

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER
DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE //KHARAS REGION

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ABSTRACT

This case study aimed to analyse the factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas region. Data were collected by employing document analysis and observations, as well as interviews conducted with learners, school staff and a representative of the village council. The study found that the major learner factors that contributed to school dropout were teenage pregnancy, a lack of motivation, disciplinary problems and alcohol and drug abuse. The study found that parental factors, such as the illiteracy of some of the parents and guardians, as well as a lack of parental involvement in the children's education reflected by the fact that only 30% of the parents normally attended teacher-parent meetings, contributed to the dropout rate at the selected school. Furthermore, on the socio-economic factors the lack of employment in the community, where only 35% of the community was employed, implies that parents were unable to meet the needs of their children. Some learners, consequently, left school in search of employment for themselves and their families. Lastly, school factors that contributed to the high rate of dropout at the selected school included the lack of learning materials and individual learner support, as well as overcrowded classrooms. Therefore, the study recommends frequent emphasis by teachers on the importance of education in every person's life, thus, motivating learners to stay in school. It also recommends that parents and guardians should be encouraged to attend literacy classes to enable them to assist their children with schoolwork. Lastly, it is recommended that the government provides sufficient teaching and learning materials, as well as infrastructure, to support all learners.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC: Annual Education Census

EMIS: Educational Management Information Systems

MoEAC: Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

NSFP: Namibia School Feeding Program

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

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DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my husband, Immanuel Shinana, my mother, Teodensia Nantanga, my father, Sakaria Nambala, my aunt, Secilia Nantanga, and my late grandmother, Natalia Nghipalendjila Hanghome. I could have not reached this stage if it were not for all of you. You are my inspiration.

DECLARATION

I, Klementine Mwendela Nambala, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This study aims to analyse the factors that contribute to the school dropout of learners at a selected combined school in the //Kharas region. //Kharas region is found in the southern part of Namibia, with an unemployment rate of 32.2 % (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2018). According to the Namibia Statistics Agency (2018) has 89 157 working-age population of which 44.7% of the youth in the //Kharas region were unemployed. The region consists of 35 primary schools, 10 combined schools and 10 secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2017). The study only focused on a selected government school in Aroab, which is a village located 170 km out of Keetmanshoop town in the //Kharas region. It has about 4200 residents, with an unemployment rate of 65%. Economic status plays a vital role in the issue of learners dropping out of school.

The study considered all the three phases at school namely, the junior primary phase, upper primary phase and junior secondary phase, with the most concentration on the upper primary phase and junior secondary phase. School dropout refers to those children who are enrolled in school but who fail to complete the relevant level of their educational cycle (Devkota & Bagale, 2015). In the Namibian Constitution (1990), Article 20 states that primary education shall be compulsory (Republic of Namibia, 1990). Children shall not be allowed to leave school until they have completed their primary education or have obtained the age of sixteen (16) years. Namibia is aiming for “a knowledge-based society, a society where knowledge is constantly being acquired and renewed, and used for innovation to improve the quality of life. A knowledge-based society requires people who are healthy, well educated, skilled, pro-active, and with a broad range of abilities” (Ministry of Education, 2016b, p. 2). Andrew, Peter and Philip (2018) report that about

130 million children in the developing world had been denied their right to education when they dropped out of school. A study was conducted in Serbia by Krstic, Stepanovic-Ilic and Videnovic (2017) who found that between 6000 to 9000 children from one generation had dropped out of compulsory education.

Omollo and Yambo (2017) argue that learners who are rejected by peers are normally discontented with themselves, and their relationship with other learners may be worrisome. In their study, they indicate that approximately 31% of those children who had experienced low levels of acceptance, compared to 9% of other children, dropped out of school. Another study conducted in Pakistan by Ghazi, Ali, Shahzad, Shahzada and Nawaz (2011) reports that of 2.04 million learners enrolled in school, approximately 18% dropped out. India accounts for between 20% and 40% of school dropouts at the elementary and primary levels every year.

A study conducted in Namibia in the Omaheke, Kavango, Kunene and Zambezi regions found that some learners dropped out due to pregnancy, economic and system factors and/or a lack of parental involvement, while some dropped out due to cultural factors (Nekongo-Nielsen, Mbukusa, Tjiramba, & Beukes 2015). Maswahu (2012), in a study conducted in the Zambezi region, agrees with Nekongo-Nielsen, et al., (2015) that factors, such as the curriculum, poor academic performance, poverty and teenage pregnancy were found to be linked to the existing predisposition to drop out of school.

Although several studies on school dropout in Namibia had been conducted, no study to date has been conducted on school dropout in the //Kharas region specifically. The situation or factors in the //Kharas region may be different from those of other Namibian regions; consequently, the researcher opted to replicate Namibian studies on school dropouts but focused on a different geographical area, namely Aroab in the //Kharas region.

1.2. Statement of the problem

According to the Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) (2015), a total number of 698 453 learners were enrolled in schools in Namibia prior to 2015 (Ministry of Education, 2015a). A total of 14 965 (2%) learners of the 698 453 who were enrolled in schools, of whom 7 590 (51%) were female and 7 375 or (49%) male, had dropped out of school. According to EMIS (2017), a total of 44 245 learners in Namibia had left school in 2016, of whom 1 084 were from the junior primary phase, 4 307 from the senior primary phase and 38 854 from the junior and secondary phase (Ministry of Education, 2017). A total number of 694 learners drop out of school in the //Kharas region (Ministry of Education, 2017).

According to the Annual Education Census (AEC) of Aroab, 2% of the learners in 2015, 3% in 2016, 3% in 2017 and, 2% in 2018 had dropped out of school (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). This situation is worrisome as it could work against the envisaged Vision 2030, which is to see Namibia as a knowledge-based economy. Education is a key component of economic growth because it has a direct influence on entrepreneurship and productivity growth which, subsequently, increase employment opportunities and women empowerment. Education assists in creating the potential for the youth to enhance their abilities, creativity and systematic skills to compete in a fast-growing, global world. In this regard, Aroab may have a growing population of individual dropouts who will find it hard to contribute meaningfully to the economic growth of the country, as they will lack the educational knowledge needed in a knowledge-based economy. This study, therefore, focused on the factors contributing to the school dropout of learners in the Aroab Village in the //Kharas region of Namibia.

1.3. Research questions

The following questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the school factors that contribute to school dropout at the selected school?
2. How does learners' socio-economic status contribute to their dropping out of school?
3. How do the parental factors contribute to school dropout at the selected school?
4. What can be done to prevent learners from dropping out of school?

1.4. Significance of the study

The researcher envisions that the findings may be useful to stakeholders in education. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture may find them useful in the formulation of future combined- and primary school education policies aimed at enhancing participation and the retention of learners.

School principals, heads of departments, teachers and school management committees in the circuit may find the results useful in identifying the factors contributing to school dropout and the strategies that can be put in place to control the situation. In addition, the findings may also add to existing knowledge of the magnitude of problems connected to school dropout, and could thus be of great importance to educational stakeholders.

1.5. Limitations of the study

The main limitation concerns the difficulty to find the school dropouts; therefore, the researcher was limited to the number of dropouts available as participants. As a result, only four female dropouts were interviewed, although the researcher planned to interview male dropouts as well. The researcher could only access class teachers who had learners who had previously dropped out

of school, as they usually had more information about learners' home situations than other teachers did. This does not indicate that other teachers did not have useful information as well.

The study only focused on the government school in Aroab, although the private school in the village might also have given useful information. Lastly, the researcher was a teacher at the school where the study was carried out, which might have resulted in some of the participants not taking the interview seriously and providing limited information.

1.6. Delimitation of the study

The study was restricted to the only combined school in Aroab. It only focused on factors that led to the school dropout of learners at the village government school.

1.7. Definition of terms

School dropout in this study refers to a child who was once enrolled in school but has since left school for various reasons other than completion, before turning 16 years of age.

School factors refer to factors that influence the teaching-learning situation by developing and evaluating the school policy on teaching and the policy on creating a learning environment at the school. School factors are expected to influence classroom-level factors, especially the teaching practice, quantity of teaching, provision of learning opportunities, and quality of teaching.

Learner factors refer to learner characteristics or learner variables that influence their social behaviour and school performance, such as their age, attitudes, personalities, group dynamics and motivation.

Junior primary phase in the Namibian context refers to a school phase that consists of pre-primary to grade three.

Senior (Upper) primary phase adopted for the sake of this study refers to a school phase that consists of grade four up to grade seven.

Junior secondary phase in the Namibian context refers to the school phase consisting of grades eight and nine.

1.8. Summary

Chapter 1 presented the introduction to, and background of, school dropouts in Namibia. The chapter, furthermore, looked at the statement of the problem, research questions and the significance of the study. Finally, the chapter discussed the limitations and the delimitations of the study.

The next chapter will look at the academic literature on school dropouts that were reviewed, as well as the two theories that informed the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature related to the problem of school dropout globally, as well as in Namibia specifically. Firstly, the statistics available on school dropouts in various parts of the world, including Namibia, will be discussed. Secondly, literature focusing on school factors that contribute to school dropout will be reviewed. The literature review also looks at the link between learners' socio-economic status and their dropping out of school. In addition, the literature also looked at how parental factors contribute to school dropout. Lastly, literature that looks at measures to prevent learners from dropping out of school will be reviewed.

Finally, this study was framed by two theories, namely the social capital and ecological system theories. These two theories will be discussed against the background of school dropouts.

2.1.1. Global statistics regarding school dropout

School dropout for the purpose of this study refers to a child who was once enrolled in school but has since left school for various reasons other than completion, before turning 16 years of age (Republic of Namibia, 1990). Researchers are of the belief that dropout is a process and that before learners actually drop out of school, a lot of critical events would have taken place that would finally led to the decision to drop out (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). They added there are also circumstances where the system is responsible for not enabling the learner to continue in school, what some researchers call pushout as opposed to dropout (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). In other words not all learners dropped out of school by choices, circumstances forced them to leave school.

Lastly, school withdrawal reflects a complex interplay among learner, family, school, education systems and policies as well as community variables (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015).

A study was conducted in Pakistan by Ghazi, Ali, Shahzad, Shahzada and Nawaz (2011) who report that approximately 18% of the 2.04 million learners enrolled in school, had dropped out. India accounts for 20% to 40% of school dropouts in elementary and primary levels every year. Latif, Choudhary and Hammayun (2015) found that 1.7 million learners in Bangladesh were enrolled in the secondary education level but about 0.7 million dropped out without completing their secondary and higher secondary education levels. “Around 7.57 million children who are aged 5 to 10 years old never attend school in South Asia, and 25.29 million children should study in secondary education but they are not in school at all” (Latif, et al., 2015, p.2). The same study found that the dropout rate of learners before their matriculation was 30% for girls and 27% for boys in South Asia. Forty-five of every one hundred children in Bangladesh enrolled in Grade One are expected to drop out before completing primary school. In India, 40% of children drop out of school before completing their middle, standard education (Latif, et al., 2015).

In conclusion, school dropout is a worldwide concern. Statistics show that between 20% and 40% of the learners drop out of primary school every year. Although the statistics only shows the primary, the study focused on the three school phases; lower primary phase, upper primary phase.

2.1.2. Namibian statistics regarding dropout

A study by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF, 2015) in Namibia found that in rural areas and poorer communities, parental support was not strong and that each year about 16 000 children (about 43% of Grade 10 learners) drop out of school after failing Grade 10. The high dropout rate may also be attributed to the schooling system. According to the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), a total number of 698 453 learners enrolled in

Namibian schools (Ministry of Education, 2017). A total of 14 965 (2%) learners dropped out of school, of whom 7 590 (51%) were female and 7 375 (49%) male. As stated before, a total of 694 learners dropped out of school in the //Kharas region (Ministry of Education, 2017). According to the Annual Education Census (AEC) of Aroab in 2015, 2% of the learners dropped out; in 2016, 3% dropped out and in 2017, 3% and in 2018, 2% left school (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). The statistics given for Aroab, it's for the entire school, including all the three school phases. In summary, the dropout rate of learners in Namibia is not different from that of the rest of the world.

The Table below shows the average percentage of dropouts of the learners in Namibia from Grades 1 to 12 in 2016.

Table 1: Dropout rates by Grade

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Dropout %	7.8	5.4	4.9	3.9	1.5	7.1	3.8	2.1	9.7	9.2	32.6	5.1

Adapted from Ministry of Education (2016a)

Table 1 shows the average percentage of dropouts among the primary, junior and secondary learners, with the highest percentage recorded in Grades 1, 9, 10 and 11.

The study conducted by Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) in Kavango region found out that out of 60 learners that dropped out, 46% dropped out due to pregnancy, 20% due to economic and poverty related factors, 17% due to system factors, 12% due to lack of parental involvement and 5% due to cultural factor. These figures are of great concern and they only from one region. Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) reported that learners were sneaking out of their parents or guardians houses to go sleep with married man in the community in return for money, gifts and

bribes. The situation found at Kavango region is not different from that of Aroab in //Kharas region. The researcher was of the assumption that due to different geographical location and demographic segmentation, the situation would be different.

2.2. Factors that cause school dropout

This section will discuss the different factors that are contributing to school dropout. Firstly, school factors, such as the classroom, school performance, teacher-learner relationships, policies and a lack of parental involvement, as well as how these may have contributed to the issue of dropout, will be discussed. Secondly, the learners' socio-economic status as well as the way in which it may lead to school dropout will be scrutinised.

2.2.1. School factors

This section will look specifically at different school-related factors that cause learners to leave school before completing the academic year that they have started. The following school factors will be specifically examined: classroom environment, school performance, teacher-learner relationship, boredom and the influence of policies.

Boylan and Renzulli (2014) believe that there are push and pull reasons for leaving school. In their study, they stated that the push-out from the school constitutes learners' reasons for dropping out. These school factors include disciplinary policies and conflicts with teachers, combined with the learners' individual characteristics which contribute to pushing them out of school (Boylan & Renzulli, 2014). There are disciplinary measures in place, in cases where the learner do not adhere to the learners' code of conduct. For those learners who were suspended or expelled, their chances for returning to school are limited and for those who left because they experienced conflicts with

teachers, these past experiences are likely to have left them highly resistant to a school setting (Boylan & Renzulli, 2014). Such factors may cause learners to fail to connect with the school, thus creating disciplinary problems and resulting in poor academic performance. This may, in turn, lead the school to push learners out directly through expulsion. While, on the other hand, the pull-out factors include responsibilities relating to individual and family needs and the need to earn money, which may influence learners to abandon their education (Boylan & Renzulli, 2014). Thus, learners, who are pulled out of school, normally drop out because the situations in their lives make it difficult for them to stay in school. For example, a learner who was pulled out of school after having a child may discover once she have adjusted to the transition to parenthood and her child is no longer a baby, she have the time to go back to school or seek for a job (Boylan & Renzulli, 2014).

Researchers also emphasise that schools with poor facilities and inadequate resources create conditions that affect the performance of the children and, ultimately, their decision to leave school prematurely. In some cases the learners do not transfer to better equipped and resourced school, but they drop out of school completely, while in some instances from learners better economic background do transfer to other schools at the nearby towns e.g at Keetmanshoop, Mariental and other towns, learners who transfer to better schools are not regarded as school dropouts. Bad quality education, an inadequate school environment and school facilities, overcrowded classrooms, the unsuitable language of teaching, carelessness of teachers and security problems in girls' schools are some of the common factors which increase the rate of school dropout (Latif, et al., 2015).

School and Psychological factors

Latif, et al. (2015) believe that the dropout rate in Pakistan increased due to the boring environment of the school, a lack of facilities and the bad physical atmosphere, as well as overcrowded classrooms. Corporal punishment is one of the major factors that contribute to a high rate of dropout in Pakistan. In addition, it has been shown that strict measures for punishing learners with disciplinary problems or poor attendance represent a significant factor connected to learners dropping out of school. In Pakistan, around 35 000 high school learners drop out of the education system each year due to corporal punishment (Latif, et al., 2015).

Buop, et al. (2018) add that a lack of diversity in the school curriculum can predispose learners to drop out. Children with different learning needs and capacities often study in a joint classroom, without the adoption of appropriate teaching and learning methods, as well as the lack of encouragement to participate in the school activities. Krstic, et al. (2017) state that the lack of individualised support in both regular and remedial classes for learners with learning difficulties and those who are less motivated to learn is one of the main school factors contributing to learners dropping out of school. The study points out that learners' inability to learn the lesson content of a particular subject and complete their homework individually or with their family, without the compensatory role of remedial classes, results in lower achievement, learners repeating a year, the feeling of failure and lower self-esteem. All of these factors increase the risk of dropping out.

School performance

Studies show that learners drop out when they are depressed by their poor background and poor academic performance. It has been reported that, due to pressure at home and other activities after school, some children are not able to find time to study; consequently, they end up with poor academic performance (Braithwaite & Oduro-Ofori, 2015). As a result of poor academic

performance, these learners are being criticised by their parents, teachers and fellow learners instead of receiving assistance from them. They, therefore, prefer to leave school to learn other trades out of the formal school system, such as helping at the construction sites. Chinyoka (2014) argues that, when learners attribute failure to the lack of ability, they are likely to give up, thus, leading to possible school dropout. “Thus, an individual who views failure as due to lack of ability will hold less hope for doing better in the future. This is common among learners from poor backgrounds who believe that they are not capable because they are poor, leading to learned helplessness” (Chinyoka, 2014, p. 295).

Teacher-learner relationship

Buop, et al. (2018) concur with Krstic, Stepanovic-Ilic and Videnovic (2017) who stress that learner-teacher relationships have a considerable impact on learners being satisfied with school, their wellbeing and even their academic performance. Verbal violence, such as bad remarks and insults as disciplinary measures by teachers, aimed at such learners also plays a contributing role in school dropout. Bad remarks can be discouraging to learners who are already at risk of dropping out (Krstic, et al., 2017). Thus, unsatisfactory relationships with teachers and the climate in the classroom count among the main causes of early school leaving. On the other hand, positive relationships with peers, the feeling of belonging, absence of peer violence, as well as participation in extracurricular activities and different kinds of dialogue in the classroom and school, are related to lower incidences of dropping out of the education system (Krstic, et al., 2017; Weybright, Caldwell, Xie, Wegner, & Smith, 2017).

In addition, absenteeism of both teachers and learners can cause learners to drop out of school. When several days have passed without lessons having been taught, it reduces the learners’ interest in attending school (Brammah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015). The learners do not leave the school for

schools with better facilities, they dropped out of school and never come back, nor do they transfer to school with better teacher attendance rates, they are just using it as an excuse to quit school.

Boredom

According to Mora (2011), boredom may influence learners' behaviour and disposition in the classroom. He found that learners' boredom was associated with tedious activities they found meaningless. A study conducted in California reports that learners were bored when their Biology classes included no demonstrations, as well as when they did not understand the material taught. Routinised and repetitive classroom activities led some learners to disengage academically, display disruptive behaviour, cut classes and eventually drop out of school. He argues that a boring school experience could lead to some learners cutting classes and that it, consequently, exacerbates learners' risk of dropping out of high school. Furthermore, learners are more likely to be bored during teacher-driven activities. Lastly, Mora (2011) found that learners enjoyed fun classes that involved hands-on activities; conversely, they frequently grew bored in lecture-driven subjects.

The influence of policies and the curriculum factors

According to the Ministry of Education (2015) in the national promotion policy guide, it is expected that learners will progress through Grades 1 to 9 without repeating a Grade. This policy states that a learner should only repeat twice in each school phase; however, if such a learner fails to achieve the minimum competencies required in a particular Grade, such a learner should repeat that Grade. "Learners who do not progress to the next Grade must receive counselling to help them understand their situation and must receive learning support focusing on the competencies which they did not achieve" (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 2). The national promotion policy also has some effects, both positive and negative, on the learners. The negative aspect is that failing learners

have to repeat a phase twice before transferring to the next Grade. Such policy may also contribute to school dropout, because it may cause some learners not to take their schoolwork seriously and later some learners to drop out school, because they know that they will be transferred until they reach Grade 11, after which the system itself will throw them out of school.

On the other hand, some learners tend to master the basic competencies when they repeat a certain grade and perform well in the examinations. When a learner passes an examination or is promoted to the next grade, it encourages and motivates him or her to do well in the next grade. Repetition of classes is the greatest contributory factor to learners dropping out of school. Repeation of classes often discourages some of the learners to throw in the towel. Ghazi, et al. (2011) state that unhappy and unsuccessful school experiences also cause dropout.

A study conducted in the Kavango region by Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) found that a high number of female learners dropped out of school due to pregnancy. In addition, some learners dropped out of school because they were not allowed to come back to school after being absent from school for more than 20 days (Nekongo-Nielsen, et al., 2015). Schools with higher dropout rates do not provide adequate learning support (Krstic, et al., 2017; Latif, et al., 2015). In the same study, it is noted that schools that successfully retain their learners, have fair disciplinary procedures, attentive teachers, high expectations and many opportunities for meaningful participation. Successful schools do not focus on the shortfalls but rather on their learners' strengths, and continually carry out student support programmes. Such schools collaborate with parents and community leaders (Krstic, et al., 2017).

In summary, there are a plethora of school factors, such as overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate disciplinary measures, negative relationship between teachers and learners, the repetition of

Grades and a lack of diversity in the curriculum, just to mention a few, that contribute to school dropout.

2.2.2. Learner factors

Socio-economic factors

The socio-economic status of the learners and other socio-economic factors, such as parents' income, education status and other related factors could lead to learners dropping out of school. Latif, et al. (2015) state that financially weak learners have a high possibility of dropout. The low-level economy of a country, the low per-capita income of people and the inadequate provision of physical facilities in the school contribute to the school dropout of learners.

In addition, early marriage and teenage pregnancies, as well as security problems, also cause the dropout of learners at both combined schools and students at tertiary institutions (Latif, et al., 2015). Learners may drop out of school due to poor health caused by poor diet and starvation. The distance between their schools and homes or towns increases the problems as some parents cannot afford the transport to send their children to school, thus, learners have to walk long distances.

The emotional difficulties caused by poverty create learning problems at school which manifest in a wide range of problems, such as non-adjustment at the school, and encompass broader educational disabilities rather than specific learning problems. A study conducted in Pakistan by Ghazi, et al. (2011) points out that it is the economic pressure that forces a learner to leave school to assist his or her family in increasing their income. The researchers mention disinterest on the part of youngsters, caused by the social pressure to obtain employment to provide money and independence from their families. In addition, peer groups influence those learners who tend to imitate their peers/friends, thus becoming stubborn and refusing to listen to their parents and teachers' advice. Some of these learners leave school to join their friends who are involved in

malpractices, such as the use of drugs and alcohol (Braumah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015; Sigei & Tikoko, 2014).

2.2.3. Parental Factors

The following socio-economic factors has a direct link to the learners; shortages of funds, a poor standard of health, costly school materials, such as textbooks, and the poor motivational level of parents to send their children to school are some of the factors leading or adding to the dropout of learners (Ghazi, et al., 2011). According to Braimah and Oduro-Ofori (2015), inadequate parental care was cited as a cause of school dropout that could be linked to the level of poverty. They add that some parents are not able to take care of their children due to poverty or financial problems; as a result, these children stop their schooling. Parents are not interested in having their children educated; instead, they want them to work and earn an income. Parental poverty and the consequent drive of parents to employ their children to save on labour or to send their children for paid labour are real factors that contribute to the dropout of learners from school. A study conducted in the Kunene region in Namibia found that circumstances related to poverty at home forced learners to leave school to look for paid activities, causing them to stay out of school for such long periods that they were unable to go back to school when such activities were over (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015.). Those few learners who did go back to school, usually, had missed much of the content of subjects. Consequently, they were more likely to fail that specific Grade.

Another study conducted in India by Mishra and Azeez (2014) asserts that family is the most influential agent among the different social factors that influence the growth and development of any child significantly. The education, occupation, health status and income of parents, as well as family size, are some of the external factors which influence children's retention or deflection from

school (Ghazi, et al., 2011; Mishra & Azeez, 2014). It is also reported that parents' educational status is very important. Those parents who are educated well enough or who are aware of the importance and need for quality education for their children are more successful in creating a positive environment (Mishra & Azeez, 2014; Porumbu & Necşoi, 2013).

On the other hand, broken homes caused by divorce are also one of the factors that lead to dropout (Brammah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015; Chinyoka, 2014). "Some men neglect their wives and children; these children are left at a very tender age in the care of their mothers alone. Therefore, it becomes so difficult for single parents to cater to their children in school, due to the financial problems that they are experiencing. Thus their children eventually drop out of school" (Brammah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015, p.73). The economic status, the family environment and the socio-educational status of parents have a huge impact on the child's development. Researchers found that children from better households were more likely to remain in school, while those who were poorer were more likely never to attend school or drop out once they have enrolled.

Lastly, studies show that children from unhealthy family environments are prone to school dropout. The alcoholism of parents is also one of the negative factors. Poverty, the low educational level of parents, weak family structures, the pattern of schooling of siblings, as well as preschool experiences, family background and domestic problems, create an environment that affects the value of education negatively and is responsible for children dropping out (Mishra & Azeez, 2014).

Lack of parental involvement

Ghazi, et al. (2011) note that when there is little interest by parents in their child's education, there are greater possibilities of student dropout. Pavalache-Ilie (2015) holds that, when the parents become involved in their children's education, the children make more effort to learn, they are

more concentrated and attentive, more attracted to the learning process and they think of themselves as being more competent. He also adds that the learners whose parents become involved, feel responsible for their education. When the parents show real interest in the education of their children, they are oriented towards excellence, constantly look for challenges, are determined despite difficulties and show satisfaction regarding the school tasks. When the parents become involved in the reading activities of the learners, the learners feel more effective, more motivated and they voluntarily take up reading (Pavalache-Ilie, 2015).

Several studies found that motivation and emotional support from family members, especially from parents, is an important factor that creates interest in a child to continue his/her study. In addition, parents who monitor and regulate their children's activities, provide emotional support, encourage independent decision-making and are generally involved in their children's schooling; these children are then less likely to drop out of school (Ghazi, et al., 2011; Latif, et al., 2015; Mishra & Azeez, 2014; Pavalache-Ilie, 2015). Pavalache-Ilie (2015), furthermore, emphasises that parental involvement has a positive influence on various variables, such as the mark average and scores obtained in standardised tests, enrolment of the learners in challenging academic programmes, attendance of classes, behaviour displayed at home and school, as well as their social abilities and adaptation to the school environment.

In conclusion, although the apparent reasons for learners' dropout are most likely to be personal, such as poor academic achievement, a lack of motivation and low educational aspirations and pregnancy, aspects such as poverty, employment and non-supporting family conditions also lead to early school leaving. This occurs only when the school does not recognise the problems and difficulties a learner is facing and does not provide well-timed and adequate support in learners' learning and development (Krstic, et al., 2017).

2.3. Suggestions to prevent school dropout

Several studies make a variety of suggestions about ways to overcome the issue of learners dropping out of school. These suggestions will be discussed in the following section.

Firstly, the government and all the stakeholders of education should improve and repair dilapidated school structures (Braimah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015). Secondly, the researchers propose that schools should be well equipped with reading materials, sports items, different types of equipment and furniture (Braimah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015).

Kurebwa and Mabhandu (2015) suggest that there is a need for teachers to undergo continuous professional courses, such as classroom management, to do their work professionally without undermining, marginalising or victimising children for absenteeism and not doing homework. Class teachers need to be encouraged to have guidance and counselling sessions at school in order for learners to develop confidence both in schoolwork and in their teachers. The counselling sessions should take place regularly to make the learners aware of the need to stay in school. Through guidance and counselling lessons, teachers must explain and demonstrate to learners the dangers associated with truancy and peer group influence (Braimah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015).

Furthermore, the government should implement adult education programmes in all parts of the country. The importance of adult education is envisaged to aid in enhancing attitudinal change among illiterate and ignorant parents in favour of child education (Kurebwa & Mabhandu, 2015). Chinyoka (2014) adds that parents should be sensitised to making the education of their children a priority, by providing adequate school learning materials, such as stationery, to their children and by attending teacher-parent meetings.

Lastly, studies recommend that the government of the Republic of Ghana should create poverty reduction initiatives to assist poor parents in generating some income to be in a better position to assist their children in school (Braimah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015).

2.4. Theoretical framework

Although other studies on school dropout were based on different theories, such as the reproductive, grounded or systems theories, individual models and institutional models, the researcher decided to explore whether learners dropping out of school could be linked to the ecological system and the social capital theories.

These two theories relate school dropout to parental support, socio-economic status, motivation, aspirations and policy measures. The researcher mainly opted to employ aspects of the ecological and social capital theories since these two theories are intertwined. Secondly, the researcher believes that it takes a village to raise a child and that school dropout is a process and not an event. The researcher agrees with the previous study conducted by Nekongo-Nielsen, et al. (2015) that found that dropping out of school is influenced by the social and academic experiences of learners.

2.4.1. Social capital theory

Hamdan, Yusof and Marzukhi (2014) define the Social Capital theory as a network, interaction and connection of people around the community. It consists of the norms, relationships, values and informal sanctions that shape the quantity and cooperative quality of society's social interactions. This theory recognises the relationships of everyday life between neighbours, colleagues and friends who have value for individuals and the society as a whole (Hamdan, et al., 2014).

The social capital theory posits that positive relationships among family members, especially between parents and their children are capital resources that can facilitate educational achievement

(Adedokun & Balschweid, 2008). In addition, this theory states that strong social support from the family results in fewer behaviour problems and boosts learners' self-esteem, which will motivate them to stay in school. In turn, this will produce a positive influence on their achievement (Adedokun & Balschweid, 2008).

A study carried out by Porumbu and Necşoi (2013) holds that family factors, such as positive parent-child relationships, parental monitoring and involvement in the child's education, as well as parents' expectation of further studies at tertiary institutions are indeed the driving forces that motivate a child to do well in school. Parental involvement in education includes parents interacting with the parents of their children's friends when they come together to discuss their children's activities and set norms and standards for the children. Porumbu and Necşoi (2013) concur with Adedokun and Balschweid (2008) that learners who have open and regular communication with their parents are less likely to drop out of school.

In addition, Social Capital Theory is of the belief that the overall well-being and quality of life are linked to the ability of people to be acquainted with their surroundings and participate in community life and daily activities, feel connected and have a strong sense of place (Hamdan, et al., 2014). Conversely, learners from a social environment that is not supportive tend to feel that they are not loved, cared for and appreciated; this lowers their self-esteem. Learners with a negative self-image tend to become involved in disruptive behaviours. These learners are demotivated to do well in school, they hardly communicate with their parents about school-related activities and they are likely to drop out of school (Adedokun & Balschweid, 2008). Social capital theory informed the study in the sense that a positive parental involvement and a good social environment help children to remain in school. Children from a negative parent-child relationship, less communication and lack of social support are likely to drop out of school.

2.4.2. Ecological systems theory

The ecological systems theory was developed by Bronfenbrenner, and he has recently renamed his theory the bio-ecological systems theory. According to this theory, the environment is structured into five systems, namely the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-chronosystems (Perron, 2018).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory looks at a child's development in the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. The theory was renamed the bio-ecological systems theory to emphasise that a child's biology is the primary environment fuelling her or his development. "The interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his/HER [her] immediate family/community environment and the societal landscape fuels and steers his/HER [her] development" (Perron, 2018, p. 2).

The micro-system is the layer that is closest to the child, and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact. It includes the family, school, neighbourhood and/or childcare environments. Families and schools are the central micro-systems interacting with the youth's organised, out-of-school activities. Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) argue that parents are more likely to support and encourage their children when the goals and norms of the activity align with those of the home setting. Therefore, to study a child's development, one must look not only at the child and her or his immediate environment but the interaction of the larger environment as well (Perron, 2018). Stearns and Glennie (2006) warn that a learner can be forced to drop out of school when exposed to unfavourable conditions in the school environment. These include failing tests, the act of attending school daily and disciplinary measures employed by the school.

The next system in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is the meso-system which refers to the connections between the structures of the child's micro-system (Perron, 2018), for example,

the connections between a child's parents and his or her teacher at school. According to the UK Essays (2018), peers, community and schools also affect the child. The peer groups help the child gain independence and discover his or her sense of self. However, negative experiences with peers, such as bullying, can hurt the child's self-esteem, affect how he or she interacts with others, as well as his or her ability to communicate and socialise with peers with ease (UK Essays, 2018). A child may drop out of school because of being bullied by others.

The third system in Bronfenbrenner's theory is the exo-system. This system involves a larger social system in which the child does not function directly (Perron, 2018). Even though the child is not involved directly, he or she can still feel the effects on his or her immediate environment. Children are affected by their culture through the communication of beliefs and customs parents receive from other structures in the meso-system and exo-system (Perron, 2018). The effects or influence can be either positive or negative. Parents' work schedules and community, family-based resources are examples of the exo-system. In addition, the exo-system may consist of the parents' careers or financial situations, political systems and/or social networks. It has an indirect effect on the child through their careers and socio-economic status or the government. Parents often expose their children to activities with which they are familiar and, thus, children tend to participate in the same types of activities that their parents have participated in as children (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017). However, even for parents with knowledge of the depth and breadth of activities available, increasingly demanding work schedules impede opportunities for participation. Children from families with working parents participate in fewer activities than children with at least one non-working parent at home. A study conducted by Swick and Williams (2006) argues that parents' socio-economic status affects the child because parents may not have the means to purchase educational materials or live in a decent home; they may not even have a home at all. Children

born in poverty statistically have lower self-esteem, are less likely to excel in school or more likely to drop out, and are more prone to violence and crime (Adedokun & Balschweid, 2008; Swick & Williams, 2006).

Berk (2000) states that Bronfenbrenner's macro-system comprises cultural values, customs and laws. The influence of the macro-system comes from cultural views in society, and it can influence the child in a much broader context. In addition, the beliefs of the family and their lifestyles, education, religion, as well as the mass media, are also large influences on a child. The macro-system we live in influences what, how, when and where we carry out our relations. Cultural beliefs and societal values provide guidance and supports for families, children and their parents (Swick & Williams, 2006). Culture dictates beliefs concerning religion, school, family and community life (Perron, 2018).

Lastly, the chrono-system has to do with time. For example, death in the family can affect the child's entire life, as the situation at home could force the child to leave school to take care of the younger ones at home. As mentioned earlier, a broken home caused by divorce is also one of the factors that lead to dropout (Braithwaite & Oduro-Ofori, 2015; Chinyoka, 2014).

One of the implications of this theory is that knowledge of how the various ecological levels affect out-of-school activities should be considered in programme design (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) also claim that it is ineffective to take a one-size-fits-all approach when designing learning activities. In addition, teachers should focus on designing high-quality activities that foster positive learner development and provide professional development for staff. Moreover, teachers should have some understanding of the other primary settings, such as families or schools, in learners' lives. The scientific community should take an active role in forming

collaborative partnerships with teachers to co-develop and share this knowledge (Ettedal & Mahoney, 2017).

In summary the five layers or systems of the ecological theory namely (the micro-system, the meso-system, exo-system, macro-system and chronosystems) made the theory relevant and more linked to the study that was analysing factors that contribute to school dropout at the selected school in the rural area. The theory described the factors are associated or contribute to school dropout more holistically.

2.4.3. The link between the social capital and the ecological systems theories

The social capital theory is linked to the three layers of the ecological system theory namely; mesosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem. The mesosystem layer provides the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem (Perron, 2018). This layer comprises of the connection between the child's teacher and his parents, between his church and his neighborhood. The *exosystem* this layer defines the larger social system in which the child does not function directly. The structures in this layer impact the child's development by interacting with some structure in her microsystem. Parent workplace schedules or community-based family resources are examples. The child may not be directly involved at this level, but he does feel the positive or negative force involved with the interaction with his own system (Perron, 2018). Macrosystem layer is comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws (Perron, 2018). This concur with the social capital which believes that its the norms, relationships, values and informal sanctions that shape the quantity and cooperative quality of society's social interactions. Both theories are of the argument that if the parents' ability or inability to carry out that responsibility toward their child

within the context of the child's microsystem is likewise affected. The researcher believes that the two theories ecological theory and social capital theory are linked, because they all focusing on contextual factors found in the learner's immediate environment such as learners' families, communities, schools as well as education systems and policies, which plays a major role in learners' decision to dropping out of school. In a study conducted in Malaysia, it is argued that the recognition of the social capital theory in the relationships of everyday life between neighbours, colleagues and friends, helps the society to generate micro-level outcomes, such as family well-being, as well as strengthens the neighbourhood and increases the quality of life (Hamdan, et al., 2014). Although there are several theories regarding school dropout, the researcher believes that a combination of the social capital and ecological systems theories describes the issue of school dropout more holistically and completely, as it includes many of the factors that influence school dropout.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in this study. It comprises the research approach and design, the target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2. Research design

A research design can be described as a plan of the way in which to proceed in order to determine the nature of the relationship between variables (Maree, 2007). The research approach for this study was qualitative and defined as a range of methodological approaches aiming to generate an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world by learning about people's social and material circumstances, as well as their experiences, perspectives and histories (Kemparaj & Chavan, 2013).

According to Maree (2007), when employing a qualitative research methodology, the researcher aims to collect rich, descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context to develop an understanding of what is being studied. He adds that "qualitative research typically studies people by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment" (Maree, 2007, p. 51).

The researcher, in this study, employed a qualitative methodology as its emphasis is on the quality and depth and not on the breadth of the information (Maree, 2007). The researcher employed an intrinsic case study design to understand the phenomenon in question in-depth (Mertens, 2010). The qualitative approach has the potential to uncover the reasons for, as well as the way in which, people do things. In this study, the design enabled the researcher to understand in-depth the reasons

why the learners of the school in the //Kharas region were dropping out. A case study allowed the utilisation of multiple sources and techniques, such as observations, document analysis and interviews, in the data gathering process, and this assisted in making the results credible and valid (Maree, 2007).

One of the greatest strengths of the case study design is its adaptability to different types of research questions and different research settings. In addition, a “case study also offers a multi-perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation, but also the views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them” (Maree, 2007, p. 75).

3.3. Population and sample

Population

Mertens (2010) defines a research population as the group to whom the researcher wants to apply the results. Aroab has about 4 200 residents (Smith, 2016). The target population for the study was learners and teachers from the combined school, which comprises approximately 800 learners and 26 teachers, in the Aroab village in the //Kharas region. In addition, the population also involved people from the community, specifically those serving on the village council.

Sample

Sampling is the process employed to select a portion of the research population for study (Maree, 2007) and comprises the group that the researcher has chosen from the population from which to collect data (Mertens, 2010). The sample was selected utilising purposive sampling. Wu Suen, Huang and Lee (2014) define purposive sampling as the deliberate choice of a participant due to

the qualities the participant possesses. It refers to a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. The researcher has decided what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Wu Suen, et al., 2014).

Participants in the study and other informants were engaged to locate the dropouts. Although the researcher planned to interview 3 learners who had previously dropped out of school, only 2 learners were interviewed as the third learner did not come back to school when the school opened after the national lockdown. Secondly, the researcher also planned to interview five learners who had dropped out of school and never returned; however, only four dropouts could be interviewed. Thus, the sample for this study included two learners as returnees who had previously dropped out of school, as well as four dropouts who had not returned to school. The researcher included the two learners who previously dropped out of school as participants of the study, in order to have a clear view as to why they dropped out of school.

Three class teachers were purposefully selected to participate in the study. They were selected since they had dropouts in their register classes. In addition, the Life Skills teacher, the school principal and one person serving on the village council also formed part of the sample. The parents were not included in the study, although they could have the essential information due to the reasons some stays on farms where they are working, could be difficult to locate the parents since some of the learners are staying in the hostel. Among the learners who participated in the the study, only one who was a minor or under age who needed a consent from the parents.

3.4. Research instruments

Different research instruments, namely, document analysis, observations using an observation checklist and interviews using interview guides were employed to collect the information required by the study. In this section, the researcher defines each instrument that was employed in the study. Reasons for employing these specific instruments to collect the data are also provided.

Document analysis

Firstly, document analysis was carried out, whereby existing documents were reviewed. Bowen (2017) defines document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic. Document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. Mertens (2010) asserts that document analysis assists the researcher in obtaining comprehensive and historical information. Such information and insight can assist the researcher in understanding the historical roots of specific issues, in this case, school dropout, and can indicate the conditions that are likely to have a negative effect on the phenomenon currently under investigation.

Furthermore, Bowen (2009) adds that information contained in documents can suggest some questions that need to be addressed and situations that need to be observed as part of the research. Another advantage of conducting document analysis is that some of the information that the researcher is looking for already exists in the form of documents. Documents of all types can assist the researcher in uncovering meaning, developing understanding, and discovering insights relevant to the research problem (Bowen, 2009).

Information and insights derived from documents were utilised to generate new interview questions, and this was a valuable addition to the knowledge base. Documents can be analysed as a way to verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources. Another reason for employing document analysis is that the documents are unobtrusive and non-reactive, which implies that they are unaffected by the research process (Bowen, 2009). The documents analysed in this study included the Annual Education Census of Aroab, school reports of the learners who had dropped out of school, attendance registers and disciplinary files.

Observations

Secondly, observations, utilising an observation checklist, were conducted to obtain information in a non-threatening way, as well as analyse and compare whether the school had the characteristics, such as disability-friendly infrastructures, a conducive learning environment, enough teaching and learning materials, as well as learning support, of a healthy school environment (Mertens, 2010). Kawulich (2015) defines observation as the systematic description of the events, behaviour and artefacts of a social setting. The researcher of this study preferred to employ overt observation, where the participants were aware of being observed and the researcher was not, in any way, hiding the fact that she was observing them for research purposes (Kawulich, 2015).

Interviews

Lastly, the researcher conducted interviews with the school principal, three teachers who had dropouts from their classes, the Life Skills teacher, two dropouts who came back to school, and four dropouts who never returned to school. Interviews were also conducted with a person serving on the village council.

Maree (2007) defines an interview as a unique form of conversation which provides the researcher with empirical data about the social world by engaging in conversations with participants and asking them to talk about their lives. In addition, the face-to-face interview enables the researcher to gain participants' cooperation by establishing a relationship with them which, consequently, result in the production of high response rates (Maree, 2007). Interviews allow participants to use their own words to describe their experience and also give the researcher the flexibility to explore the subject deeper with the participants; therefore, the researcher chose to make use of individual interviews (Banda, Svanemyr, Sandøy, Goicolea, & Zulu, 2019).

The researcher audio-taped all the interviews and utilised handwritten notes to support the recordings. The interviews were conducted to obtain a range and depth of information for a better understanding of the impressions of the key participants about school dropout at the selected school in the //Kharas region (Mertens, 2010).

3.5. Procedure

Three research instruments were used to collect information from the selected participants. The instruments were document analysis guide, observations using an observation checklist, and interviews using interview guides.

Firstly, the researcher reviewed some of the documents, such as the annual education census of the school, the attendance registers of the selected school, the school report cards of the dropouts, and the disciplinary files of the selected teachers. Notes were taken throughout the analysis of all the above-listed documents. The information from the document analysis was employed to develop some of the interview questions.

Secondly, the researcher conducted observations by employing an observation checklist. In this study, the researcher was an overt observer since the participants were aware that they were being observed. The observations were conducted in the classrooms of those teachers who had dropouts. The designed checklist covered three areas, namely the classroom, school environment and school policy. Notes were taken during the observations. An observation checklist was employed to establish whether the school had the characteristics of a healthy school. The information obtained through the observations was employed to develop the interview questions.

Lastly, appointments were made with all the participants to conduct face-to-face interviews. Interview questions consisted of issues that arose from the observations and document analysis that needed some clarification, as well as some other, general questions. Interviews were conducted, firstly, with the school principal, followed by the Life Skills teacher, three class teachers, two learners who had previously dropped out of school and a person serving on the village council. Lastly, four dropouts who never returned to school were interviewed. All the interviews were recorded. The researcher then transcribed the information recorded during the interviews, analysed the findings, and created meaning out of the findings.

3.6. Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is defined as the process of making sense from research participants' views and opinions about situations, corresponding patterns, themes, categories and regular similarities (Vosloo, 2014).

The data collected in this study were analysed by employing phenomenological data analysis, where the researcher reads the interview transcript in its entirety to achieve a global sense of the whole. This researcher identified predetermined categories to be observed and these were later

developed as a checklist; notes were taken during structured observations. The Annual Education Census, containing information about those learners who had dropped out of school, was analysed. The results obtained from the document analysis were also employed to guide the development of interview questions for the class teachers, school principal and the Life Skills teacher. The researcher took notes during the interviews. All the tape-recorded information was, subsequently, transcribed. The notes from the observations, document analysis and interview transcripts were labelled and organised to facilitate the data analysis process. The researcher reduced the data to a manageable size by employing memoing (Mertens, 2010). The key elements were identified, similar items were grouped and themes formulated. The data collected were analysed, based on the specific categories, namely school factors, socio-economic status and school performance. The data were subsequently integrated and summarised, and the themes were explained in detail.

3.7. Research ethics

Firstly, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Namibia. Secondly, the researcher applied for permission to conduct the study at the selected school in the Aroab village from the Regional Director of the Ministry of Education. After permission had been granted by the Director, the researcher requested permission to conduct the study from the school principal of the combined school where the study was conducted, and appointments to meet with the teachers of that specific school were made.

The researcher explained the purpose of the study to all the participants. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that they would remain anonymous. Consent letters, which they were required to sign if they agreed to participate in the study, were handed to participants. The parents of the learners who were participants and

underaged also signed the consent letter agreeing that their children could take part in the study, while the learners themselves signed an assent letter. The participants were assured that the information collected by the researcher was only for academic purposes; therefore, it would only be revealed to the supervisor and examiners.

The data collected for this study was treated confidentially and presented as collected, without manipulation or fabrication. Finally, integrity and academic professionalism were maintained throughout the study. The information will be kept on a memory stick, stored securely, and later will be destroyed as per UNAM regulations.

3.8. Summary

This chapter described the research methodology employed. The study conducted qualitative research, employing a case study design. The participants in the study were people serving in the Aroab village council, the school principal of the selected school, teachers who had dropouts in their classes, three learners who had previously dropped out of school, as well as five dropouts who had not returned to school. The findings that were generated from document reviews, observations, and interviews will be presented in detail in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The study aimed to analyse the factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas region. This chapter presents the findings of the study. The following questions were employed to guide the study:

1. What are the school factors that contribute to school dropout at the selected school?
2. How does learners' social-behaviors contribute to their dropping out of school?
3. How do the parental factors contribute to school dropout at the selected school?
4. What can be done to prevent learners from dropping out of school?

The data to answer the research questions were collected by means of document analysis, observations and interviews. The themes developed through data analysis were employed to formulate the subheadings in this chapter. The results presented are from documents and interviews conducted with twelve participants, comprising four dropouts who never returned to school (LD), two learners who had previously dropped out but returned to school (LR), three class teachers who had dropouts in their classes (T), the Life Skills teacher (TLS), the school principal (P) and one person serving on the village council (VC).

4.2. Number of learners who dropped out of the selected school from 2015 to 2019

The Table below presents the number of learners who had dropped out of school every year from 2015 to 2019. It, furthermore, shows how many males and females from the selected school had

dropped out of school per year, as well as the total number of learners who had dropped out of school in the five years at the selected school.

Table 2: Statistics of dropouts over the past five years

Years of dropout	Male	Female	Total
2015	10	6	16
2016	14	7	21
2017	12	5	17
2018	7	4	11
2019	7	4	11
Total	50	26	76

In total, 76 learners had dropped out of school, which is of great concern. Overall, the school had 1.9% dropouts over five consecutive years. The year 2016 shows the highest number of learners (21) who had dropped out of school. Table 2 indicates that the majority of the learners who had dropped out of school were boys (65%).

4.3. Participant information

The Table below presents information regarding learner dropout. It includes learners who had previously dropped out of school but returned (LR) and the dropouts who never returned to school (LD). It includes the participants' age, the last Grade they had attended before they dropped out of school or the current Grade for those who came back to school, as well as how long they had been out of school.

Table 3: Learners who had dropped out of school and returned (LR) and dropouts who never returned to school (LD)

Participants	Gender	Age (at the time of data collection)	Last/current Grade	Year of Dropout	The period out school/how long for the (LR) only
LR 1	Female	18	Grade 9	2020	7 months
LR 2	Female	16	Grade 9	2020	3 months
LD 1	Female	18	Grade 8	2019	Never returned
LD 2	Female	19	Grade 10	2019	Never returned
LD 3	Female	18	Grade 7	2018	Never returned
LD 4	Female	21	Grade 8	2018	Never returned

According to the information presented in Table 3, all participants were female; the researcher could not get hold of male dropouts. Although the statistics in Table 2 indicates that the majority of the learners who had dropped out of school were boys, the researcher could not get hold of them and those who were available were not willing to take part in the study. Thus the study only consists of female dropouts as participants. The participants, both the dropouts (LD) and those learners who returned to school (LR), were asked why they had dropped out of school and what they thought could be done to prevent learners from dropping out of school. Although the researcher planned to interview five dropouts (LD), only four were available and were willing to participate in the study. Of those who returned (LR) to school, only two could be interviewed, due to availability. One of the learners, who had previously dropped out of school, did not return to school after the national lockdown due to the COVID pandemic.

Table 4 below presents information of those teachers with learners who had dropped out of their classes (T), the Life Skills teacher (TLS), principal (P), and a person serving on the village council (VC).

Table 4: Participants' information, their gender and job experience

Participants	Gender	Job experience
T1	Female	3 years
T2	Male	14 years
T3	Female	35 years
TLS	Male	10 years
P	Female	20 years
VC	Female	10 years

Table 4 shows that the female respondents are more than the male respondents. The Life Skills teacher and the school principal automatically formed part of the respondents. The Life Skills

teacher (TLS) kept a record of the learners who had dropped out of school and provided counselling to the learners whenever it was required. The school principal automatically formed part of the study because she was the head of the school and thus aware of everything that was happening at the school. The Life Skills teacher reported to her before the information was sent to the regional office. The criterion employed to select the three teachers was that they should have had dropouts in their classes. Lastly, the person serving on the village council formed part of the study to give an overview of school dropout from the community's point of view.

4.4. Factors that influenced school dropouts and possible solutions suggested by participants

Several questions related to the themes were posed to provide answers to the research questions. These resulted in the researcher dividing the factors into learner-related, school-related, socio-economic factors and community/parental-related factors.

4.4.1. Learner factors

Academic performance

Five of the participants, the person serving on the village council (VC), the Life Skills teacher (TLS), the principal (P), Teacher Three (3), as well as one dropout who never returned (LD 3) stated that poor performing learners were likely to drop out of school, normally, due to frustration. When a learner struggled in different subjects, it would affect him or her negatively; it lowered the learner's self-esteem since not getting something right or grasping something could be quite frustrating. According to one of the dropouts who never returned (LD 3),

I was tired of failing at school, the things at school are very difficult and I did not understand anything.

LD 3 spoke of failing constantly, never passing any Grade, and either being transferred or having to repeat the Grade. LD3's peers used to laugh whenever a teacher asked her a question and this made her feel uncomfortable. She said she did not see the need for going to school, thus, she preferred to be at home. The only thing she enjoyed at school was doing knitting in the Home Ecology class. According to the information gathered from the Life Skills teacher, learners dropped out of school due to some school factors, such as feeling ashamed to repeat a Grade.

According to the Life Skills teacher, Teacher 2 (T2) and Teacher 3 (T3), in some cases there was no relationship between school dropout and school performance. Even learners who were doing well in school were dropping out of school.

There was a smart girl in Grade 9 and she just decided to leave school and went to the farm to stay with her parents.

Discipline

Three of the teachers (T1, T2, and T3) were of the opinion that the learners were very disrespectful to their teachers. One of the learners who returned to school (LR1) said that

The learners are insulting teachers, exchange words with them; they fight in front of the teachers.

LR 1 advised that

The learners must respect their teachers, stop insulting them, the children must stop fighting at school. She emphasised that the learners must always behave and adhere to the school rules.

In some instances, when the older learners had to repeat a certain Grade, they tended to present disciplinary problems, such as bullying, fighting and smoking on the school grounds. A lack of discipline caused three (3) boys to leave school. Some learners came to school with unacceptable

hairstyles just to be sent back home to cut their hair. According to the Life Skills teacher, they often did not return to school again. Some were not wearing the full school uniform, for example, wearing sneakers instead of school shoes, and that led to disruptive behaviour during lessons. In short, a lack of discipline was one of the learner factor that could contribute to school dropout.

Teenage pregnancies

Teacher 3 (T3) alleged that young girls were engaging in sexual activities and roaming the streets with boys and older men during the night, while they were supposed to be at home. She added that these girls were having sexual relations with older men in the community so that they could receive money to buy fancy cellphones, clothes and food for their homes. As a result, some of them ended up becoming pregnant and leaving school.

A Grade 9 learner who returned to school (LR1) after giving birth suggested that

Girls who are 16 years older should go to the clinic and get contraceptives to prevent them from falling pregnant while they are still in school. It is not easy coming from school with a lot of homework and tests, while the babe is there crying waiting to be breastfed.

The school principal advocated that the police should patrol the streets during the night and send the teenagers home. To conclude, some of the learners dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancies.

Peer influence

The Life Skills teacher stated that, when the boys were around the age of 14, they tended to be influenced by their friends who were not attending school. These boys then often also left school to seek employment at nearby farms.

They were attracted to quick money, joining gangs, smoking the hookah pipe and consuming alcohol. As a result, these learners became addicted and they started misbehaving at school. Most of them ended up being suspended from attending classes and later they dropped out of school. To sum up, peer influence could be considered one of the contributing factors to school dropout.

Boredom

According to one of the learners (LD 2), she dropped out of school because she found school boring. Another learner (LR 1) said that

I was just tired of waking up early in the morning every day, at the hostel, we wake up at five o'clock from Monday to Friday and it used to be very cold in the morning.

The school did not have a laboratory for the learners to carry out their experiments; it only had a storeroom to store the chemicals. It can be quite boring for the learners just to learn the theory in the science subjects and only look at illustrations of how to conduct certain experiments in textbooks, without doing it practically. As a result, it led to poor performance in the science subjects, which later caused frustration and led to some learners dropping out of school.

Teachers at the primary level did not employ different teaching strategies but mostly only made use of the chalkboard and textbooks while teachers at the junior secondary made use of the projector and gave notes on handouts, which made their work easier and helped save time.

To summarise, the lack of interesting and practical lessons was demotivating the learners. As a result, it could contribute to school dropout.

4.4.2. School factors

Curriculum factor.

Two of the teachers (T1 and T2) felt that the new curriculum that had been introduced in 2016 is too broad, the content is too much for the learners to grasp, and on top of that, there are not enough learning materials for teaching and learning the new curriculum. This caused some of the learners not to meet the passing requirements; therefore, the majority of the learners fail and repeat the Grades.

The school offered afternoon classes to those learners repeating a Grade, transferred learners and those who normally performed below average. The Life Skills teacher stated that, although there was a learning support programme at the school, the curriculum did not make provision for learning support for each subject. At the end of the year, all the learners had to write the same examinations; it did not matter whether they were below average or suffering from foetal alcohol syndrome. Consequently, at the end of the day, those learners might not meet the promotional requirements and were normally at risk of dropping out of school. The Life Skills teacher was of the opinion that there was a need for teachers to plan varying assessment activities for learners to accommodate those with differing abilities.

To conclude, participants believed that the lack of teaching and learning materials for the new curriculum and learning support in all subjects could be some of the factors contributing to school dropout.

Classroom environment

The classroom observations indicated that the classrooms were equipped with enough lights and ventilation. There were posters with subject-related content on the walls. Every child had his or her own desk and chair. According to the findings, there were not enough learning materials, specifically, textbooks. Those that were available were very old. Some of the classrooms were overcrowded. For example, there were only two Grade 5 classes, and each consisted of 47 learners, which made these classes not conducive for learning. Two teachers who had dropouts in their classes (T1 and T2) suggested that the government should provide enough textbooks to all the learners because the situation at school was that a group of five learners sometimes had to share one textbook.

In addition, the school infrastructure at the primary learners' classes (Grade 0 to 7) was not disability-friendly. The pavement was very high and did not make provision for a wheelchair ramp. However, the school infrastructure for Grades 8 to 9 was disability-friendly, as it did have ramps and the pavement was not high. At the time when the data were collected, the school could not accommodate wheelchair-bound learners; consequently, they might be forced to drop out of school at the primary phase because of the difficulty to access the classrooms. The school principal and the Life Skills teacher recommended that the government adjusted the school's infrastructure to make it disability-friendly and make education accessible to all learners. In short, overcrowded classrooms and the lack of disability-friendly infrastructures were believed to be contributing to the issue at hand.

Teacher-learner relationship

According to the principal,

Each class teacher has a disciplinary book, where they keep the record of each learner's transgressions, such as insulting teachers and their fellow learners, fighting, absconding classes, smoking on the school premises, and not doing homework.

The Life Skills teacher believed that the subject teachers usually neglected the learners who were below average and concentrated mostly on the smart learners only. He suggested that teachers should be role models to the learners and the community, and play the role of *in loco-parentis*. Lastly, he suggested that teachers should accommodate all learners in such a way that they would feel as important as everyone else in the classroom. Teaching strategies should be flexible to accommodate the learners' differing needs.

Teachers also shared how they reacted when they noticed that a certain learner had stopped coming to school. They (T1, T2, and T3) stated that they made contact with the parents to find out the root of the problem and referred the learners to the Life Skills teacher. The Life Skills teacher (TLS) said that

Sometimes it is very difficult to trace the parents to find out why a child dropped out of school. Some of the parents are farmworkers, and it is not easy to get hold of them.

Corporal punishment

Six participants (dropouts and learners who had returned) stated that some teachers inflicted corporal punishment on learners who made a noise in class, while other teachers made use of detention. They suggested that teachers should stop inflicting corporal punishment on the learners.

Furthermore, even in detention classes, learners had to sit for two to three hours after school for not doing homework, failing to submit projects and for making a noise in class. To sum up, some learners dropped out of school due to frustration and some due to corporal punishment.

In summary, the majority of the participants believed that a lack of discipline and respect among the learners towards the teachers caused them to drop out of school. Lastly, unequal treatment of the learners by teachers, contributed to poor performance of the learners which leads to dropping out school.

4.4.3. Parental factors

Socio-economic status

According to the person serving on the village council (VC), the unemployment rate in the village stood at 65%, which means that only 35% of the community was employed.

There are no institutions or companies where people can be employed, only a few governmental institutions where people are working. The majority only depend on the social grant for the senior citizens. Unemployment causes poverty and social problems among the families in the community. As a result, learners are forced to work to cater for themselves and their families. The parents are sending their children to sell foodstuffs such as sweets, fat cakes and some children are forced to sell alcohol and drugs.

The school principal requested that non-governmental organisations should become involved in assisting the school with donations for school uniforms and shoes to cater for the needy learners and to motivate them to stay in school.

Teacher Two (T2) claimed that one of the parents went to school to withdraw her son who was in Grade 7 so that he could go to work on the farm. Teacher 2 (T2) advocated that parents needed to

be educated about children's rights so that they did not just force children to leave school to seek employment.

Five of the participants, namely the school principal, teachers and the person serving on the village council, all believed that there was a lack of moral values in the community. All three teachers (T1, T2, and T3) who participated in the study recommended the provision of recreational facilities and the introduction of youth education programmes to broaden the children's view of life and allow the unemployed youth from the community to facilitate or coach these classes. The person serving on the village council said there was a community library, but the children did not make use of it. She recommended that the Keetmanshoop rural constituency office should supply or donate some information communication and technology tools to introduce community education programmes, such as watching educational videos every Friday in the library. This would help to keep the children off the street. In short, all the participants strongly believed that poverty was the driving force causing learners to leave school.

Parental neglect and lack of parental involvement

The Life Skills teacher stated that parents were abusing alcohol and neglecting the social well-being of their children.

When parents are abusing alcohol during pregnancy, it has a serious impact on the mental capability of the child. It may cause some children to be born with alcohol syndrome. Such children struggle to cope with schoolwork.

One of the dropouts (LD4) proposed that

All the kids should be accommodated in the hostel because sometimes there is no food at home and sometimes there is no money to buy electricity for the kids to study and to do their homework.

Some of the learners only came to school until break time. Once they had eaten the porridge, they would go home and did not stay till the last period of the day. The Life Skills teacher suggested that the government should provide the school with nutritional food to improve the school-feeding programme since it was the only meal of the day for some of the learners. The person serving on the village council said that

Such situations force the learners to leave school and indulge in criminal activities, such as stealing and vandalism of people's properties. Most of these children only end up becoming street children.

She suggested that teachers should establish different clubs, such as a girls' club, debate club, science club, *Window of Hope* and *My future is My Choice clubs*, at school to keep the learners busy after school and keep them off the streets. She also added that teachers should invite young mothers who were willing to open up, to share their experiences of being unemployed teenage mothers with the learners, encourage them to change their behaviours and take their schoolwork seriously. Teachers should also invite successful people from the community to address the learners and motivate them.

The school principal stated that most of the parents did not attend the parent-teacher meetings; only 30% of the parents attended the meetings. Meetings took place at least once per term.

Some of the topics discussed at parent-teacher meetings include learner attendance, pass and fail statistics and discipline.

Teacher Three (T3) stated that some of the parents were also school dropouts and that they could not read and write; therefore, they could not assist their children with schoolwork. She added that some of the parents refused to come to the school when their children had violated the school rules to discuss the issues with the teachers. Some parents demanded that learners should stay home and some learners dropped out due to unknown reasons. The parents were not fulfilling their parental responsibilities.

The Life Skills teacher stated that there was a lack of motivating the learners by the parents and they did not always serve as role models to their children. Parents did not give full psychological and emotional support to the learners. They did not encourage learners and did not emphasise the importance of being educated as an individual. Instead, some parents were the ones negatively influencing their children; they consumed alcohol together with their children.

Teacher Three (T3) emphasised that, for the children to change, the parents need to change their perspective towards education first. They should also know what and what not to do in front of their children. She was of the opinion that there was a need for parental education through community meetings and church gatherings to guide the parents and guardians in ways to motivate their children to see the need and importance of education. The children needed to be encouraged and motivated from a young age. The school principal suggested the following: engage social welfare and offer to counsel both parents and learners since many of the parents were addicted to alcohol. In addition, the participants (teacher 3 and school principal) suggested that the school should receive assistance from church leaders to restore the moral values in the community. In summary, teachers were of the opinion that the learners were not well motivated to stay in school and that there was a lack of parental support.

4.5. Summary

This chapter presented the data collected from the document analyses, observations and interviews with different respondents and were presented according to different themes. Several questions were utilised to gain the information required under each theme. These looked at learner, school and community/parental-related factors that led to school dropout, together with suggestions from the participants of the study regarding possible solutions. In summary, these factors are:

- Learner factors: school performance, teenage pregnancy, lack of discipline, peer influence and boredom.
- School factors: influence of policy, classroom environment and teacher-learner relationship.
- Community/parental-related factors: unemployment (poverty), lack of motivation, parental neglect and lack of parental involvement.

The next chapter comprises a discussion of the findings of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results of the document analysis, observation and interviews presented in Chapter Four. The discussion of the findings are guided by themes and sub-themes; however, some sub-themes will be combined.

Certain recommendations arising from the study are made. Lastly, before the concluding remarks, the limitations of the study are discussed.

5.2. Discussion of the results

5.2.1. The link between the findings and theoretical framework

The study employed the ecological system and social capital theories. The social capital theory holds that the positive relationships among family members, especially between parents and their children, are capital resources that can facilitate educational achievement (Adedokun & Balschweid, 2008).

The findings of the study indicate that the parents had a very huge influence on their children's behaviour and attitudes towards school. Many parents neglected the social well-being of their children. The study, furthermore, shows that most parents were not involved in their children's education; only 30% of the parents attended teacher-parent meetings. In correlation with the findings, the social capital theory states that strong social support from the family results in fewer behaviour problems and boosts learners' self-esteem, which will motivate them to stay in school. In return, this will have a positive influence on their achievement (Adedokun & Balschweid, 2008).

According to the findings of the study, some of the parents were also school dropouts and several of them ended up being domestic workers. They were also the ones who usually went to the school to withdraw their children to work on the farms. The parents' socio-economic status also affected the child's academic performance. This concurs with Swick and Williams (2006) who argue that parents' socio-economic status affects the child because they may not have the means to purchase educational materials or live in decent homes; in fact, they even may not have a home at all. Adedokun and Balscheid (2008) reported that statistically, children born in poverty have low self-esteem and are thus less likely to excel in school or more likely to drop out. They are also more prone to violence and crime (Adedokun & Balschweid, 2008; Swick & Williams, 2006). Swick and Williams argued that cultural beliefs and societal values provide guidance and support for children and their parents.

The study found a lack of motivation from the parents; the parents are neglecting their roles and responsibilities in their children's education. This is in agreement with Adedokun and Balschweid (2008) who state that learners from a social environment that is not supportive, tend to feel that they are not loved, cared for and appreciated, and this lowers their self-esteem. They add that learners with a negative self-image tend to engage in disruptive behaviour. These learners are demotivated to do well in school, they hardly communicate with their parents about school-related activities and they are likely to drop out of school.

The ecological theory posits that, for one to study a child's development, one must look at not only the child and his or her immediate environment but the interaction of the larger environment as well (Perron, 2018). The findings of the study show that learners were behaving the way they are because of the environment in which they were living; participants in this study believed that the community lacked moral values. Stearns and Glennie (2006) caution that a learner can be forced

to drop out of school when exposed to unfavourable conditions in the school environment. The ecological system and socio-capital theories guided the study because they relate to school dropout to parental support, socio-economic status, motivation, aspirations and policy measures. The researcher believes that it takes a village to raise a child. In summary, there is a link between the two theories and school dropout, because are focusing on how the child's immediate environment can affect his or her development include his or her education. The focus of the study was to examine the factors that contribute to school dropout.

5.2.2. Learner factors

School performance

According to the data gathered, in some instances, there was no relationship between school performance and school dropout because even learners that were performing well were dropping out of school. On the other hand, some learners dropped out of school due to frustration; for example, when a learner struggled in a certain subject or subjects, it affected him or her because of his or here inability to achieve or grasp something was frustrating. This concurs with Krstic, et al. (2017) who point out that learners' inability to learn the lesson content of a particular subject and complete their homework individually or with their family, without the compensatory role of remedial classes, results in lower achievement, the learner repeating a year, the feeling of failure and a sense of low self-esteem. All of these factors increase the risk of dropping out.

In some cases, some of the learners, especially the older ones, were embarrassed to repeat a Grade, and they opted to rather drop out of school. The findings of the study are in agreement with the study conducted by Braimah and Oduro-Ofori (2015) who holds that learners drop out of school when they are depressed by their poor background and poor academic performance. As a result of poor academic performance, many of these learners are being criticised by their parents, teachers

and fellow learners instead of being helped by them. Chinyoka (2014) asserts that, when learners attribute failure to their lack of ability, they are likely to give up which may lead to possible school dropout.

Discipline

The findings of the study reveal some push factors that caused the learners to drop out of school. These factors included the disciplinary measures employed at schools, such as detention and corporal punishment. The findings of the study concur with Boylan and Renzulli (2014) who highlight some of the school factors, such as disciplinary policies and conflicts with teachers, combined with learners' characteristics that tend to push learners out of school. Such factors may cause learners to fail to connect with the school and create disciplinary problems which may result in poor academic performance.

Teenage pregnancies

The study shows that female learners were roaming the streets during the night and engaging in sexual activities with older men from the community in exchange for money to buy cellphones, clothes, pay their bills and provide food for their families. As a result, some of them ended up pregnant and leaving school.

These findings are similar to that of a study conducted by Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) which reports that learners were sneaking out of their parents' homes to engage in sexual relations with married men in return for money, gifts and other kinds of bribes, eventually becoming pregnant.

Peer influences

The findings of the study indicate that some of the learners, especially boys around the age of 14, were being influenced by their friends who did not attend school; consequently, some boys were leaving school to join gangs, consume alcohol, smoke hookah pipes and seek employment on farms and at construction sites. As a result, these learners became addicted to alcohol and smoking, causing them to become unruly at school. This, in turn, led to their suspension from attending classes and them later dropping out of school. Alcohol and drug abuse was a very common practice in the community as some learners visited bars and clubs after school. This finding concurs with several researchers who found that some of the learners left school to join their friends who were involved in malpractices, such as the use of drugs and alcohol (Brammah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015; Sigei & Tikoko, 2014).

Boredom

The findings show that the school environment was not appealing to the learners' needs or arousing their interest to stay in school. There was no laboratory for the learners to conduct their experiments at the school. The findings of the study strongly agree with that of a study conducted in California which reports that learners were bored when their Biology lessons were not accompanied by demonstrations, as well as when they did not understand the material (Mora, 2011). Mora (2011) points out that learners tend to enjoy fun lessons that involve practical activities, rather than lecture-driven lessons.

Lastly, the results indicate that teachers at the primary level did not make use of different teaching strategies, except for employing the chalkboard and textbooks, while teachers in the junior secondary Grades made use of overhead projectors and gave notes as handouts. These actions

made their lessons more interesting and fun for the learners. This concurs with Mora (2011) who states that repetitive classroom activities lead some learners to disengage academically, display disruptive behaviour, cut classes and drop out. He adds that learners' boredom is associated with tedious activities they find meaningless.

In short, the study reveals that a variety of learner factors contributed to school dropout. Such factors included school performance, teenage pregnancies, peer influences and boredom. These factors were largely confirmed by the literature as contributing to school dropout.

5.2.3. School factors

Policy influences

The national promotion policy has both positive and negative effects on the learners. The negative part is that the learners have to fail twice in the phase before being transferred to the next Grade. The findings of the study agree with Ghazi and others (2011) who argue that forced repetition of classes is the greatest contributory factor to learners' school dropout.

Based on the findings, it appears that the curriculum did not cater for the needs of all the learners, especially those who performed below average. Even though they attended remedial classes, they still wrote the same examination as the rest of the learners. There was a lack of teacher training in the different ways of offering learning support to learners with different learning difficulties; teachers felt that they were not well equipped. Several researchers agree that the lack of diversity in the school curriculum and individualised support in both regular and remedial classes for learners with learning difficulties and those who are less motivated to learn is one of the main school factors contributing to learners dropping out of school (Buop, et al., 2018; Krstic, et al., 2017).

Classroom environment

The study reports that some classrooms were overcrowded. The data show that there were not enough textbooks, and learners were forced to share. In some subjects, only one textbook used by the teacher was available. Latif, et al. (2015) emphasises that a boring school environment, overcrowded classrooms and the lack of learning materials also increase the rate of school dropout.

Teacher-learner relationship

The study determined that most of the learners did not have respect for their teachers as they were swearing at the teachers and fighting in front of them. The findings of the study are in agreement with Krstic and others (2017) who found that risky behaviour during leisure time, as well as aggressiveness and discipline problems among the learners, are some of the causes of school dropout. The unsatisfactory relationships with teachers and the climate in the classroom count among the main causes of early school leaving (Krstic, et al., 2017).

The study reports that factors, such as disciplinary measures, corporal punishment, overcrowded classrooms, the lack of teaching and learning materials, as well as diversity in the school curriculum and policy influences, were some of the school factors that contributed to school dropout. These findings are supported by the literature.

5.2.4. Parental factors

Socio-economic status

The research findings indicate that all the participants strongly believed that poverty was the main cause of the problems that led to school dropout. The majority of the parents (65%) were unemployed. As a result, they could not afford to buy stationery for their children. Some parents withdrew their children from school to seek employment at the nearby farms. These research findings concur with Ghazi, et al. (2011) and Nekongo-Nielsen, et al. (2015) who state that

economic pressure forces a learner to leave school to assist his or her family in increasing their income. They add that these activities caused learners to stay out of school for longer periods after which they were unable to return. The few learners who went back to school usually had missed much of the subject content that was taught, and were thus likely to fail that specific Grade (Nekongo-Nielsen, et al., 2015).

Parental neglect and lack of parental involvement

According to the findings of the study, only 30% of the parents attended the teacher-parent meetings. The parents did not see the value and importance of sending their children to school, and there was no motivation by the parents. Most of the parents could not assist their children with schoolwork due to language barriers; most of them could not read and write English as some of them were also school dropouts. The study is in agreement with several researchers who have found that motivation and emotional support from family members, especially from parents, was an important factor that creates and maintains an interest in the child to continue his or her studies (Ghazi et al., 2011; Latif, et., 2015; Mishra, & Azeez, 2014; Pavalache-Ilie & Antonia, 2015). Pavalache-Illie & Antonia (2015) argued that parents who are educated sufficiently to have awareness of the importance and needs regarding education are more successful in creating an environment for achieving quality education for their children. Furthermore, researchers argue that the children of parents, who monitor and regulate their children's activities, encourage independent decision-making and are generally involved in their children's schooling, are less likely to drop out of school (Ghazi, et al., 2011; Latif, et al., 2015; Mishra & Azeez, 2014; Pavalache-Ilie & Antonia, 2015).

To sum up, the study reveals that the high rates of unemployment, parental neglect, lack of parental involvement and illiterate parents and guardians were some of the parental factors that contributed to school dropout. These findings agree with the literature.

The overall conclusion drawn from this study is that the main factor that leads to dropout is poverty, as this situation forced the learners to leave school in search for employment. It also shows that there were very little parental motivation and involvement. Some of the learners were embarrassed to repeat the Grade, while some were frustrated due to poor academic performance. Other factors included teenage pregnancies, parental neglect and the lack of parental involvement, as well as policy influences, boredom and peer influences. These findings are supported by the literature, which found that learners drop out when they are depressed by their poor background and poor academic performance. It has been reported that, due to pressure at home and other activities after school, some children are not able to find time to study; consequently, they end up with poor academic performance (Brammah & Oduro-Ofori, 2015). As a result of poor academic performance, these learners are being criticised by their parents, teachers and fellow learners instead of receiving assistance from them. They, therefore, prefer to leave school to learn other trades of an informal nature. Chinyoka (2014) argues that, when learners attribute failure to the lack of ability, they are likely to give up, thus, leading to possible school dropout.

5.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study and/or the reviewed literature related to it.

Recommendations to the church and community leaders

- The study recommends that parents and guardians should be encouraged to instil the love of education in their children at a young age while they are still in pre-school by buying children's books and educational games. The parents should be involved in their children's education by attending teacher-parent meetings.
- The study also recommends that church and community members, as well as police officers, need to cooperate by patrolling the streets to ensure that no children are roaming the streets during the day when they are supposed to be at school and during the night when they are supposed to be home. This may contribute to restoring the moral values among the learners, reduce the number of dropouts and improve retention in school.

Recommendations to the school

- The learners are leaving school to seek employment. Sometimes it is their parents who withdraw them from school. Thus, the study recommends that the school board, the community leaders such as the councillor of Keetmanshoop rural constituency and the chief executive office of the Aroab village council together with the church leaders as a preventative measure, addresses this withdrawal of learners with all parents in teacher-parent meetings, community meetings and church gatherings and emphasise the economic importance of keeping their children in school to end the vicious cycle of poverty in families.

- The study also recommends that teachers teach learners about children’s rights in Namibia. Article 15, of the Namibian Constitution (1990, p. 15) states that “children under the age of 18 are entitled to be protected from economic exploitation and shall not be required to be employed in or required to perform work that is likely to interfere with their education”.
- Teachers should establish school activities that include educational programmes to occupy learners after school and keep them off the streets. Such programmes could be educational but fun and interesting at the same time, such as debating, girls-, science-, language- and drama clubs. Community members, for instance the unemployed youth, could be engaged in facilitating the *My Future is My Choice* programme.
- The findings indicate that teachers at the primary level did not make use of different teaching strategies, except for employing the chalkboard and textbooks, while teachers in the junior secondary Grades made use of overhead projectors and gave notes as handouts. Thus the study recommends that teachers at the primary level should employ different teaching strategies to make learning interesting for the learners and to cater for all their needs. The use of technology should not only be for junior secondary classes but should start at the lower Grades. Teachers can utilise the projector to play videos, educational games and display pictures to the learners.
- Teachers must stop corporal punishment at school. Teachers should be role models for the learners and the community and play the role of *in loco parentis* by showing their love and care for learners.
- There is a lack of motivation among learners. Therefore, the study recommends that teachers and the school, in general, need to emphasise and remind their learners constantly of the importance of education and motivate them to stay in school. This can be done by inviting people from different walks of life in the community, such as young mothers, prisoners, street vendors,

businessmen and women, to inspire and motivate the learners by sharing their personal experiences on the reasons why they came to be where they are.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

- The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should provide the school with all the critical resources needed, such as textbooks for all learners and laboratories to conduct their experiments, to improve the learning and teaching environment for both learners and teachers. This would make it easier for learners to relate subject content to their everyday lives. The infrastructure should be able to accommodate all learners, irrespective of their disabilities.
- Many of the parents could not assist their children with schoolwork at home, because they themselves were unable to read and write. Although a literacy programme existed in the village, only a few parents or community members attended these classes. Therefore, the study recommends that the community leaders should encourage parents to attend these classes until they have reached Stage 3, which is aimed at developing basic and functional English skills for general communication. Some of the parents are primary school dropouts; thus, attending these classes will be useful to them. Once they can read and write and have improved their English communication skills, they may be able to assist their children at home, which will lead to better academic performance. Adult education can enhance attitudinal changes among illiterate parents in favour of the child's education.
- The study, furthermore, recommends that the school's infrastructure, such as pavements, should be adjusted in such a way that it will be disability-friendly; ramps should be fitted to the pavements to accommodate people making use of a wheelchair. At the time of the study, the school's infrastructure was not inclusive, because there were no ramps to accommodate the disabled which restricted the movement of a disabled person around the school grounds; this may cause such a

person to drop out of school. Inclusive or disability-friendly infrastructure will prevent a disabled person from dropping out school.

Recommendations to the government

- There is a need for social workers to provide counselling to both parents and learners on the importance of education and the negative effects of drug and alcohol abuse. Parents have a huge influence on the behaviour of their children and the way they perceive things in life.
- Some of the learners from poor households came to school hungry. A hungry learner finds it hard to concentrate in class. This may result in poor academic performance which will later lead to school dropout. The study recommends that the government should provide the school with nutritional food, such as fruit, to sustain, maintain and improve the feeding programme at school because some of the learners depended on that one meal at school since there was no food at home. According to the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, (2019) it is believed that this will result in the improved general health of the learners and also improve regular attendance. Lastly, it will improve retention and progression through the Grades (MoEAC, 2019).
- It is also recommended that the school hostel be expanded to accommodate all the learners from poor households. Some of the learners came from households where there was no electricity and were thus unable to do their schoolwork at night. Some of the learners who are children of farmworkers were staying with family members in the village and were sometimes not taken good care of.
- In conclusion, the researcher recommend that the government should devise poverty reduction initiatives to help poor parents to generate some income to be in a better position to help their

children in school. At the time of the study, 65% of the population in Aroab was unemployed, and the majority only depended on the social grants for the senior citizens.

Recommendation for further studies

- Lastly, further research should be conducted on this topic and more dropouts should be included in the study so that their views can be better represented. Further study should employ the mixed methods approach, focusing on both government and private schools in rural and urban areas, for the study to yield better and more reliable results that could be generalised to other schools or other regions. The inclusion of questionnaires as one of the research instruments to reach the dropouts who could not be interviewed face-to-face is recommended.
- Finally, it recommends that further research be conducted to explore a more successful implementation of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia. Many parents still do not play their part as the most important stakeholders in education and as parents in the children's education, due to the fact they cannot read and write.

5.4. Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the difficulty to find five dropouts from both genders who had not returned to school; therefore, only four female dropouts were interviewed. No male dropouts were interviewed; those found by the researcher had refused to participate in the interviews, while others were not available. Therefore, the option for male learners to discuss their reasons for dropping out of school was not available for this study.

The biggest limitation of the study is that the researcher did not include participants that could provide the essential information on the socio economic status of the learners, which are parents and guardians, although teachers are also from the community.

The limitations brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic made the situation difficult for the researcher, since some learners who had previously dropped out of school did not return to school after the lockdown; thus these learners could not be interviewed. Lastly, the study only focused on the government school in the village, although the private school in the village might also have contributed useful information; therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalised to the whole village. It would have made an interesting comparison of factors that contribute to school dropout both at a government school and at a private school.

The results could have been more significant if a mixed-methods study had been conducted, where both interviews, observations and questionnaires could have been combined as instruments to collect data. Mixed-methods could have allowed the researcher to add insights that might be omitted by using the qualitative-method only. In addition, mixed-methods provides a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the research problem than a qualitative approach alone. Overall, the above limitations did not prevent the researcher from collecting the required information and achieving the research objectives.

5.5. Conclusion

The study determined that the factors that contribute to school dropout were multi-layered in that they were derived from learners, parents and the school. In summary, the findings of the study indicate that the major factors that contributed to school dropout were poverty, poor academic performance, teenage pregnancies, parental neglect and the lack of parental involvement, a lack of discipline among the learners, peer influences, as well as the impact of school policies. This study may be of value to the learners who may be contemplating dropping out. In addition, the findings of the study may be useful to parents, teachers, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC), community developers and other stakeholders as they can be employed to advocate the

curbing of premature school dropouts. Curbing premature dropouts allow teachers, parents and professional counsellors to provide the necessary support and counselling to the learners who are identified as being at risk of dropping out of school.

In addition, the findings could be employed by the MoEAC to add value to inputs geared towards policymaking and policy review. The findings of the study could help the policymakers in reviewing educational policies, such as the National Promotion Policy Guide, Namibian School Feeding Program (NSFP) and others, to alleviate the problem of school dropout. The findings could also inform the government in ensuring that schools' infrastructure is inclusive, gender-sensitive, learner- and disability-friendly and conducive to a successful learning environment for all learners, particularly to those who are at risk of dropping out.

Finally, the findings of this study add to the body of knowledge of research regarding the factors that contribute to school dropout that has been conducted before, it has added to the existing literature. The study contributes to an understanding of school dropout in a research site that is impacted by multiple socio-economic factors. It added the views of learners who previously dropped out and returned, because in all the studies done on school dropout in Namibia non of them made use of the learners who previously dropped out of school as participants. It also explained how the ecological theory and the socio capital theory can be linked to the factors that contribute to school dropout.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE FROM UNAM



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE-008-2020

Date: 27-04-2020

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE //KHARAS REGION.

Nature/Level of Project: MASTERS STUDY-HON-HEALTH

Researcher: KLEMENTINE MWENDELA NAMBALA

Student Number: 201101109

Faculty: FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Supervisors: DR P.J FEBRUARY

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

REC wishes you the best in your research.

REC Chairperson

Prof CJ Wilders

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CJ Wilders", is written over a horizontal line.

(Signature)

APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION FROM THE //KHARAS EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR



||KHARAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE of EDUCATION, ARTS and CULTURE



Tel: (063) 2270600	Private Bag 2160
Fax: (063) 2235001	KEETMANSHOOP

Inquiries: Awehabe J ||Hoeseb Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture: Kharas
Date: 20 May 2020
File Ref. No.: 15/1

Klementine Mwendela Nambala
P O Box 853
KEETMANSHOOP

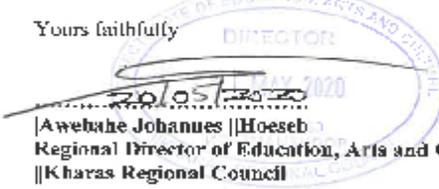
Dear Klementine Mwendela Nambala

SUBJECT: Approval to conduct research at Oosterheim Combined School in Aroab

1. Receipt of your letter, dated 14 May 2020. Subject: A request for permission to conduct a research at Aroab (Oosterheim Combined School, bears reference.
2. Permission is hereby granted to you, **Klementine Mwendela Nambala**, to conduct research on the topic "An analysis of factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the Kharas Region", amongst teachers and learners of Oosterheim Combined School in the Garib Circuit, a public primary school in the Kharas Region.
3. The aforementioned authorization is granted on condition that **only three (3) teachers and three (3) learners of Oosterheim Combined School will form part of the intended research sample** and that the anonymity of those respondents would be guaranteed.
4. Please present this letter to the Principal of Oosterheim Combined School when you would visit the school for the study and agree on suitable time-slots for research engagements with the selected three teachers and three learners with the Principal.
5. Note must however be taken of the limitation that the engagement with the three teachers is not supposed to lead to the disruption and or interruption of teaching and learning programmes and or processes, or discontinuation of teachers' teaching duties.
6. Lastly, the Regional Management Committee of the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture would like to request you to share the research findings with this regional directorate to be used for curbing premature dropouts from school as well as for insightful planning purposes and for adding value to inputs geared towards policy-making and or policy review.

Yours faithfully


Awehabe Johannes ||Hoeseb
Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture
||Kharas Regional Council



APPENDIX 3: AN OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

An observation guide for classrooms for teachers who had dropouts

Classroom number: _____

Statement	Responses		Comments
	Yes	No	
Classroom			
Classrooms are structured to enhance learning (display boards, seating arrangement, lights, and ventilation).			
There are enough learning materials such as textbooks.			
Every learner at school has his/her chair and a desk.			
Recognised pupils' individual differences and provided activities.			
School environment			
The school environment is disability-friendly (e.g. wheelchair ramp).			

The school is having a laboratory for the learners to carry out their experiments.			
The school is offering remedial classes to learners with special learning needs.			
School policy			
There is an open-door policy at school for parents to come to visit.			
Corporal punishment is one of the disciplinary measures employed.			
The school feeding program is functional at school.			
Other observations			

APPENDIX 4: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The aim of the document analysis will be to assist the researcher to obtain comprehensive and historical information about school dropout at the selected school.

Documents selected	Data to be analyzed
Annual Education census	Percentage of school dropouts vs Enrollment (any other info that is relevant to the study, e.g. class size) Reasons for dropping out Percentage of qualified teachers
School report card for the school dropout	Relationship between school performance and school dropout
Disciplinary files of the selected teachers	The relationship between the learners' behaviour and school dropout
Attendance registers of selected teachers	To check attendance of the learners

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE LIFE SKILLS TEACHER

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE LIFE SKILLS TEACHER

Introduction

I am Klementine Mwendela Nambala, a master student at the University of Namibia, majoring in Inclusive education. The research titled: An analysis of factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas Region. Thank you for your willingness, interest and time to participate in the study. The information will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality.

NB:

- You are not required to provide your name (for anonymity sake)
- There are no wrong or right answers, all responses will be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think are the major causes of learners dropping out of school in Aroab?
2. What gender is most likely to drop out of school? Justify your answer.
3. Are there school-related factors contributing to dropout? Explain your answer
4. Do you think that there a relationship between school performance and school dropout? Explain your answer.
5. 5.1. In your opinion, what effect does the school policy have on the learners who failed a certain grade?
- 5.2. From your point of view, what effect does the curriculum have on the learners who failed a certain grade?

6. 6.1. Is there a learning support class/ program at school to help learners who are at risk of not progressing to the next grade?
6.2.If there is, what criteria do the school use to select these learners?
7. 7.1. Was counselling given to the learners before they dropped out of school? If yes, what type of counselling was provided? If no, what prohibited counselling?
7.2. If counselling was given to the learners, did they still opt to leave school?
8. What role does the socio-economic situation of parents contribute to learner dropout?
9. What role do parents play in the dropout of their children at your school?
10. What do you think can be done to prevent learners from dropping out of school in Aroab?

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR A MEMBER OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR A MEMBER OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

Introduction

I am Klementine Mwendela Nambala, a master student at the University of Namibia, majoring in Inclusive education. The research titled: An analysis of factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas Region. Thank you for your willingness, interest and time to participate in the study. The information will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality.

NB:

- You are not required to provide your name (for anonymity sake)
- There are no wrong or right answers, all responses will be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the employment rate of Aroab? Why do you think that this is so?
2. In your opinion, what do you think are some of the socio-economic factors that cause the learners to leave school at an early age?
3. Do you think there could be a relationship between the parents' socio-economic status and the learners' school dropout in Aroab?
4. What recreational activities are there in the village to keep the children busy during their free time?
5. In your opinion, what impact does school dropout have on the community?
6. What do you think can be done to minimise or prevent learners from dropping out of school in Aroab?

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Introduction

I am Klementine Mwendela Nambala, a master student at the University of Namibia, majoring in Inclusive education. The research titled: An analysis of factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas Region. Thank you for your willingness, interest and time to participate in the study. The information will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality.

NB:

- You are not required to provide your name (for anonymity sake)
- There are no wrong or right answers, all responses will be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the percentage of qualified teachers at school?
2. In your opinion, what are the school factors that cause the learners to drop out of school?
3. What are some of the disciplinary measures that are employed at school when the learners misbehave or violate the school rules?
4. When a learner drops out of school, what happens?
5. What does the school do in order to motivate or encourage the learners to do well in school?
6. From your experience, is there a relationship between school performance and the school dropout?

Elaborate your answer

7. What does the school do to cater for the well-being of learners?

8. 8.1. Is there a learning support class/ program at school to help learners who are at risk of not progressing to the next grade?
- 8.2. If there is, what criteria do the school use to select these learners?
- 8.3. How successful is the learning support class/ program? Substantiate your answer.
9. 9.1. How often does the school conduct parent-teacher meetings?
- 9.2. How would you rate the parents' attendance at the meetings? What are some of the topics that were discussed during the meetings?
- 9.3. Do the parents take part in the discussions during the meetings? If not, what could be their reasons for not doing so?
10. Do you think learners' socio-economic situation is also contributing to school dropout of the learners at your school? Explain your answer
11. What are your suggestions on how to alleviate the school dropout problem at your school?

APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE LEARNERS WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL PREVIOUSLY
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE LEARNERS WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL/DROPPED OUT, BUT RETURNED/ LEARNERS WHO ARE AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT (identified by Life Skills teacher)

Introduction

I am Klementine Mwendela Nambala, a master student at the University of Namibia, majoring in Inclusive education. The research titled: An analysis of factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas Region. Thank you for your willingness, interest and time to participate in the study. The information will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality.

NB:

- You are not required to provide your name (for anonymity sake)
- There are no wrong or right answers, all responses will be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONS:

Different sets of learners (see heading) will respond to questions that are relevant to the situation]

1. What are some of the reasons that caused/could cause you to drop out of school?
2. What are the reasons that other learners drop out of school?
3. Do you think the teachers' attitude also caused/could cause some of the learners to drop out of school? Explain your answer

4. Are the teachers using teaching strategies that cater for all the learners when they are presenting their lessons? Justify your answer
5. Do struggling learners get support from the school? Please substantiate your answer.
6. Which mode of punishment is frequently used in your school when the learners violate the school rules or misbehave?
7. In your opinion, is there a possibility that some learners are dropping out of school to go look for a job at the nearby farms? Explain your answer.
8. When you dropped out of school, did the school communicate with your parents? Elaborate on your answer.
9. Were you given counselling from the Life skill teacher before you dropped out?
10. Were you given counselling from the Life skill teacher after you came back? (For those learners who came back)
11. In your opinion, were you motivated to stay in school?
12. What made you come back to school?
13. 13.1. What do young people in Aroab do during their leisure time?
- 13.2. What do you think young people in Aroab should do during their leisure time
14. Suggest ways of preventing learners from dropping out of school in Aroab.

APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE TEACHERS INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE TEACHERS

(Teachers who had dropouts in their classrooms)

Introduction

I am Klementine Mwendela Nambala, a master student at the University of Namibia, majoring in Inclusive education. The research titled: An analysis of factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas Region. Thank you for your willingness, interest and time to participate in the study. The information will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality.

NB:

- You are not required to provide your name (for anonymity sake)
- There are no wrong or right answers, all responses will be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have cases of dropout at your school? If yes, how many learners dropped out of school over the past 5 years from your class? Please elaborate.
2. What do you think are the major causes of learners dropping out of school in Aroab?
3. What socio-economic factors contribute to school dropout at this school?
4. What gender is most likely to drop out of school? Justify your answer?
5. 5.1. In your opinion, what effect does the school policy has on the learners who failed a certain grade?
5.2. From your point of view, what effect does the curriculum have on the learners who failed a certain grade?

- 5.3. Do you know of a child who opted to drop out of school instead of repeating a grade?
6. Is there a relationship between school performance and school dropout? Explain your answer.
7. 7.1. Is there a learning support class/ program at school to help learners who are at risk of not progressing to the next grade?
- 7.2. If there is, what criteria do the school use to select these learners?
8. 8.1. As a class teacher, what did you do once you have noticed that one of the learners stopped coming to school?
- 8.2. Did you inform the parents of that specific learners? What was their response?
- 8.3. In your opinion, what role do parents play in the dropout of their children? Explain your answer.
9. Suggest ways of preventing learners from dropout in school in Aroab.
10. Specifically, in your opinion, what role can teachers play to minimise school dropouts?

APPENDIX 10: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL DROPOUTS

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Introduction

I am Klementine Mwendela Nambala, a master student at the University of Namibia, majoring in Inclusive education. The research titled: An analysis of factors contributing to learner dropout at a selected school in the //Kharas Region. Thank you for your willingness, interest and time to participate in the study. The information will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality.

NB:

- You are not required to provide your name (for anonymity sake)
- There are no wrong or right answers, all responses will be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the reasons that caused you to drop out of school?
2. Do you think the teachers' attitude also caused some of the learners to drop out of school? Explain your answer
3. Were the teachers using different teaching strategies when they were presenting their lessons? Justify your answer
4. Which mode of punishment was frequently used at your school when the learners violate the school rules or misbehave?
5. In your opinion, is there a possibility that some learners are dropping out of school, to go look for a job at the nearby farms? Explain your answer.

6. When you dropped out of school, did the school communicate with your parents?
7. Were you given counselling from the Life skill teacher, before you dropped out of school?
8. In your opinion, were you motivated to stay in school?
9. Do you wish to go back to school?
 10. 10.1. What do young people in Aroab do during their leisure time?
 - 10.2. What do you think young people in Aroab should do during their leisure time?
11. Suggest ways of preventing children from dropping out of school in Aroab.

APPENDIX 11: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM FOR THE LEARNERS WHO HAD DROPPED OUT PREVIOUSLY AND CAME BACK TO SCHOOL

ANNEX 5



TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE //KHARAS REGION

REFERENCE NUMBER:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Klementine M. Nambala

ADDRESS: P O BOX 853, Keetmanshoop

CONTACT NUMBER: 0816102276

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at The University of Namibia and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and Namibian National Research Ethics Guidelines.

1. What is this research study all about?

The study aims to find out the factors that are contributing to school dropout of the learners at the selected school. The study is carried to find out the possible solutions to prevent learners from dropping out of school.

The study will be conducted at Aroab, at the selected school. It will include three learners who previously dropped out and came back and five learners who dropped out but never came back to school as a participant in the study. The learners are requested to provide the needed information through face to face interviews so that we have a clearer idea of the issues that contribute to school dropout.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

You are one of the learners who previously left school due to certain reasons that are only known to you. Therefore, you are invited to be part of the study because the researcher believes that you in a position to have rich information which is of great importance towards the study which is focusing on school dropouts of learners at the selected school.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

You are humbly requested to provide honest information that is being searched for by the study, by answering interview questions. The face-to-face interview will last for about 25 to 30 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The study has no personal benefits to participants as of current, however, it will help to come up with solutions and strategies on how to prevent learners from dropping out of school, so that they can complete their studies.

5. Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

As a participant, you are assured that there will be no harm that will result from participating in the study.

6. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. As a participant, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time during the study. There will be no consequences for declining to participate in the study.

7. Who will have access to the collected information?

As a participant, you are reassured that collected information will only be used for academic purposes and no one else apart from my supervisor and will have access to that information. The collected information and data collection materials will be kept in a safe place to avoid leakage of information and will be destroyed at least after five years. The information collected will be treated as confidential and protected. In addition, your right to privacy will be highly guaranteed, thus your identity will remain anonymous.

8. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There will be no payment given for participating in the study.

9. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +264 061 2063061; pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

10. Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE KHARAS REGION

I declare that:

- a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2020.

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

11. Declaration by investigator

I, Klementine M Nambala declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2020.



Signature of investigator

.....

Signature of witness

APPENDIX 12: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM FOR THE LEARNERS WHO HAD DROPPED OUT AND NEVER RETURNED TO SCHOOL

ANNEX 5



TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE //KHARAS REGION

REFERENCE NUMBER:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Klementine M. Nambala

ADDRESS: P O BOX 853, Keetmanshoop

CONTACT NUMBER: 0816102276

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at The University of Namibia and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and Namibian National Research Ethics Guidelines.

1. What is this research study all about?

Studies both nationally and internationally show that learners drop out for a number of reasons. Some of these reasons overlap and others are typical to the area where the research was carried out. This study aims to determine the factors that contribute to school dropout of learners in a rural village in the south of Namibia, as well as to determine possible solutions to prevent learners from dropping out of school.

The study will be conducted at a selected school in Aroab in the //Kharas region. The other site will be at the Aroab Village Council. The total number of participants will be three class teachers who had dropouts in their classes, the school principal, the Life Skills teacher, three learners who previously dropped out and came back, five learners who dropped out but never came back to school as well as one person serving on the village council. In total, the study aims to have 14 participants.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

You are of the learners who dropped out of school due to the reasons only known best to you. Therefore, you are invited to be part of the study because the researcher believes that you are in a position to have rich information which is of great importance towards the study which is focusing on school dropouts of learners at the selected school.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

You are humbly requested to provide honest information that is being searched for by the study, by answering interview questions. The interview will last for about 30 to 35 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The study has no personal benefits to participants as of current, however, it will help to come up with solutions and strategies on how to prevent learners from dropping out of school, so that they can complete their studies and become responsible citizens. It will also add to the literature with regards to findings obtained from the study.

5. Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

As a participant, you are assured that there will be no harm that will result from participating in the study.

6. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. As a participant, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time during the study. There are no consequences for not participating in the study.

7. Who will have access to the collected information?

The participant is reassured that collected information will only be used for academic purposes and no one else apart from my supervisor and will have access to that information. The collected

information and data collection materials will be kept in a safe place to avoid leakage of information and will be destroyed at least after five years. The information collected will be treated as confidential and protected. In addition, your right to privacy will be highly guaranteed, thus your identity will remain anonymous.

8. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There will be no payment given for participating in the study.

9. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at **+264 061 2063061**; pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

10. Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE KHARAS REGION

I declare that:

- a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2020.

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Signature of witness

11. Declaration by investigator

I Klementine Nambala declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2020.



Signature of investigator

.....

Signature of witness

APPENDIX 13: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT
FORM FOR THE PERSON SERVING ON THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

ANNEX 5



**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE
//KHARAS REGION**

REFERENCE NUMBER:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Klementine M. Nambala

ADDRESS: P O BOX 853, Keetmanshoop

CONTACT NUMBER: 0816102276

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at The University of Namibia and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and Namibian National Research Ethics Guidelines.

1. What is this research study all about?

Studies both nationally and internationally show that learners drop out for a number of reasons. Some of these reasons overlap and others are typical to the area where the research was carried out. This study aims to determine the factors that contribute to school dropout of learners in a

rural village in the south of Namibia, as well as to determine possible solutions to prevent learners from dropping out of school.

The study will be conducted at a selected school in Aroab in the //Kharas region. The other site will be at the Aroab Village Council. The total number of participants will be three class teachers who had dropouts in their classes, the school principal, the Life Skills teacher, three learners who previously dropped out and came back, five learners who dropped out but never came back to school as well as one person serving on the village council. In total, the study aims to have 14 participants.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

As you working with the community issues, you might be aware of the learners dropping out of school at a very young age. You are therefore invited to participate in this research because the researcher believes that you are in a position to have rich information which is of great importance towards the study which is focusing on school dropouts of learners at the selected school.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

You are humbly requested to provide honest information that is being searched for by the study, by answering interview questions. The interview will last for about 30 to 35 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The study has no personal benefits to participants as of current, however, it will help to come up with solutions and strategies on how to prevent learners from dropping out of school, so that they can complete their studies and become responsible citizens. It will also add to the literature with regards to findings obtained from the study.

5. Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

As a participant, you are assured that no harm will result from participating in the study.

6. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. As a participant, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time during the study. There will be no consequences for declining to participate in the study.

7. Who will have access to the collected information?

As a participant, you are reassured that collected information will only be used for academic purposes and no one else apart from my supervisor and will have access to that information. The collected information and data collection materials will be kept in a safe place to avoid leakage of information and will be destroyed at least after five years. The information collected will be

treated as confidential and protected. In addition, your right to privacy will be highly guaranteed, thus your identity will remain anonymous.

8. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There will be no payment given for participating in the study.

9. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at **+264 061 2063061**; pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

10. Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE KHARAS REGION

I declare that:

- a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2020.

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

11. Declaration by investigator

I Klementine Nambala declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2020.



Signature of investigator

.....

Signature of witness

APPENDIX 14: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM FOR THE PARENTS OF THE LEARNERS WHO HAD DROPPED OUT PREVIOUSLY AND THEN CAME BACK TO SCHOOL (under age)

ANNEX 5



TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE //KHARAS REGION

REFERENCE NUMBER:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Klementine M. Nambala

ADDRESS: P O BOX 853, Keetmanshoop

CONTACT NUMBER: 0816102276

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at The University of Namibia and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and Namibian National Research Ethics Guidelines.

1. What is this research study all about?

The study aims to find out the factors that are contributing to school dropout of the learners at the selected school. The study is carried to find out the possible solutions to prevent learners from dropping out of school.

The study will be conducted at Aroab, at the selected school. It will include three learners who previously dropped out and came back and five learners who dropped out but never came back to school as a participant in the study. The learners are requested to provide the needed information through face to face interviews so that we have a clearer idea of the issues that contribute to school dropout.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

Your child is one of the learners who previously dropped out of school, he/she is selected to be part of the study because the researcher believes that he/she is in a position to have rich information which is of great importance towards the study which is focusing on school dropouts of learners at the selected school.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

The learner is humbly requested to provide honest information that is being searched for by the study, by answering interview questions. The face-to-face interview will last for about 25 to 30 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The study has no personal benefits to participants as of current, however, it will help to come up with solutions and strategies on how to prevent learners from dropping out of school, so that they can complete their studies.

5. Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

As a participant, you are assured that no harm will result from participating in the study.

6. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. As a participant, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time during the study. There are no consequences for not participating in the study.

7. Who will have access to the collected information?

The participant is reassured that collected information will only be used for academic purposes and no one else apart from my supervisor and will have access to that information. The collected information and data collection materials will be kept in a safe place to avoid leakage of information and will be destroyed at least after five years. The information collected will be treated as confidential and protected as well as the identity of the participant will remain anonymous.

8. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There will be no payment given for participating in the study. The researcher is responsible for all the costs involved in the research process.

9. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

Otherwise, you can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +264 061 2063061; pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

10. Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE KHARAS REGION

I declare that:

- a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2020.

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

11. Declaration by investigator

I, Klementine M Nambala declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2020.

.....
Signature of investigator

.....
Signature of witness

APPENDIX 15: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT
FORM FOR THE CLASS TEACHERS AND LIFE SKILL TEACHER

ANNEX 5



**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE
//KHARAS REGION**

REFERENCE NUMBER:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Klementine M. Nambala

ADDRESS: P O BOX 853, Keetmanshoop

CONTACT NUMBER: 0816102276

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at The University of Namibia and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and Namibian National Research Ethics Guidelines.

1. What is this research study all about?

Studies both nationally and internationally show that learners drop out for a number of reasons. Some of these reasons overlap and others are typical to the area where the research was carried out. This study aims to determine the factors that contribute to school dropout of learners in a rural village in the south of Namibia, as well as to determine possible solutions to prevent learners from dropping out of school.

The study will be conducted at a selected school in Aroab in the //Kharas region. The other site will be at the Aroab Village Council. The total number of participants will be three class teachers who had dropouts in their classes, the school principal, the Life Skills teacher, three learners who previously dropped out and came back, five learners who dropped out but never came back to school as well as one person serving on the village council. In total, the study aims to have 14 participants.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

As you are one of the teachers who had dropouts in your class, you are invited to participate in this research because the researcher believes that you are in a position to have rich information which is of great importance towards the study which is focusing on school dropouts of learners at the selected school.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

You are humbly requested to provide honest information that is being searched for by the study, by answering interview questions. The interview will last for about 30 to 35 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The study has no personal benefits to participants as of current, however, it will help to come up with solutions and strategies on how to prevent learners from dropping out of school, so that they can complete their studies and become responsible citizens. It will also add to the literature with regards to findings obtained from the study.

5. Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

As a participant, you are reassured that there will be no harm that will result from participating in the study.

6. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time. There are no consequences for not participating in the study.

7. Who will have access to the collected information?

As a participant, you are reassured that collected information will only be used for academic purposes and no one else apart from my supervisor and will have access to that information. The

collected information and data collection materials will be kept in a safe place to avoid leakage of information and will be destroyed at least after five years. The information collected will be treated as confidential and protected. In addition, your right to privacy will be highly guaranteed, thus your identity will remain anonymous.

8. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There will be no payment given for participating in the study.

9. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at **+264 061 2063061;** pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

10. Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE KHARAS REGION

I declare that:

- a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2020.

.....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

11. Declaration by investigator

I Klementine Nambala declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2020.

.....

Signature of investigator

.....

Signature of witness

APPENDIX 16: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT
FORM FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

ANNEX 5



**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE
//KHARAS REGION**

REFERENCE NUMBER:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Klementine M. Nambala

ADDRESS: P O BOX 853, Keetmanshoop

CONTACT NUMBER: 0816102276

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at The University of Namibia and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and Namibian National Research Ethics Guidelines.

1. What is this research study all about?

Studies both nationally and internationally show that learners drop out for a number of reasons. Some of these reasons overlap and others are typical to the area where the research was carried out. This study aims to determine the factors that contribute to school dropout of learners in a

rural village in the south of Namibia, as well as to determine possible solutions to prevent learners from dropping out of school.

The study will be conducted at a selected school in Aroab in the //Kharas region. The other site will be at the Aroab Village Council. The total number of participants will be three class teachers who had dropouts in their classes, the school principal, the Life Skills teacher, three learners who previously dropped out and came back, five learners who dropped out but never came back to school as well as one person serving on the village council. In total, the study aims to have 14 participants.

2. Why have you been invited to participate?

As you are the head of the school, you might be aware of the learners dropping out of school at a very young age. You are invited to participate in this research because the researcher believes that you are in a position to have rich information which is of great importance towards the study which is focusing on school dropouts of learners at the selected school.

3. What will your responsibilities be?

You are humbly requested to provide honest information that is being searched for by the study, by answering interview questions. The interview will last for about 30 to 35 minutes.

4. Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The study has no personal benefits to participants as of current, however, it will help to come up with solutions and strategies on how to prevent learners from dropping out of school, so that they can complete their studies and become responsible citizens. It will also add to the literature with regards to findings obtained from the study.

5. Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

As a participant are assured that no harm will result from participating in the study.

6. If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. As a participant, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time during the study. There will be no consequences for declining to participate in the study.

7. Who will have access to the collected information?

As a participant, you are reassured that collected information will only be used for academic purposes and no one else apart from my supervisor and will have access to that information. The collected information and data collection materials will be kept in a safe place to avoid leakage of information and will be destroyed at least after five years. The information collected will be treated as confidential and protected. In addition, your right to privacy will be highly guaranteed, thus your identity will remain anonymous.

8. Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There will be no payment given for participating in the study.

9. Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at **+264 061 2063061**; pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

10. Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNER DROPOUT AT A SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE KHARAS REGION

I declare that:

- a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2020.

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

11. Declaration by investigator

I Klementine Nambala declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2020.

.....
Signature of investigator

.....
Signature of witness