

**FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DROPOUT AS PERCEIVED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The increasing rate of school dropout among secondary school students in Kwara State has become a critical concern, impacting educational outcomes and future opportunities for students. This study investigated factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara State. The population of this study comprised all secondary school students in Kwara state while a sample size of 200 respondents was used in the study. A questionnaire entitled “Factors Responsible for Drop-Out Questionnaire (FRDQ) was used to collect data for the study. Mean and rank order analysis was used to answer the research question while the null hypotheses formulated were tested using t-test and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that low parental income; lack of interest in schooling; and high cost of education are the main perceived factors responsible for school dropout. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in the factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on gender and school type but a significant difference was found based on age and religion.

**Keywords:** Factors; Dropout; Secondary school; Students

**Discipline:** Educational Science

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**Absztrakt****A LEMORZSOLÓDÁSÉRT FELELŐS TÉNYEZŐK A KÖZÉPISKOLAI TANULÓK PERCEPCIÓI ALAPJÁN KWARA ÁLLAMBAN, NIGÉRIÁBAN**

Kwara államban a középiskolások körében tapasztalható iskolai lemorzsolódás növekvő aránya kritikus jelentőségű problémává vált, amely kedvezőtlenül befolyásolja a tanulmányi eredményeket és a tanulók jövőbeli lehetőségeit. Jelen kutatás célja a lemorzsolódásért felelős tényezők feltárása a középiskolai tanulók percepciói alapján Kwara államban. A célpopulációt Kwara állam valamennyi középiskolai tanulója alkotta, amelyből 200 fős mintát vontak be a vizsgálatba. Az adatgyűjtés a „Factors Responsible for Drop-Out Questionnaire (FRDQ)” strukturált kérdőív segítségével történt. A kutatási kérdések megválaszolására leíró statisztikai eljárásokat, átlag- és rangsorelemzést alkalmaztak, míg a megfogalmazott nullhipotézisek vizsgálata t-próba és varianciaanalízis (ANOVA) alkalmazásával történt 0,05-ös szignifikanciaszinten. Az eredmények azt mutatták, a tanulók által észlelt, a lemorzsolódás kiváltó legfontosabb okok között az alacsony szülői jövedelem, az iskolai tanulmányok iránti érdeklődés hiánya, valamint az oktatás magas költségei szerepelnek. A lemorzsolódásban a nem és az iskolatípus nem mérvadó, ugyanakkor szignifikáns eltérések jelentkeztek az életkor és a vallási hovatartozás tekintetében.

**Kulcsszavak:** tényezők; lemorzsolódás; középiskola; tanulók

**Diszciplína:** neveléstudomány

**Introduction**

Education is the machine or force that emphasizes change or the orientation of individual perception, beliefs, customs, and patterns of thinking and values from time immemorial to date. However, there are two distinct forms of education: traditional and western education. Ever before the coming of the European or white men to Nigeria, a form, of indigenous traditional education had been in existence. Agbawsi (2017) asserted that when the western form of education was introduced in Nigeria, it was then conceived erroneously as aimed at destroying the existing culture of the people. With time, the first nations that had experienced western form of education began to metamorphose when they found that people who went to school began to enjoy relatively high socio-economic status in the society. Graduates of these schools easily got employment and occupied enviable positions which made them members of the new elite group.

The major concern in basic education is ensuring that students stay in school until they complete their education. Dropping out of school is a serious

problem because it denies individual students their fundamental human right to education. Students who withdraw from school prematurely end up not obtaining any certificate of graduation. The major social costs of dropping out of school include reduced political participation, increased demand for social services, increased crime rates, and poor levels of health. Individual costs include lower earnings, unemployment prospects, and a greater likelihood of health problems limiting their chances of economic and social well-being in the future (Ahmad, Najeemah & Jamalsafri, 2017).

According to Mohammed, Sivapan, and Junanah (2017), student dropout is a serious problem for both students and society. Understanding the factors responsible for secondary students dropping out is one of the key issues in addressing the social and economic problems that impede the progress of human resource utilization in developing countries. Completing secondary education is important to facilitate basic entry into employment, besides providing adequate foundation for further progress in an individual's career, as well as ena-

bling to interface with technological utilization. (Fun & Wolters, 2014). Dropping out from secondary school is considered a serious educational, social, and cultural problem (Carlson, 2014). This problem has eaten deep into our society that the aims of training or sending children to school nowadays by parents are unfulfilled and unpleasant.

Poverty has been known to force most parents to withdraw their children from school. UNICEF (2017), report indicates that 12.5 million children are out of school for various reasons. The same report indicates that Nigeria is one of the 25 developing countries of the world with low enrolment rate. This is a problem that requires emergency action if the nation is to advance technologically, economically and socially considering the multiple and intergenerational benefits derivable in the education of our children.

Huang (2016) conducted a systematic review of research on academic achievement and student dropout, aiming to identify the key factors contributing to dropout among students. The researcher found out that low academic achievement is a significant predictor of student dropout, students who experience academic difficulties and have a low grade point average are more likely to drop out of school. The study however was limited in contents as the investigation failed to provide emphasis on factors responsible for dropout among secondary school students.

Rumberger and Lim (2015) in their study found that financial constraints, such as the need to work to support family, are a significant predictor of dropout among secondary students. Also, students who attend schools with strict discipline policies or a focus on standardized testing are more likely to drop out.

### **Research Question and Hypotheses**

In this study, this research question was raised: What are the factors responsible for dropout as

perceived by secondary school students in Kwara State?

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study; 1) There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara State based on gender. 2) There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara State based on age. 3) There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara State based on school type. 4) There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara State based on religion.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research design that was adopted for this research was the descriptive survey method. Descriptive survey approach is considered appropriate for this study since the researcher aimed to collect information from secondary school students in Kwara State to find out the factors responsible for drop-out.

Population consists of the elements to be used for the research. As regards this study, the population will be secondary school students selected from Kwara State. Since the study of the total population is not possible and impracticable, a sample technique was adopted with a view of making the research findings economical and accurate. In order to arrive at the samples, random sampling technique was used to select 200 students.

The instrument that was used in collecting data for this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Factors responsible for drop-out questionnaire (FRDQ). The questionnaire consists of two sections A and B. Section A requires the respondents to give some background information

such as gender, age, school type, and religion while section B elicits information on factors responsible for drop-out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state, Nigeria. The items were rated on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) - 4 points, Agree (A) - 3 points, Disagree (D) -2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) -1 point. The instrument was content validated and a reliability coefficient of 0.63 was obtained after a test re-test method of reliability.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data analysis of the study was subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. The answering of research questions was done using the statistical tool of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The testing of Hypotheses however was done using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.5 level of significance.

## Results

### Demographic Data

This section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents in frequency and percentages (Table 1).

The Table 1 reveals that 87 (43.5%) of the respondents were male, while 113 (56.5%) of the respondents were female. This indicates that female respondents participated more than male respondents in this study. That 44 (22.0%) of the respondents were between 9-13 years of age, 143 (71.5%) of the respondents were between 14-18 years of age, 13 (6.5%) of the respondents were 19 years of age and above. This indicates that respondents who were between 14-18 years of age participated more in this study. The respondents were practicing African traditional religion, 84 (42.0%) were practicing Christianity, while 112 (56.0%) of the respondents were Muslim. This indicates that there are more Muslim in this study than other religious groups. That 95 (47.5%) of the respondents were from pri-

vate school, while 105 (52.5%) of the respondents were from public school. This indicates that respondents from public school participated more in this study.

Table 1. Demographic Data of Respondents.

Demographic Data		Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	87	43.5
	Female	113	56.5
<b>Year</b>	9-13 years	44	22.0
	14-18 years	143	71.5
	19 years and above	13	6.5
<b>Religion</b>	ATR	4	2.0
	Christianity	84	42.0
	Islam	112	56.0
<b>School Type</b>	Private	95	47.5
	Public	105	52.5
<b>Total</b>		200	100

Research Question One: What are the factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students Kwara State?

Table 2 presents the mean, standard deviation and rank order of the respondents' perceptions on the factors responsible for dropout. The table also indicates that item 1, 6 and 9 which states that in my view, the factors responsible for school drop-out include: low parental income; lack of interest in schooling; and high cost of education ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd with the mean scores of 3.68; 3.49 and 3.46 respectively. Likewise, items 3, 8 and 2 which state that in my view, the factors responsible for school drop-out include: single parenting; poor teaching methods; and poor study habits ranked 8th, 9th and 10th with the mean scores of 3.04; 3.00 and 2.92 respectively. Since all the 10 items have mean scores that is above 2.50, this implies that low parental income; lack of interest in schooling; and high cost of education are the main perceived factors responsible for school dropout.

Table 5. Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order Analysis of the Respondents' Perceptions on the Factors Responsible for Dropout .

Item No.	In my view, the factors responsible for school Drop-Out include:	Mean	S.D.	Rank
1	low parental income	3.68	.468	1 <sup>st</sup>
6	lack of interest in schooling	3.49	.539	2 <sup>nd</sup>
9	high cost of education	3.46	.499	2 <sup>nd</sup>
7	harsh treatments from senior students especially prefects	3.45	.488	2 <sup>nd</sup>
5	peer group influence	3.44	.498	5 <sup>th</sup>
10	long distance to school	3.39	.489	6 <sup>th</sup>
4	poor parenting style	3.37	.485	7 <sup>th</sup>
3	single parenting	3.31	.870	8 <sup>th</sup>
8	poor teaching methods	3.18	.663	9 <sup>th</sup>
2	poor study habits	3.09	.280	10 <sup>th</sup>

### Hypotheses Testing

Four null hypotheses were postulated and tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using t-test and ANOVA statistical methods at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on gender.

The calculated t-value of 1.03 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with a corresponding p-value of .303 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis one is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the factors respon-

sible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on gender.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for dropout as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on age.

Table 3. shows the calculated F-ratio of 5.89 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .003 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence, there is significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on age.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing difference in the Respondents' Perceptions on the Factors Responsible for Dropout Based on Age

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	30.86	2	15.43	5.89*	3.00	.003
Within Groups	515.49	197	2.61			
Total	546.35	199				

\* Significant,  $p < 0.05$

In order to ascertain where the significant difference lies, Scheffe Post-Hoc was carried out and the output is shown on Table 4.

Table 4. Scheffe post-hoc where the significant difference lies based on Age

Year	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
9-13 years	44	33.48	
14-18 years	143	33.89	
19 years and above	13		35.23
Sig.		.636	1.000

Table 4 shows that respondents who were between 9-13 years and those between 14-18 years have mean scores of 33.48 and 33.89 (in subset 1) respectively, while those who were 19 years of age and above have a highest mean score of 35.23 (in subset 2), and thus contributed to the significant difference.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on religion.

Table 5 shows the calculated F-ratio of 4.85 is more than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .009 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on religion. In order to ascertain where the significant difference lies, Scheffe Post-Hoc

Table 5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing difference in the Respondents' Perceptions on the Factors Responsible for Dropout Based Religion

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	25.653	2	12.826	4.85*	3.00	.009
Within Groups	520.702	197	2.643			
Total	546.355	199				

\* Significant,  $p < 0.05$

was carried out and the output is shown on Table 6.

Table 6. Scheffe post-hoc where the significant difference lies based on Religion

Religion	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Christianity	84	33.49	
Islam	112	34.14	
ATR	4		36.00
Sig.		.094	1.000

Table 6 shows that respondents who were practicing Christianity and Islam have mean scores of 33.49 and 33.14 (in subset 1) respectively, while those who were practicing African traditional religion have a highest mean score of 36.00 (in subset 2), and thus contributed to the significant difference.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on school type

The calculated t-value of .164 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with a corresponding p-value of .870 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis one is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on school type.

### Discussion

The finding of the study showed that low parental income; lack of interest in schooling; and high cost of education are the main perceived factors responsible for school dropout. This finding aligns with a study by Kiraz (2019) found that students from low-income families are more likely to drop out of school due to financial constraints and the need to contribute to household income. Similarly, Boateng and Kofi Nyarko (2022) reported that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often face pressure to enter the workforce prematurely, leading to higher dropout rates. The finding is in line with the study of Arshad, Qamar and Gulzar (2017) who found that students who were disinterested in their studies or felt disconnected from the educational process were more likely to drop out. Gbollie, Ndomahina and Keita (2020) found that direct costs such as tuition fees, textbooks, and uniforms, as well as indirect costs like transportation and opportunity costs, significantly influenced dropout decisions among students from low-income families.

Another finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on gender. This implies that male and female respondents were not different in their perceptions on the factors responsible for drop out. The finding relates to the study of Mussaid, Ahmad and Iqbal (2019) conducted a study in Pakistan that revealed no significant variation between male and female students regarding the primary reasons for leaving school prematurely. This similarity in dropout factors across genders could be that the challenges leading to educational discontinuation may be more universal.

Finding also revealed that there was a significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on age. This implies that respondents across age were different in their perceptions on

the factors responsible for drop out. The result of Scheffé post hoc showed that respondents who were 19 years of age and above contributed more to the significant difference. The finding relates to the study of Archambault, Janosz, Morizot and Pagani (2017), younger students often display higher levels of academic motivation compared to their older counterparts. As students age, their engagement with school may diminish due to increased academic pressures and a growing desire for independence. This could be as a result of the inability of older students to balance academic demands with personal aspirations and responsibilities.

Another finding revealed that there was a significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on religion. This finding implies that respondents based on their religious affiliation, have different views on the factors responsible for drop out. Scheffé post hoc revealed that respondents who were practicing African traditional religion contributed more to the significant difference. The outcome of this study agrees with the submission of Alade, Kuku and Osoba (2016) who stated that some religious groups in Nigeria tend to prioritize religious education over secular schooling, potentially influencing students' perceptions of the importance of completing secondary education. This could be that respondents practicing African traditional religion might not give modern school priority because their religions belief are not thought in school, thus consider dropout.

Finding also revealed that there was no significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on school type. This implies that respondents have similar perceptions on the factors responsible for dropout. The finding supports to the study of Adedigba and Olatunji (2019), who noted that socioeconomic factors were consistently

significant predictors of dropout rates across various school types in Nigeria. This could be that root causes of dropout are more closely tied to individual and family factors rather than institutional characteristics.

### Conclusion

The study investigated the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state. It was concluded that low parental income; lack of interest in schooling; and high cost of education are the main perceived factors responsible for school dropout. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in the factors responsible for drop out as perceived by secondary school students in Kwara state based on gender and school type but significant difference was found based on age and religion.

The findings of this study have implications for counselling practice. The identification of low parental income as a main factor contributing to school dropout highlights the need for counsellors to be aware of and responsive to socioeconomic challenges. Counsellors can be prepared to: provide information about financial aid options, scholarships, and other support programs available to students from low-income families; collaborate with local organizations and government agencies to develop and implement poverty alleviation programs that can indirectly support students' continued education; and offer career counselling that emphasizes the long-term economic benefits of completing secondary education, potentially motivating students to persevere despite financial challenges. Given the significant difference found based on age, counsellors should develop age-appropriate intervention irrespective of their gender, religion and school type.

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that: 1) Government and non-governmental organizations should develop and implement policies that provide financial assistance to low-

income families. This could include scholarships, grants, and subsidies for school-related expenses. 2) Schools should adopt curricula that are engaging and relevant to students' lives and future careers in such a way that incorporating practical and vocational training would help maintain students' interest. 3) Counsellors should implement age-appropriate counselling interventions that address the unique challenges faced by different age groups irrespective of their gender, religion and school type.

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