

School Dropout Among Children and It’s Implication(s): Perspectives from Rural Ghana

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Introduction

Education aids in enhancing a person’s intellectual capacity through the knowledge gained, skills acquired, and talents nurtured, for personal and societal advancement. For a developing nation like Ghana where education is seen as a tendency for alleviating poverty and promoting economic progress (Wiafe, 2021), dropping out of school or failing to complete becomes a serious human and social issue requiring in-depth study. With perspectives from selected rural Ghana, the study proposed to examine school dropout among children and its implication(s) on the community. Two research questions guided the study: 1. What factors contribute to school dropout among children in the selected rural areas of Ghana? 2. What are the implication(s) of school drop out on the community? The test of five theories on school drop out was the framework for the documents synthesis and appraisal. The theories are (1) academic mediation theory, which is concerned with academic achievement, (2) general deviance theory, which is concerned with deviant behaviors, (3) deviant affiliation theory, which is concerned with peer relationships, (4) family socialization theory, which is concerned with family practices and expectations, and (5) structural strains (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000).

Methodology and Method

Because the study is from selected cases with a defined boundary, a collective/multiple case studies research was adopted following Bhattacharya, 2017. Document analysis method was used to source data for the study. This method is associated with the systematic assessment and evaluation of printed and electronic content documents that have been recorded without the researcher’s intervention (Bowen, 2009). The approach calls for data to be studied and interpreted in order to extract meaning, gain insight, and create empirical knowledge similar to thematic analysis of qualitative research. The researcher followed coding and category construction, based on the data’s characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon. Varied documents were used for this systematic examination, which included books, records from Ghana Statistical Service and Ministry of Education, reports from Ghana Education Service, peer reviewed journal articles, and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These multiple documents were sorted for convergence and corroboration for analytic triangulation, thus providing the researcher a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Bowen, 2009; Eisner, 1991).

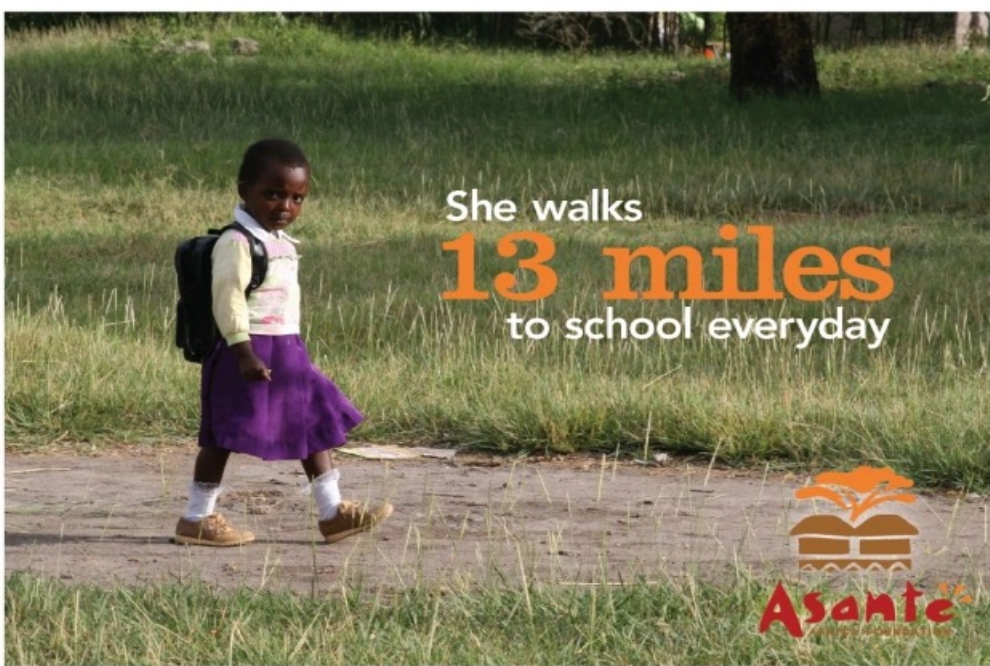
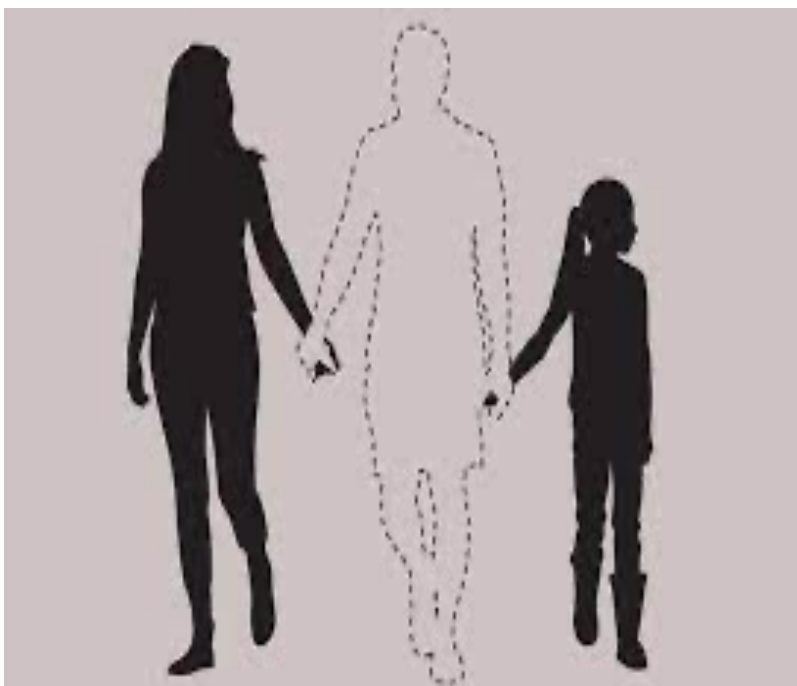
Findings



Ghana is one of 54 countries in Africa, located in the west and south of the Sahara. This sovereign nation is geographically 92,000 square miles, about 239,460 square kilometers. In all, three rural school communities in two regions of Ghana were the focus of the study. The communities are: (1) Asutifi school district in Brong-Ahafo region, (2) Nchiraa Circuit in Wenchi Municipal Assembly in Brong-Ahafo, and (3) Jarapa Municipal (Nambeg), in the Upper West region of Ghana.

What is Rural in Ghana? The Ghana Statistical Service identifies a community as rural when it has a population of less than 5,000. The monthly individual poverty line in these communities is GHC 31 and GHC 154 for a household equivalent to the United States Dollar (USD) \$4.09 and \$20.32 respectively.

1. What factors contribute to school dropout among children in the selected rural areas of Ghana?



2. What are the Implication (s) of school dropout on the community? High unemployment rates, increased social vices, and early marriage in boys and girls were major themes emerging from the document analysis process. For high unemployment rates for example, the employment sector data of the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey showed, 90% of people in the study area work in the private informal sector (GSS, 2009. Ghana Demographic and Health Survey, 2008). This suggests most residents of the municipality lack the necessary educational credentials and skills to find employment in government and other formal sectors due to school dropout or non-completion.

Discussion/Conclusions and Recommendations

Early marriage in boys contrary to the happenings in Namberg in the Jirapa district concerning female children’s early marriage due to religious practices came as a surprise finding. Available field data by Abotsi et al. (2018) revealed dropout rates were highest for youngsters between the ages of 6 and 10 than for those between 11 and 15, with 63.4 percent being males (p. 8). These statistics reveal boy-child education is not what it portrays to be in Ghana and has been left to its fate. While advocacy for the girl-child, vulnerable members of the Ghanaian community, is on the ascendancy and that which the researcher admires, supports, and advocates for, the total neglect or continuous inadequate support for boys’ education is an effect that will come to hit hard on us as a nation and a global community because we refused to ensure educational equity. Frantic efforts by all stakeholders to at least sustain educating boys while improving girls’ education and opportunities will be a needed balance to avoid the reverse effect and perceived consequences which might call for advocacy for boy-child education in the near future. Hostile school environment due to excessive corporal punishment was identified as a major reason given by school children in the communities for dropping out of school. This is unfortunate! If education accepted in Ghanaian society as a panacea for poverty alleviation has its major players, with the teacher and school authorities the reason students in these communities leave school, then we are failing as a people in this noble profession called to nurture lives for the common good of society. Because we have parts to play as teachers, research such as this must be made available and reforms addressing the issues must be included in professional developments to help keep everyone abreast of happenings in the sector, while finding the best practices to mitigate recurrence. The researcher is of the view authorities can correct recalcitrant students and still keep them in school. Generally, findings from the document analysis show similarities in the dropout phenomenon across the selected rural communities of Ghana. The researcher is of the impression school dropout issues might be extremely difficult to understand because of the various factors contributing to it. Further studies and interventions both structural and systemic is highly recommended.

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