African Journal of Social Issues 8 (1): 2025
Available online at https://ajosdemar.com;
https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajosi
Copy Right: © Author(s)
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajosi.v8i1.45
CC BY
p-ISSN 2672 – 5142; e-ISSN 2734 – 3324
Original Research

PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT AND COVID-19 IN NYAGATARE DISTRICT OF RWANDA: DO FAMILY CONFLICTS MATTER?

[1]PIERRE Celestin Bimenyimana, [2]PHOCAS Niyitanga, [3]JEROME Ndayisenga, [4]EMMANUEL Bumvampoze, [5]GERALD Bikorimana, and [6]UMUHOZA Karemera Noella Josiane

[1]Department of Social Sciences & Office of the DVC for Academic Affairs and Research, University of Rwanda, [2,5]Department of Social Sciences, University of Rwanda, [3]African Research and Community Health Initiative, Rwanda, [4]Emmanuel Bumvampoze, Vice Chancellor's Office, University of Rwanda, and
[6]Department of Crop Production, University of Rwanda,

Email: [1]pcbimenyimana@ur.ac.rw, [2]niyitangaphocas9@gmail.com, [3]jeromendayisenga1@gmail.com, [4]e.bumvampoze@ur.ac.rw, [5]g.bikorimana@ur.ac.rw, *and* [6]k.umuhoza@ur.ac.rw

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the contribution of family conflicts to public secondary school dropout, especially in the period from 2019 to 2021 in the Nyagatare district of Rwanda. The research was purely qualitative. The qualitative design in this context was to determine the significance of family conflicts on dropouts in public secondary schools. To reach the objective of the study, data were collected from a sample population of three public schools located in Nyagatare District of Rwanda, and the people who live near those three schools, whereby 14 interviews were conducted in total. The sampling followed purposive sampling, where the selected schools are the ones that have the highest level of school dropout among the public schools of the district. The study adopted narrative analysis, which is a qualitative data analysis method that emphasizes comprehending the primary narratives derived from the personal stories of a research group. The study found that the major conflicts in the area during the study period were disagreements between spouses and fighting between them. The findings also revealed that family conflicts have major negative effects on children's education, which therefore in some cases, resulted in their dropping out of school. The study suggests that the government, parents, and school leaders should put more effort into fighting against family conflicts that contribute to children's school dropouts.

Keywords: Public School; dropout; COVID-19, family conflicts; Rwanda.

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies revealed that the COVID-19 era increased caregivers' burdens. It also increased child-parental home-based conflicts (Russell et al., 2020; Spinelli et al., 2020) in the sense that during the COVID-19 Pandemic period, measures like quarantine increased financial crisis and family relationship issues (Park et al., 2020 and Brooks et al., 2020). This can be explained in the sense that measures like quarantine kept family members together at home, and this triggered quarreling chances because people were unoccupied and were almost doing nothing at home. During the pandemic period, there was an increased risk of partner violence. This experience increased the chances of child maltreatment and family-based violence (Humphreys et al., 2020).

Dagnew's (2017) study sought to explain out-of-school factors and in-school factors that contributed to school dropout by using the case of Ethiopia. The study reported that out-of-school factors relate to parental factors, such as parental level of education, parental income level, and limited parental encouragement.

A study was conducted in Rwanda on Rwandan students' dropout and repetition rates. The results showed that most students who repeated or left school before completion were those from families in the poorest living situations of living and their parents were mostly not educated (Williams et al., 2015). Therefore, families might experience significant stress due to poverty, which affects children on the other hand. According to the family stress model, poverty can lead to interparental conflict, which is crucial in family dynamics and can precede unfavorable child outcomes, including school dropout (Chzhen et al., 2022)

Out-of-school factors, such as family conflicts, determine children's behaviors and future progress in studying (Heppen, 2002). In this context to understand what contributes to school dropout and change in the dropped out's behavior someone may wonder whether it depends on household residence (urban/rural), level of parental education, parental occupations, and other home-based factors like family conflicts which are the subject of the current study because one single cause cannot explain the situation.

Indeed, according to several experiences high school dropout is a great obstacle to one's chance of getting effective jobs that pay enough to keep one out of the poverty line; properly the economic changes and reasons for dropping out of school have never been crucial aspects of discussion (Potter et al.,1989; Levy et al., 2019; Herd et al., 2019; Fine, 2018). Therefore, not getting better employment can be seen as a stressful occurrence that impacts the functioning and balance of the entire family structure, hence contributing to family conflicts.

It was also found that since the middle of the 1980s, there has been an emergency of new reports on economic and familial causes of quitting secondary schools (Mclanahan 1985; Ekstrom et al., 1986) where the education system has also shown hindrances related to high school enrolment contribute to a small number of students who finish their studies (Wals,2012). As a matter of fact, in South and West Asia, countries encounter situations that indicate that there are thirty-three dropout cases for a hundred pupils in primary schools, while in Latin America and the Caribbean students about 17% of schools quit before completion (UNICEF, 2011).

The policy of free primary education increased the number of students joining schools, especially in African countries like Kenya, but the challenge is staying in school and

completing studies. For instance, in Kenya, about 400,000 pupils, out of a total of 677,966 pupils who entered level one in 2003, dropped out or repeated, meaning that only 41% could have completed (Abuya et al., 2013).

The situation was found to be the same in Niger as well as in Burkina Faso where above a quarter of pupils at the age of fourteen and below dropped out the school, the feedback is the same as that of Americans (Bashir et al., 2018) who wondered that as children got older their spirit of dropping out of school also rises.

A study conducted in Bangladesh has revealed that the economic status of a family may contribute to the family dynamics, including the increase in family conflicts, which also leads to a high level of high school dropouts (Morrow and Villodas, 2018). Another study has shown that in Africa, the primary factors contributing to early school dropout are insufficient income, parents' level of education and work position, residing in a single-parent family, being born out of wedlock, age, region of residence, academic performance, and family conflicts (Momo et al, 2019).

The Rwandan education system took into account the free education policy through nine years and twelve years of basic education (Walters et al., 2014), and the enrolment rates have effectively increased (MINEDUC, 2019). However, according to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2020), some districts in Rwanda have been reporting an increase in the number of pupils leaving schools before completion. For instance, in the Gisagara and Nyamagabe districts of the southern province, the dropout rates increased from 6% in 2018 to 11 % in 2019. However, there is still a need to understand the contribution of family conflicts to the considerable increase in school dropouts, especially in the Nyagatare District of Rwanda during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Do family conflicts matter?

Rwanda Ministry of Education in 2019 reported a dropout rate in secondary schools of 9.3% and 8.9% among male and female students, respectively (MINEDUC, 2019). In Rwanda, the dropout rate is still high, given the efforts that have been invested to promote the secondary school enrollment rate among the school-aged population. Strategies adopted to promote secondary school education include the dissemination of secondary schools in the country through a twelve-year basic education program, increasing the welfare of primary and secondary school teachers, and optimizing the learning environment (Williams, 2019; MINEDUC, 2022; Nizeyimana et al., 2020).

Previous studies highlighted family conflicts as a factor associated with secondary school dropout in Rwanda, but perceptions of parents, local leaders, and teachers have not been studied (Ndushabandi et al., 2016; Safari, 2016). This study aims to explore the perception of parents, teachers, and local leaders regarding the influence of family conflict on secondary school dropouts in Rwanda, especially in the Nyagatare District of Rwanda during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflicts among married partners result in violence related to sex or physical aggression (Appel & Holden, 1998), and the acts of violence among partners are mostly accompanied by other effects of different family issues on children's development. For instance, it has been proclaimed, in a study investigating the effects of divorce on children's development (Amato,

2000), that high couple conflicts affect the children's development, before, before, and after the couple's divorce.

Mussetto et al. (2017) found that parental conflicts affect children psychologically and therefore determine the children's future mental health. Such situations of parental conflicts and their effects on children's mental health may result in barriers that later affect family-community development, generally because both the affected parents and children are members of the larger community. Family conflicts increasingly affect children negatively, and these effects may result in others to their future relationships and their future progress, mainly in schools and colleges. The misunderstanding between family members, mainly between couples, leads to an imbalance in the family (Royal, 2017).

It was also found that children with conflicted family backgrounds are likely to be affected both socially and psychologically, it later becomes an obstacle for them to create relationships with others around them, either friends or family members and they have disorders in settling down and sleeping disorders, overall, these negatively affects their performance at school (Reynolds et al.,2014). There is a perspective that focuses on the idea that conflicts are not necessarily positive because they mostly end in violence, and from this approach, it should stop from happening. This approach needs to be standby in controlling violent disputes, creating early warning environments, using organized coordination to stop emergencies of new conflicts, and institutionalizing the idea of conflict prevention at different levels, either globally, regionally, or locally (Thakore, 2013).

Njau and Wamahiu (1994) defined school dropout as a situation in which children quit school before completion of the prescribed curriculum of studies. Several relevant terms have been put in place to explain dropout in different ways, but in a synonymous way: those terms are withdrawal and non-completion. Disagreement in concepts related to school dropout is therefore a problem because the way dropout should be measured, researched, and tackled is described by how it is defined (Ashby,2004), therefore, the main problem to look after is all about who has dropped out (Nichols,2010).

Since the independence of 1962, the Rwandan government has been focused on boosting the number of student enrolment, this has been fruitful to the country's development such as in coping with the negative effects of ignorance, poor economic status, and poverty, in this regard, the scholar Mathisen (2012), did a study on Rwanda's education reform, and the results found that education in Rwanda is a pillar for developing human capital.

Rwanda, as an African country like others, sees education as a pillar of human rights, where every Rwandan is allowed to realize and try his/ her best to reach their potential. In this regard, the Rwandan government has emphasized that, through its policies like the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), due to the vital link between education and standardized economic opportunities, all Rwandans should be allowed to have access to education (Holvoet, 2008). The government of Rwanda especially emphasizes access to primary and secondary education, but for many children in the Nyagatare district, leaving school before completion is still pertaining, where about 29,036(8.8%) are out of school (Williams, 2015).

From recent studies families are believed to be a crucial base of society, hence through this nuclear family has been proclaimed to be a set of small social units in which conflicts might occur from a mismatch of its member's feelings, communication failure, and financial

insecurity as well as parenting issues (Mukashema et al. 2012; Nsabimana and Rutsibuka, 2019). In addition, other social aspects are also leading to conflicts, which later affect families and the whole society in general.

Kim et al. (2008) indicated that there was permanent distress, like family conflicts, which affect emotional and psychological well-being, which further affects the children's academic achievements and scores. Field (2013) pointed out that in a family with conflicts among parents, children are almost in danger of facing emotional problems that later affect their schooling achievements negatively.

From all the above-listed literature, the question remains: do family conflicts matter in school dropouts in the Nyagatare district of Rwanda, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period? To answer this question, the researchers adopted the following methodology to investigate the issue.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design

This study was purely qualitative. The qualitative design in this context was to determine the significance of family conflicts on dropouts in public secondary schools. The qualitative design was found to be suiting because a qualitative study elucidates the reasons behind individuals' ideas, emotions, or behavior on a subject matter, where the fundamental aspect of qualitative research is that its practitioners do not aim to generalize their findings to a broader audience (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

Population and Sampling

The population used in this study comes from three public schools and their surrounding citizens in the Nyagatare district of Rwanda. In the targeted population, the numbers per category are as follows: 100 parents within 100 meters from the schools, 10 local leaders, 53 schoolteachers, and head teachers, which makes a total population of 163 people.

The sample was selected using a purposive sampling method where the selected schools were the ones with high levels of school dropout, and it included the local leaders, teachers, and parents from Nyagatare District, considering that they are involved in dealing with school dropout. The sample size of this study was made of 14 structured interviewees, including 5 parents, 5 teachers, and 4 local leaders. The reason for conducting 14 interviews only was that the level of saturation was reached, whereby the interviewees were giving similar answers

The study was conducted in three public schools from Nyagatare District; in deciding on three sampled schools, we have included 2 schools from the rural areas of the district and one from the urban area, considering that a large number of public schools are located in rural areas. Selecting schools from both rural and urban areas helped the study to capture opinions from both settings. The selected local leaders are the ones in the areas where the schools are located, where parents are the ones having children who dropped out of the studied schools during COVID-19.

In short, as said above, purposive sampling was adopted as Khalid et al. (2012) pointed out that purposive sampling, also known as non-probabilistic sampling or the Critical sampling technique, in which the researcher selects a sample due to personal judgment regarding the fitting characteristics of such elements.

Sources of data

The data were collected from 14 selected interviewees by using key informant interviews. The interview guide was developed to respond to the study objectives which were to investigate the kind of family conflicts in the area as well as their effects on school dropout in secondary public schools.

Validity and Reliability

The collected data from interviews in the form of verbatim were transcribed and translated into English from Kinyarwanda. The opinions of interviewees were used as they were and then discussed using previous studies. To guarantee the validity, we ensured a one-to-one meeting between the interviewee and the interviewer during the interviews. To guarantee interviewer reliability, the interviewer utilized similar interview questions specifically created for the purpose of this study for all interviewees.

Data Analysis

The narrative analysis was adopted to understand the data gathered from the field. This strategy focuses on collecting and analysing the verbal or written narratives and visual representations provided by individuals (Sutton & Austin, 2015). In this context, we captured extracts from interviews, and those extracts were interpreted using the subject knowledge of the researcher as well as the findings of the previous studies close to the current study.

Ethical Considerations

Conversations made with respondents were kept confidential. Respondents were requested to consent before participating in the interviews. Interviews were conducted in safe places and the interviewees were kept anonymous in the results section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to establish the contribution of family conflicts to school dropout in public secondary schools in Nyagatare District of Rwanda during the COVID-19 pandemic times. The interview was the source of data from the field. For anonymity, the interviewees were coded as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Coding of Interviewees

SN	Designation	Coding	Meaning of the Code
1.	Parent 1	KII 1	Key Informant Interviewee 1
2.	Parent 2	KII 2	Key Informant Interviewee 2
3.	Parent 3	KII 3	Key Informant Interviewee 3
4.	Parent 4	KII 4	Key Informant Interviewee 4
5.	Parent 5	KII 5	Key Informant Interviewee 5
6.	Teacher, Head Teacher 1	KII 6	Key Informant Interviewee 6
7.	Teacher, Head Teacher 2	KII 7	Key Informant Interviewee 7
8.	Teacher, Head Teacher 3	KII 8	Key Informant Interviewee 8
9.	Teacher, Head Teacher 4	KII 9	Key Informant Interviewee 9
10.	Teacher, Head Teacher 5	KII 10	Key Informant Interviewee 10
11.	Local Leader 1	KII 11	Key Informant Interviewee 11
12.	Local Leader 2	KII 12	Key Informant Interviewee 12
13.	Local Leader 3	KII 13	Key Informant Interviewee 13
14.	Local Leader 4	KII 14	Key Informant Interviewee 14

What are the dominant family conflicts in the study area?

For most interviewees, the prevalent conflicts in the area were disagreements on who to do daily activities between the spouses, which in some cases have resulted in fighting between them. These disagreements were, for example, on who should take care of the children at home, prepare food, wash dishes, and wash clothes. Another big problem was that getting money to cater to family needs was difficult because it was not allowed to go to work, and family members were to stay home to avoid contracting or spreading the pandemic.

The interviewees argued that the level of family conflict has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which characterized the years between 2019 and 2021. This is in the sense that family members have been staying at home for a long time due to government measures to contain the pandemic, like lockdowns, to avoid physical contact, which was among the ways of transmission of the pandemic virus. This has caused them conflict as they had nothing to occupy them. This was because with the emergence of this pandemic, family members were forced to stay at home for months, which raised different life struggles like financial insecurity, social difficulties, and enough time for alcoholism and substance use, especially Kanyanga (Karpman et al., 2020). Therefore, this boosted the rates of family conflicts during 2020, which later influenced school dropouts, particularly from 2019 to 2021.

During interviews, which were conducted with parents, the responses were highly focused on family conflicts being the primary cause of school dropout in the period between 2019 and 2021. This was via some statements of KII 2, KII 7, KII 8, KII 9, and KII 11, where all of them stated that:

> *"Staying at home for several hours together with all family members had made conflicts easier and possible to exist in the family relations. This included physical fights, verbal disagreements, verbal fights, quarrels, and other conflicts, but verbal disagreement was the most case. These increased conflicts contributed to the*

dropout of our children, as we did not take the time to help them in their education, and some of them were no longer interested in going to school and opted to drop out.

Previous Studies have proven that family conflicts have similar forms as all other social conflicts and that they may contribute to children's school dropouts (Emery, 1992) the current study found specifically that forms of family conflicts in families of school children in Nyagatare district respectively from 2019 to 2021, were found to be physical fights, verbal disagreement, verbal fights, or quarrels, and other conflicts, however, the verbal disagreement was the most case. This can be due to misunderstandings and stress resulting from social and economic insecurities as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What were the effects of Family Conflicts on school Dropout?

Looking at the effects of family conflicts on school dropouts, the research participants revealed that family conflicts influenced school dropouts, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period when parents were staying at home for a long time, and this also contributed to the increase in conflicts because people at home were underoccupied. The interview data revealed that family conflicts influenced children's school dropouts, are reported by KII 10:

'Yes, family conflicts were linked to school dropouts because during that pandemic period, people stayed at home for many hours a day; hence, it was easy for members to conflict with each other. During that period, people engaged in alcoholism, hence family conflicts increased due to drunkenness. As a result, parents could not support their children, which resulted in school dropouts. This is because there was limited parental support. This affected the level of motivation for children to continue with their studies.

This is supported by previous studies which showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, dropout rates varied significantly, from less than 1 percent to over 35 percent, with markedly elevated rates among older pupils, indicating that pandemic-related school closures, along with other pandemic-induced disruptions, have hindered the educational trajectories of numerous teenagers (Moscoviz and Evans, 2022). Globally, the financial shock resulting from COVID-19 is projected to lead to around 7 million additional dropouts from primary to secondary education (Azevedo et al., 2020).

KII1 supported the above view by saying: *Family conflicts negatively affected our children's performance at school; with repeated failure, our children decided to leave and go for casual work. As of now, we are still fighting to see how to return them to school.'* This is in line with previous studies, which show the relationship between student performance and family conflicts. This is the case of Fortin (2013), who posited that inadequate academic performance is the most significant predictor of school dropout, and when combined with adolescent behavioral issues, often stemming from familial disputes, these two factors collectively exacerbate the dropout rate.

Another study revealed that family environments including family conflict affect the performance of a student at school and may lead to dropping out from school because failure at school demotivates a student from going back to school (Boonk et al., 2018). From the

interviews conducted, it was found that conflicting families do not have enough time to focus on helping children do their education in the right way which has affected negatively the level of motivation of students who finally found themselves no longer interested in going to school. This is the case of KII 5 who reported:

> *'Yes, children were exposed to the parents' conflicts since they were supposed to stay at home together with their parents and the parents were not focused on helping their children. Hence don't have enough time to focus on their studies and later find themselves no longer going to school due to involvement in family conflict.*

The above finding is in line with the previous study. This is the case of a study that used the Family Structure Survey (FSS) in 2019 on factors associated with school dropout and concluded that there is a positive relationship between family conflicts and school dropout in the sense that families in conflict spend much of their time in those conflicts and don't get enough time to help children take care of their education. Hence, children find themselves no longer motivated to go to school (Boyaci, 2019).

In the context of the current study, school dropout is defined as the noncompletion of successive semesters in which a student is enrolled, but it is called school dropout when a student spends at least a year without attending class. The current study also found that leaving school for children results in different threatening situations toward their life progress and even self-development, among which unplanned pregnancy& early marriage to girls and drug abuse to boys have ranked highly. In this regard, most areas of Nyagatare district, especially those close to the borders of Uganda, face the same negative effects of school dropout due availability of drugs and alcohol. Therefore, a child who rejects school gets access to drugs and alcohol, and even love or desires for money, which pushes them into illegal activities like smuggling

CONCLUSION

The study identified various forms of family conflict that were prevalent in the area where the study was conducted, including physical fights and verbal disagreements. Those conflicts increased due to staying at home during the COVID-19 pandemic period, whereby family members were not having occupations rather in quarrelling. The increase in those various types of conflicts was found to have contributed to children's demotivation to go to school and, hence, dropping out.

The present study analyzed the contribution of family conflicts in children's school dropout, particularly from 2019 to 2021 in Nyagatare District. Family conflicts have been found as the root cause of school dropout during that period, whereby the data gathered from local leaders, teachers, headteachers, and parents pointed out that those family conflicts increased due to staying at home during the lockdown related to the pandemic.

The study recommends that collaboration between parents, school leaders, and local leaders should be enhanced to make sure that they have a good understanding of the family environment where the students live, to work together to reduce the level of family conflicts, which were found to be a factor contributing to children dropping out of school.

Moreover, family conflicts in the Nyagatare district can occur for years and months. This could mean that children and other family members are left victims of such conflicts, and they are in danger of being affected negatively by those conflicts. School dropout was found to be the major effect of family conflicts as well as the low school performance of children in the Nyagatare district, during the years from 2019 to 2021.

REFERENCES

Abuya, B., Oketch, M., & Musyoka, P. (2013). Why do pupils drop out when education is 'free'? Explaining school dropout among the urban poor in Nairobi. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *43*(6), 740-762.

Amato, P. R. (2000). The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of marriage and family*, *62*(4), 1269-1287.

Appel, A. E., & Holden, G. W. (1998). The co-occurrence of spouse and physical child abuse: A review and appraisal. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *12*(4), 578.

Ashby*, A. (2004). Monitoring student retention in the Open University: Definition, measurement, interpretation, and action. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, *19*(1), 65-77.

Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. (2014). Qualitative research: Getting started. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, *67*(6), 436.

Azevedo, J. P., Hasan, A., Goldemberg, D., Geven, K., & Iqbal, S. A. (2021). Simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on schooling and learning outcomes: A set of global estimates. *The World Bank Research Observer*, *36*(1), 1-40.

Bashir, S., Lockheed, M., Ninan, E., & Tan, J. P. (2018). *Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa*. World Bank Publications.

Boonk, L., Gijselaers, H. J., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educational Research Review*, *24*, 10-30.

Boyaci, A. (2019). Exploring the Factors Associated with the School Dropout. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, *12*(2), 145-156.

Brooks, S. K., Webster, R. K., Smith, L. E., Woodland, L., Wessely, S., Greenberg, N., & Rubin, G. J. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: a rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*, *395*(10227), 912-920.

Chzhen, Y., Howarth, C., & Main, G. (2022). Deprivation and intra-family conflict: Children as agents in the Family Stress Model. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *84*(1), 121-140.

Dagnew, A. (2017). The Relationship Between Students' Attitudes Towards School, Values of Education, Achievement Motivation, and Academic Achievement In Gondar Secondary Schools, Ethiopia. *Research in Pedagogy*, *7*(1), 30-42.

Ekstrom, R. B., Goertz, M. E., Pollack, J. M., & Rock, D. A. (1986). Who drops out of high school and why? Findings from a national study. *Teachers College Record*, *87*(3), 356-373.

Emery, R. E., Fincham, F. D., & Cummings, E. M. (1992). Parenting in context: systemic thinking about parental conflict and its influence on children.

Field, R., Jeffries, S., Rathus, Z., & Lynch, A. (2016). Family reports and family violence in Australian family law proceedings: What do we know. *Journal of Judicial Administration*, *25*(4), 212-236.

Fine, M. (2018). Silencing and nurturing voice in an improbable context: Urban adolescents in public school. In *Thinking about schools* (pp. 337-355). Routledge.

Fortin, L., Marcotte, D., Diallo, T., Potvin, P., & Royer, É. (2013). A multidimensional model of school dropout from an 8-year longitudinal study in a general high school population. *European journal of psychology of education*, *28*, 563-583.

Heppen, J. B., Zeiser, K., Holtzman, D. J., O'Cummings, M., Christenson, S., & Pohl, A. (2018). Efficacy of the Check & Connect mentoring program for at-risk general education high school students. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *11*(1), 56-82.

Herd, P., Freese, J., Sicinski, K., Domingue, B. W., Mullan Harris, K., Wei, C., & Hauser, R. M. (2019). Genes, gender inequality, and educational attainment. *American Sociological Review*, *84*(6), 1069-1098.

Holvoet, N., & Rombouts, H. (2008). The challenge of monitoring and evaluation under the new aid modalities: experiences from Rwanda. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *46*(4), 577-602.

Humphreys, K. L., Myint, M. T., & Zeanah, C. H. (2020). Increased risk for family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Pediatrics*, *146*(1).

Karpman, M., Zuckerman, S., Gonzalez, D., & Kenney, G. M. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is straining families' abilities to afford basic needs. *Washington, DC: Urban Institute*, *500*.

Khalid, K., Abdullah, H. H., & Kumar M, D. (2012). Get along with quantitative research process. *International Journal of Research in Management*.

Kim, H. S., Sherman, D. K., & Taylor, S. E. (2008). Culture and social support. *American psychologist*, *63*(6), 518.

Levy, B. L., Owens, A., & Sampson, R. J. (2019). The varying effects of neighborhood disadvantage on college graduation: Moderating and mediating mechanisms. *Sociology of Education*, *92*(3), 269-292.

Mathisen, J. (2012). Education reform in Rwanda: impacts of genocide and reconstruction on school systems.

McLanahan, S. (1985). Family structure and the reproduction of poverty. *American Journal of Sociology*, *90*(4), 873-901.

Ministry of Education- MINEDUC , (2019). 2019 Education Statistics. Kigali.

Ministry of Education- MINEDUC (2022). Communique on the Raise of Salary for Primary and Secondary Schools Teachers. Kigali.

Momo, M. S., Cabus, S. J., De Witte, K., & Groot, W. (2019). A systematic review of the literature on the causes of early school leaving in Africa and Asia. *Review of Education*, *7*(3), 496-522.

Morrow, A. S., & Villodas, M. T. (2018). Direct and indirect pathways from adverse childhood experiences to high school dropout among high-risk adolescents. *Journal of research on adolescence*, *28*(2), 327-341.

Moscoviz, L., & Evans, D. K. (2022). Learning loss and student dropouts during the covid-19 pandemic: A review of the evidence two years after schools shut down.

Mukashema, I., & Sapsford, R. (2013). Marital conflicts in Rwanda: points of view of Rwandan psycho-socio-medical professionals. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *82*, 149-168.

Mussetto, A. B., Saviolo, C., Lario, C. V., Cavanna, S., Astegiano, F., Dihn, S., ... & Cirillo, S. (2017, March). Whole body MRI with DWI for detection of active or fibrotic residual disease after therapy in Non Hodgking Lymphomas. European Congress of Radiology-ECR 2017.

Ndushabandi, E. N., Kagaba, M., & Gasafari, W. (2016). Intra-family conflicts in Rwanda: A constant challenge to sustainable peace in Rwanda.

Nichols, P. D. (2015). *Insider Perspectives on the School Dropout Crisis* (Doctoral dissertation).

NISR (2020), fourth population and housing census, Rwanda, 2012. Nyagatare District profile,

Nizeyimana, G., Nzabalirwa, W., Mukingambeho, D., & Nkiliye, I. (2020). Hindrances to quality of basic education in Rwanda. *Rwandan Journal of Education*, *5*(1).

Njau, R., & Wamahiu, S. P. (1994). School Dropout and Adolescent Pregnancy. In *Nairobi: Forum for African Women Educationalists*.

Nsabimana, T., & Rutsibuka, I. (2022). Contribution of "Umugoroba w'Ababyeyi" Programme (UAP) or Parents' Sunset Meeting to the Reduction of Family Conflicts in Rwanda: Case Study of Cyanika Sector, Nyamagabe District (2016-2019). *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, *7*(2).

Park, Y. J., Choe, Y. J., Park, O., Park, S. Y., Kim, Y. M., Kim, J., ... & Jeong, E. K. (2020). Contact tracing during a coronavirus disease outbreak, South Korea, 2020. *Emerging infectious diseases*, *26*(10), 2465.

Potter, S., Howard, R., Murphy, S., & Moynihan, M. M. (2018). Long-term impacts of college sexual assaults on women survivors' educational and career attainments. *Journal of American College Health*, *66*(6), 496-507.

Reynolds, D., Sammons, P., De Fraine, B., Van Damme, J., Townsend, T., Teddlie, C., & Stringfield, S. (2014). Educational effectiveness research (EER): A state-of-the-art review. *School effectiveness and school improvement*, *25*(2), 197-230.

Royal, K., Flammer, K., Borst, L., Huckle, J., Barter, H., & Neel, J. (2017). A Comprehensive Wellness Program for Veterinary Medical Education: Design and Implementation at North Carolina State University. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(1), 74-83.

Russell, T. W., Hellewell, J., Jarvis, C. I., Van Zandvoort, K., Abbott, S., Ratnayake, R., ... & CMMID COVID-19 working group. (2020). Estimating the infection and case fatality ratio for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) using age-adjusted data from the outbreak on the Diamond Princess cruise ship, February 2020. *Eurosurveillance*, *25*(12), 2000256.

Safari, J. P. (2016). Institutional causes of school dropout in Rwanda: Perspectives of community education workers. *CEC Journal*, (2), 1-16.

Spinelli, M., Lionetti, F., Pastore, M., & Fasolo, M. (2020). Parents' Stress and children's psychological problems in families facing the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, 1713.

Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, *68*(3), 226.

Thakore, D. (2013). Conflict and conflict management. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, *8*(6), 7-16.

UNICEF Staff. (2011). *The State of the World's Children 2011-executive summary: Adolescence: an age of opportunity*. Unicef.

Wals, A. E. (2012). *Shaping the education of tomorrow: 2012 full-length report on the UN decade of education for sustainable development*. Unesco.

Walters, S., Yang, J., & Roslander, P. (2014). *Key Issues and Policy Considerations in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Selected African Countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, and Tanzania. UIL Publication Series on Lifelong Learning Policies and Strategies. No. 1*. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Feldbrunnenstrasse 58, 20148 Hamburg, Germany.

Williams, T. (2015). Great expectations: aspiration, uncertainty, and schooling in Rwanda.

Williams, T. P. (2019). The things they learned: aspiration, uncertainty, and schooling in Rwanda's developmental state. *The Journal of Development Studies*, *55*(4), 645-660.

Williams, T. P., Abbott, P., & Mupenzi, A. (2015). 'Education at our school is not free': the hidden costs of fee-free schooling in Rwanda. *Compare: A journal of comparative and international Education*, *45*(6), 931-952.