

Factors That Influence High Rate of School Drop out at Junior High Level

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Abstract: *The dropout rate of students in high school is a persistent issue/problem in both public and private schools across Ghana. The students dropping from school have consequences and negative effects on both the individual student and the society at large which is responsible for supporting them. The purpose of this article is to discuss the factors that influence junior high school dropout and the process of decision making of students who drop out of high school education in the country. Several factors influence students during their decision-making process. High school dropout or school withdrawal at the early stage, is a multifaceted problem that could result from several factors in the spheres of life. Some specific commonly factors cited by researchers throughout literature related to early school dropouts include socioeconomic status, early marriages among female students, grade retention, school mobility, and many more. The target population for this study is one hundred (100) which consist of 10 head teachers, 10 other staff teachers, 20 parents, and 60 students/pupils selected using random sampling with the help of questionnaires. The data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. The result of the study reveals that factors such as School-related, community-related, societal related reasons, economic factor or reasons, and personal or individual reasons influence students drop out at the junior high levels in Ghana. We conclude that this study will be beneficial to the Government, the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, parents, student researchers, and policymakers.*

Keywords— School Dropout, Early Marriages, Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education

1. INTRODUCTION

The high school dropouts issue has attracted a lot of attention including that of educationalist, policymakers, scholars, researchers, and practitioners who are trying very well to understand the source and nature of this issues, challenges, and problem to do something concerning it. One of the reasons for such extensive concern is that the shift in demographic is increasing the disadvantaged and minority students number who archaeologically has the highest number of rates of school dropout (Levin 1986). According to McDill, Natriello, and Pallas (1985, 1986), some recent reform efforts, like, more stringent or strict requirements for graduation, might make it very difficult for most students to be able to graduate from their high schools was a strong observation among researchers. Researchers of late have devoted substantial effort in current years to understand what the causes of high school dropout are. The efforts have been supported by the national data availability such as the study of High School dropout and beyond, which provides in-depth information on the high school dropouts and the continuing students. This topic is also assisted by the increasing use of other alternative strategies is researches extending from types of modelling such as Multivariate Statistical Modeling to demographic and ethnographic studies, which can help increase the understanding of the issues and some of this complex problem (Fine 1986; Wehlage and Rutter 1986). Researches and studies on the causes of high school drop-out have concentrated on a comprehensive and wider range of several related factors (Rumberger 1987). The above factors can be categorized into numerous major groups such as School-related, demographic, family-related, and personal or individual. Within each group, several researchers have found a large and great number of some specific factors which influence the students' decision to drop out of school. Some of the school-related factors mentioned include disciplinary problems and issues, poor attendance, and lower academic achievement. Leaving high school is a social problem which is well-documented, and it often presents frightening circumstances and conditions for the adolescents. Dropping out or leaving school is often connected with delinquency, use of a substance, and lower achievements in school (Chavez, Oetting, & Swaim, 1994; Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Elliott, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985). Again, Catterall, (1987) and Rumberger, (1987) argued that people not having high school degrees often receives lower wages, salaries, higher unemployment rate, and more reliance on welfare and some other social services. Kolstad & Kaufman, 1989 indicated that other studies also argued that leaving high school does not have to be, and it is not essential, a permanent condition to the individuals. The estimates of the school dropout percentage who eventually attain either their higher school diplomas or the General Educational Development Certifications (GEDCs) is high as 44 percent. That is the study of the correlates of school degree attainment in the dropouts possibly will be an effective tool or instrumental tool in decreasing the school dropout rate, but unfortunately, very few researches are conducted in this area. Several outcomes emerge from the reasons why most students drop from school and it varies widely, more are women are likely to leave because of teenage pregnancy or early marriages and most men are likely to drop to go for work. Also, the background of the family strongly have a

great impact on the propensity to drop out of school, some various other factors influencing the dropout rate include the ability and the aspirations of the students. Leaving High School can also be Influence by the family's race, sex, and background. The education of females in developing countries has broken the chain of some women problems in relations to the individual development of the women and again, the strength in the society and economy of the country at large (Olmos, 2011). The education of the female has unique intergenerational belongings on wellbeings of the women because it touches on so many facets of development. Empowering the girl child through education is essential in achieving the sustainable development goals of 2030 agenda. Education, in general, is associated with national development; and is proven to increase the employment opportunities, reduce poverty, maternal and child mortality rates, reduce fertility, and to improve nutritional and health care (UNFPA, 2016) and in general also, the social development that cannot be overstated. At the World Forum of Education in Dakar, countries planned strategies that will help in the promotion and development through the eradication of all other challenges surrounding the educational attainment of females in their various countries which would lead to the attainment of higher institutional Education to all members. Attaining a universal primary education and gender equalities were part and parcel of the key focus of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) over the past years. A lot more substantial improvements have been made towards meeting the 2015 global goals but the targets were not met and this led to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) implementation with the hope that by 2030 the set target will be achieved. It was argued that, the closer the countries get to reaching the goals, the harder it becomes in making significant additional advancement without addressing the main key organizational or structural barriers which prevent the children from attending schools (UNESCO, 2015). In most of the developing countries, lots of girls are married and are still attending school (Malhotra, 2010). Most Stakeholders who try helping seeking to promote the girl child education realized early child marriage as one of the challenges recurrently facing the female educational growth and development especially among the developing countries hence, the stakeholders are taking some measures to help curb these menace (Walker, 2013 and Sajid, 2014). Teenage pregnancy and early child marriages are a destructive practice and it continues in the developing nations across the worlds (Malhotra, 2010). Following the article 1 of the United Nations Convention, on the Rights of the Child (1989), child marriage is defined as any kind of marriage in which a child below the age of Eighteen (18), before the child is physically, psychologically and physiologically prepared to bear the responsibilities and task of marriage and childbearing.

Research Problem

There are several reasons which motivated this research. The alarming rate of high school students dropping out of school in Ghana is also an undeniable reason for this study. The research will examine the factors that influence the High Rate of School Dropout at Junior High Level in the country taking into consideration the following problems:

- The effects of School-related reasons to High School Dropout
- The impact of the Community-related reason that affects High School dropout
- The consequences of the societal related reasons that Affects High School Dropout
- The Economic reasons influencing High school dropout?
- The personal and individual reasons determining the dropout of high school students

The above were some of the reason or factors motivating these study on high school dropout in Ghana.

Research Objectives

The main Research Objective is:

To examine the factors that influence the High Rate of School Dropout at Junior High Level

The specific objectives are:

- To discuss the effects of School-related reasons on High School dropout
- To investigate the Community-related reason that affects High School dropout
- To expatiate Societal related reasons that Affect High school dropout
- To investigate the Economic reasons influencing high school dropout
- To examine the personal or individual reasons determining the dropout of high school students
- To discuss how can High School Dropout be reduced in the country.

Research Question

The main Research Question is:

What are the factors that influence the High Rate of School Dropout at Junior High Level?

The specific research questions are:

- What are the effects of School-related reasons to High School Dropout?
- What is the Community-related factors or reasons that affect High School dropout?
- What are the societal related factors or reasons that Affect High School Dropout?
- What are the Economic factors or reasons influencing High school dropout at a junior high level?
- What are the personal or individual reasons determining the dropout of high school students?
- How can the high school dropout rate at the junior high level be reduced in Ghana?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Models of School Dropout

There are several models which explain the reasons most students drop out of High schools. As one group of the models addresses the challenges, problems and issues why some students leave high school, other existing school dropout models also suggested that the process is been influenced by several kinds of factors such as the early & recent school or academic performance, academic & social behaviours, and as well as educational and general attitudes. The difference between the models is the way the various factors really interact with one another to foster the processes of gradual removal and finally dropping out, and the relative focus on the individual against the institutional factors. Wehlage et al., (1989) developed a model in which dropping out of school, and other School consequences, is jointly influenced by two (2) broad factors like the school membership or the social bonding, and the educational engagement. The School membership is concerned with the social dimensions of schooling and it is influenced by things like social ties and others commitment within the institution, beliefs, involvement in other school activities, and legitimacy of the school. While the Educational engagement is concerned with the academic dimensions of schooling which is influenced by the extrinsic rewards which are associated with the work of the school and the inherent or essential rewards which is associated with the curriculum and how educational events are constructed.

Models of Student Engagement

Student engagement in Schools is one of the factors influencing high school dropout. In the preceding model, student engagement is one of the immediate factors leading to students leaving school. The engagement of students has also been identified as a significant precursor to student academic achievement and also to students dropping out. There is increasing empirical literature and theoretical literature on these subject matter. Newman, Wehlage, and Lamborn (1992) have developed engagement in academic work model, which they describe as “the student’s efforts and psychological investment in focused toward learning, understanding the knowledge, skills/crafts that the academic work is envisioned to promote” They hypothesize that, the engagement in academic work is mainly influenced by three (3) major factors which include the “students’ underlying essential needs for competence, the authenticity or validity of the work the students were requested to complete and the extent to which the students experience memberships in the school”. Fredericks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) further recognize three (3) dimensions of student engagement to include 1. Behavioural engagement 2. Emotional engagement and 3. Cognitive Engagement. Behavioural engagement represents behaviours that demonstrate students’ attachment and involvement in both the academic and social aspects of the school, such as doing homework and participating in extracurricular activities like athletics or student government. Emotional engagement: refers to students’ affective reactions to their experiences in school and in their classes, such as whether they are happy or bored. Cognitive engagement: represents mental behaviours that contribute to learning, such as trying hard and expending effort on academic tasks. Also, their review examines both the outcomes and the backgrounds to engagement. The antecedents or background include school-level factors, like the size of the school, communal structures, and the disciplinary practices, and the classroom-level factors like the teacher support, classroom structure, peers, and the task characteristics.

Models of Deviance

Though considerable studies of high school dropout on empirical and theoretical literature are concentrated within the school-related factors, there are a substantial number of body of researches that has also focused on other factors such as out-of-school related factors. For example, in social scientists subjects in fields like criminology, economics, psychology, and sociology have all focused on a variety or range of deviant behaviours which include the juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy and parenting with their relationship to high school dropout. Battin-Pearson, et al. (2000) has identified five (5) different theories of school dropout which concentrated on different or diverse sets of predictors to include

- Academic Mediation Theory which mainly focused on the academic achievement of the student
- General Deviance Theory which concentrations on the deviants' behaviours
- Deviant Affiliation Theory which emphasizes on the peer-relationships
- Family Socialization Theory which emphasizes on the family practices and the expectations
- Structural Strains Theory applies to demographic factors like ethnicity. Race, gender and family socioeconomic status.

The models do not only vary concerning the significant analytical/predictive factors, but they differ/vary in whether those factors influence school dropout behaviour directly, or whether the effects are influenced by other factors like academic achievements.

Models of Institutions

Most of the high school dropout models concentrate on individual personal factors, however, scholars generally also acknowledge that, the various settings in which the students live like their families, communities, societies and schools all shape their behaviours, attitudes, and educational performance (Jessor, 1993; National Research Council, Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn, 2004). There is a considerable study that has identified very significant features of families, communities, societies and schools that contribute to the educational performance of students (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007; Rumberger & Palardy, 2004). The features are:

- **Composition:** which comprise the features of the persons within their setting/context;
- **Structure:** which consist of the size and the location
- **Resources:** like, human resource, physical and fiscal
- **Practices:** which include the parenting practices within their families, and instructional practices within their schools.

A Conceptual Model of Student Performance

The above models can be used in constructing a conceptual framework which will help in understanding the process and procedure involved in student dropping out of school and student graduation, likewise the significant factors underlying the processes. This model identifies two main types of factors which influences students’ performance in high schools to include: 1. Individual factors associated with students, and 2. Institutional factors associated with three major contexts influencing the students to include the school itself, their families, and the communities. Individual factors can be grouped further into four (4) different areas or groups: These are educational performance, attitudes, behaviours, and background.

The model also suggests that high school graduation is strongly related to both the individuals’ persistence and achievement. Thus, the students who either interrupt their education by changing schools, or dropping out of school, or those students who have very poor academic-achievement in their schools, are very unlikely to advancement or progress in their schools and to graduate. Some of the behaviours identified in this research literature are course taking, deviance behaviour such as misbehaviour, drug abuse, alcohol use, and the childbearing. Also, peer associations, and employment.

Empirical Review

The major factors affecting female contributing and partaking in education has been identified by Brock and Cammish (1997) to include: socio-cultural, geographical, health, economical, political/administrative, religious, educational and other initiatives. Nevertheless, the socio-cultural factors were also recognized as the key universal deterrent to the female student educational opportunities and the fundamental cultural biases which are in favour of male students. The prevalent operations of the system of patriarchal of social organizations, of the customary or regular early marriage, of the prevalence of teenage pregnancies, the large disregard for the value of education etc, all affects the female involvement/participation in education. It is evident that all is built in a patriarchal power where female been discriminated against is a norm. Walker, 2013; Kosiki, 2016 & UNESCO, (2015) concluded that the effects of early child marriages are transgenerational and it goes through sectors like the health sector, girl child education, and the human rights. Child marriage is recognized/identified to be a factor that affects the education of the girl child in several ways. It is generally known that early marriages among other factors like teenage pregnancy and frequently the newly illegal mining lead to high schools drop out of most students especially the girl child (Bayisenge, 2010; Asigri, 2012 & Komackech, 2013). Early marriages and teenage pregnancy have continuously been together. The early marriages lead to early babies (early child-bearing) which of course limits the access to educational continual and it reduces the benefits of their educational investment’ since both teenage pregnancy and early marriages may be very challenging for children then the ultimate decision for the child is to leave/drop out of school.

3. METHODOLOGY

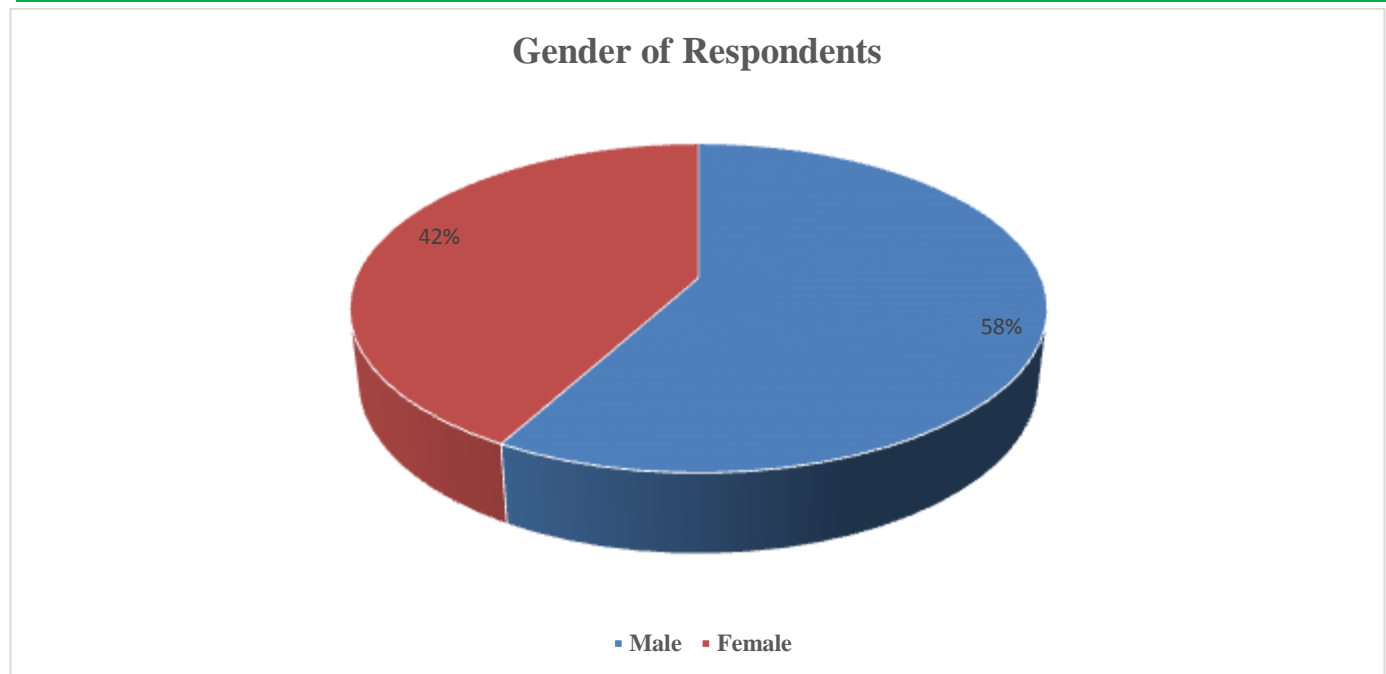
The population of the studies is one hundred (100) respondents. This consist of 10 head teachers, 10 teachers (other staff), and 20 parents and 60 students who were randomly selected. Questionnaires were used to collect the data and it was quantitatively analyzed using SPSS. We concluded that the study was beneficial to the Government, the Ministry of Education, and Ghana Education Service, parents, student, researchers, and policymakers.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Table one (1): Gender of Respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
Male	58	58
Female	42	42
Total	100	100

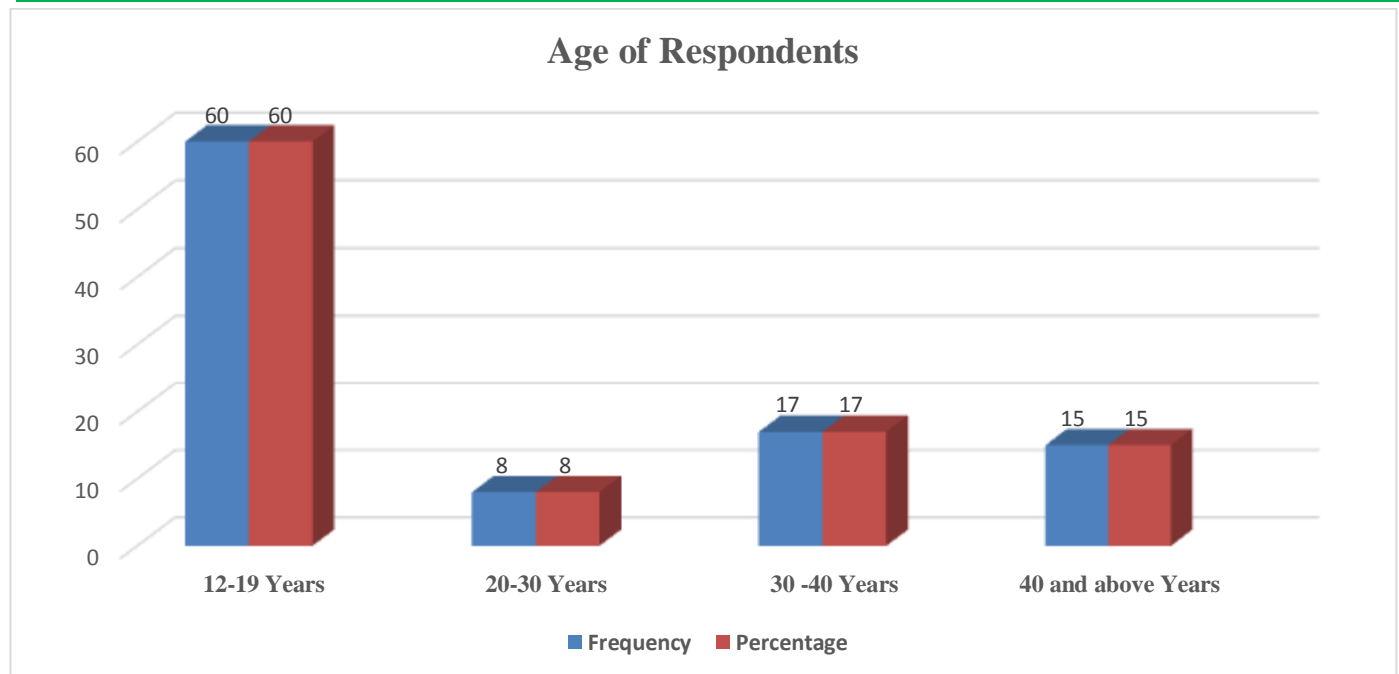
Source: Primary Data 2020



From the responses, 58 percent of Male responded while 42 percent of Female responded. We observed that the total of male respondents exceeds the number of female respondents.

Table Two (2): Age of Respondents

Class	Frequency	Percentage
12-19 Years	60	60
20-30 Years	8	8
30 -40 Years	17	17
40 and above Years	15	15
Total	100	100



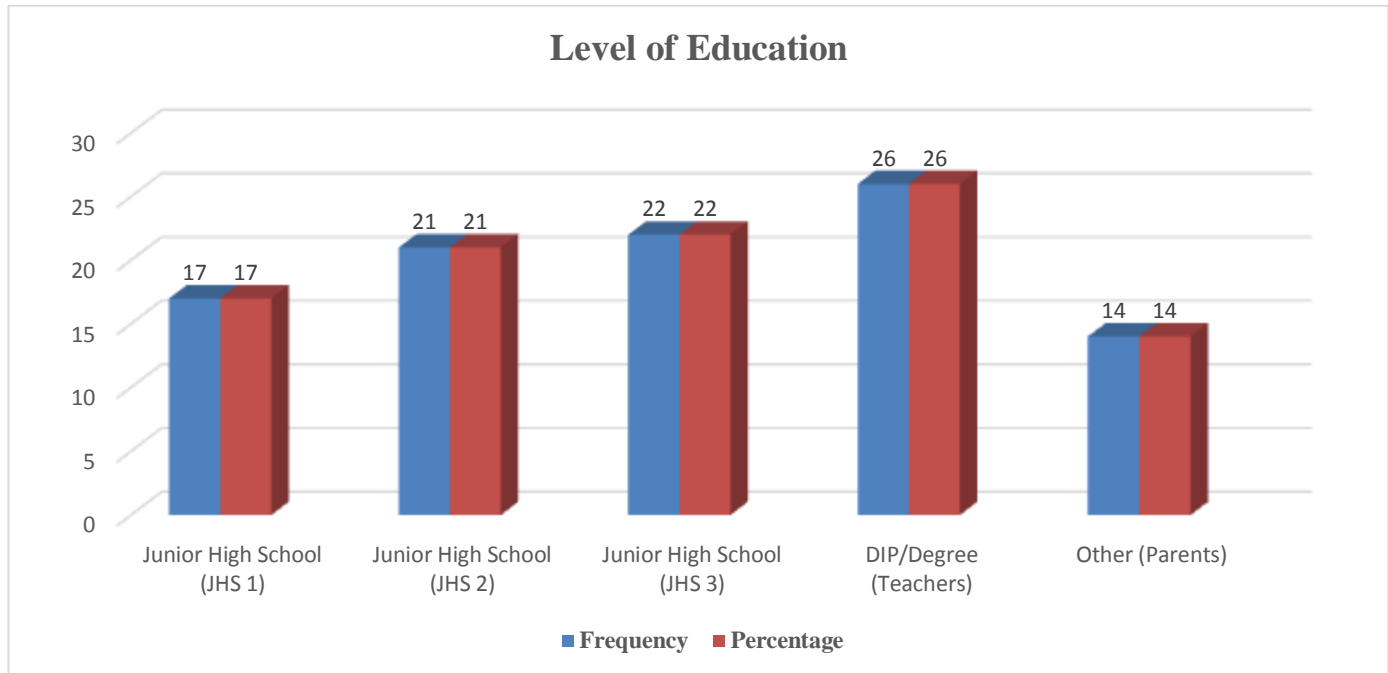
Source: Primary Data 2020

Age group 12-19, 60 percent participant answered and age group 20-30, only 8 percent responded. With age group 30 -40, 17 percent respond to the question while age group 40 years and above 15 percent answered.

Table Three (3): Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Junior High School (JHS 1)	17	17
Junior High School (JHS 2)	21	21
Junior High School (JHS 3)	22	22
DIP/Degree (Teachers)	26	26
Other (Parents)	14	14
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data, 2020

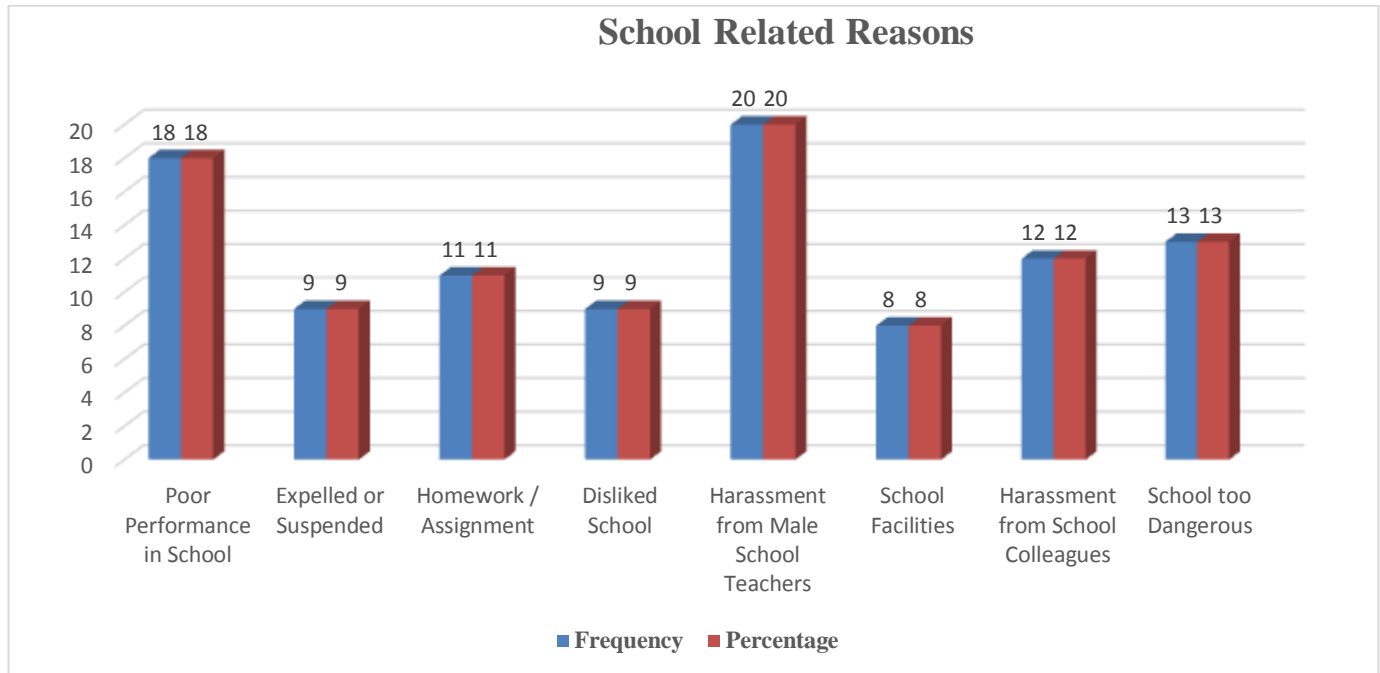


Under the level of Education, both the students, teachers and parents of the students were all interviewed. 17 percent of students in Junior High School Level (JHS 1) responded while 21 percent of students in Junior High School Level (JHS 2) also answered the question and 22 percent of students in Junior High School Level (JHS 3) participated. The teachers who have both Diploma and Degree who were interviewed were 26 percent and the parents and guardians are 14 percent.

Table Four (4): School Related Reason

No	School-Related Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1	Poor Performance in School	18	18
2	Expelled or Suspended	9	9
3	Homework / Assignment	11	11
4	Disliked School	9	9
5	Harassment from Male School Teachers	20	20
6	School Facilities	8	8
7	Harassment from School Colleagues	12	12
8	School too Dangerous	13	13

Source: Primary Data 2020

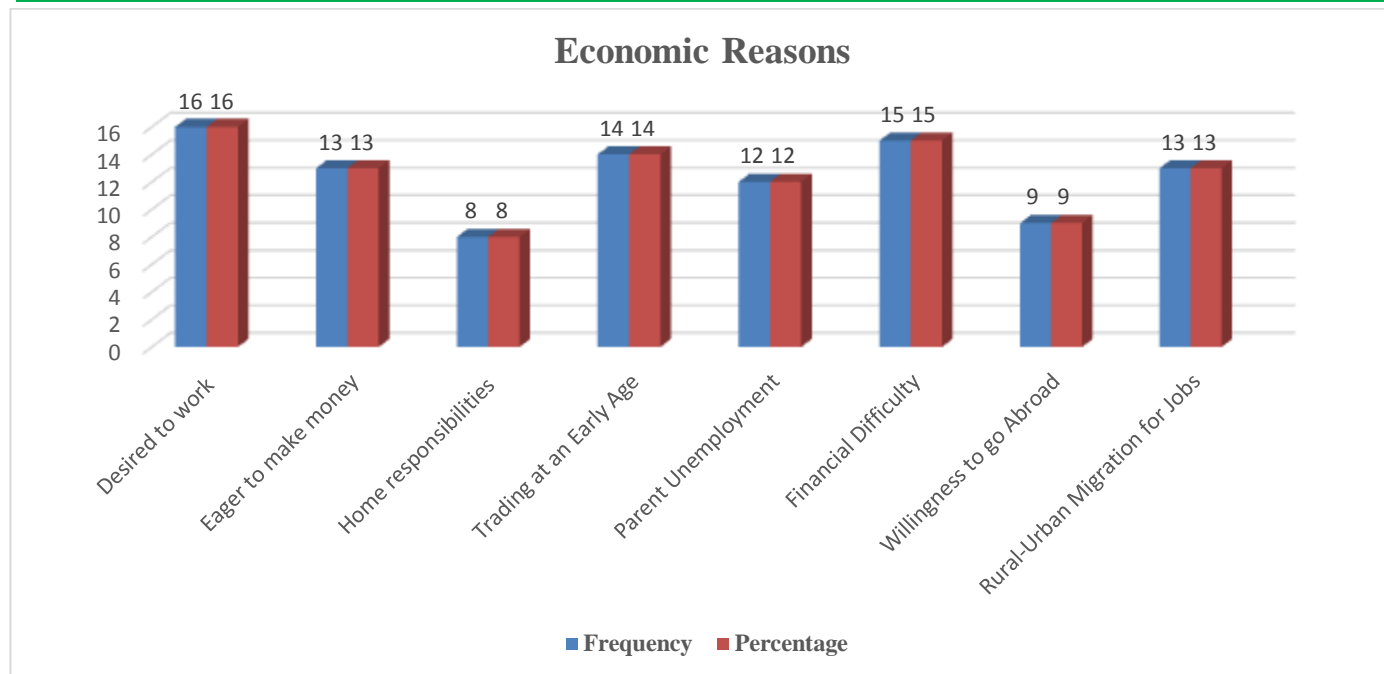


From the field data collection, 18 percent mentioned students Poor Performance in school, 9 percent made mentioned of Expelled or suspended from school and 11 Percent made Homework / Assignment. Also, 9 percent mentioned Disliked school as reasons for their school dropout while 20 percent said Harassment from Male school teachers. 8 percent complained about the School facilities, 12 percent said Harassment from school colleagues and finally, 13 percent said the School too Dangerous.

Table Five (5): Economic Reasons

No	Economic Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1	Desired to work	16	16
2	Eager to make money	13	13
3	Home responsibilities	8	8
4	Trading at an Early Age	14	14
5	Parent Unemployment	12	12
6	Financial Difficulty	15	15
7	Willingness to go Abroad	9	9
8	Rural-Urban Migration for Jobs	13	13

Source: Primary Data 2020



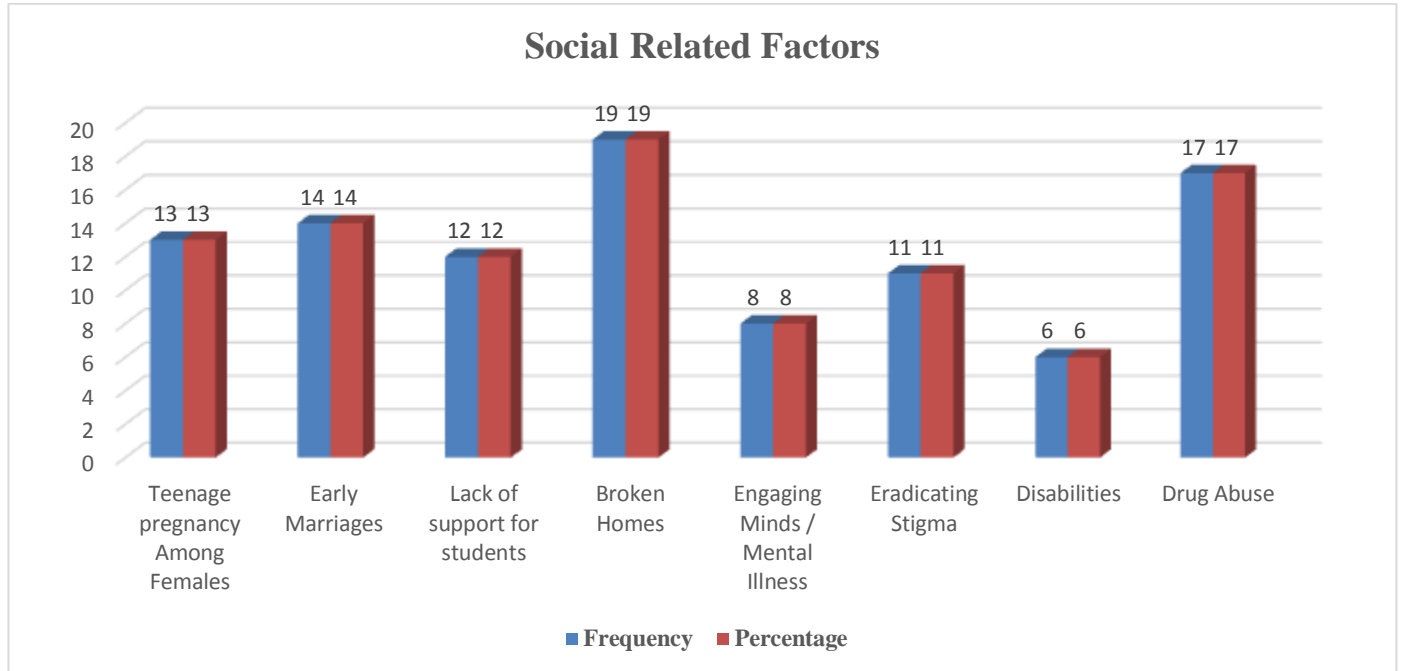
When the respondents were interviewed on the field about the Economic Reasons or factors that lead to their high school dropout, 16 percent said they are desired to work, 13 percent mentioned Eager to make money, 8 percent made mentioned of too much Home responsibilities on them,

14 percent said, they started Trading at an Early Age, 12 percent said, their Parent are Unemployed, 15 mentioned they have Financial Difficulty, 9 percent said, Willingness to go abroad to make more money and 13 percent made mentioned of Rural-Urban Migration for Jobs.

Table Six (6): Social Related Reasons

No	Socially Related Factors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Teenage pregnancy Among Females	13	13
2	Early Marriages	14	14
3	Lack of support for students	12	12
4	Broken Homes	19	19
5	Engaging Minds / Mental Illness	8	8
6	Eradicating Stigma	11	11
7	Disabilities	6	6
8	Drug Abuse	17	17

Source: Primary Data 2020

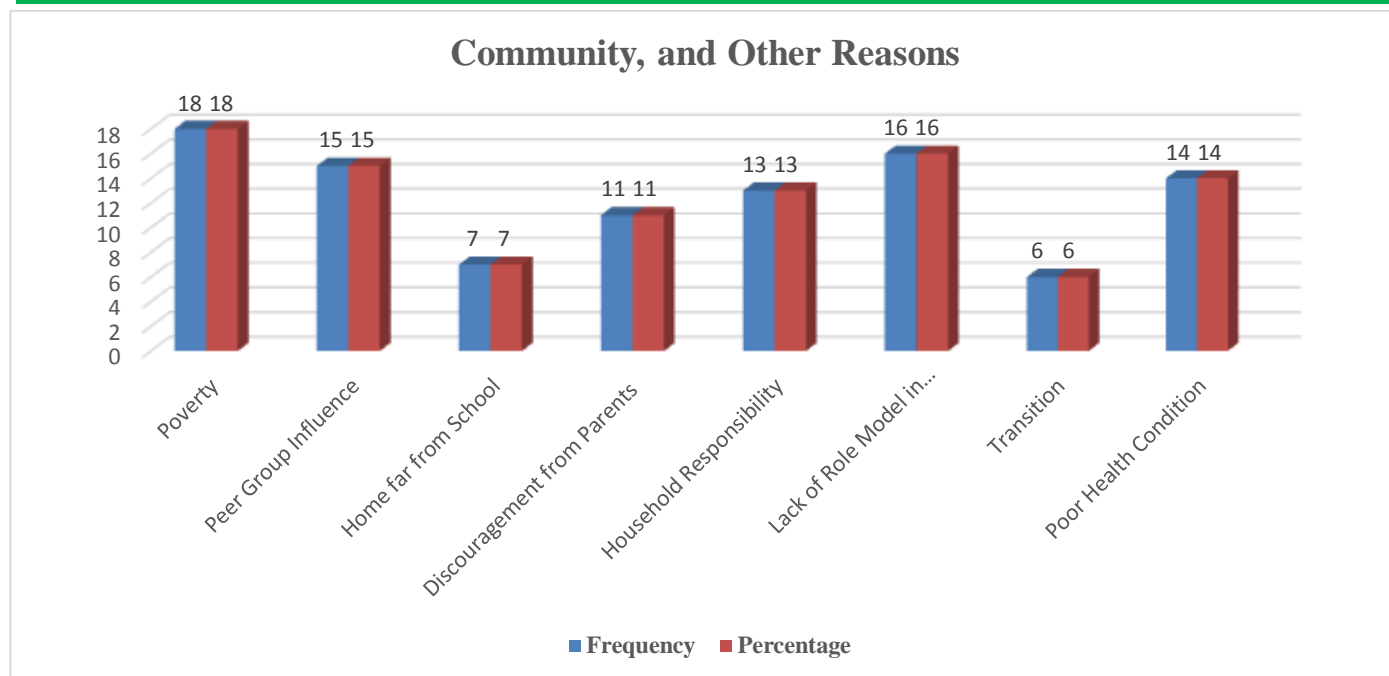


During the interviews, the participants mentioned some of the Socially Related Factors to the high dropout of students as: Teenage pregnancy Among Females students (13 percent), Early Marriages (14 percent), Lack of support for students (12 percent), Broken Homes (19 percent), Engaging Minds / Mental Illness (8 percent), Eradicating Stigma (11 percent), Students with Disabilities (6 percent), and Drug Abuse (17 percent).

Table Seven (7): Community, and Other Reasons

No	Community, Societal, and Other Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1	Poverty	18	18
2	Peer Group Influence	15	15
3	Home far from School	7	7
4	Discouragement from Parents	11	11
5	Household Responsibility	13	13
6	Lack of Role Model in Community	16	16
7	Transition	6	6
8	Poor Health Condition	14	14

Source: Primary Data 2020

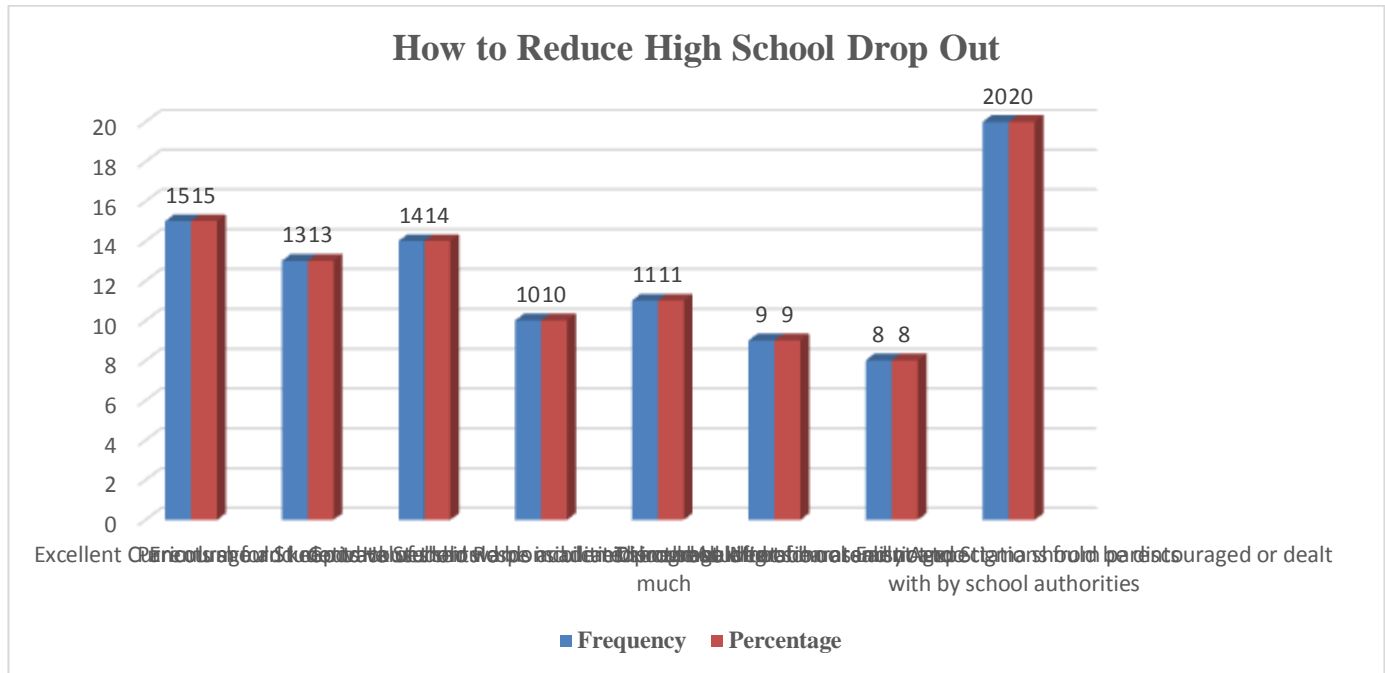


The respondents mentioned the Community, Societal, and Other Reasons for the drop out of school to include: Poverty (18 percent), Peer Group Influence (15 percent), Home far from School (7percent), Discouragement from Parents (11 percent) Household Responsibility (13 percent), Lack of Role Model in Community (16 percent), Transition (6 percent) and Poor Health Condition (14 percent).

Table Eight 8: How to Reduce High School Drop Out

No	How to Reduce High School Drop Out	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent Curriculum for Students	15	15
2	Encourage and motivate Students	13	13
3	Parents should keep track of their wards academic progress	14	14
4	Good values should be inculcated in the students	10	10
5	Household Responsibilities should be after school and not too much	11	11
6	Discourage Migration at Early Age	9	9
7	There should not be unrealistic expectations from parents	8	8
8	All kind of harassment and Stigma should be discouraged or dealt with by school authorities	20	20

Source: Primary Data 2020



The interviewees were asked what they think will help to Reduce High School Dropout and the below are their responses: There should be Excellent Curriculum for Students in the school (15 percent), parents and teachers should encourage and motivate students (13 percent), the Parents should keep track of their wards academic progress (14 percent), Good values should be inculcated in the students (10 percent), Household Responsibilities should be after school and not too much (11 percent), Discourage Migration at Early Age (9 percent), There should not be unrealistic expectations from parents (8 percent) and all kind of harassments and Stigmatization should be discouraged or dealt with by the school authorities (20 percent).

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the Factors That Influence High Rate of School Drop Out at Junior High Level in Ghana using a questionnaire and one hundred respondents made up of student, parent and teachers. A Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis to help examine fully a wider range of School-related reasons on High School dropout, Community related reason that affects High School dropout, Societal related reasons that affect High school dropout, the Economic reasons influencing high school dropout, the personal or individual reasons determining the dropout of high school students and How can High School Dropout be reduced.

The findings of the study established that many of the factors indicated earlier in other studies of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies have shown to influence the dropping out of students at both the students, community, economic, individual or personal reasons, and societal and institutional levels.

At the School-Related Reasons, several factors mentioned by both the school authorities, teachers, parents and the students. The factors mentioned include Poor Performance in class, students Expelled or suspended from the school, due to Homework or Assignment given by teachers, the Disliked of school by the students, Harassment from Male school teachers to the female students, the School facilities itself, Harassment from school colleagues, and some of the students seeing School be too Dangerous for them.

Taking Economic reasons into consideration, the following were the respondents' responses during the field data collection. The students Desired to work, most of the students Eager to make money, the Home responsibilities of the students, some of the students were exposed to Trading at an Early Age, Parent Unemployment and not able to pay school fees, Financial Difficulty within the family, students Willingness to go Abroad and Rural-Urban migration for jobs.

Socially, the Social Related Factors why students drop out of high school was mentioned by the interviewees to include: Teenage pregnancy Among Females, Early marriages which leads to early parenting, Lack of support for students, Broken Home, the Engaging Minds / Mental Illness, for some of the students to Eradicating Stigma from colleagues, due to Disabilities among some of the students and Drug Abuse, especially among the male students.

At the community level, Community, and Other Reasons for the drop out of student in high school was made mentioned by the participant during the data collection as Poverty, Peer Group Influence, Home too far from School, Discouragement from parents, Household Responsibility

Lack of role model in community, Transitions and Poor Health Conditions.

Finally, the below is mentioned by both the teachers, parents and the students as what can be done to Reduce High School Drop Out rate. Excellent Curriculum for Students, Encourage and motivate Students, Parents should keep track of their wards academic progress, Good values should be inculcated in the students, Household Responsibilities should be after school and not too much, There should not be unrealistic expectations from parents, and all kind of harassment and Stigma should be discouraged or dealt with by the school authorities.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Parents must encourage their children to go to school and the need to complete their high education both junior high and senior high schools.

Teachers must try to make school very flexible for all students by so doing sustainable development goals can be achieved by 2030. Especial goal number four which talk about Education for students. By so doing they can:

- Make class exercise easy for every child to a performance
- The student should not be expelled or suspended from school but rather given them normal punishment and advising/talking to them
- The parent should help their children understand their assignment or get someone at home to help their children understand the homework better.
- Students who disliked school should be motivated and encouraged to love school
- Harassment from Male school teachers to the female students should be discouraged and dealt with outrightly.
- School facilities should be made very attractive for the students.
- Other students should not be allowed to harassment their colleagues in school
- School should be made free of danger to all students. It should be a lovely, friendly and interesting place for all student to cherished.

The government should support all needy students in school

The free Senior high School policy in Ghana also continue for all students and it should be from Nursery, Primary, Junior high school and Senior High Schools all.

Ghana Educational Trust Fund (GET Fund) should help parents whose children are intelligent qualifies to go to the university with scholarships to continue.

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