing employment as 55(90.2%) of the total respondents agreeing to the contention. Nevertheless, 1(1.6%) disagreed to that and 5(8.2%) were uncertain about the contention. This finding indicates that extremely large number (90.2%) of the respondents certified the statement put forward by Create (2007), that the unemployment rate for dropouts is very high as compared to the unemployment rate of high school graduates. Again, the finding is in line with a study by Ingram (2011), which revealed that most of the school dropouts become jobless in the sense that, they don't have the requisite knowledge and skills to gain better job to make good living. This makes them experience low standard of living as their economic life is not of the good one. This implies that, such people find themselves in economic hardship.

School Dropouts are more likely to be Employed in Low Income Job

As depicted in table 6 above, out of 61 respondents, 56(91.8%) of them agreed to the notion that school dropouts are more likely to be employed in low income job. Nonetheless, 3(4.9%) disagreed to the notion and

2(3.3%) were uncertain about it. Again, it can be deduced from the finding that overwhelming majority (91.8%) of the respondents came to admit what was put forth by Create (2007), which brought to light that the economic outcomes of not having a diploma are very difficult and this situation has put many young people behind the access to good and well-paid jobs. It also, buttresses the research conducted by Antwi (2002) that most of the young people who completed school are able to find themselves in business and other industrial work where they are well paid later for their daily needs to the extent that they are able to save. This implies that, even when they are employed, they are not paid well.

Most Prisoners Are School Dropouts

The table 6 above shows that, out of the 61 respondents, 33(54.1%) agreed that most prisoners are school dropouts. On the other hand, 18(29.6%) respondents disagreed and 10(16.4%) were uncertain about that. The majority (54.1%) authenticates the finding of Hunt et al., (2007) which showed that dropouts make up uneven percentages of every nation's prisons and death row inmates. This indicates that most dropouts engage in bad deeds.

School Dropouts Engage in Crime and other Social Vices such as Armed Robbery, Prostitution and many Others

The analysis of data collected revealed that respondents greatly see school dropouts as engaging in crime and other social vices such as armed robbery, prostitution and many others. A total of 57(93.4%) of the respondents agreed to this opinion. In spite of this, 2(3.3%) disagreed and a similar proportion were

Table 7: Recommendations

STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Preschool centers can be of help to lessen school dropout	4(6.6%)	5(8.2%)	10(16.4%)	26(42.6%)	16(26.2%)
Gaining access to loans by parents can help reduce school dropout	2(3.3%)	9(14.8%)	7(11.5%)	20(32.8%)	23(37.7%)
Free and compulsory education can help minimize school dropout	4(6.6%)	2(3.3%)	1(1.6%)	20(32.8%)	34(55.7%)
Well trained and competent teachers as well as responsible parenting can help minimize school dropout	4(6.6%)	1(1.6%)	4(6.6%)	19(31.1%)	33(54.1%)
There must be a law that will bind parents to take up their responsibility	3(4.9%)	7(11.5%)	6(9.8%)	19(31.1%)	26(42.6%)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (March, 2015)

uncertain about the opinion. It was fascinating to have a response of such nature from the majority (93.4%) of the respondents. This evidence is in line with the study outcome of Thornberry et al., (1985) that a community is not spared especially when the rates of school dropout were high; such a community experiences higher crime rates. A study conducted by Agnew (2000), exposed that there are rampant theft cases which are as a result of increasing school dropout. Moreover a study by Hunt (2007) revealed that some dropouts find themselves in prostitution, drug selling, smuggling, robbery and even practising occultism and "blood money" in order to have a living. It is quite obvious from the finding that most of the school dropouts involve in delinquency and drug related crime and other highly risky behaviours such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse and sexual activities.

School Dropout Destroys the Bright Future of the Young People Who Used to be Brilliant Students

The information illustrated in Table 6 above gives a picture of 56(91.8%) respondents of the total number of respondents agreeing to the claim that school dropout destroys the bright future of the young people who used to be brilliant students. However, 1(1.6%) disagreed to that and 4(6.6%) respondents were uncertain about the claim. The magnificent majority (91.8%) responses accept a research by Vermont, (1999), that the serious and worried situation is that, many of the young people used to be brilliant students when they were in school but financial constraints among others compel them to duck out schooling and get themselves involved in social vices. This therefore destroys the bright future of these children whose education would have had a good bearing on society but rather the opposite is felt.

Recommendations for Curbing School Dropout

For every social issue, there are recommendations for reducing or minimizing it if not solving or eradicating it

completely. Children who are from families that gain access to any form of financial assistance are to large extent unlikely to be taken out of school. As proposed by Ersado (2005), this affects those in the rural communities as loans become very difficult to access. This section examines the recommendations for curbing school dropout. Using a Likert Scale, the respondents were asked to tick whether they strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree to issues raised.

Preschool Centers can be of help to Lessen School Dropout

The table 7 above shows that, out of the 61 respondents, 42 respondents representing 68.8% agreed that preschool centers can be of help to lessen school dropout. However, 9 respondents representing 14.8% responded in the negative and 10 respondents representing 16.4% were uncertain about this. The majority (68.8%) response is in line with the study outcome which indicated that preschool centers can be of help to eliminate dropouts, as elder girls with childcare obligations are normally taken out from school to take care of their little brothers or sisters (Andvig et al., n.d.). Thus, preschools must foster a foundation of learning skills that are built upon in elementary school and beyond.

Gaining Access to Loans by Parents can help Reduce Dropout

The data presented in Table 7 above indicates that, out of 61 respondents 23(70.5%) agreed to the opinion that gaining access to loans by parents can help reduce school dropout. Then again, 9(18.1%) respondents disagreed and 7(11.5%) of them were uncertain. After examining the data revealed by the study, it was quite

clear that the largest part of the respondents (70.5%) accepted that children who are from families that gain access to loans from banks or any other form of financial assistance are to large extent unlikely to be taken out of school. As proposed by Ersado in 2005, this affects those in the rural communities as loans become very difficult to access. This infers that implementation of students loan policy is very important.

Free and Compulsory Education can help Minimize School Dropout

As depicted in table 7 above, out of 61 respondents, 54(88.5%) respondents agreed to the opinion that free and compulsory education can help minimize school dropout. Nonetheless, 5(8.2%) disagreed and 2(3.3%) were uncertain about the notion. The majority (88.5%) of the respondents were with the view that, all levels of education in Ghana must be free and compulsory as it is very hard for many people to provide for themselves mere three square meals in a day. It means that, poverty has inhibited many parents to send their wards to school so education being free would be to their advantage.

Well Trained and Competent Teachers as Well as Responsible Parenting can help Minimize School Dropout

The information illustrated in Table 7 above gives a picture of 52(85.2%) respondents of the total number of respondents agreeing to the opinion that, well trained and competent teachers as well as responsible parenting can help minimize school dropout. Then again, 5(8.2%) respondents disagreed to the opinion and 4(6.6%) were uncertain about this. The majority (85.2%) of the respondents believe that most of the teachers are not well trained and as a result they are incompetent while others are well trained but do not have the competencies of teaching as their training do not much that of classroom. With respect to responsible parenting, the emphasis was on monitoring, accountability and incentive as evident in the study of Banerjee and Duflo (2006); Birsdall et al., (2005), which revealed that, it is important to improve monitoring, accountability systems and motivation. This implies that, teachers need to have certain attributes and skills in order to make them proactive in discharging their duties.

There Must Be a Law that will Bind Parents to take up Their Responsibility

From the statistics shown in Table 7 above, out of 61 respondents, 45 representing 73.7% contended that,

there must be a law that will bind parents to take up their responsibility by agreeing to this. Yet, 10 respondents representing 16.4% disagreed and 6 representing 9.8% were uncertain about this. Even though, the majority (73.7%) accepted the opinion, yet they had similar opinion as those who disagreed and their worry was the rate at which unemployment is escalating. Almost all of them admitted that it is good to have such a law but that should not be enacted till there are jobs for people. This means that, the enactment of such a law must be implemented only when there are jobs for parents.

According to human capital theory, education has become one of the key development objectives in recent times. Therefore, it was imperative to examine the rate at which school dropout is enlarging as this has become one of the major factors hindering the nation's development. The study confirms that poverty, poor academic performance, teenage pregnancy and broken homes as well as poor parental care are some of the major causes of school dropout. Besides, it has been manifested that problems securing employment, low income job and destruction of bright future of the young people are associated with school dropout. Finally, gaining access to loans, free and compulsory education, enactment of law for responsible parenting and well trained as well as competent teachers can help minimize school dropout.

SUMMARY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section summarizes the major findings collected from the field in relation to the research questions or objectives in the same sequence as listed in chapter one. The second section focuses on the conclusion of the study and the final section looks at recommendations thought up by the researcher.

Summary of Major Findings in the Research Survey

With regard to the first research question "how is the academic environment look like at Akim Tafo?" The findings were that the majority of the respondents admitted that school dropout is a common phenomenon in Akim Tafo community. This implies that, despite all the effort by successive government to eradicate it, the issue of school dropout is still persisting. Also, the respondents believe that, the level of education of parents determines whether or not their children become educated. This supports the idea by Ersado (2005) that the parents' educational background determines their ward's education and the job that that child decides to do in

future. This means that, parents with higher level of education encourage their children to also achieve higher level in education and vice versa. Again, most of the respondents believe that, quantity of resources that the society and the parents are endowed with might have an effect on academic environment. This revealed that as more resources one has, the higher education he attains. Once again, most respondents acknowledged that changes in society population and resources have impact on school setting. That is, increase in population and resources will call for increase in academic facilities. Additionally, the study found that 90.2% of the respondents are in agreement with Bronfenbrenner (1979) that inadequate or lack of inspiration, reasonable sponsorship and educational fortunes may lead to educational failure. It implies that, children who have been motivated to seek the benefit of education and as well have educational opportunities go higher and vice versa.

Moreover, with reference to the second research question "What are the causes of school dropout in the area?" The study found that, most of the respondents believed that poverty is the largest factor which causes school dropout. The finding indicated that most of the people who dropped out of school were as a result of lack of financial support. This consents to a study by UNICEF (2007) that most parents are inadequately and financially not sound to support the children schooling. In addition, the majority of the respondents accepted that, poor academic performance leads to school dropout. That is, most children quit schooling as a result of their inability to meet the standard of learning in school and so they were laughed at by friends as well as being intimidated by some of their teachers. Also, the largest proportion of the respondents agreed that, teenage pregnancy hinders children from continuing schooling. Yet again, the study found that, unhealthy condition of children is likely to delay or even deny them access to schooling. It denotes that, some children are not sent to school at right age due to the fact that parents fear that their wards are not physically strong to be enrolled in school even when they are of age. Likewise, the study discovered that school dropout is as a result of broken homes and poor parental care, as most of the parents fail to give to their children the necessary attention when divorced or are still married.

Besides, it was the objective of the study to identify effects associated with school dropout. Therefore, the study recorded that, 90.2% of the respondents admitted that school dropouts have problems securing employment. This is due to the fact that, the basic requirements to join any paid organization in recent times is Senior High certificate. Furthermore, 91.8% of the respondents believed that school dropouts are more likely to be employed in low income job. This finding is similar to the study outcome of Create (2007) that the

economic outcomes of not having a diploma are very difficult and this situation has put many young people behind the access to good and well-paid jobs. It implies that, even when school dropped outs secure employment they are not paid well as they have no skill or education. Also, the finding depicted that most prisoners are school dropouts as most of them engage in social vices which landed most of them in prison. Additionally, the study also depicted 93.4% of respondents concurring that school dropouts engage in crime and other social vices such as armed robbery, prostitution and many others. This finding is related to the study outcome of Hunt (2007) revealed that some dropouts find themselves in prostitution, drug selling, smuggling, robbery and even practising occultism and "blood money" in order to have a living. Once more, the field survey showed that 91.8% responses believed that school dropout destroys the bright future of the young people who used to be brilliant students.

With respect to the last objective of the study to examine the challenges in curbing school dropout, the finding showed most of the respondents agreeing that preschool centers can be of help to lessen school dropout. This implies that preschool centers should be established as elder girls with childcare obligations are normally taken out from school to take care of their little brothers or sisters. Again, the study illustrated that, gaining access to loans by parents can help reduce school dropout. In addition, the finding revealed that free and compulsory education can help minimize school dropout. Furthermore, the study found that well trained and competent teachers as well as responsible parenting can help minimize school dropout. Also, it is evident from the finding that, there must be a law that will bind parents to take up their responsibility.

It is therefore evident in the research finding that the academic environment of every society is very crucial to determine the rate at which school dropout is enlarging. Also, the causes and the effects as well as those challenges of curbing of school dropout enable every society to deal with the problem appropriately. These research findings confirm assumptions for the conceptual framework of the study.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the study that, education is a basic tool that should be given to the youth in order to fulfill their roles as full members of every society. Empowering the youth through education is exceptionally worthwhile as education is a strategic investment in human resource with high social returns and acts as a facilitator in almost every aspect of development. It is therefore against this background that this study was conducted to examine the effect of school dropout on the lives of the youth.

The findings of the study disclosed that school dropout affects the youth and the society adversely. It is evident from the study that school dropout shakes the economic well-being of the youth and as well trembles the society. For instance, individuals who are dropped out of school have problems securing employment. Again, even when they are employed they are not paid well. Furthermore, School dropouts engage in crime and other social vices such as armed robbery, prostitution and many others.

Besides, the findings revealed that as most of the school dropouts engaging in social vices, the greater their number increases in prison hence forming the majority in prison. Also, school dropout destroys the bright future of the young people who used to be brilliant students. This implies that people who would have become professors, ministers of the state and many others end up becoming liability. This means that being educated is an end in itself.

It can therefore be concluded that the research findings have effectively gratified the objectives of the study and justified the research questions posed by the researcher. The outcomes of the study are important since they demonstrate how crucial it is as an individual and/or a society to get rid of school dropout. As a necessity in the lives of the youth in Ghana, education should be seen as a key factor for development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section is divided into two parts: recommendations based on the research findings and recommendations for further studies.

Recommendations Based On the Research Findings

Preschool centers can be of help to lessen school dropout, as children would prefer being in school setting to that of their homes. This is because the children would start making friends at early stage and as school would be the only place to meet these friends, they would be reluctant to stop schooling no matter what happens. The use of flexible schooling timetable depending on the community would help the sustainability and the efficacy of the preschool centers.

Furthermore, access to soft loans and grants by parents can also be of help to reduce school dropout. The loans or grants should attach conditions that will coerce parents to use the money for the purpose to which that money was given. That is, if parents would even use the money for any profitable business, they should make sure that the money is retrieved to serve the purpose it meant to.

Besides, free and compulsory education can also help to minimize school dropout. If not up to tertiary institutions, education must be free from the basic to the Senior High School. This must come along with compulsion whereby parents and the entire community members would be obliged to compel children to go to school.

Moreover, well trained and competent teachers as well as responsible parenting can help minimize school dropout. Teachers must go through the require process of training to acquire the requisite skills needed in handling children or students. There must also be reorientation for teachers in order for them to know their responsibilities as teachers and this will only work when additional or better remunerations are attached. Parents must also be reoriented to take up their responsibilities.

Finally, there must also be a law that will bind parents to take up their responsibility. However, this law can only be enacted when there are mass employment opportunities. That is to say, the government should create jobs to the extent that everybody would be working before the legislation of the law, as the unemployed parents may not be able to take up their responsibility. The bottom line is that, there must be adequate jobs to avoid parents using that as an excuse.

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