

**FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG FEMALE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS IN THE PUSIGA DISTRICT**

**JOSEPH ABANGA AKURUGU**

Department of Education  
St. John Bosco's College of Education,  
Post Office Box, 11, Navrongo-Ghana

<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJSSMR.2022.5203>

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing female pupils dropping out from Junior High Schools in the Pusiga District of the Upper East Region. The main objectives of this study were to examine school based-factors and home-based factors that influence female students' dropout in the Pusiga District. The study also intended to make a contribution to the existing literature in order to come out with effective ways of curbing girl child school dropout. The study made use of a descriptive survey design. It was delimited to only public Junior High Schools in the Pusiga District. A sample of 83 female Junior High School dropouts for the 2017/2018 academic year out of a total population of 105 was drawn for the study, including 83 parents or guardians and 20 teachers constituted the sampled size. Simple random sampling, purposive sampling and snowballing were used to sample the target size. Structured Questionnaires were used to collect the data. Frequencies, simple percentages, bar charts and pie charts were used for analyzing the data. The findings showed that the situation where students continue to repeat in classes without promotion and without any necessary support, long distances from home to school, a large number of students per class, poverty, parental negligence, peer influence, sexual harassment, cultural and traditional values and societal beliefs were the main factors that influenced female pupil drop out of school. The study recommended that parents and teachers should pay more attention to the early warning signs, the Girl Child Education Unit in the District should educate and sensitize parents about the need to support the education of both genders and scholarships for the girl child should be increased at the Junior High School and special attention paid to girls at risk.

**Keywords:** Girl child, Girl education, female/girl child dropout, Junior High Schools

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

All over the world, access to basic education lies at the heart of every development agenda as it is the means through which human capital can be developed. As Westberg (2010) puts it, educational attainment has long been at the forefront of development policies. Education is the driving force behind any strong economy and a prerequisite for social and economic growth. It creates opportunities and provides societies with a better educated and skilled workforce which is necessary for stimulating development (Govender & Steve, 2004). Education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty, give people the opportunity to

improve their lives and raise their voices, promotes harmonious co-existence, improve health, productivity and foster participation in civil society (UNESCO, 2005).

Mac-William and Kwamena-Poh (1975) echo that the main purpose of education whether formal or informal is to produce people who will be useful members of society. It is therefore imperative to give equal importance to the education of both sexes. Education of the female child is widely acknowledged as being a powerful vehicle for self-advancement and the fulfilment of developmental outcomes for present and future generations of children (Maluwa-Banda & Kholowa, 2002)

The government of Ghana over the years have made education its priority (GSS, 2012). Under Ghana's Highly Indebted Poor Countries program (HIPC) and Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I & II (GoG, 2006), a number of projects were implemented such as; introducing girl child education in the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) of 1995, free textbook scheme, capitation grant scheme among others.

Gains have been made in Ghana towards increasing the number of girls in the basic level of education. In 1997, Ghana Education Service established the Girl's Education Unit as part of its Basic Education Division to boost the participation of girls in basic school education and other activities related to female education. With support from World Food Organization (WFP), enrolment and retention of girls in the basic level were improved. The Upper East and Upper West Regions recorded an increase of 31.4% and 26.1% respectively compared to the national average of 12.8% (UNICEF, 2006). Notwithstanding these positive trends, the country has not been able to meet the MDGs target of achieving gender parity in 2015. The gaps are particularly sharp in northern Ghana (UNICEF, 2006). According to the World Conference on Education (2001), all children, particularly girls, must have access to and complete quality education. It has come to a stage where both boys and girls have equal rights to be educated, and in developing a nation it is important to provide education irrespective of gender.

Despite these efforts by successive governments over the years in achieving gender parity in education, the problem of female students dropping out of school continues to exist (Camfed, 2012). A growing body of literature (EMIS basic education data 2018) shows that girls' dropout rates are higher compared to boys in Ghana. Thus, when dropout rate varies by sex and girls tend to drop out earlier compared to boys, it manifests that there are some unique factors contributing to the increase in the dropout rate, particularly for girls. In other words, there are some factors that extensively contribute to an increase in girls' dropout which needs to be researched. Adamu-Issah, Elden, Forson, and Schrofer (2007), argued that household factors such as poverty, domestic chores, cultural beliefs among others remain the most dominant followed by the economic, and then societal factors that contribute to girls dropping out of school before completing their education. They contended that these factors do interact with each other because the girls don't drop out of school because of a single reason; rather they drop out of school as a result of the combined effect of multiple factors. However, the findings from this study are too broad without a specific population of girl child school dropouts. The current study, therefore, focused on girl child school dropouts at the Basic school level in the Upper East Region. Eventhough, Zehadul and Shahidul (2015), in reviewing literature pertaining to factors contributing to school dropout among girls

concludes that economic factors such as cultural factors as are the major contributory factors to girl child dropping out from Junior High School, it was only a literature review in general without a specific setting. To explore these factors, therefore, this study attempts to ascertain the reasons for the high rate of girls' dropout from Junior High Schools in the Pusiga District from the perspective of parents, the school authorities as well as the girl child.

## 2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In most of the Ghanaian Societies especial rural Northern Ghana, emphasis has been put on educating boys than girls. This is because they believe that culturally, girls would be married at an early stage of their lives while boys would continue to remain at home (Okemwa, 2010). Female dropping out of school continues to be a major problem to the government of Ghana. This explains why the government of Ghana in its effort to combat the menace, established under the Ghana Education Service, the Girl Child Education Unit (GSS, 2012).

Despite these initiatives to address the situation through various government policies, interventions and declarations like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which strives to ensure equal access to education for both boys and girls, there is still a variation in the numbers of dropouts of boys and girls in basic schools.

For instance, the report on Basic Statistics and Planning Parameters for Basic Education in Ghana showed that completion rates for boys in Junior High Schools were 74.9% for the 2012/2013 academic year and 72.0% for the 2013/2014 academic year while the completion rate for girls in Junior High Schools, on the other hand, was 65.3% for 2012/2013 and 65.8% for the 2013/2014 academic year (MoE, 2014). This shows that male students had higher chances of completing their programme of the study compared to their female counterparts.

At the regional level, while the rate of completion seems to improve in the Upper East region as a whole compared to the national statistics and parameters, the rate of completion at the Pusiga District is still very low in terms of female students at the junior high school. For instance, the report on Basic Statistics and Planning Parameters for Basic Education in Pusiga District showed that between the 2013/2014 and 2017/2018 academic year, male students recorded an average of 10% dropouts compared to an average of 19% for female students dropouts for the same period. That is 9% more than the average rate of dropout of their male counterparts (MoE, 2014).

That is, there are still numerous cases of girls dropping out of school due to a number of reasons that are still not known and need to be researched. Hence, the reason for this study is to conduct a thorough investigation is to ascertain why female pupils drop out from Junior High Schools in the Pusiga District. The study further sought to investigate possible factors influencing female pupils' drop out from Junior High Schools, in the Pusiga District of the Upper East Region. Thus, narrowing down to school-related factors and community-related factors that influence Junior High School female pupils to drop out in the Pusiga District.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 The Concept of School Drop Out

Colough and Hallmark (1975) define the dropout of pupils as those that leave school at any time other than the established exit point at the end of the primary, junior high school, and senior secondary or tertiary cycles. Also, Lecompte and Dworkin (1991) assert that a dropout is a situation where a pupil leaves school for any reason other than death before graduation or completion of a programme of study and without transferring into another elementary or educational cycle.

According to Hunt (2008), research suggests that a number of interrelated factors interact to influence how and why females drop out from school. There are both school-related and out of school factors resulting in female drop out (Arko, 2013). According to UNESCO (2008), the reasons for dropping out of school are multiple and complex and may depend on a country's level of development. According to the report, these include unsafe, overcrowded and poorly equipped schools and inadequately trained teachers. These factors identified could either be school-level factors or out of school-level factors (poorly equipped schools and inadequately trained teachers) that contribute to female pupils dropping out from junior high schools.

Gisore, (2004) proposes four groups of factors namely, socio-economic background, socio-cultural level, the pedagogical conditions and psychological development of the child. The four may either separately or jointly lead to a child dropping out of school and these factors could fall under either out of school-level factors or school-level factors.

For this study, the researcher intends to look at the factors influencing female students dropping out of Junior High School in two broad factors: community-related factors and school-related factors.

### **3.2 Community-related Factors**

House level factors or out of school-related factors are those factors that contribute to girls dropping out of Junior High Schools for reasons limited only to the home or household and the society in which the girl-child finds herself (Hunt, 2008). These could include economic, socio-cultural, beliefs, poverty, early and forced marriages, parents' negligence and negative attitudes toward girl child education and house chores are some of the out of school-related factors that play a significant role in girls dropping out of junior high schools (Gondwe, 2006). Parental investment in the education of their wards can sometimes be gender-biased. Although parents are devoted to their children irrespective of the gender of the children, investment towards their education is not always evenly distributed. This is mostly the case in the African society where the male child is usually regarded as the heir of his father and therefore priority must be given to his wellbeing (Gondwe, 2006). To many parents, educating boys is a better investment because they tend to see boys' education bringing greater future economic reward directly to the family, which is not to be the case with girls whose future is expected to lie in family care and marriage (UNDP, 1999).

"Indeed, educating a girl is often seen as a poor investment because the girl will marry and leave home, bringing the benefits of education to the husband's family rather than to her own". (Hunt, 2008, p.31). In addition, according to the study by Colclough, Rose and Tembon (2000) in Guinea, parents mentioned that primary schooling was irrelevant to girls'

future role. Furthermore, Parents' negative attitudes towards female education may influence them to engage their children in household chores rather than sending them to school.

There is considerable evidence in the literature that supports this accession. (Glick & Sahn, 2000) and (Kingdon, 2005) supports the view that there is gender bias or pro-male bias in the case of parental investment in children. In addition, Leung and Zhang (2008) found that parents' preference for sons encourages more of them to invest in their sons' well-being to take care of their parents in the future. In fact, parental gender bias investment occurs particularly when parents have limited or lower-income and resources, causing girls to leave school earlier than boys (Gondwe, 2006). For instance, Fuller and Laing (1999) and Grant and Hallman (2006) found an association between a family's financial strength and the likelihood of the daughter's dropout in South Africa.

When resources are scarce in a family, the option would be for the education for the boys to be granted and not for girls. In polygamous homes with many children, it follows that the education for girls suffers (Abagi, 1992). Kasente (2006), revealed that a family's financial capacity dictates who should be taken to school, and the preference is always the boy. He concurs with Abagi (1992) and asserts that when the resources are inadequate to educate both boys and girls, it is the girls who are discontinued from school to leave room for the boys to continue with their education. This is because it is viewed that the social benefits derived from female education are not likely to have much impact on family decision (Onyango, 2003). In view of this Poverty disarranges the living standards and schooling of girls. It is worth noting therefore that both boys and girls are the same and both of them need education (Cited Mohamed, 2016).

According to United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 32/20, gender stereotypes about the role of women as relegated to the family sphere underpin all obstacles to girls' equal access to quality education. Girls are often socialized to assume domestic and care responsibilities, with the assumption that they will be economically dependent on men. The stereotype of men as breadwinners leads to the prioritization of boys' education. Stereotypes often dictate different expectations for boys and girls, such as completion of education and fields of study to pursue. Stereotypes are also perpetuated in school curricula and materials, which often leads to occupational gender segregation, with girls less likely to study and pursue careers in highly valued professional and traditionally male-dominated fields, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (UNHRC, 2016).

Rose and Samarra (2001) stipulate that girls spend approximately one hour per day more than boys working for the household. A study by Brock and Cammish (1997) found that girl children frequently drop out of school to look after younger siblings. In addition, some parents send girls to work as house girls for richer African families in cities (Munthali, 2004).

Local beliefs, traditional practices and attitudes about gender roles often hold girls back from school. An estimated 15 million girls a year are married before they are eighteen (HRW, 2014). Many are forced to marry by their families in exchange for a dowry which is seen as a way of alleviating poverty within the family. Once married, many girls wanting to continue their education are often denied this right, due to traditional roles they are expected to play in the home, such as childbearing and cleaning.

Marriage has always been a prevalent cause for school dropout among females (Grant, Cynthia & Barbara 2013). Early and forced marriages are a common occurrence in African countries and this affect girls' education attainment. In Malawi, according to the United Nations one of two Malawian girls will be married before her 18th birthday (HRW, 2014). Many Malawian scholars have agreed that early marriage contributes to a higher rate of female school dropouts, which affects equal access to education for both males and females.

Mohammed (2016) equally reported that a girl may be withdrawn from school if a good marriage prospect arises. Early marriage is a sociocultural factor that hinders the girl child's access to school. Some parents, in an attempt to protect their teenage daughters, give them out to wealthy old friends.

### 3.3 School-related Factors

School-level factors refer to those factors peculiar to the school context that are likely to influence the girl child to drop out of school. These factors could include among others Academic Failure or Academic Struggles, the attitude of the teacher towards girls, lack of feminine friendly facilities in the school and lack of role models among others. Distance to school is an important factor in educational access, particularly for rural populations (Boyle, Brock, Mace, & Sibbons, 2002). The greater the distance from home to school, the less likely it is that a girl will attend. In most cases in the rural areas, parents have to procure means of transport such as bicycles for their wards to be able to reach school on time. Given a far distance from school, girls are not able to get home on time to perform their domestic chores which makes some parents withdraw the girl child from school so that the girl child can properly perform their domestic duties (Hunt, 2008).

Also, Parents are reluctant to send girls to schools that are far from home because girls are considered to be weaker than boys and unable to expend the energy required to walk to and from school. A large number of studies in African regions report that school distance can discourage girls from being educated for two major problems. One of them is the length of time and energy needed to cover the distance for children with empty stomachs. Another is parental anxiety about the sexual safeguard of their daughters. School distance gives the motivation to girls to stay in school. Ainsworth, Beegle, and Koda, (2005) found that close proximity to schools had a positive motivating impact on girls. This assessment is supported by Maluwa-Banda (2004) who established that parents are afraid that their daughter may be subjected to sexual harassment on their way to and from school. Mzuza, Yudong, and Kapute, (2013) noted that due to a long walking distance to school, most girls start school a little later than the official entry age. This makes them reach puberty before completing their primary school cycle and many girls drop out from school after puberty.

Arko (2013) reports that poor academic performance is one of the main factors influencing girls dropping out. Mzuza et al. (2013) concur that there is a strong relationship between poor examination passing rates and dropout rates confirming that girls who fail exams eventually lose interest to continue with school and opt to quit. There is evidence that children with low achievement are more likely than those with higher achievement to drop out (Hunter & May 2003). Bacolod, Marigee, and Ranjan, (2005) observed that lower scores on measures of cognitive ability are associated with higher rates of dropout. Pupils with low ability are often

the victims of grade repetition, which in most instances does not improve their performance but rather increase their chances of dropping out. Ampiah, Akyeampong, and Rolleston, (2010).stipulate that grade repetition is a factor associated with dropout.

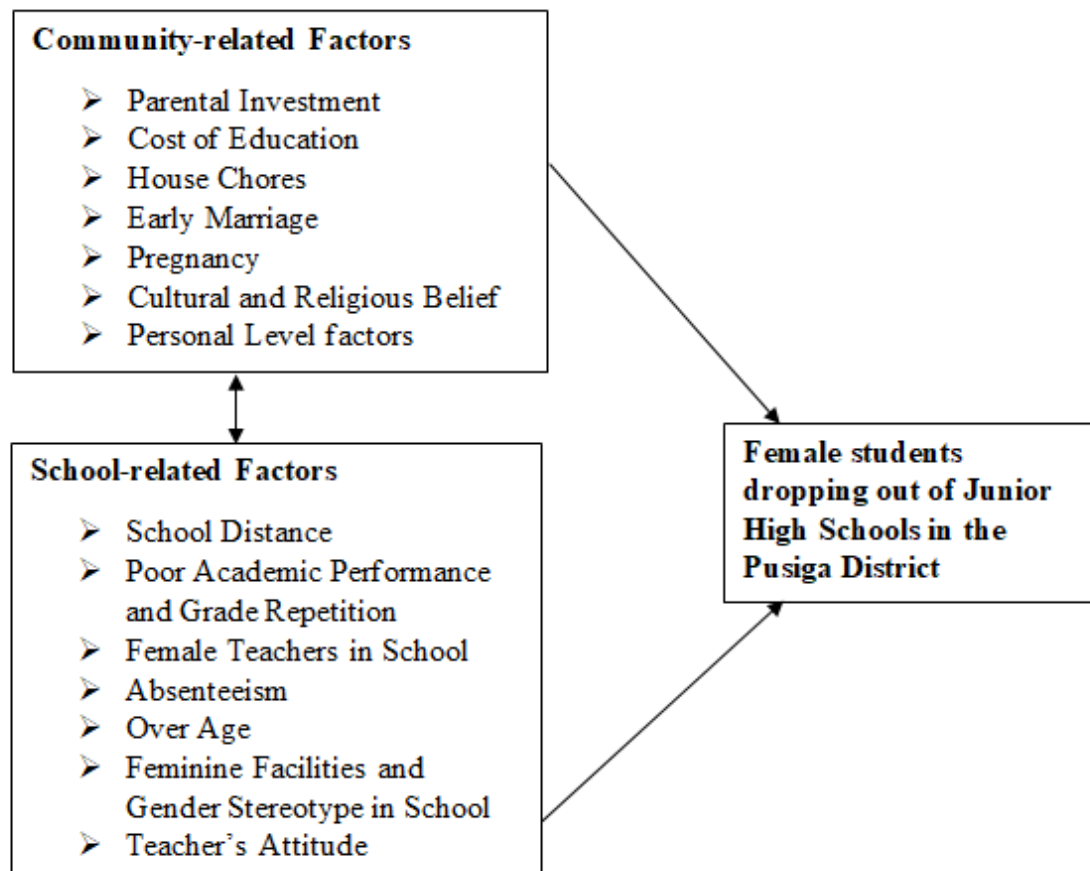
Hunt (2008) found that repetition increased rather than decreased the risk of dropping out. In the same vein, Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah (2009) found that girls who were made to repeat grades with a view of improving performance ended up dropping out of school. Alexander (2008) adds that holding students back to repeat a grade without changing instructional strategies is ineffective. More evidence is given by the study done by Education Policy and Data Center (2009) in 35 developing countries on grade retention which reports that the achievement of retained students still lags behind that of peers after repeating a grade, making it an ineffective strategy for making students catch up. In addition, grade repetition greatly increases the likelihood that the student will drop out of school and being held back twice makes dropping out almost certain. According to Sabates (2010), primary education repetition rates remain very high in some African countries and many of the children repeating grades leave school before completing primary education. Most of the students who drop out of school in Africa are more likely to have been retained than students who graduate. Hunt (2008) adds that grade repetition extends the age range in a particular grade making repeaters overage for that grade level hence increasing their chances of dropping out.

Currently, more than 60% of all schools in Africa lack sufficient sanitation facilities (UNICEF, 2009). Even in schools with facilities, unhygienic sanitation hinders the ability of students to concentrate and learn at school (Water and Sanitation Collaborative Council and WHO, 2005).

This assertion is supported by various studies which have particularly linked the attendance of girls to the availability of adequate sanitation facilities in schools (UNICEF, 2006). Girls spend more time in schools when the number of sanitation facilities is adequate (UNICEF, 2006). As such, the need for improved access to sanitation goes beyond improved health and addresses issues of children's rights and gender equity. Studies carried out in Lesotho and Bangladesh, have indicated that girls have a preference for separate facilities (UNICEF & IRC, 1998). In schools where the toilets are shared between girls and boys or are closely located, a significant number of girls drop out of school after they attain puberty because of harassment and lack of privacy (UNICEF & IRC, 1998). According to Ngales (2005) in a study on school girls towards health, dignity and wellbeing in Ethiopia, it was found that female students indicated that they often missed classes during menstruation or because culturally restrictions combined with poor hygiene and lack of privacy prevented them from using latrines at all.

Girls may be unwilling to attend a school or discouraged from doing so by parents or guardians when schools do not provide water, safe and separate toilets/ changing rooms nor take into account girls' particular health needs. Their concentration and participation in class may also be negatively affected in those circumstances. Social stigma around menstruation for example often leads to additional discrimination and may further compel a girl to remain at home.

## Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework



The first box (household level factors) show the factors within the household that is, the decisions, actions and inactions that contribute to influencing female students' dropout. Literature on the topic demonstrates that Parental Investment, Early Marriage, Pregnancy, Cultural and Religious Beliefs among others contribute to female students dropping out. This is demonstrated by the arrow linking “household-level factors to Female students dropping out of Junior High Schools in the Pusiga District. In addition to that, when parents feel their daughter would be in danger due to the distance of the school, parents are likely to withdraw their daughters. Also, in situations where parents are not satisfied with the attitude of teachers teaching their daughter in the form of discrimination, ineffective teaching, stereotype due to gender or religion or a set of cultural beliefs, parents would usually withdraw their daughters. These in some cases can come from colleague students. This is demonstrated in figure 1.1 by the arrow pointing from “school-level factors” to “household-level factors” indicating that school-level factors can influence household-level factors in affecting the drop out of the female students from Basic schools.

The second box in figure 1.1 (school-related factors) shows the factors within the school that are contributing to female students dropping out of school. These factors include School Distance, Poor Academic Performance and Grade Repetition, Female Teachers in School, Absenteeism, Over Age, Feminine Facilities and Gender Stereotypes in School and Teacher's Attitudes. This is demonstrated by the arrow from school-related factors to the dependent variable.



### 3.4 Target Population

The target population for the study was females who have dropped out of Junior High Schools in The Pusiga District. The total population was approximately one hundred and eighty-three (183) female dropouts in the Pusiga District. This population was selected because according to Ghana Statistical Service (2014), the proportion of literate males was higher (45.5 %) than that of females (29.9%). Also of interest were the economic activities in the Neighboring countries, and how they influence female students' dropout.

### 3.5 Sample Size

The sample size comprised of eighty-three (83) female respondents who dropped out of school in the 2017/2018 academic year representing about 79% of the population size of one hundred and eighty-three (183) female dropouts in the Pusiga District. Also, the researcher reached out to twenty (20) teachers and eighty-three (83) parents of the dropouts to respond to aspects of the questionnaire. In all, one hundred and eighty-six (186) respondents were involved in the study.

### 3.6 Sampling Procedure

This study made use of simple random sampling, purposive sampling and snowballing to identify and reach out to the target population. The researcher obtained data from the Pusiga District Directorate of Education from the 2013/2014 to the 2017/2018 academic year. 2017/2018 was randomly selected based on a simple random sampling procedure. There were a total of 34 Junior High Schools for 2017/2018. Total female enrollment was 1,871 with a total dropout of the female of 183 pupils (MoE, 2018).

The purposive sampling strategy was used to select females because of the purpose of the study; thus, the focus was given to female pupils in Junior High Schools who have dropped out of school in the 2017/2018 academic year. Snowballing was used in identifying the dropouts. A snowballing sampling procedure is used in research when the members of the population are difficult to locate and the researcher collects data on the few members of the target population he or she can locate and then asks those individuals to provide the information needed to locate other members of the population whom they know (Gordon, 2009). The snowball sampling method was used until the target sample size was reached.

Also, the purposive sampling method was used to select teachers who had taught in school for at least three years. This was because these teachers had a fair knowledge of the problems as a result of their long stay in the school. Again, a purposive sampling strategy was also used to select parents of the dropout girls in order to triangulate the findings in the study.

### 3.7 Data Collection Instrument

The researcher used semi-structured Questionnaires to collect data in the study. The questionnaire was prepared in three sets and grouped into different sections. Parents, teachers and the female dropouts were required to respond in three sections; A, B and C. With section C seeking demographic data while the rest of the two sections sought responses on different items based on the research questions.

### 3.8 Validity of the Research Instruments

To ensure the validity of the qualitative instrument, the researcher subjected it to face and content validity measures. Face validity is the extent to which an instrument is subjectively viewed as covering the concept it purports to measure. In other words, an instrument can be said to have face validity if it “looks like” it is going to measure what it is supposed to measure. After designing the research instrument the researcher showed it to colleagues for relevant comments and suggestions. Content validity, on the other hand, refers to the content which measures all facets of a given social construct (Pan, W., & Schumsky, D.A. & Wilson, F.R. 2012). The questionnaire covered all aspects of the study. To ensure the content validity, therefore, the researcher gave the instrument to the supervisors and other Professors in that field of study to seek their expert opinions, for necessary corrections and approval.

### 3.9 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability of a research instrument is the consistency of the instrument producing similar results given the same conditions on different occasions. To establish the reliability of the questionnaire, it was pilot- tested among Junior High school students in the Bawku Municipal and the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha, a measure of internal consistency was used in determining the reliability of the pre-tested instrument.

### 3.10 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was administered to parents and the dropped out female respondents in their various homes while the teachers questionnaire was administered in the school. The researcher with the help of colleagues initially sought consent and explained the purpose of the study to the respondents.

The researcher assured the respondents that any information taken from them would be treated with utmost confidentiality even though this was captured in the introduction section of the questionnaires and interview guide. The respondents were also informed of the right to participate voluntarily and may choose to withdraw at any level they so wish. The researcher then guided the respondents to complete the items in the questionnaire. The researcher used three (3) days to cover the sample size for the study.

## 4.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA

**Research Question 1:** What are the home-based factors that influence the school drop-out rate of female students in junior high schools in the Pusiga District?

Frequencies, simple percentages and bar charts and pie charts were used for data analysis in the study.

**Table 1.1 Distribution of Dropouts Responses to Home Based Factors that Influence Drop out**

<b>Variable Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Family, Cultural and Traditional religion belief that female education is a waste of resources</b>		
Agree	71	85.5
Disagree	12	14.5
<b>Parents Investment in male child only</b>		
Agree	76	91.6
Disagree	7	8.4
<b>Female child need to work and Supplement family income</b>		
Agree	43	51.8
Disagree	40	48.2
<b>The girl child is to undertake house chores</b>		
Agree	39	47.0
Disagree	44	53.0
<b>No means of transport is provided to the girl child to go school</b>		
Agree	74	89.2
Disagree	9	10.8
<b>Desire to learn a trade</b>		
Agree	45	54.2
Disagree	38	45.8
<b>Not seeing any benefit to gain in continuing education</b>		
Agree	21	25.3
Disagree	62	74.7

**Source: Fieldwork (2020)**

The number of respondents that indicated they needed to work and supplement family income was 43 which constituted 51.8% of the total population while 48.2% disagreed that they needed to work and supplement the family income.

The majority (89.2%) attributed their decision to drop out to lack of means of transport while 10.8% disagreed their reason to drop out was lack of means of transport. This is consistent

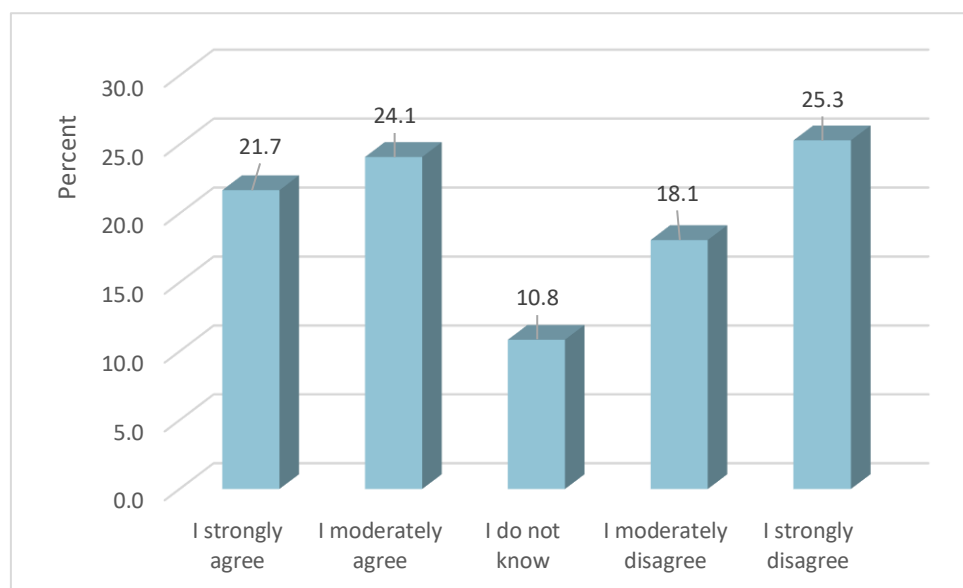
with the similar school-based factor as the majority (63.8%) of the respondents indicated that it took them more than one (1) hour to walk from their homes to get to school (Figure 4.6). Boyle et al. (2002) posit that distance to school is an important factor in educational access, particularly for rural populations. The greater the distance from home to school, the less likely it is that a girl will attend. In most cases in the rural areas, parents have to procure means of transport such as bicycles for their wards to be able to reach school on time. Given a far distance from school, girls are not able to get home on time to perform their domestic chores which makes some parents withdraw the girl child from school so that the girl child can properly perform their domestic duties (Hunt, 2008).

Of the total dropouts, 54.2% indicated they dropped out to pursue their desire to learn a trade. This is somewhat consistent with the background of the JHS dropouts as 63.9% of the dropouts were engaged in learning various forms of trade (Figure 4.4). The other 48.8% disagreed their reason for dropping out was to learn a trade.

The majority (74.5%) of the respondents disagreed that they were not seeing any benefit to gain in continuing education while 25.3% indicated that their reason for dropping was that they did not see the benefit of continuing their education.

Home-based factors are factors emanating from the home that contribute to the female child dropping out of school. According to Hunt (2008), those factors limited only to the home or household and the society the girl child find themselves that contribute to the drop out are the home-based factors. These factors play a significant role in the girl child dropping out (Gondwe, 2006). These factors include economic, socio-cultural, beliefs, poverty, early and forced marriages, parents' negligence and negative attitudes toward girl child education and house chores among others.

For the girl child to fully achieve her dream of getting educated, she would need the support of the home and the society at large as well as her inner desire to achieve such a goal (Hunt, 2008). This support comes in various forms such as financial, physical, emotional, encouragement among others.



## Figure 1.2 Distribution of Drop Outs Opinion on Parental Support

When dropped outs were asked to rate the level of support from their parents and guardians, 21.7% indicated they strongly agreed they received the best support to continue their education while 25.3% indicated they strongly disagreed that they received the best of support (Figure 1.2). Also, 24.1% said they moderately agreed that they received support while 18.1% indicated they moderately disagreed they received support to pursue their education. Those that stated they were indifferent constituted 10.8% of the sampled population. This is consistent with the response of parents about their opinion of the education of girls.

**Table 1.2 Opinion and Actions of Parents on the Education of their Wards**

Reactions of Parents	Frequency	Percent
They were in support	13	15.7
They were not in support	37	44.6
They were unconcerned	33	39.8

**Source: Fieldwork (2020)**

Though some parents were of the view that the education of the girl child is unnecessary, 44.6% of the dropouts indicated their parents were not in support of them dropping out of school. The least of them (15.7%) indicated their parents were in support of their decision to drop out while 39.8% said their parents were unconcerned about their decision to drop out (Table 1.2). It is difficult for these girls to attain their educational goals without the needed support from their parents and guardian. To get a child to attain a certain level of education, parents and guardians must be ready and willing to support them financially, physically and emotionally among others to make that dream a reality (Gondwe, 2006).

Generally, 44.6% of parents and guardians were of the view that priority should be given to male children in their educational pursued while 19.3% were of the view that the education of the girl child is a total waste of resources (Table 1.2). Parents came to this conclusion on the basis that in the African society, the male child is usually regarded as the heir of his father and therefore priority must be given to his wellbeing. This is consistent with the assertion of Gondwe (2006) as he concludes that because the male child will inherit the father, priority should be given to his wellbeing. To many parents, educating boys is a better investment because they tend to see boys' education bringing greater future economic reward directly to the family, which is not to be the case with girls whose future is expected to lie in family care and marriage (UNDP, 1999). Also, 25.3% of parents and guardians supported the idea that equal opportunity should be given to both boys and girls in their educational pursued without any form of bias and discrimination, and 10% of parents and guardians were of the view that priority should be given to the girl child only.

**Research Question 2:** What are the school-based factors that influence the school drop-out rate of female students in junior high schools in the Pusiga District?

**Table 2.1 Distribution of Facilities in Public JHS in Pusiga District**

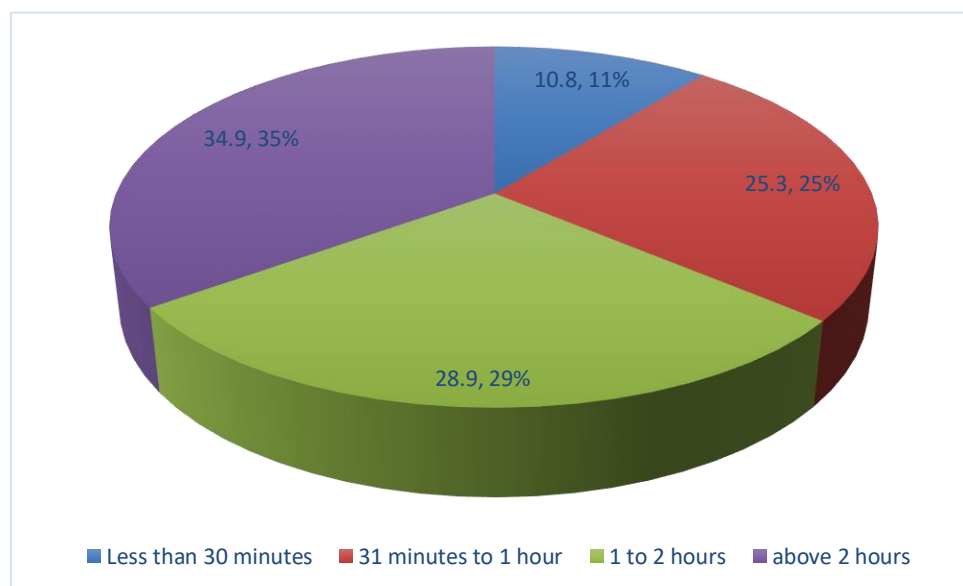
Description of facility	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Adequate teaching staff	41	13.4%	49.4%
Proper and spacious class room with adequate furniture	28	9.2%	33.7%
Separate and proper latrine	83	27.2%	100.0%
Good Library	27	8.9%	32.5%
Extra-curricular activities e.g. Debating clubs	31	10.2%	37.3%
Good school environment	24	7.9%	28.9%
Easily accessible place of school location	19	6.2%	22.9%
Strict and unbiased disciplinary system	27	8.9%	32.5%
Sufficient (at least two) female teachers in school	14	4.6%	16.9%
Assistance in the form of guidance and counseling	11	3.6%	13.3%

**Source: Fieldwork (2020)**

Generally, when the school dropouts were asked about the availability of basic facilities in their school and how satisfied they were with such facilities, the responses were as below. From the output, 49.4% indicated they had adequate teaching staff and 33.7% indicate they had access to a proper and spacious classroom with adequate furniture (Table 2.1). This demonstrates lack of sufficient teachers and proper and well-ventilated classrooms. This is not uncommon in Ghanaian society as most of the schools in the rural areas mostly lack teachers with classrooms enrollment above the normal size (UNICEF, 2006). In some cases, local volunteers who are nonprofessional teachers have to step in and assist to cater for the shortage. This finding is consistent with UNESCO’s research (2001) where they conclude that schools that usually serve the rural communities are generally characterized by staff shortages, crowded classrooms and lack of resources. All schools had separate latrines for their students. With regards to library facilities, 32.5% had access to such facilities. This was particularly of students close to the district capital and could access the Gbewaa College of Education library. A student who indicated they had extra-curricular activities such as

debating clubs among others were 37.3%, also, 28.9% had a good school environment, 22.9% could easily access their school without any form of hindrance such as rivers among others, 32.5% indicated they had a strict and unbiased disciplinary system in their schools. Schools that had at least two (2) female teachers were 16.9% while 13.3% of the students in the sampled schools had assistance in the form of guidance and counselling.

School-level factors refer to those factors peculiar within the school context that is likely to influence the girl child to drop out of school (Gondwe, 2006). The school should provide a conducive and enabling environment of all forms to enable the learner to learn comfortably. Students will achieve their full potential in any stage of their academic life when the school is able to support them with their basic needs (Arko, 2013). Among these needs include constant engagement of the student, spacious and well-ventilated classrooms, guidance and counselling, strict and unbiased discipline system, and regular attendance of teachers and the delivery of lessons. When these factors are lacking, the learner is faced with challenges that could trigger their dropout.



**Figure 3 Distribution of Time Taken to Get to School**

From Figure 4.6, it can be observed that 10.8% of the dropouts spent less than 30 minutes from their houses to get to their school location. Also, 25.3% spent between 31 minutes and one (1) hour, 28.9% spent between one (1) hour and two (2) hours and the majority 34.9% spent above two (2) hours to get to school by foot. Overall, the vast majority (63.8%) of the respondents indicated that it took more than one (1) hour to walk from their homes to get to school (Figure 3)

Based on the specification of the facilities in the schools, the dropouts were asked to then rate the specific factor that informed their decision to quit school. The result is as below.

**Table 3.1 Distribution of Dropouts Responses to School-Based Factors that Influence Dropout**

Variable Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Poor Academic Performance and Grade Repetition</b>		
Agree	75	90.4
Disagree	8	9.6
<b>I was far older than my class mates</b>		
Agree	79	95.2
Disagree	4	4.8
<b>Lack of Female Teachers (role models) in School and the community</b>		
Agree	50	60.2
Disagree	33	39.8
<b>Lack of Feminine Facilities and Gender Stereotype in School</b>		
Agree	35	42.2
Disagree	48	57.8
<b>The School Distance is too far</b>		
Agree	49	59.0
Disagree	34	41.0

**Source: Fieldwork (2020)**

The majority (90.4%) of the dropouts cited poor performance and grade repetition as major school-related factors influencing their dropout (Table 3.1). Poor academic performance and the lack of progression might lead some parents, guardians and children to question whether they should remain in school. This seems particularly the case for girls, where research by Brock and Cammish (1997) in Sierra Leone and Vanuatu, indicates that girls who needed to repeat would often be withdrawn from school instead, whereas boys might be more likely to repeat. Kane (2004) describes how boys repeat more than girls, with boys having a higher student performance. This seems to imply (but does not state) that the consequence of repetition is higher female dropout over retention. This finding confirms the assertion by Arko (2013) that poor academic performance is one of the main factors influencing girls dropping out. According to Divine (1996), good performance is key to pupil retention. This study found that most of the female dropouts had a history of poor performance and grade repetition which did result eventually in them dropping out.



As seen from Table 3.1, 60.2% of the respondents indicated they were older than their peers and as such, influenced their decision to drop out. Most research evidence shows that over-age pupils, above the average age for a grade level, are more likely to drop out (Dimas, 2013). A study by Lewin (2007) of some Sub-Saharan African countries on the effects of the relationship between age and grade found that there is a correlation between age and grade attended with dropping out. Pupils who were too old for the grade they attended were more likely to drop out of school.

The study established that most girls (81.9%) within the Pusiga District dropped out of school due to a lack of role models either within the community or at school, low appreciation of the girls' efforts, lack of personalized conversation around social issues affecting the girls and the general lack of exposure to successful ladies in the community through education. In terms of human resources, research indicates that female teachers often have an important impact on schooling quality for female pupils (Colclough et al, 2000). However, the availability of female teachers in some countries is low as is the case in the Pusiga District. The majority (90%) of the headteachers were males and 10% were females (table 4.3). Also, only 16.9% of the junior high schools in the District had at least two female teachers in their school. For example, in Colclough et al (2000) research, some of the rural schools visited in Guinea and Ethiopia had no female teachers; this is not uncommon.

This study revealed that 59% of the dropouts agreed the distance of their school contributed to their decision to drop out while 41% disagreed (Table 3.1). According to Hunt (2008), a far distance from school leads to girls not being able to get home on time to perform their domestic chores, and as such, make some parents withdraw the girl child from school so that the girl child could properly perform their domestic duties. Mzuza et al (2013) noted that due to a long walking distance to school, most girls start school a little later than the official entry age. This makes them reach puberty before completing their primary school cycle and many girls drop out from school after puberty.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- i. Cultural, traditional values and societal beliefs constrain girls from freely realizing their dreams in education. Societies, traditional values and some religious beliefs constrain girls from making their own decisions and expressing their own opinions. Parents were more concerned about the role of girls at home as in this role, girls do not need education since they are supposed to take care of the children and prepare meals.
- ii. Poverty and relinquishing of financial responsibilities possess challenges to pupils to comfortably pursue their education and hence kill their drive and desire to continue schooling. Due to poverty, parents are not able to afford the basic need of their female child such as textbooks, uniforms, bicycles among others. The long hours of walking to and from school make them tired coupled with the fact that girls have to perform

house chores like fetching water, sweeping and cooking among others upon reaching home.

- iii. The continual repetition of the girl child without the necessary measures, care and support, guidance and counselling worsens the academic performance of the girl child and increase the risk of dropout rather than retention. This is especially where repeated students go to add to the already crowded students in the class. Their progress academically is mostly not tracked and monitored properly to check improvement. These students end up not seeing any improvement in their academic life and see dropping out as a better choice than being in school.

## REFERENCES

- Abagi, O. (1992). Addressing the Gender Gap in Education in an Emerging Democratic Society of Kenya. A paper prepared for the Workshop on Democratic and Democratization in Kenya, Kenyatta University.
- Adamu-Issah, M., Elden, I., Forson, M. & Schrofer, T. (2007). Achieving universal primary education in Ghana by 2015: a reality or a dream? New York.
- Arko, A. D. (2013). Causes of female dropout in Junior High School in Kassena-Nankana West District of Upper East Region, Ghana. *Journal of education and practice*. Vol. 4(16).
- Colclough, C. and Lewin, K. M. (1993). *Educating All the Children: Strategies for Primary Education in Developing Countries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Govender, P. & Steven, G. (2004). *Nepad policy focus series back to the blackboard looking beyond universal primary education in Africa*. The southern African institute of international affairs.
- Government of Ghana (2006). *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II)*. Accra
- Gisore, B. N. (2004). An investigation into the factors influencing low retention rates of pupils in public primary schools in Gucha district. Unpublished M.ED Thesis. The University of Nairobi.
- Glick, P. & Sahn, D.E. (2000). Schooling of girls and boys in a West African country: the effects of parental education, income, and household structure. *Economics of Education Review*. Vol. 19: pp. 63–87.
- Gondwe, G. C. (2006). *Factors Influencing Rural Female Pupils Drop Out from Primary Schools, in Nkhata-Bay South District, Malawi*. Master of Science in Educational Administration and Leadership, St. Cloud State University.

- Grant, M. & Hallman, K. (2006). Pregnancy-Related School Dropout and Prior School Performance in South Africa. Policy Research Division Working Paper No 212. New York: Population Council.
- Hunt, F. (2008). Dropping Out from School: A Cross-Country Review of Literature. The University of Sussex Centre for International Education, United Kingdom.
- Kasente, D. (2006). Gender and Education in Uganda: A Case Study for Education for All Monitoring Report. Kampla: Makerere University. Retrieved on 18th April 2020 from <http://lobrary.unesco iicba.org>.
- Kingdon, G. G. (2005). Where Has All the Bias Gone? Detecting Gender Bias in the Intrahousehold Allocation of Educational Expenditure. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. Vol. 53(2): pp. 409-451.
- Leung, M. C. M. & Zhang, J. (2008). Gender preference, biased sex ratio, and parental investments in children in single-child households. *Review of Economics of the Household*. Vol. 6(2): pp. 91–110.
- MacWilliam, H. O. A. & Kwamena-Poh, M. A. (1975). The development of education in Ghana. London: Longman group limited.
- Maluwa-Banda, D. & Kholowa, F. (2002). The status of the education of the girl child in Malawi: A gender review in education. A report for UNICEF Malawi.
- Mohamed, M. O. M. (2016). Factors influencing female students' dropout rate in secondary schools in Mogadishu, Somalia. Unpublished M.ED Thesis. University of Nairobi.
- UNESCO (2005). EFA global monitoring report 2005: Education for all, the quality imperative. Paris: UNESCO publishing.
- Westberg, N. B. (2010). Girls versus boys? Factors associated with children schooling in rural Malawi. Master thesis: Norwegian University of Life Science.
- Zehadul, K. A. H. M. & Shahidul, S. M. (2015). Factors contributing to school dropout among the girls: a review of literature. *International Islamic University of Malaysia, Malaysia. European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences*. Vol. 3(2): pp. 25-36.