

EXPLORING DETERMINANTS OF LEARNER DROPOUT IN KAVANGO WEST
REGION RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The research aims to explore the determinants of dropout among primary school learners in rural schools and find the strategies that can be applied to retain learners in school until they complete secondary school. The study employed a qualitative research approach where data was gathered from the participants through face-to-face interviews and observations. A purposive sampling method was used to select twenty participants of the study, which included learners who dropped out of school and returned, parents and guardians of the learners who dropped out of school and returned, Life Skills teachers, and Principals. The study found that family/community factors and school/system factors have a huge impact on dropout rates among primary school learners in rural areas. More male learners lack motivation and were found to be dropping out of school at an early age than female learners. More learners faced physical and emotional abuse at home from their parents. While some parents kept their children at home to take care of their younger siblings, others left children alone in their houses near the school while they went to work on their fields in the inland. There was an increase in dropout and absenteeism whenever there was no food at school. The maize meals arrived late at schools causing learners to drop out due to hunger, especially those who lived alone and those who stayed far from school. Teachers have shown to have limited knowledge on how to support learners who returned to school and those who are at risk of dropping out of school. A major collaboration between stakeholders is encouraged to address the factors that influence primary school learners in rural areas to drop out of school.

KEY WORDS: Dropout; Emotional and Behavioural Problems; Inclusive Education; Rural Schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
LIST OF TABLES	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VI
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	VII
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	VIII
DEDICATIONS.....	IX
DECLARATIONS	X
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	5
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	7
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	7
1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	7
1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY.....	8
1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	8
1.8 CONCLUSION	9
CHAPTER 2	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	10
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	11
2.3 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG CHILDREN IN RURAL SCHOOLS.....	15
2.3.1 <i>School Factors</i>	16
2.3.2 <i>Family factors</i>	19
2.3.3 <i>Individual factors</i>	21
2.4 EXISTING NAMIBIAN STUDIES ON DROPOUT FACTORS	22
2.4.1 <i>School factors</i>	23
2.4.2 <i>Social and Learner Factors</i>	25

2.4.3	<i>Parental/family factors</i>	26
2.4.4	<i>Cultural factors</i>	27
2.5	STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS SCHOOL DROPOUTS	28
2.6	SUMMARY	29
CHAPTER 3	31
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	31
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	31
3.2	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	31
3.2.1	<i>Study Setting</i>	32
3.2.2	<i>Population</i>	33
3.2.3	<i>Sample and Sampling Procedures</i>	33
3.2.4	<i>Research Instruments</i>	35
3.3	PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION	37
3.4	DATA ANALYSIS	39
3.5	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	40
3.6	SUMMARY	40
CHAPTER 4	42
PRESENTATION OF RESULTS	42
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	42
4.2	DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.....	42
4.3	FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	44
4.3.1	<i>Factors that influenced dropout among learners</i>	45
4.4	INTERVENTIONS/FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LEARNERS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL	59
4.4.1	<i>Parents' interventions</i>	59
4.4.2	<i>Factors that influence learners to go back to school</i>	61
4.4.3	<i>School interventions</i>	62
4.5	STRATEGIES THAT MAY REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE.....	64
4.5.1	<i>Strategies suggested for the parents</i>	65
4.5.2	<i>Strategies suggested for the schools</i>	67
4.5.3	<i>Strategies suggested for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture</i>	69
4.6	CONCLUSION	74
CHAPTER 5	75
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	75
5.2	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	75
5.3	FACTORS INFLUENCING DROPOUT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	75
5.3.1	<i>School Factors</i>	76
5.3.2	<i>Family/Community Factors</i>	80
5.3.3	<i>Individual/Learner Factor</i>	83

5.4	STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE.....	86
5.5	CONCLUSION	88
5.6	RECOMMENDATIONS	90
REFERENCES		95
APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE		103
APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER FROM UNAM		104
APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE		105
APPENDIX 4: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER FROM KAVANGO WEST DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION		106
APPENDIX 5: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER FROM INSPECTOR OF EDUCATION NCAMAGORO CIRCUIT		107
APPENDIX 6: CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT		108
APPENDIX 7: CERTIFICATE OF INFORMED PARENTAL CONSENT		111
APPENDIX 8: CERTIFICATE OF ASSENT		114
APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS		118
APPENDIX 10: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS.....		121
APPENDIX 11: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS.....		123
APPENDIX 12: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST.....		126

List of Tables

Table 1	Learners who dropped out of school and returned.....	42
Table 2	Principals, life skills teachers and teachers.....	43
Table 3	Parents who participated in the study.	44
Table 4	Study findings according to themes.....	45

List of Figures

Figure 1 Two classrooms at School B 48

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EMIS Education Management Information Systems

GDP Gross Domestic Product

NSFP Namibian School Feeding Programme

SGD 4 Sustainable Development Goals (quality education)

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UPE Universal Primary Education

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate this study to the Namibian child at the risk of dropping out of school and those who are out of school for various reasons. May the Namibian child get the necessary help that will help them develop a love for school and help them attend and complete school with ease.

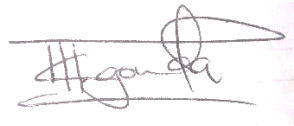
Declarations

I, Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Igonda', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is enclosed within a rectangular pink stamp.

October 2024

Name of Student

Signature

Date

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Inclusive education is an efficient technique to give all children an equitable chance to go to school and learn and develop the skills they need to succeed in life. It means teaching all children in the same classrooms and schools, regardless of their cultural background, economic status, or learning disorders, while catering to all their individual learning needs. The Salamanca-Statement-and-Framework in Action (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994) reinforces that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. This includes children with disabilities and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups. Through inclusive education and learning, opportunities are available for groups who have traditionally been excluded, not only children with disabilities but all children with special educational learning needs. Human differences are normal, and learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process.

Various nations strive to implement inclusive education. However, they still face challenges as the dropout rates keep increasing and negatively affecting the implementation of inclusive education policies. Dropout is a universal phenomenon in

the education system as around 263 million children are out of school, including 64 million in primary school (UNESCO, 2018). The latest edition of the Global Education Digest indicates that 42% of African schoolchildren will leave school early, with about one in six leaving before Grade 2 (UNESCO, 2012). The alarming incidence of drop-out of learners at the primary school level is pervasive in many developing countries (Sajjad et al., 2012). This is confirmed by Ali et al. (2021) that the problem of dropout at the primary level is deeply rooted in almost all the developing countries, and thus it has attracted the attention of academicians, policymakers, and researchers for a long time. In their study, Hirakawa and Taniguchi (2021) discovered that researchers from a variety of disciplines have long understood that, in addition to its effects on employment and earnings, dropout leads to a number of poor outcomes and associated risky behaviour. The study by Kristic, Stepanovic-Ilic and Videnović (2017) confirmed that the dropout rate in primary education is significantly higher for children from rural areas.

In Namibia, the enrolment rate in primary and secondary education has been on the rise (Ministry of Education, 2013). However, despite the steady improvement in the primary education net enrolment rate (72.5% in 2018, 73.1% in 2019, 72.3% in 2020, 72.5% in 2021, 72.7 in 2022) (Educational Management Information System [EMIS], 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022), there is a concerning trend of non-retention of primary-phase learners through to the secondary phase. Nationally, statistics indicate that over two-thirds of all learners in the country were enrolled in the primary phase; just under one-third (27.2 % in 2018, 26.6% in 2019, and 27.4% in 2020, 27.3 in 2021, 27.0% in 2022)

(EMIS, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022) were enrolled in the secondary phase. Thus, more children proportionally drop out or do not gain access to secondary education at all. The Kavango West Region is among the top five regions with a high number of dropouts nationally for the past five years. The region consists of 178 schools, including satellite schools, of which most are rural schools. Out of 178 schools, there are 39 combined schools and four (4) secondary schools. Over the last five years, secondary school enrolment has been three times lower than primary school enrolment in the region (EMIS, 2022).

Ali et al. (2021) highlighted that education is a key right of every citizen and a vital element of human development; thus, it is considered to have a strong relationship with the economic and social development of a country. When children drop out of school for various reasons, they face exclusion from education. “Education is directly associated with socioeconomic and personal indicators like economic stability, poverty, economic development, socioeconomic status, income equalities, economic growth, unemployment, labour productivity, and human capital (Ali et al., 2021, p. 2). For instance, research has shown that school dropouts face disadvantages in the labour market; they have lower probabilities of being employed and lower chances of getting better-paid jobs than school completers (Mendoza-Cazarez, 2019). Society loses out on human capital from the young children who leave school prematurely, having not acquired adequate knowledge to help them develop as holistic individuals as well as to develop communities. As a result, this can lead to high rates of poverty, increased criminal activity, and high taxes on society, which makes it difficult for governments to

help these individuals. For a learner leaving school before having acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills, there are two losses: the opportunity that the learner has to acquire the skills needed for learning and the resources allocated to the learner, which could have benefited other learners (EMIS, 2020). In a developed community, the safety of all children should be ensured.

Several studies (Ishola & Mitonga, 2017; Mapani, 2011; Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Tjikuzu, 2016) on dropout in Namibia focused mainly on school dropout at the secondary school level. These and other studies uncovered the factors contributing to school dropout. However, this problem remains understudied in rural areas. Furthermore, none of the studies conducted have involved parents in their populations as participants. The data obtained about parents' views did not come directly from parents but rather from easily accessible participants in the studies, such as teachers. This study has involved parents as participants to obtain raw data about the factors affecting children in rural primary schools. Primary improvement data allows researchers to improve the accuracy and reliability of their data. Reducing dropout rates is a major issue in Kavango West. According to the EMIS (2022), only one-quarter of learners registered for primary school in the Kavango West Region proceeded to secondary school. This confirms that there is a high dropout rate at the primary phase in Kavango West Region.

The EMIS (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 & 2022) reports have shown that there is a considerable problem with learners dropping out in the more remote schools. In their study, Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) recommended that research-based methods should

be developed to reduce the dropout rate, especially in high-poverty and remote, rural schools. Although some learners who drop out returned to school, it is evident that school dropout is a recurring problem in rural schools in Kavango West Region, which can negatively affect social life and the future of the children.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to the EMIS (2022), a total of 17 982 learners dropped out of school in 2022, of whom 8 984 (49.9%) were female and 8 998 (50%) were male. Of this number, 1850 learners dropped out of school in the Kavango West region. A reasonably large number of learners (1,315) dropped out because of the long distance between the school and home, especially in Kavango East, Kavango West and Kunene regions (EMIS, 2022, p. 85). Namibia has implemented the Universal Primary Education (UPE) funding, thus removing the burden of school fees from parents. Yet, the number of learners who drop out of school remains high. A high learner dropout rate further reflects that the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education has not succeeded in retaining learners in remote, rural areas. Namibia devotes a significant share of its budget to the education of its children, with an annual average spending of 20.7% of the total budget and 7.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (United Nations Children Fund [UNICEF], 2023). This huge investment in education needs enablers to reimagine education, help recover pandemic-related learning losses, and revitalise efforts to achieve SDG 4 and related national strategic objectives. The World Bank and UNICEF affirm that the high dropout rate of learners in primary school is a significant source of inefficiency and resource drain.

Hence, focusing on retaining learners within the education system is crucial to realising the potential benefits of primary schooling.

Although studies have been carried out to identify factors contributing to school dropout among learners nationally and around the globe, most of these studies focused on learners in the secondary phase and on the interaction of teacher-related factors and school-related factors. The difference between the enrolment of learners in primary school and secondary school shows that most children left school before secondary school or have failed and must repeat grades. This researcher believes that there is a concerning problem at the primary level, which is why learners do not reach secondary school.

Existing literature reflects mostly on factors contributing to the dropout of learners. However, there is a need to investigate factors that enabled learners who dropped out to re-enter schools and what their experiences were once they returned to school. Such information is crucial for inclusive education and will shed light on school and community cultures that are likely to promote the retention of learners in school. Therefore, the present study is intended to bring new insights to the problem under investigation by exploring the determinants of school dropout among primary school learners in rural areas, with a specific focus on those who once dropped out of school and returned. It is expected that this research will provide first-hand information through a children's agency.

1.3 Research Objectives

In relation to the problem described above, the main objectives of the study are as follows:

- a) To explore determinants of school dropout among rural primary school learners in the Kavango West Region of Namibia from the perspective of learners.
- b) To identify strategies that might help retain rural primary school learners in the Kavango West Region of Namibia.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study aims to uncover determining factors and produce results that can be analysed and hopefully educate learners, parents, educators, peers, and education policymakers as to the importance of inclusive education and encouraging learners in rural schools to stay in school. The results of the study could provide important information regarding the inclusive education factors causing primary school learners in rural communities to drop out of school and encourage key players in the education sector to find solutions to the primary school dropout phenomenon.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The limitation of the study was the language barrier between the researcher and the participants. The researcher of this study is only fluent in English and Oshiwambo and fairly fluent in Rukwangali, while most of the interviewees speak Rukwangali better than English. Although the research has used an interpreter, especially during the interview with parents, this may have caused biases. Some learners felt uncomfortable at the beginning of the interview, but the researcher has tried to use child-friendly

approaches and language to reduce the amount of fear and increase rapport with the learners.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on two rural schools in the Ncamagoro circuit of the Kavango West Region. This circuit consists of 20 rural schools, which include only three combined schools. For this reason, the results may not be generalised to the entire region due to the small population and geographical settings.

1.7 Definition of terms

Child abuse is defined as any psychological, sexual or physical mistreatment or neglect by a grown-up in a position of responsibility towards an individual below 18 years old (Finkelhor et al., 2019).

Corporal punishment is physical punishment like deliberate suffering and possible revenge for injustice or retribution or the transformation of wrongdoers or possession of unwelcoming behaviours (Haq, 2019).

Inclusive education UNESCO (2008) defined inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth, and adults through increasing participation, cultures, and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from the education system.

Dropout refers to a child who has left primary, secondary, or college before completing education (Ali et al., 2021). That is, children who quit school for some reason except death before completing their education are called dropout children.

Rural schools refer to schools in geographical areas in the countryside that are neither towns nor cities.

Inland refers to the villages in the middle of the region, far from town, schools, and the tarred road.

Emotional problems and behavioural problems referred to in this study are noticeable negative emotions and behaviours in learners.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the overview of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, the significance of the study, limitations, and delimitation of the study, as well as definitions of terms employed in the study. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework of this study as well as presents an in-depth review of studies based on the subject under study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of earlier studies on a specific topic (Andrew & Richard, 2013). It outlines what is known and what is still unknown about the topic. A compelling literature review persuades readers that there is a significant gap in the body of research that needs to be filled with one's own original contribution (Berdanier & Lenart, 2020).

This section presents the relevant literature on the inquiries that the researcher investigated in order to reinforce the importance of this study. The section introduces the theoretical framework employed in the study to enhance understanding. The initial section examined research conducted by various scholars on the factors that affect primary education learners' dropout rates in rural and urban schools. The second section assessed studies conducted in Namibia about the factors that contribute to school dropout. The final section discussed the strategies discovered by different studies that may aid in eliminating school dropout factors and reducing primary school dropout rates.

Despite significant progress in the 2000s in shrinking the percentage of children and youth out of the education system, the 2010s saw much slower progress (UNICEF, 2019). According to UNICEF (2019), global statistics from 2018 discovered that 59 million children of primary school age (about 6 to 11 years old) are out of school. While 12 million of these children have never attended school, one-third of them attended

school in the past but did not continue their education. This raises the concern about the number of children who drop out of school at the primary level.

UNICEF (2019) revealed that in Sub-Saharan Africa, 32 million children of primary school age are out of school, of which 14 million are boys and 18 million are girls. This shows that the exclusion of girls from school remains a problem in Africa. It should also be noted that some children who are out of school at primary school age are likely to start school late and still drop out due to overage. Furthermore, some of the out-of-school children included in the secondary school age group dropped out of primary school.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study is framed within the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979). This theory views a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment (Perron, 2018). It describes how the learning and development of a child are influenced by the interaction of different systems such as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017).

The decision to drop out of school by learners in rural communities can be influenced by their ecological system at levels such as family, peers, community, culture, financial status, and the education system. Smink and Reimer (2015) argued that it is important to understand ecological factors such as individual, family, school and community that put learners at risk of dropping out of school to identify appropriate solutions. Gil et al.'s (2019) study shows that, from the teachers' perspective, the factors that are most likely

to predict school failure are related to commitment and that of both the student himself or herself and of the agents involved in their education, the teaching staff, and the learner's family. The understanding of the Ecological System Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is instrumental in enabling the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge about the factors that lead to dropout.

Wahedi (2016) argues that “the microsystems most directly affect development and are comprised of all institutions, experiences and influences within the child's immediate environment” (p. 24). The structure of this system includes family, school, neighbourhood, and childcare environments. Mengisto and Horenczyk (2019) discovered that parental education, a lack of motivation from family, especially the father, and student-teacher relations are major factors contributing to learners' school dropout. In his study, Wahedi (2016) stressed that strong supportive relationships between people or organisations in the microsystem enhance the positive development of the child or adolescent. Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasised that bi-directional influences are strongest at the microsystem level and have the greatest impact on the child. This is the level where the child is most influenced by the environment in which they are interacting. A child growing up in a negatively influenced environment about attending school is most likely to leave school prematurely.

The next layer of ecological theory is the mesosystem. It involves the interactions between the microsystems of the child. For example, the interactions between the child's parents and teachers or between school peers, neighbours and siblings (Perron, 2018). For instance, if a child's parents have a conflict with the child's teachers, this

interaction may influence the child's development. According to the ecological systems theory, if the child's parents and teachers get along and have a good relationship, this should have positive effects on the child's development, compared to negative effects on development if the teachers and parents do not get along.

The third layer of the ecological system, the exosystem, involves institutions and persons that influence the children's lives but are indirectly embedded, such as neighbourhoods, parents' workplaces, parents' friends, and the mass media (Ettedal & Mahoney, 2017). "For example, the legal service system, a friend of the family, or the public assistance office may not directly promote the social or intellectual growth of the children" (Wahedi, 2016, p. 2). However, they may improve the mental and physical health of the family, provide the resources needed for adequate nutrition or shelter, and improve the effectiveness of the parents. These positive influences will, in turn, promote healthy child development. Furthermore, the negative influence of these institutions (neighbourhoods, parents' workplaces, parents' friends, and the mass media) may inhibit a child's development. For instance, if the neighbour who used to provide for a family loses his job, this will affect the child's mental and physical wellness.

The macrosystem may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture (Bronfenbrenner, 2004). It has to do with the economic, political and social stability of the country. According to Cabrera-Hernandez (2022), social policies affect the school attendance of children and are one of the factors influencing school dropout. For example, if the education policy pronounces a child who has been absent from

school for 30 days as a dropout, even if the child later wants to go back to school, they will be scared that the teachers will not allow them to attend school. Moreover, children from child-headed households may, if the country's economy is poor, fail to get assistance in terms of food or health services, and they are bound to experience strain in their development, which may lead to them dropping out of school to go look for jobs to sustain themselves.

Lastly, a chronosystem encompasses change or consistency over time, not only in the characteristics of the person but also in the environment in which that person lives (Perron, 2018). For example, the death of a parent may alter the family structure, socio-economic status, and place of residence. Children may relocate to a different area after the deaths of both or one parent, and they may not continue with school in their new residence or may experience psychological problems that may result in them leaving school. In addition to that, children may be less motivated to attend school, especially if a parent who passed away had the responsibility to look after the children and encourage them to attend school.

Subsequently, Bronfenbrenner's theory takes child development from the home to the schools and neighbourhoods, to the community and nation, and ultimately involves all policymakers and others' roles in child development (Wahedi, 2016). This theory is relevant to this study as it allows the researcher to understand how the environment of primary school children in rural areas influences the factors that lead to school dropout.

2.3 Factors contributing to school dropout among children in rural schools

Inclusive education involves restructuring the culture, policies, and practices in schools so that they can respond to the diversity of students (Bhat, 2017). Smink and Reimer's (2015) study on rural school dropout issues found that there are six challenges in rural socioeconomic environments that impact the dropout rate: funding structures to support education; learner population; transportation-related issues; quality professional staff; school buildings and support facilities; and lastly, family participation and investments in education. Learners should all be included in education regardless of their ethnicity, attainment, socioeconomic status, or background. Furthermore, it should be considered that some learners need more support or provisions to have an equal chance of success. Without their learning needs met, some learners may drop out of school.

Several studies (Ali et al., 2021; Andrew, Peter & Philip, 2018; Hirakawa & Taniguchi, 2021; Krstic & Stepanovic-Ilic, 2017; Mughal et al., 2019) investigated factors that lead to primary school dropout in both rural and urban areas. These studies demonstrated that school dropouts are caused by a variety of factors, such as individual, family, teacher, and school characteristics. Individual factors such as gender, grade retention, academic achievement, and age on the first day of school are all important. Previous research has highlighted parents' educational degree and socioeconomic status as family determinants (Ali et al., 2021). While teacher factors included teacher absenteeism and their relationships with learners, school issues included low school quality and a lack of school infrastructure. This section examines school factors, family factors, and individual factors, and how these influence learners' decisions to drop out of school.

2.3.1 School Factors

Studies by Hasan and Irhaif (2021) and Andrew et al. (2018) found that teacher absenteeism, teacher and learner relations, school environment, and poor-quality educational provision were some of the factors that played a role in increasing pressure to drop out.

2.3.1.1 Teachers and teacher relations with learners

Hasan and Irhaif (2021), in a Baghdad study, revealed that inadequate relationships between learners and teachers are major contributors to school dropouts. Teachers who exhibited empathy and provided support were well-liked and respected by their learners. On the contrary, teachers who were indifferent and made negative remarks were identified as pushing factors for some learners to drop out of school (Andrew et al., 2018). Furthermore, the behaviour management and teaching strategies employed by certain teachers could also influence learners' decisions to leave school (Pedditzi & Fadda, 2022). Teachers who rely on physical punishment may increase the likelihood of dropouts. According to Hirakawa and Taniguchi (2021), school-related factors are strong predictors of school dropout rates in Cambodia's rural primary schools. Factors such as teacher absenteeism and the teacher-student relationship have a significant impact on dropout rates. They also noted that the longer the teachers were absent, the higher the likelihood of students dropping out.

Conversely, Schiefele (2017) elucidates that the enthusiasm of teachers towards the subject they teach has a significant impact on the rate of students dropping out.

Teachers who are passionate about their subjects tend to be more mindful of their teaching techniques and foster a positive attitude towards the subject. Such teachers cultivate efficient study habits, interpersonal skills, and ethical values. Mughal et al. (2019) discovered that substandard teaching, particularly in rural public schools during primary education, is the main reason most learners leave school. Learners remarked that they had not gotten appropriate instruction during their primary education since teachers had to rely on translation books (Mughal et al., 2019). Mughal and Aldridge (2017) assert that inadequate pedagogical skills in the classroom are the root cause of learners' disinterest in education from an early age. In Uganda, some learners struggled to keep pace with the information disseminated in school (Nabugoomu, 2019). Teachers must, therefore, implement comprehensive approaches to cater to the learning needs of all learners. Those who feel excluded from the lesson are prone to disruptive behaviours and absenteeism. Some teachers have disclosed that they have not undergone any training on inclusive education (Nabugoomu, 2019).

2.3.1.2 School environment

Mughal et al. (2019) and Nabugoomu (2019) reported that overcrowding, a lack of classrooms, and a lack of a good-quality learning environment at public schools in remote rural areas have an impact on the educational performance of some dropout learners. Mughal et al. (2019) further confirmed that school challenges such as a lack of appropriate facilities at school, a lack of extra-curricular and sports activities, a high learner-to-teacher ratio, and a lack of teachers impact the performance of learners, and some learners tend to drop out of school. On the other hand, Nabugoomu (2019)

discovered that some girls have dropped out due to a lack of sanitary towels during menstruation. This kept them at home, leading to their dropping out of school.

Nabugoomu (2019) revealed that some learners are demotivated to stay in school due to hunger and long distances to school. These learners stay at home because they are tired of walking long distances to school. Although some countries introduced the school feeding programme, it was noticed that school feeding meals sometimes resumed very late during the term, leading to a high rate of absenteeism and dropout. In Namibia, Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) confirmed that the school feeding meal in primary schools does not arrive on time, even though ordered on time, and this contributes to school dropout.

Finally, Andrew et al. (2018) revealed that leadership styles that create an unfavourable school environment for the pupils usually make them drop out of school. They have also revealed that school factors have a strong impact on dropout rates in primary schools in Kenya.

2.3.1.3 Policies

Numerous studies have looked at the subject of policies governing schools. Mughal and Aldridge (2017) suggested that certain inadequate public regulations and curricula that do not align with the socio-cultural context may have an adverse effect on learners' ability to focus during classes. Hirakawa and Taniguchi (2021) verified that school policies have an impact on learners' enthusiasm for learning. Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) uncovered in their research that schools were expelling learners who had been absent from class for more than twenty consecutive days, as per the school's policies.

Despite the Basic Education Act 7257 (2020) that advocates for the re-enrolment of dropouts at any time, it is concerning that some schools still adhere to the 30-days policy, which exacerbates the learners' dropout rate. Certain learners are apprehensive about returning to school after being absent for more than twenty days, fearing that teachers will dismiss them, ultimately leading to dropping out (Nekongo et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Nabugoomu (2019) discovered that some learners in rural schools drop out of school due to poor performance and class repetition. “The repetition policy in a school is a cause for pupils to leave school prematurely, especially when the policy allows forced repetition of a class (Andrew et al., 2018). Hasan and Irhaif (2021) argued that past failure incidents forced learners to drop out. This suggests the need for school policies to be designed to encourage learners to attend school rather than discourage them from doing so.

2.3.2 Family factors

According to Kurebwa and Wilson (2015), family factors such as low income, lack of parental involvement, large family size, high crime in the community, and lack of community support for school influence learners negatively, and some of them tend to drop out of school (Sajjad et al., 2012). Bisani (2019) argues that most children who drop out of school live below the poverty line. Learners from disadvantaged families are more likely to drop out than those from advantaged families (Hirakawa & Taniguchi, 2021). Most parents in rural communities survive solely on farming. Some parents in Kavango West were reported to keep their children at home to work on farms, and some worked to get money to maintain the family (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Sajjad et al. (2012) suggested that the academic attainment of parents is one of the key determinants of the increasing number of children dropping out of school. Ali et al. (2021) also discovered that family factors were the strongest dropout factors in rural primary schools in Pakistan. They further indicate that a lack of parents' education is one of the main factors contributing to dropout rates in rural areas. Parents with low levels of education are more likely to have non-school-going children. This can have a major negative impact on the child's views towards education and lead them to drop out of school.

Mookho and Mohlouoa (2014) reported that a lack of family support is one of the family factors among learners in rural primary schools. Learners who face rejection by one or both parents are made to feel excluded and rejected. Moreover, a lack of motivation from family, especially the father (Mengisto & Horenczyk, 2019), is one of the major factors contributing to dropout. Some parents kept their children in gardens, especially during planting and harvest seasons; this was also seen as a physical factor that contributed to school dropouts (Nabugoomu, 2019). It has been identified that parental involvement in their children's education is very low in rural areas. That is, parents did not attend the parents' meetings. This is a concern because schools update parents on school programmes and learners' problems through parent meetings. When parents are not attending meetings, they miss out on important information regarding school and the development of their children.

Lastly, "the age and gender of the family head are also important determinants of primary school children's dropout" (Ali et al., 2021, p. 127). The higher the age of the

parents, the higher the chances of dropout. Older parents are usually not aware of the importance of education as a future need for their children, and hence children opt to drop out. It was discovered that male household heads are more educated and support their children's education more as compared to a household's female head (Ali et al., 2021). Family factors are evidently strong factors contributing to the dropout rate of learners in primary education. However, only a few studies directly involved parents as participants. Therefore, befits this study that it directly involves parents as participants to help explain the parental and family factors fuelling the dropout of learners from primary education.

2.3.3 Individual factors

Individual factors such as truancy, poor school attitude, peer pressure, and emotional difficulties were identified as the main factors contributing to dropout. Poor attendance of learners in school leads to truancy, absenteeism, and dropout problems (Hirakawa, 2021). After several absences, learners are likely to drop out. Dropout learners are often described as having vulnerable backgrounds (lower socio-economic status, migration background) and behavioural and emotional difficulties (Osman & Özer, 2020). Osman and Ozer (2020) found that when learners struggle academically or have learning disabilities, parents decide that they should drop out of school. Learners with learning difficulties develop low self-esteem as they repeat grades and become older, and most leave school due to bullying. Low motivation, educational expectations, and a poor attitude towards education, preferring to be employed at a young age, are common risk factors for dropping out (Krstic & Stepanovic-Ilic, 2017; Nabugoomu, 2019). In

Honduras, most learners leave school due to financial problems at home (Murphy-Graham et al., 2021). The other factors (preschool experience, motivation, self-esteem, educational aspiration, and health condition) are also considered important factors influencing dropout. Lastly, Andrew et al. (2018) revealed that some children who drop out of school influence others to drop out of school too.

So far, it can be construed that the dropout factors in primary schools differ from country to country as well as school to school. While some studies discovered parental factors as the main dropout factors, others argued that school factors were the strongest predictors of dropout. Most studies focused mainly on parental and school factors, which included teacher factors, and slightly neglected individual' factors. Additionally, a few studies identified community factors as having an influence on dropouts. From the related work, there is no study that addresses the learner's dropout factors comprehensively, which is the focus of this study. This study sought to explore the parental/family, school, and teacher factors as well as learners' factors that influence dropout and those that influence learners to return to school in rural primary schools.

2.4 Existing Namibian studies on dropout factors

This section presents a review of dropout studies in Namibia (Ishola & Mitonga, 2017; Mapani, 2011; Nambala, 2022; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Tjikuzu, 2016). Mapani (2011) analysed the factors contributing to dropout among boys in secondary school. The study was based on five secondary schools in Khomas Region. She found that peer pressure, individual characteristics of boys, lack of parental involvement in the education of boys, financial difficulties, bad behaviour, and smoking, alcohol and drug

abuse are the major factors contributing to dropout among boys in secondary schools in Khomas Region. While the study focused mainly on secondary schools, Namibian statistics revealed that most learners who enrol in primary education do not progress to secondary school. The factors identified by Mapani (2011) could be prevented earlier if similar efforts and focus were put on the factors influencing dropout among boys and girls in the primary phase.

Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) investigated factors that led to dropout among three regions: Kunene, Kavango, and Omaheke. Nambala (2022) analysed the dropout factors in the Karas Region. Tjikuzu (2016) investigated the factors that led to dropout among the San people in Omaheke Region. The three studies identified a combination of factors that were believed to have influenced children to drop out of school. Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) categorised the five factors as social factors, economic factors, system factors, parental involvement, and cultural factors. Nambala (2022) categorised the factors into three categories, learner factors, school factors, and parental factors. Social factors and learner factors are observed to be similar, while economic factors and parental involvement were categorised under parental factors by Nambala (2022). Lastly, system factors are observed to be similar to school factors. Interestingly, cultural factors were reported to have an influence on dropout (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Tjikuzu, 2016).

2.4.1 School factors

The system and school factors identified were based on school policies on absenteeism, grade repetition, learning resources and teaching approaches, lack of motivation, and

finally, long distances to school. It has been reported that the school's policies on absenteeism dismissed learners who missed school for twenty consecutive days. On the other hand, also discovered that learners who repeated grades lost interest in school, and some became too old for the grades and often eventually undisciplined to the point that they even bullied fellow learners in class (Nabugoomu, 2019; Nambala, 2022; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). On learning resources, some learning materials used at school have, for example, pictures that reinforce bullying of learners from certain ethnic groups (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). Learners ultimately dropped out as a result of bullying. Learners in rural primary schools were reported to have dropped out of school due to a lack of high grades at the schools where they received their primary education.

In line with Hasan and Irhaif's (2021) findings that some learners drop out of school due to poor relationships with the teacher, Nambala (2022) noted that most of the learners do not have respect for their teachers as they swear at them and fight in front of them. These types of behaviours can negatively affect the relationship between the teacher and the learner. Nambala (2022) also revealed that children drop out of school due to the absence of feeding programmes. The meals were reported to arrive late, and learners miss school when they know that there is nothing to eat at school. Lastly, some learners, especially in the Kunene region, dropped out of school due to the long distance to school (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015).

The reviewed literature strongly indicates that several school factors need to be addressed. After seven years since the study on dropout in Kavango Region was conducted, the dropout rate has not gotten better in the region. Although both studies

involved Life Skills teachers, there is little knowledge revealed about how schools dealt with learners at risk of dropping out of school. The studies also did not disclose how the schools handled learners who returned to school after dropping out, yet these types of learners were interviewed.

2.4.2 Social and Learner Factors

Social and learner factors such as pregnancy, peer pressure, orphanage, vulnerability, and lack of discipline are reported to have an influence on dropout. While some children left school due to negative influence from others, most teenage girls leave school at the age of 13 to nurse their babies and eventually some drop out due to stigmatisation at school from both learners and teachers. It was observed that these girls lack support from home and school. Some boys were also dismissed from school for impregnating girls. Additionally, Nambala (2022) identified boredom due to the lack of interesting teaching media and learning resources used by the teachers as a factor in dropout in the Karas Region. Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) stated that learners had so much free time after school because they were never given homework. Homework keeps learners motivated as they continue to learn about their subjects at home. This also motivates parents to help learners with their work and be more involved in their children's education. According to Tjikuzu (2016), San orphans and vulnerable children are at a higher risk of dropping out because of the poor social support network within their immediate environment. This is confirmed by Ishola and Mitonga's (2017) study that revealed that most orphan children lack support from their families. Some

eventually drop out of school and become street kids. The participants in their study indicated that they were not aware of the social grant.

2.4.3 Parental/family factors

Family mobility and seasonal migration, poverty and child labour, and parental involvement are identified as family factors that influence dropout in Namibia. While parents in Kunene Region migrated for greener pastures for their animals, in other regions, parents' relocation to different areas also affected learners' attendance, and most learners eventually dropped out of school (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015).

Nambala (2022) found that poverty is a key predictor of dropout in the Karas Region in her study. Most parents are impoverished and cannot afford school supplies for their children. As a result, learners drop out of school early to hunt for work in order to support themselves and their families. According to Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015), some children sought employment to purchase school uniforms because their parents could not afford to do so. Nambala (2022; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015), on the other hand, revealed that most parents are uninterested in their children's education and do not attend parent-teacher meetings, with only 30% of parents in attendance.

Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) also reported that some children lived with parents who were not their biological parents, and these parents mostly did not care about those children's education. Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) revealed that children who are undisciplined at school tend to have the same behaviours at home. Some parents are tired, and they tell the teacher to just dismiss their undisciplined child. If children's

undesirable behaviours are not discouraged, the rate of dropout due to the same reason will undoubtedly increase. They indicated that parents with weak educational backgrounds tend to encourage their children into early marriage, and some removed their children from school to take care of sick parents. Ali et al. (2021) confirmed that children raised by educated parents are less likely to drop out compared to children from households with no educational background.

Lastly, Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) identified child-headed households as one of the factors that encouraged dropout. Children as young as 15 years old live alone with their younger siblings while their parents are working on farms far away. These children struggled to look for food to feed their younger siblings.

Evidently, there are strong parental factors that lead to school dropouts in Namibia. However, the reviewed studies did not include parents as participants. The information provided about parents was given by the teachers and principals. The current study involved parents as participants to obtain unbiased data from parents about their experience with the children who dropped out and to provide information on what motivated their children to return to school. This information may encourage out-of-school children to return to school.

2.4.4 Cultural factors

Studies found that cultural practices such as early child marriage and herding livestock were some of the factors that led to the dropout of learners from school in Namibia (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Tjikuzu, 2016).

To sum up, it has been indicated that more learners who enrol in primary education do not progress (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). It has also been revealed that school dropout factors vary from urban to rural schools. Poverty was discovered as a strong factor in both urban and rural schools. More boys were found to drop out due to school and economic factors, while girls dropped out mostly to take care of sick family members, and due to early marriages, and pregnancy. According to Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015), the rural/urban dynamics of dropout indicate that pregnancy and child-headed household factors increase as you move from rural areas to urban centres. Child labour, on the other hand, is more prevalent at semi-urban schools, while lack of motivation, being too old for the grade, and distance from school increase as you move from urban to rural areas. It should be noted that some cultural practices can be detrimental to children's futures. Parents should be educated to balance culture and value the importance of their children's education.

2.5 Strategies to Address School Dropouts

Several studies carried out on dropout factors suggest strategies that may reduce the dropout rate. Mookho and Mohlouoa (2014) suggested that learners need to be sensitised about the importance of education and that an enticing environment must be created to enable them to share their views. Policies that reward schools that reduce school dropouts should be set up (Nabugoomu, 2019).

The environment of the school should also be made attractive so that the child may feel at home while at school (Sajjad et al., 2012). Nabugoomu (2019) suggested that social support for learners who are at risk of dropping out of school should be established, and

schools should use extracurricular activities such as art to increase the interests of learners in school. Khama (2022) suggested that school feeding meals should be delivered on time as they assist with the retention of learners in schools and equally reduce dropout rates.

Furthermore, Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) suggested that policies should also specify better ways of disciplining learners who absent themselves from school and provide guidelines for parental involvement in their children's education. It is advised that parents should be motivated and encouraged to be actively involved in their children's education through various platforms (Andrew et al., 2018). Pedditzi and Fadda (2022) argue that the quality of the home environment and the quality of parenting are predictors of educational achievement and well-being.

2.6 Summary

Based on the available literature reviewed in this chapter, learners' factors require special attention to support learners dealing with vulnerability, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, as well as learning difficulties, in remaining in school. It is also evident that curriculum difficulties such as promotional and absenteeism policies in Namibia contribute to learners' dropout. Economic factors, including poverty, were identified as the primary contributors to school dropout in Namibia. This was classified as a parental factor. Parents who are struggling financially fail to support their children, and some have been reported to influence their children to drop out of school in order to find employment.

Parents only participated in one study regarding San children dropping out. All the reviewed studies involved mostly secondary education learners, and only a few learners from the primary phase were involved. There was also a lack of information on factors that influenced learners who returned to school. This study involved parents and investigated learners and parental factors that motivated children who dropped out of school to return to school. The next chapter (Chapter 3) discusses the research methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design of the study, which includes the population of the study as well as the study setting. The chapter is extended to the sampling methods, research instruments, and data collection procedures followed in collecting data and data analysis. The last part of the chapter discusses research ethics.

3.2 Research design

This study adopted a qualitative approach. Mertens (2015) elucidated that qualitative techniques provide an in-depth description of a specific phenomenon. According to Maxwell (2012), qualitative design allows for the incorporation of participant differences as well as differences in attitudes, values, intents, and meanings, as well as social, cultural, and physical contextual elements that influence casual relationships. Lambert and Lambert (2012) stated that the purpose of qualitative investigations is to provide a detailed summary of specific events experienced by people or groups of people in everyday terms. Lambert and Lambert (2012) elaborated further, stating that qualitative research strives to uncover patterns and linkages related to theoretical conceptions in order to enhance theory development. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to go through an inductive process "where concrete, context-specific evidence is collected, then patterns and commonalities are identified to build abstract ideas and theories" (Hong & Cross Francis, 2020, p. 2).

The study used a case study design due to the nature of the topic under investigation. A case study is a detailed description of a complex phenomenon, such as recent events, key challenges, or programmes, aimed at finding new and deeper understandings of the phenomenon (Mertens, 2015). This research design is ideal for this study since the researcher aimed to investigate the factors contributing to school dropouts by interviewing parents, teachers, and learners who dropped out and returned to school in the Ncamagoro circuit. The two schools chosen from the circuit serve as the cases in this study. Observations, interviews, and document analysis were all possible with the case study design (Mertens, 2015). The design allowed the participants to express their opinions and share their experiences about the factors that contribute to school dropout in their communities, while also allowing the researcher to study phenomena in their natural setting and interpret and describe the phenomena in terms of the meaning participants brought to her.

3.2.1 Study Setting

A research study setting is an important component of a study. The study setting's nature, context, environment, and logistics may all have an impact on how the research is conducted (Majid, 2018). Majid (2018) advises that before submitting the study for ethics approval and beginning data collection, investigators should document the characteristics, events, gatherings, and other factors of the study setting. For this study, the researcher visited the two schools involved in the study to investigate the study settings and to observe any practical issues inherent in the study setting's organisation, structure, or layout (Majid, 2018). A total of eight learners and seven parents were

interviewed in the Life Skills teacher's office at the school where the learner attended school. Five school personnel, which included two Life Skills teachers, two principals, and one class teacher, were interviewed in their respective offices at the schools where they teach. The parents and learners were asked to indicate the setting in which they were comfortable, and they all agreed to be interviewed at school.

3.2.2 Population

According to Mills and Gay (2016), a research population is the whole of a collection of individuals, events, or objects that share common characteristics. A study population is also defined as those who fall within the scope of the researcher's research interest or subject of study. According to the Kavango West Directorate of Education (2022), Kavango West Region consists of seven circuits with 178 schools, of which 149 are primary schools. The Ncamagoro Circuit accommodates twenty schools, of which three are combined schools, six are senior primary schools and 11 are junior primary schools. The targeted population of this study includes learners, teachers and parents in the Ncamagoro circuit. The Ncamagoro Circuit consists of 156 teachers and 4320 learners. The study involved learners who once dropped out of primary school and returned, as well as their parents or guardians, teachers, and principals from schools with the highest dropout rate in the circuit.

3.2.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Kamangar and Islami (2013) defined sampling as the practice of selecting a statistically representative sample of individuals from a population of interest. Since it provides a

statistical representation of the population of interest and is large enough to answer the research issue, sampling is a significant tool for research investigations (Majid, 2018). Purposive sampling was used in this investigation because it enabled the researcher to get a more in-depth insight into the topic under study than generalising from one's own study (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, Subedi (2021) emphasises that purposive sampling helps researchers to select participants with rich information that cannot be gathered from other participants.

Between May 2020 and December 2021, a total of 422 learners dropped out of primary school in the circuit due to various reasons. The study sampled learners who dropped out of school and returned, parents/guardians of learners who dropped out, as well as primary school principals and/or Life Skills teachers.

A purposive sampling method was used to select the two schools with the highest number of dropouts and participants in this study. Twenty participants from the two selected schools were sampled. The sample included seven parents/guardians, of whom each parent/guardian represented a learner or two learners who also participated in the study. Eight learners who once dropped out of primary school and returned were sampled to participate in the study. A purposive sampling method was also used to select a principal, the Life Skills teacher at each school involved in the study, and one primary class teacher who participated in this study.

3.2.4 Research Instruments

According to Arikunto (2010), a research instrument is chosen as an assisting tool to collect data in order to facilitate the research. Researchers can collect data in qualitative research by observing, interviewing, and reviewing records, documents, and other artefacts in the research setting (Mertens, 2015). The researcher employed a combination of document reading, observation, and interviewing in this investigation.

3.2.4.1 Document analysis

The process of document analysis entails analysing numerous sorts of documents, such as books, newspaper stories, academic journal articles, and institutional reports (Morgan, 2022). Any text-based document is a potential source for qualitative analysis (Patton, 2015). The researcher examined school, circuit, and regional records as well as Education Management Information System (EMIS) reports. This enabled her to learn more about learners, such as the age groups most likely to drop out, the most common causes of dropout in primary school, and the grades with the largest number of dropouts. According to Mertens (2015), researchers use document analysis to gain essential context and insight into the dynamics of everyday functioning. Reviewing documents also assisted the researcher in obtaining pre-existing data, which supplemented the information gathered through interviews. Second, it enabled the researcher to create an acceptable interview guide on which questions to ask. Pre-existing data are frequently combined with different types of data for triangulation, an approach aimed at improving the credibility of a study (Morgan, 2022). According to Morgan (2022), triangulation aids in determining whether a study's findings are

consistent in developing a greater grasp of the topic under investigation. The documents that were analysed were obtained both physically and electronically from the two selected schools, the Ncamagoro Circuit Office and Kavango West Regional Office.

3.2.4.2 Observation

According to Creswell (2012), observation is a set of tools for acquiring open-ended, first-hand information through observing people and places at a research site. Furthermore, Ary et al. (2018) claimed that qualitative observations rely on narratives or words to describe the situation, behaviours, and interactions. As a non-participant observer, the researcher used an observation checklist to record the data. Ary et al. (2018) reiterated that the observation checklist gives a set of behaviours that are to be observed, and the behaviours in the checklist should be operationally and readily observable.

According to Trigueros (2017), a non-participant observer is a visitor who has the sole right to watch participants' behaviours and the environment without participating in their activities. Through direct engagement in the setting, researchers obtain rich data (Mertens, 2015). Observations were made in the classrooms where the study's participants attended their classes, as well as throughout the school surroundings.

Classroom observation was used to identify negative emotions among learners, learner behaviours, and interactions between learners and their teachers. This also allowed the researcher to become acquainted with the learners and aid in the development of a relationship between the researcher and the participants before the interview. The

purpose of the observations conducted around the school was to assist the researcher in analysing the infrastructure in the school and the impact it may have on learners.

3.2.4.3 Interviews

Face-to-face, semi-structured individual interviews were used to obtain data from participants. A face-to-face interview is a type of in-depth interview that can be used to target certain perceptions, opinions and attitudes (Triguero et al. 2017). It also allows the interpretation of the body language and facial expressions of your participants (Marshall, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, allow the interviewer more freedom to add questions or request clarification (Canals, 2017). According to Mertens (2015), a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to begin with more informal questions in order to establish rapport with the subject. The researcher supplemented the data gathered from document analysis with a semi-structured face-to-face interview. The researcher implemented individual semi-structured interviews to allow participants to express themselves freely and for the interviewer to go deeper into questions (Canals, 2017). To provide more uniform data transcription, an audiotape was used. The researcher asked the participants for permission to record the conversations.

3.3 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate and permission letter to collect data from the University of Namibia. The researcher then wrote to the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to obtain the permission letter, which allowed her to seek permission to collect data from the circuit and the two

schools included in the study in Kavango West Region. The Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Regional Director of Education for Kavango West, the Ncamagoro Circuit Inspector of Education, and the principals of the two selected schools all provided approval letters. She then went to the two schools two weeks before the data collection week to discuss with the principals and life skills teachers about the purpose of her study, the target participants, and the data collection procedures of the study. The researcher then met with each participant to explain the study's goal, obtain consent and agreement from participants, and schedule the interview time and location.

Data was collected using three instruments:

a) Document analysis: The researcher studied government records on school dropout rates in the Kavango West Region, as well as school, circuit, and regional documents, to create a thorough understanding of available data on the phenomenon under study. Ncamagoro Circuit data was obtained at the circuit, while regional data was obtained via emails.

b) Observation: At each research setting, the researcher assessed the emotional behaviours observed among participants in the study, their physical appearances, such as the state of their school uniforms, interaction between learners and between learners and teachers, and finally the school and classroom environment.

c) Interviews: Finally, the day after the observation, interviews with all participants were conducted, which took three days in each study setting. It is critical to be aware of the necessity of triangulating data in qualitative research by using multiple data sources.

Morgan (2022) feels that combining various methods during data collection has the ability to provide a more comprehensive picture of what is being examined and to cross-check information; the strength of one method compensates for the weakness of another.

3.4 Data analysis

All the collected data was analysed using the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is an appropriate method for this study since it is the best way to analyse subjective information such as experiences, opinions, and interviews (Morgan, 2022). All the obtained data was organised in a single file, with each piece of data having its own coded file. Both observational and content review data were analysed using a reflexive technique. Reflexivity refers to how the researcher's values, background, qualities, and study decisions affect the outcomes (Bailey & Bailey, 2017). The verbatim transcript approach was used to transcribe data from interviews. The goal of verbatim transcripts is to capture every utterance from the participants and provide a true record of the conversation (Lester et al., 2020). The researcher transcribed the interview herself, which allowed her to become acquainted with the collected data. According to Lester et al. (2020), verbatim transcription increases a researcher's grasp of the participants' viewpoints and assists them in interpreting the data set in a way that speeds up subsequent analysis. The interview transcription was coded with a focus on the respondents' experiences, opinions, feelings, knowledge, and input displayed during the interview. This coding layer is used to identify key assertions, experiences, and reflections (Lester et al., 2020).

3.5 Ethical considerations

The researcher has obtained ethical clearance from the University of Namibia's Decentralised Ethics Committee. Permission to conduct research at the two primary schools was obtained from the University of Namibia's Decentralised Ethics Committee, the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, the Directorate of Education for the Kavango West Region, and the principals of the two selected schools. Ary et al. (2018) stated that potential participants must understand the aim and process of the study, its risks and rewards, and the obligations of the participants and the researcher in order to make an educated decision. As a result, the researcher conveyed the study's aims and goals to all participants. Every participant was permitted to voluntarily participate and withdraw at any moment. Minors' parents were contacted for assent before interviews. The following ethical concerns were adhered to: anonymity, secrecy, and informed consent. Codes were used instead of participants' names to maintain anonymity. The researcher requested consent from all participants to record them. Finally, the images utilised were taken in a manner that does not reveal or embarrass the respondents and their associates, and the participants have provided permission to the researcher to take pictures.

3.6 Summary

Chapter three presented the methodology of the study. It discussed and situated the qualitative descriptive design that the study adopted as well as the target population and the study setting. The chapter has also discussed the purposive sample method and sampling procedures. The sections on data collection procedures, research instruments,

and data analysis were also included. Lastly, the chapter provided a brief examination of ethical considerations regarding the study. The next chapter provides a presentation of the outcomes of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research participants' profiles and the study's findings obtained through interviews and observations from two primary schools in the Kavango West Region's Ncamagoro Circuit. In answering the research questions mentioned, the findings are organised around the themes that emerged from the investigation. These themes are factors that drive learners to drop out of school; interventions by both teachers and parents; factors that influence learners to return to school; and finally, strategies that may be employed to keep learners in school. The results are presented using pseudonyms, for instance, Learner 1 (L1), Life Skills Teacher 1 (LST1), School Principal 1 (SP1), Teacher 1 (T1), and Parent 1 (P1).

4.2 Description of research participants

A total of 20 participants took part in this study. The participants' biographical information is presented in Tables 1–3 below:

Table 1: *Learners who dropped out of school and returned*

Participants	Gender	Age	Grade	Whom participant lives with
L1	Male	17	4	Aunt
L2	Female	12	4	Grandmother
L3	Male	18	5	Elder Brother
L4	Male	16	6	Biological parents:

L5	Male	9	1	Biological parents
L6	Male	10	2	Biological parents
L7	Female	18	7	Biological parents
L8	Male	14	4	Aunt

The results in Table 1 show that six male learners and two females took part in the study. All the interviewed learners were old/overaged for the grade they were in during the time of data collection. The analysis of data shows that four learners lived with their biological parents while the other four lived with their extended family members (aunt, brother, or grandmother).

Table: 2 *Principals, life skills teachers and teachers*

Participants	Years of teaching experience	Grade taught in 2022	Inclusive education training
SP1	24	8	Not received
LST1	14	4 – 7	Not received
LST2	6	4 – 7	Not received
SP2	27	5 – 7	Received
T1	24	1	Not received

Key: SP = School Principal; LST = Life Skills Teacher; T = Teacher

Table 2 shows the descriptions of participants of two principals, two primary Life skills teachers and one class teacher of grade 1 who were interviewed. All the participants

have more than five years of teaching experience. The results show that only one teacher received training in inclusive education.

Table 3: *Parents who participated in the study*

Participant	Gender	Number of learners in the house	Number of learners who drop out of school
P1	Female	6	1
P2	Female	10	2
P3	Female	4	1
P4	Male	4	2
P5	Male	4	3
P6	Male	7	1
P7	Female	3	2

Table 3 shows that, of the seven parents who were interviewed, one parent represented two learners. The number of learners in the house recorded is the number of learners who are currently registered in school and attend school every day. The number of learners recorded as dropouts is the number of children who were at home in November 2022 and did not go to school for various reasons. The results show that each house has a range of one to three learners who were not attending school in 2022.

4.3 Findings of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence dropout rates in primary school. Data were collected from various stakeholders/participants such as

parents of learners who dropped out of school and returned, learners who dropped out of school and returned, Life Skills teachers, and the principals of the schools with the highest dropout rate in the circuit. The findings are organised and presented according to themes, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: *Study findings according to themes*

Main themes	Sub-themes
Factors influencing school dropout out	School factors
	Learners' factors
	Family and community factors
Interventions/what influenced learners to return to school	Intervention by the schools
	Factors that motivated learners to return
	Interventions by parents
Strategies suggested to help reduce the school dropout rate at primary and retain learners in school	Strategies suggested for the school.
	Strategies suggested for the Ministry of Education and other ministries.
	Strategies suggested for parents

4.3.1 Factors that influenced dropout among learners

The results show that the participants indicated that school factors, family and community factors, and learner factors tend to influence learners to drop out of school, as discussed in detail below.

4.3.1.1 School Factors

Teacher learner relationships

Two principals and one Life Skills teacher (Participants SP1, SP2, & LST2) explained that most learners are afraid of teachers, to a point that even when they have problems at home or at school, they rather keep it to themselves until they decide to leave school. Participant SP2 indicated that teachers need to know their learners to be able to help them. Most learners who drop out experienced emotional and mental problems but were scared to talk to their teachers about them. Participant SP2 emphasised that teachers should improve their relationships with learners. According to one of the Life Skills teachers (Participant LST2), *"establishing a good relationship with learners has to do with the teachers getting to know their learners more. Because it is much easier to convince them to return to school or not to be absent once you have a close relationship with them."*

School and classroom environment

Two Life Skills teachers, one teacher and one school principal (Participants LST1, LST2, T1, & SP2) indicated that the classroom conditions may also discourage learners from coming to school. The Life Skills teachers (Teacher 1 [Participant LST1] and Teacher 2 [Participant LST2]) reported that:

"Most of our brick classrooms are old, and they are not enough, so some senior primary learners are taught in corrugated iron sheets classrooms which get really hot when it is summer and too cold during winter. We also have a serious

problem with chairs. Most of our learners must put together broken parts of chairs to sit on, which is uncomfortable, especially for female learners. You can say we are better comparing to many other schools, but such conditions can discourage learners from coming to school.” (Participant LST1)

“Our structures are really bad, you saw we do not even have a staffroom, I think we are now used to it, but this is one of the factors that may influence learners’ negative attitudes about school hence they lose interest and drop out”.
(Participant LST2)

When asked by the researcher during classroom observation, learners explained that snakes used to enter their classrooms through the holes, and that when it rains heavily, they move to one side of the class and sometimes the teacher stops teaching.

One of the school principals (Participant SP2) emphasised that the ministry builds proper infrastructure for learners.

“The school environment is not conducive; one would not want to sit in a classroom of this nature and be expected to listen to the teacher. Most of the time, if it is hot, you cannot even sit in these classrooms. If it is cold, then it is cold. If it is raining, you cannot even sit there, not even a teacher. We all must be standing. If there is anything that one would think the ministry can do, structural development should be one of them. I think if we can have good classrooms that can accommodate learners when it is cold or hot, that environment will be attractive to the learners. It will add value, and the desire to learn may also increase.” (Participant SP2)



Figure 1. Two classrooms at School B

Corporal punishment

Four learners (Participants L2, L5, L6, & L8) from both Schools A and B explained their fear of returning to school because of corporal punishment from the teacher. Participant L2 explained that at first, after a month of being absent, he wanted to go back to school, but he was afraid of the type of punishment he might receive from the teacher based on the number of days he had been absent, so he just decided to stay at home. Participant L5 indicated that *"my teacher used to beat me and get angry whenever I was absent; I was afraid that she would still beat me when I came back."* Participants L5 and L6 stated that sometimes they stayed in the bush because they were afraid of the punishment they would get at school.

Namibia School Feeding Programme (NSFP)

The school feeding programme also emerged as a contributing factor for learners to leave school prematurely. For example, Participant LST1 from School A indicated that, without soft porridge at school, most learners in the primary phase would not go to

school. The school principal of School A (Participant SP1) also confirmed that one of the challenges they have at school is hunger.

“At this time, we do not have any feeding programmes at school. We find it very hard. But when we have soft porridge at school, they attend in large numbers. We are encouraging the Ministry to at least provide the flour on time. Whenever there is no feeding programme, most of the learners do not come to school, and some drop out completely. Especially those ones at junior primary.” (Participant SP1)

Distance to and from school

One Life Skills teacher and one school principal (Participant LST1 & SP1) explained that the distance travelled by learners to school was one of the factors that influenced learners to drop out of school. For example, Participant SP1 indicated that:

“You find a learner who is 6 years old and can walk 3 to 4 kilometres. This learner will be forced to wait until a certain age to start school, and in the process, the learner will be delayed. This learner will not start in pre-primary due to age but can start in Grade 1. And it is where the ageism stigma starts, which will lead to dropouts in the end.”

Ageism stigma

Three teachers (Participants LST1, LST2, & SP1) agreed that most learners who dropped out of primary school were overaged. More learners at Schools A and B were

reported to start school at a later stage due to the distance between school and their houses. According to Participant LST1:

“Most learners who drop out of junior primary school are stigmatised due to age. Most learners who start school late have their parents’ house in the inland, and they have no one to leave their children with near the school, so they wait until the child is old and then send them to school later. Some learners who start school late come from Angola, and Osire Camp where they were not attending school. These learners come to this area to stay with their family members and then get registered at our school”.

One of the school principals explained that learners who drop out due to age start school late due to the distance between the school and the parents’ fields.

“For example, during the summertime or the rainy season, most of the parents go out for field work in the inland, clean their fields, and prepare their fields and start cultivating. These parents then go to the fields in the inland with all the children who are still too young to stay behind and under the supervision of older children. (Participant SP1)

Lack of inclusive education training

One of the Life Skills teachers explained that sometimes it is difficult to give adequate attention to learners who drop out due to academic performance because teachers were not trained properly to deal with all the learners in an inclusive setting.

“Sometimes there are just too many learners in one class, which makes it difficult for the teacher to focus on all of them and cater to their needs. Maybe if the government could employ more teachers and change the ratio to twenty-five learners per teacher in all grades, these learners would be identified and helped before they even dropped out”. (Participant LST2)

Lack of extra mural activities

The data from two school principals and one Life Skills teacher (Participants SP1, SP2, & LST1) revealed that there was a lack of interest in extramural activities among learners who dropped out of school. One of the parents (Participant P1) explained that learners may not be interested in the activities at school because they are not enticing to them. Participant LST1 added that:

“Sometimes you think that maybe if we have other sports codes apart from soccer, netball, and culture, maybe these learners will take part and gain interest in school. Also, teachers mostly just focus on learners they already know. I think teachers should come up with more extramural activities that fit all learners to keep them busy and connect with the teachers. It is what they tell us at our workshops”.

On the other hand, Participant SP2 noted that ever since they started with soccer, netball and culture, he observed that learners were growing closer to the teachers. *“You notice that now they are even free to tell the teachers about the problem they face, they do not wait for the Life Skills teacher, and this is good. It is what we want”.* (Participant SP2)

4.3.1.2 Family and community factors

Poverty

Two of the parents (Participants P5 & P7), and all the teachers and principals highlighted that they have observed poverty as the main factor contributing to dropouts in their community. According to Participants P4 and P5, girls in the community date old men for money to sustain themselves. One of the parents indicated that;

"I think girls get impressed when they see their friends dressing well or being taken care of by their boyfriends. At home, we do not really make enough money or food to cater to all the children's needs. We do not receive any funds from the government in our house." (Participant P5)

Participant P5 explained that the young children at their house, about the age of 9–10, refused to go to school because they were tired of walking a long distance to school hungry. He further added that learners said they were also ashamed of being laughed at for not having a school uniform. Participant SP2 stated that:

"You will find that these learners coming the whole day at school will go sit at home on an empty stomach or rather go into the bush and feed themselves on wild fruits other than coming to school. And when they have a hobby that is feeding them such as hunting and looking for wild fruits, they will opt for that rather than education."

One of the learners (Participant L3) reported that he was always reminded about how his parents do not send enough money to where he lives and that they always blame him for the poverty at home. The learner stated that it breaks him every time, and he only feels better when he is at school.

Another learner (Participant L4) stated that he feels poor when he does not have a full uniform like others and is hesitant to return to school due to that. *"When I do not have a uniform, I feel very bad; I feel like I am the poorest child at school"* (Participant L4).

Household chores and child-headed houses

Three learners (Participants L2, L5, & L6) indicated that they stopped going to school to look after their siblings while their mothers went to work. According to Participants L5 and L6, the parents asked them to remain at home to do household chores and to stay with their younger siblings. L8 explained that sometimes they are given so much work to do that when they are done, it is already late for school.

Sometimes I wake up so early to go look for goats or cattle and do other household chores with my brother. By the time we are done, it is already late for school. We just dress up and go meet our friends because if we go to school, they will laugh at us for being so late. (Participant L8)

"Every day I am the only one who does everything at home, and my aunt does not do anything. I do not even get time to look at my books". (Participant L2)

Participants SP1, LST1, LST2 and SP2 agreed that most learners are household heads of the small houses their parents build near the school, and they get tired of taking care of their siblings. As a result, some of them drop out to follow their parents who live in the inland and some look for jobs, especially boys. One of the teachers and one school principal revealed that:

You will find out that in a house there are only three learners, and the eldest one is in Grade 5. They are living with the other siblings. You see that these learners are now facing challenges when it comes to food provision. No one provides for them food unless they have to go inland, where their parents are living, and then collect something there. Sometimes they come back without anything, so some decide to just drop out of school. And in houses where they are being sent to live with relatives, sometimes they are not well treated, and then some decide to drop out of school. (Participant LST1)

Some learners, when you ask them, tell you that there is no food at home, and some are tired of coming to school and supervising their younger siblings. (Participant SP2)

Parental involvement and lack of motivation

According to the school principals (Participants SP1 & SP2), only about 40% of parents attend parent meetings. About 50% of parents invited to school regarding their children's behaviours such as absenteeism and dropout do not show up. Participants LST1, LST2, and T1 also confirm this attitude. For example, Participant LST2 indicated that *"Learners do not get encouragement from their parents to go to school. Once the child drops out, they just leave the learner to stay home.* Furthermore, Participant T1 added that:

"Parents have a lot of an 'I do not care attitude' and they drink too much alcohol. There is a serious alcohol abuse problem in this community by parents.

Many houses they brew alcohol at home just to drink. Sometimes parents grow enough Mahangu for their family, but they trade Mahangu for alcohol. At the end, they remain without food for the children. They do not care about their children, who need to go to school.

Participants LST1, SP1 and SP2 explained that parents are unaware of the importance of education and schooling. Hence, they cannot motivate their children to return to school when they drop out.

Parents who are illiterate and who do not see the importance of education also contribute to this high rate of dropping out of school. Some children are even kept at home to look after their siblings. Some are dropping out to head home when parents are somewhere else, and the whole responsibility is left in the hands of these school-going children. So, these are some of the factors that are immensely contributing to the dropping out of learners in school. (Participant SP2)

Teachers who participated in this study all agreed that there is a lack of interest in education among the learners. *It is like they are just coming for the sake of coming to school. They do not really care about school* (Participant T1).

One of the Life Skills teachers (Participant LST2) explained that the learners' learning also plays a big role in the school dropout rate. The teacher explained that there are no people in the community that learners can look up to for inspiration. Participant LST2 indicated that:

There is a negative influence from children who are not attending school. If you look at the area where we are, there are no aspirations for learners, no people that they can look up to, like, When I grow up, I want to be like this person. If you go around, you see that there are just these people who didn't go far in school.

4.3.1.3 Individual/Learner Factors

Bullying and lack of discipline

The results show that various participants confirmed the existence of bullying and lack of discipline at school. One of the learners (Participant L1) narrated how his classmates teased him due to his torn uniform and for not having shoes. *“When I was in Grade 4, towards exams, my fellow learners used to bully me for not having a uniform and shoes, and they used to say many other things. I used to feel bad about it, and then I decided it was better to drop out”* (Participant L1). In addition, one of the Life Skills teachers (Participant LST1) explained that most learners who bully others at school stay without parents, and they are also the type of learners who drop out of school. *“If you follow up on the learner who bullies others, you will find out that this child either stays with the grandparents or is staying alone in the house. Now we are looking at their behaviours since no one is controlling them at home. It leads to such behaviours”* (Participant LST1).

Some of the parents (Participants P5 & P7) explained that their children who dropped out of school also lack discipline at home. Participants P3 and P7 also indicated that the

children lack discipline at home and that sometimes they run away from home, sleep at other people's houses, and refuse to do the household chores. Parent 5 explained that the children do not respect them at home, especially the mother. *"They fear me a little bit, but if it's the mother, they don't even see her as an adult. Sometimes, when she tells them to do something, they even run into the bush"* (Participant P5).

Teenage Pregnancy

One of the learner participants dropped out of school due to pregnancy and hunger. The learner revealed that she had no support at home with the baby after delivery. She also said that she faced emotional abuse from her parents at home.

"My mother drinks too much alcohol; many days there is no food at home, and when she comes back from the Cuca shop, she says a lot of bad things to me. She can go to the Cuca shop for the whole day and only come back at night; when she comes back, she insults me." (L7)

Academic performance

Out of the learner participants, only one was not repeating the grade they were in at the time of data collection. The teacher participants (Participants LST1, LST2, & T1) explained that most learners who drop out are ignorant when it comes to schoolwork and mostly never do homework or other schoolwork, which lead them to fail and repeat grades. One of the school principals (Participant SP2) stated that it is a challenge for both learners and teachers.

“These learners need more help from the teachers, yet it is a struggle for teachers to get them for remedial classes because if they are not absent, they do not come in the afternoon.” (Participant SP2)

Peer Influence

The result confirms that peer influence is central in the life of a child. One of the parents (Participant 5) seemed to believe that some children dropped out due to peer pressure. The parent reported that, based on his observation, children in the community are in squads (groups) where they influence one another with negative things. In addition, one of the Life Skills teachers (Participant LST2) explained that:

“Learners, mostly boys, receive negative influence in the community from others who dropped out. They talk negatively about school. So, you know how kids are easily convinced, if someone says, if you go to school, there is nothing coming out of it, they just find other responsibilities at home, such as hunting and herding cattle, more interesting than coming to school.” (Participant LST2)

Another parent (Participant P7) also explained that:

“There is a bad influence in the village due to the large number of children who dropped out of school. Most children do not reach school, and some even do not sleep at home. “Sometimes they don’t even sleep at home. You will not see them until maybe the next day if they come home. Sometimes I force them to go to school; they dress up to go, and then you will just hear that they never reached school. (Participant P7)

Emotional problems

The results show that one of the child's behaviours and emotions changed following the loss of the mother, who died at home. One of the parents (Participant P1) reported that the child only went to school when his aunt escorted him, never stayed for the entire school day, and eventually dropped out. *"Almost every day, he would cry and refuse to go to school. If I do not accompany him to school, he sometimes does not arrive"* (Participant P1). Correspondingly, one of the school principals (Participant SP2) indicated that he observed that most learners who eventually drop out, and those who dropped out and returned, usually look sad. Participant SP2 indicated that *"One thing I have also observed about these learners is that they are not learners who are happy; you may say that they are disturbed in a way. If you closely observe them, they are not happy learners at all."*

4.4 Interventions/factors that influence learners to return to school

4.4.1 Parents' interventions

Counselling through Project Hope and Rundu Hospital

The analysis revealed that Project Hope and Rundu Hospital provided counselling to learners who dropped out of school. One of the parents indicated that (Participant P1) she learned about Project Hope after the child had been at home for a year and expressed her concern about her nephew to one of the Project Hope employees. The parent was then referred to a Rundu hospital social worker to speak with the child. The parent mentioned that the social worker came to their house and spoke with the parents and child separately. The parent stated that there has been a significant positive

improvement since the social worker's visit, and the learner returned to school and is motivated to continue attending school. *"Even when I asked if he would manage, he said he would, and even if they laugh at him, he will not leave school until he completes."* (Participant P1)

Parents encouragements

The study analysis shows that it was crucial that parents whose children drop out of school are encouraged to bring them back to school. Some of the parents (Participants P2 & P4) revealed that they were forcing and explaining to the family where the children had gone on holiday that the school was requesting that the child return to school, and that is when they ultimately sent the children to school. Some parents stopped sending children on holiday to as a method to control dropout. *"We have just decided that she will no longer go there"* (Participant P2).

Educating children about the importance of education

One of the parents (Participant P5) mentioned that he tried to teach his children and grandchildren the value of education. *"The older girl realised what was going on and returned to school. The younger children are still at home; they refused to go to school. They complained about their hunger and the distance"* (Participant P5). Participant P7 reported that *"I encouraged the children to return to school, but only one did. The other stated that he was going to look for work. However, the one who returned to school has been going most days, even though he still sleeps away from home often."* (Participant P7)

Support the children by escorting them to school

The results show that parents began escorting the children to school in the second semester after realising that the children were staying in the bush and not attending school. Participant P1 explained that the child cried every time she sent him to school, and some days, he returned home when the school in not yet out, she reacted by escorting him to school which she explained that it has worked for some days. *When I learned that he doesn't reach school and cried when I send him to school, I have started escorting him to school but it only worked for a short period of time*” (Participant P1). Participant P6 also added that *“when I learned that they do not use to reach school and that they stayed in the bush when send to school, we have decided to escort them to school. The mother is usually the one who used to escort them”*.

4.4.2 Factors that influence learners to go back to school

Counselling service

One of the learners (Participant L1) reported that he had received wonderful counselling from a social worker from Rundu Hospital, and he was motivated to return to school. The learner stated that he had no intention of ever leaving school again and that he was now feeling great. He also assured that *"I am alright now. I will never drop out of school again. Those who bully me will be ignored"* (Participant L1).

Self and Social Motivation

Four learners (Participants L3, L4, L7, & L8) explained that they were motivated to return to school after considering their home situation and their goals in life. For example, Participant L3 explained that:

I simply examined the situation at home. Some of my classmates are still in school. If I do not finish school, I will be forced to work jobs with little pay, such as collecting water for people, where I will not be able to cover my expenses. If I stay at home, our family's poverty will not improve; rather, it will worsen.

Participant L4 stated that seeing others speaking English, and successful individuals with vehicles, pushed him to return to school. He considered and recognised the significance of education and domestic poverty; he stated that *"I want to be different and to change the situation at home"* (Participant L4).

4.4.3 School interventions

Donation to learners in need by teachers

The results show that donations were made for needy learners following the principal's visit to the learners' homes. The participants (Participants LST2, SP2, & T1) revealed that they provided clothes and food for learners who dropped out due to hunger and a lack of school uniforms. For instance, SP2 mentioned that *"once some of the problems that also contribute to the high rate of dropout are identified, teachers must donate a lot of things. They go so far as to buy food for these learners in addition to school uniforms."*

Home visits

The analysis reveals that home visits can increase the likelihood of dropout learners to return to school. One of the teacher participants (Participant T1) noted that the principal always provided transportation to visit the homes of learners who had dropped out of school, which helped them retain certain learners who had a habit of missing school for

several days. Participant SP2 also stated that he went to the homes of dropout learners' parents to investigate the problem at home. He added that this method helped them create profound connections with parents and the community, as well as to bring children back to school. He reported that:

"I have noticed that when these parents see you, they get really excited. These field trips have also shown me that some of the learners lie. Parents are also unaware of what is going on. But now, because of this relationship between the school and the community, we are in a situation where parents know what is required of them." (Participant SP2)

Prioritise having soft porridge at school throughout the year

One of the school principals (Participant SP2) indicated that they have worked with the regional office to ensure that they obtain maize meals on time so that they do not run out of meals.

We requested that the regional office assist us in getting this school prioritised in the school feeding programme through the Ministry of Education. Hence, we usually get our portion before many other schools. We make sure that enough bags of maize meal are available every term when we begin, and learners eat from the first day of school. This has also motivated those who were at home to return to school because there is food at school. (Participants SP2)

Transferring overage learners

One of the school principals (Participant SP1) stated that they had to transfer some older learners to the following grade since the learners wanted to drop out due to bullying and felt too old for the current grade.

“Most learners from Osire Camp and Angola are normally too old for the grade, and the ageism stigma has a detrimental impact on them; therefore, we had to transfer them. One learner who dropped out and returned was transferred to the next grade and is now attending school every day.”

(Participant SP1)

School and Parent Collaboration

One of the Life Skills teachers indicated that (Participant LST1) they constantly encourage parents of learners who have dropped out to come to school and address the issues that the learners are facing. She emphasised that while some learners returned to school following meetings with them and their parents, many learners did not.

Participant LST1 explained that:

“What we do is, invite the parents of learners who dropped out to come to school together with the child and discuss the challenges that the learner face. Not all parents come, but a few numbers of learners whose parents come return to school, although the majority do not.”

4.5 Strategies that may reduce the dropout rate

All participants were asked to offer solutions that could help the school, parents, and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to reduce primary school dropout rates. The strategies are presented below based on the emerged themes and categories.

4.5.1 Strategies suggested for the parents

Avoid hate speech towards children

One of the learners (Participant L3) advised that parents should avoid saying demeaning or negative things to the children at home as it influences their biological children to also abuse the children who are not their own/biological. Participant L3 explained that:

“For example, reminding the child every time that their parents do not send anything can make someone leave school. We children listen; some things are educational, but most of the things parents say are not good. Even the children of the owner of the house will copy what the parents say and say bad things to me. That is not good.”

Collaboration with the School

One of the parents (Participant P1) suggested that parents should not keep children at home and use them to do household chores. Parents should encourage learners to go to school and work together with the teachers to help learners who are at the risk of dropping out of school for any reason. Participant P1 advised that *“sometimes our children have problems, if a parent cannot help the child, she/he must look for help from the social worker.”*

Another participant, a Life Skills teacher (Participant LST1), emphasised that parents must cultivate and maintain positive relationships with teachers in order to effectively assist children. *“They should come to us; for example, if a learner is sick, they should come to school to inform us”* (Participant LST1).

Attend Parents Meetings

All the teachers and principals who participated in the study emphasised that parents should attend parent meetings more to be educated about the problems that their children are facing at school and find ways to help them. *Participant LST2* advised that:

“They should get more involved in the academic work of these children. And they should also reduce the workload at home. Some learners will tell you that they cannot attend extra classes because they have to do something at home. If not, they will not eat. There are few parents that normally attend to our calls when we invite them when a learner does something. Others just ignore even when we have problems where we need parents’ input, only a few shows up.”

Social Grant Usage

The participants emphasised the need to monitor the use of social grants so that it works to the advantage of the beneficial. One of the school principals (*Participant SP2*) highlighted that parents should wisely manage the social grants that their children receive from the government. *For example, there are learners who receive social grants; this money is sufficient for a learner to dress appropriately for school. However, the way these resources are employed does not benefit the learners. These funds are being used by parents for personal gain (Participant SP2).*

4.5.2 Strategies suggested for the schools

Collaboration with other stakeholders in the Ministry of Education

One of the parents (Participant P1) advised that the school hold meetings with parents and invite social workers to educate them on the value of education and how to urge children to attend school. She also stated that social workers visit homes where children have dropped out of school to advise and counsel them in the hopes of getting them back to school and possibly reducing criminal activity in the community. Specifically, Participant P1 advised that:

"Teachers and social workers should collaborate to visit homes and educate parents and children about the importance of education and going to school rather than staying at home; this may also help the community's life situation and reduce criminal activity."

Minimise parental financial dependency

One of the parents (Participant P2) advised that the school (teachers) should limit the amount of stationery that learners are required to bring to school and provide toiletries to financially disadvantaged learners. That is:

"Teachers are also asking too much from parents. Sometimes parents are afraid of sending the children to school because they do not have money to buy the things that the school requested. Maybe the school should rather assist parents by giving learners soaps and lotions." (Participant P2)

Collaboration with Parents

Some of the parent participants proposed that there should be collaboration between schools and parents. Participant P2 proposed that teachers invite the biological parents of learners who drop out of school or who are frequently absent from school to talk about how to support the learners. Participant P3 also advised that teachers work together with parents to identify children who dropped out of school and talk to them to find out what led them to drop out; *“because there has to be a reason why the child dropped out”* (Participant P3). One of the learners (Participant L8) suggested that *“the teachers should work together with parents and arrange a meeting to talk about the problems that learners who drop out of school face.”* Furthermore, one of the Life Skills teachers (Participant LST1) advised that the school schedules meetings with parents for learners who live alone so that they can choose one parent to stay with their children each week or month.

Motivation of Learners and Enforcement of Discipline among Learners

The results also suggest a need for motivation of learners and enforcement of discipline among learners. One of the parents (Participant P4) proposed that teachers prevent learners from engaging in undesirable behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, which is currently prevalent in their area and is thought to be a cause of dropout. *“Some children in our community who become interested in drugs may miss three days of school and eventually drop out”* (Participant P4).

Similarly, Participant P7 believes that encouraging learners to stay in school and take their education seriously can help alleviate poverty and develop the community. *“They*

should explain to them the value of education. They are orphans, and because I am financially strained, the only way to aid them is via education” (Participant P7).

One of the school principals (Participant SP1) advised that the school implement programmes to help learners become more interested in school. Finally, Participant SP2 advises that teachers should study and know their learners so that they can prepare lessons that meet their needs. This will help learners stay motivated in school and possibly lower dropout rates. *“They must first know their learners and identify learners with special learning needs; their lesson delivery should then be tailored to the learners' learning needs.”* (Participant SP2)

4.5.3 Strategies suggested for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

Collaboration among stakeholders

The results suggest a need for collaboration among the educational stakeholders. One of the teachers (Participant T1), the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should work with other ministries to ensure that every child begins school at the age of six and that every child in Namibia under the age of sixteen attends school as per article 20 subsection 3 of the Namibian constitution. *“Sometimes the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should send someone to talk to the parents in the hopes that they will change. Because parents may grow tired of the teachers constantly talking to them”* (Participant T1). One of the parents (Participant P1) urged the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to work together with the police and social workers.

"They should visit every house where learners have dropped out and threaten parents who keep learners at home to do household chores, work on the farms, or sell goods about being arrested. If the social worker goes and threatens them that they will be arrested if the children do not go to school because you are sending them to work at the farm and sell goods (Participant P1).

Participant L4 also added that *"the Ministry of Health should donate maize meal to the families living in poverty in the community."*

Financial support and national documentation registration

One of the parents (Participant P2) proposed that the government provide financial assistance to parents as well as national documentation to receive the social grant in order to help them sustain their children's lives. Participant P2 suggested that:

"The Ministry of Education should assist parents in obtaining birth certificates for their children. Our children are unable to get the social grant because they lack birth certificates, and there is nothing I can do. We don't know where the mother is, and the father is in Angola."

"The government should register old people in order for them to receive social grants," (Participant L1).

Another parent (Participant P3) pleaded with the government to issue birth certificates to children and provide orphans with a grant so that they can purchase toiletries and school clothes to encourage children to continue in school instead of dropping out due to bullying.

Participant L4, on the other hand, pleaded with the government to get national documents for their parents so that they could receive a government social grant.

“The government should also register learners in order for them to receive national documents and benefit from government social handouts. The majority of the children are from Angola, and their parents do not have identification documents; thus, their children do not have documentation and are dropping out of school”. (Participant L4)

However, Participant L8 suggested that the government discontinue the social grants to learners who dropped out of school.

Sensitisation of Learners about the importance of education and punishment for dropouts

The results suggest a need for the sensitisation of learners about the importance of education and punishment for dropouts. One of the parents suggested that *“the government should try to organise discussions in which they visit schools and villages to talk with learners about the significance of attending school and devise repercussions for all learners who drop out”* (Participant P7).

Other participants (SP1, LST2, & SP2) proposed that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture implement some steps to control dropout by punishing learners who drop out.

Deliver maize meal on time

The results strongly emphasised the importance of delivering maize meal to schools on time. For example, Participants LST1 and SP1 explained that when there is soft porridge at school, absence and dropout rates always decrease. They both proposed that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture ensure that the maize meal comes on the first day of school for teachers so that learners have meals at school throughout the term. They stated that:

“If the ministry tries to supply soft porridge on time, I believe the dropout problem will improve because it is one of the key contributing factors to dropout at our school in particular.” (Participant LST1).

“The Ministry of Education should bring the soft porridge on time.” (Participant L4)

Building hostels and increasing Universal Primary Education (UPE) grant

Four participants (Participants LST1, SP1, SP2 & T1) highlighted how hostels might be a big advantage to their learners and could drastically cut dropout rates in their schools. The results show that the teacher participants believe that the main cause of dropout in their schools may be remedied by constructing hostels for learners so that they do not have to struggle with hunger, travel long-distance to and from school, and mind about domestic duties. Participant LST1 indicated that *“the community's child-headed household situation is complicated. So, hostels would be beneficial. I would like it if the*

ministry could construct a hostel to house all learners to eliminate child-headed house difficulties.”

Participant T1 proposed that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture increases the UPE money to help less fortunate learners, particularly those without uniforms. *These learners are many, and instead of spending our own money on their food and clothing, we might use the UPE fund. Perhaps the Ministry can increase the UPE fund and offer learners in need a special vote in the school budget.* (Participant T1)

Donation of goods to vulnerable learners

Three learners (Participants L1, L3 & L4) believe that if the government distributes school uniforms to underprivileged learners, dropout rates may decrease. Participant L3 remarked that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should purchase stationery, shoes, or school uniforms for underprivileged learners because some do not have access to these items. Participant L1 stated that:

"I believe the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should assist children who do not have school uniforms and shoes. They can even go to schools and give one learner a shirt while giving another learner trousers. As an example, learners may not drop out."

Sensitisation of parents about the importance of education

Participants LST1, SP1 and SP2 explained that parents are unaware of the importance of education and schooling. information., That is, nothing can be changed until parents are educated about the value of education. Participant SP1 emphasised that:

“Parents must be educated. There should be campaigns in which parents are informed about the value of education and the articles in the constitution that discuss children's rights to education, and with that information, they will ensure that their children attend school”.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of this study. The next chapter (Chapter 5) presents the discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the recommendations.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The study's findings are discussed in terms of the main two objectives: 1) factors influencing dropout and the strategies that may help retain learners in school, and 2) factors that contribute to dropout (classified into three categories: learner factors, school factors, and family and community factors). Meanwhile, data from themes based on interventions of schools and parents to ensure learners return to school, factors that influenced learners to return to school, and strategies suggested by both parents, learners, and teachers are discussed in detail below.

5.3 Factors influencing dropout among primary school learners

The following factors were found to be the main school factors that influence dropout among learners in primary school: teachers and teacher-learner relationship, school and classroom environment, school feeding programme, and distance and ageism stigmatisation.

5.3.1 School Factors

5.3.1.1 Teachers and teacher-learner relationship

When problems arise, learners frequently resort to the teachers they know best and believe can help them the most (Hako & Mbango, 2018). However, this study discovered that most learners who dropped out of school and returned to school had no meaningful relationship with their teachers and were rather fearful of them. The Life Skills teachers were unaware of many learners' experiences mentioned during the researcher's interview. It was evident that most learners do not have an open relationship with their teachers and are fearful of them. As a result, learners drop out of school due to challenges faced at school and at home because they were reluctant to inform their teachers that they needed help.

Some learners were afraid to return to school after discovering they had been missing school for a month or more, fearing that teachers would not allow them to enrol in school again. It is important that teachers build positive relationships with their learners in order to assist and support them when they encounter a problem. According to Hasan and Irhaif (2021), learners liked and appreciated teachers who showed empathy and provided help as teachers who demonstrate empathy make it easier for learners to open to them when they are experiencing difficulties.

5.3.1.2 Corporal punishment

According to the Guide to Namibia's Child Care and Protection Act (Act 3 of 2015), corporal punishment is prohibited in Namibia, both at school and at home. However,

some teachers continue to use corporal punishment in schools, prompting learners to drop out of school out of fear. It was revealed that four learners who absent themselves from school for several days were terrified of returning to school because they were worried about being punished by their teachers. Some learners opted to stay in the bush because they were afraid of getting beaten by the teacher when they arrived at school. The results corroborate that of Pedditzi and Fadda (2022), which revealed that teachers that used physical punishment increase the possibility of dropout rates. It is vital that teachers find alternative strategies to discourage undesired behaviours such as leaving school prematurely without inflicting pain on learners.

5.3.1.3 Lack of Inclusive education training

Due to a lack of training in inclusive education, some teachers struggled to assist learners, especially those with emotional and behavioural issues and other difficulties with learning. Nabugoomu (2019) also revealed in her study that teachers at the schools with the highest dropout rate have not received inclusive education training.

Having many teachers without sufficient training in inclusive education in the current education system may hinder the implementation of Inclusive Education policy. Consequently, more learners might suffer exclusion as their learning needs may not be met in the mainstream classroom, and eventually, they might drop out of school. In this study, among all teachers who participated, only one teacher had received inclusive education training. This situation might be different and the dropout by such learners

may have been averted if all Namibian teachers were trained on how to deal with emotional and behavioural difficulties of learners.

5.3.1.4 School and Classroom Environment

The findings of this research showed that educational environment was not conducive to learning. At the time of data collection, the school had only two brick classrooms, with the other classrooms made of mud and some with corrugated iron sheets. The classrooms had gaps through which a snake or goat could enter, and the roofs were all defective. The participants expressed concern about how infrastructure affects them throughout the rainy, winter and summer seasons. Learners are more likely to drop out of school if the learning environment is unfavourable to them. Learning in an unconducive environment does not only discourage and disrupt learners' academic progress but also evoke 'do-not-care' attitudes towards learning. These findings concur with those studies by Mughal et al. (2019) and Nabugoomu (2019), which revealed that a lack of a high-quality learning environment at public schools in remote rural locations negatively affects the educational achievement of some dropout students.

5.3.1.5 School Feeding Programme (SFP)

School feeding programmes have been and will continue to be critical for nutrient provision, academic performance enhancement, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle (Wang & Fawzi, 2020). This study found that when there was no food at school and as a result absenteeism was high as well as rates of dropout. This study confirms that the school feeding programme is associated with higher learner's school attendance and

concentration during lesson presentation. Although it is the Namibian School Feeding Programme (NSFP) policy to provide meals on time, this has not occurred in the last five years. The food was always late and nearing its expiration date. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Nekongo et al. (2015) who revealed that school feeding (maize meal) normally arrives in the last month of the term, and primary school learners struggle to attend school when there is no food at school.

5.3.1.6 Distance to school and ageism stigmatisation

All the learners interviewed for this study were older than their grade level at the time of the interview. These learners began school late, and some are rather old because of grade repetition. Life Skills teachers, and school principals, also confirmed that primary school learners dropped out because they felt they were too old for the grade and some learners were bullied because they were old; and that led them to drop out of school. In fact, the issue of learners starting school late stems from the distance between the school and the areas where the parents live, while others are the result of children who came from Angola and Osire Camp, where they were not schooling. The study also revealed that inland parents kept their children at home until they were old enough to travel long distances to school or to live alone in a place near the school. These results match those observed in earlier studies. For instance, according to Nabugoomu (2019), primary learners in rural areas also refused to attend school because they were tired of walking long distances to school while hungry.

5.3.2 Family/Community Factors

The study identified four community/family factors, namely poverty, household chores, child-headed household, and lack of parental involvement, that influenced the dropout rate in Ncamagoro Circuit.

5.3.2.1 Poverty

This study discovered that dropping out of school is largely associated with household poverty. Learners choose to leave school to contribute to household incomes when they are left to fend for themselves. This finding supports previous research into this area which links dropout and poverty. For example, Bisani (2019) argues that most children who drop out of school live below the poverty line. All the parents interviewed are not employed and four parents do not have national documents that are required to get the government social grant, which means in most houses there is no source of income. Only one parent received the social grant for people living with disability. The parents confirmed that sometimes they do not have food at home as they do not produce enough food to cater for the whole year. Accordingly, previous studies have confirmed that learners from disadvantaged families are more likely to drop out than those from advantaged families (Hirakawa & Taniguchi, 2021).

5.3.2.2 Household chores

This study found that some learners have various responsibilities at home, such as caring for animals, siblings, and grandparents. Some learners dropped out of school because they were exhausted from handling household tasks. The learners stated that

they stayed at home to complete household chores as requested by their parents, and others stayed with their younger siblings while their parents went to work. The present findings seem to be consistent with the research by Wichmann et al. (2019), which found that domestic duties had an impact on learners' low performance and dropout. This study also discovered that the majority of learners who dropped out live in child-headed homes. Children are regularly left alone at home, and the eldest child is usually in Grade 5 or 6. The children are left alone to reside near the school while their parents are farming in the inland. Children are sometimes deprived of food and amenities and are forced to fend for themselves in whatever way they can. As a result, some opt to drop out of school to seek employment, while others join their parents in the inland. It was reported by one of the Life Skills teachers that child-headed households are quite widespread and require substantial attention.

Children who live alone have been found to lack discipline and to be absent from school more frequently than children who live with their parents. Bhengu (2021) confirmed in his study that these children do not have enough time to focus on their academic work because they are overwhelmed by the responsibilities of caring for their siblings. Therefore, they eventually drop out because of the pressures they face at home. Through the process, these children's right to an education is violated.

5.3.2.3 Lack of parental involvement and lack of motivation

The findings of this study suggest that learners who did not receive parental support were more likely to drop out of school. This signifies the importance of parental

involvement in their children's education. Confirming the current results, Worku et al. (2019) affirm that parental education and a lack of desire from family were key contributors to the dropout of primary learners in rural schools. Based on the responses from the four teacher participants in this study, parents are less interested in their children's education, to the point that they do not even respond when the teachers contact them for meetings about their children's behaviour. This calls for parents' educational awareness campaign where teachers, parents and other education stakeholders come together and pave ways for collaboration for the betterment of our future leaders. Studies by Nambala (2022) and Nekongo et al. (2015) confirmed a lack of parental involvement which influenced school dropout. Although parents stated that they encouraged their children to attend school, the teachers indicated that many parents in the community were not interested in their children's education and instead required children to carry out household chores instead of attending school. Some parents kept their children in the garden, particularly during the planting and harvesting seasons (Nabugoomu, 2019). Because there is no collaboration from the parents, it is difficult for teachers to assist children in need. These conflicting results from both parents and teachers indicate that one is trying to clear his/her side and shift the blame to the other and vice versa.

5.3.2.4 Child abuse and mismanagement of social grants

The Namibian government provides vulnerable children with monthly allowances to help them with their financial difficulties. However, this study found that the parents of two children who got the monthly allowance from the government mismanaged the

funds. As such, the children did not have school uniforms or shoes, and their clothes were ripped, and they had no food at home after school. Further, learners reported being abused by their parents. Parents make hurtful comments to their children, leaving them feeling heartbroken. As a result, some children constantly flee from home because they are tired of being whipped by their parents. This study thus found that corporal punishment is a major issue in the Ncamagoro community, and children do not feel safe at home or school since they are subjected to physical violence from their parents and teachers, respectively. This forces them to drop out of school and fend for themselves at a young age. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field. For instance, child maltreatment, according to Mennen et al. (2022) increases the probability of school dropout among learners, and children who are victims of abuse are more likely to exhibit weak social skills and classroom behaviour difficulties. They argued that child abuse nearly triples a child's chances of having educational problems in the first five years of life.

5.3.3 Individual/Learner Factor

This study found that individual factors such as emotional problems, peer influence, academic performance and discipline contributed to dropout among primary learners.

5.3.3.1 Peer influence

Dropout children in the community have a detrimental impact on learners who are at risk of dropping out. It was discovered that boys who dropped out of school influenced younger boys in the community to drop out of school and look after animals or do piece

labour in the village for money. These findings further support the idea of Andrew et al. (2018) who indicated that children who dropped out of school in their neighbourhood motivated others to drop out as well. In this study setting, boys dropped out of primary school at a higher rate than girls. This supports the EMIS (2022) report which shows a high rate of male school leavers at 11% compared to female school leavers at 9.7%. This is particularly concerning given that boys as young as seven years old are dropping out and refusing to return to school.

5.3.3.2 Emotional problems

It has been discovered that learners who drop out frequently exhibit negative emotions at school. When an orphan learner's mother died, he suffered from emotional problems and was unable to attend school. The learner also stated that part of his mental issues was caused by bullying because of him not having a uniform and shoes. Learners who are bullied are more likely to have low self-esteem and finally lose interest in attending school since they are unhappy there. Another learner who dropped out due to teenage pregnancy mentioned that her mother abuses her emotionally at home. These results are in accordance with those of other studies and suggest that most orphans lack family support, causing them to drop out of school and become street children (Ishola & Mitonga, 2016).

5.3.3.3 Academic Performance

This study established that learners who repeat grades are more likely to drop out of school. According to the teachers interviewed for the study, most learners whom

teachers identified as having learning challenges do not attend the learning support sessions that the teachers provide in the afternoon. It is challenging for teachers to assist learners who are unmotivated and unwilling to study. These learners eventually drop out of school because they are embarrassed to be in the same grade as younger learners. One teacher stated that older learners, particularly boys, are difficult to work with, since they do not respect teachers. According to Zorbaz and Ozer (2020), learners who struggle academically or have learning disabilities acquire low self-esteem as they repeat grades and become older.

5.3.3.4 Teenage Pregnancy

A few learners in primary school drop out of school because of teenage pregnancy. This study revealed that girls are persuaded to become associated with boys by those who have supportive partners to receive money for hygiene and food. This finding corroborates the ideas of Cruz et al. (2021) who show a strong cause-and-effect relationship between adolescent pregnancy and school dropout, aided by economic fragility. One participant in this study stated that she dropped out to care for her infant because there was no one at home to assist her with nursing the baby. The distraught girl told how she was often stressed because her baby cried at night and her mother made hurtful remarks to her.

All in all, this study has discovered that parental and community factors have a strong impact on dropout in the Ncamagoro circuit. Parental factors such as poverty, child abuse and a lack of parental involvement were the root cause of many individual factors

that influence dropout, such as discipline, emotional problems, lack of motivation and teenage pregnancy. Learners who were abused at home verbally and physically were having emotional problems. These learners became victims even to their peers as they faced bullying at school. The distance travelled by learners to school was identified as the main leading factor to ageism stigma. Lastly, corporal punishment and lack of extramural activities at school demotivated learners to attend school.

5.4 Strategies to reduce the dropout rate

The findings of this study suggest some strategies to reduce the dropout rate in school, particularly in Kavango West Region. Parents should work with teachers by attending parent-teacher meetings and visiting the school to inquire about their children's behaviour and academic performance. This may assist parents in better understanding their children, identifying obstacles they may experience at school and at home, and assisting them in reaching their full potential. According to Perron (2018), a positive interaction between parents and teachers has a positive effect on a child's development. Reinforcing collaboration among stakeholders, such as community leaders, educators, and government officials, may provide considerable gains in tackling the issues that cause students to drop out. The ecological system's exosystem establishes that successful collaboration among system stakeholders supports healthy child development (Wahedi, 2016).

This study discovered that extracurricular activities encourage learners to stay in school. One participant in this study described how extracurricular activities impacted learners' positive interactions with teachers at their school. This allows learners to be honest with

their teachers about personal issues at home or school. As a result, teacher motivation and support improve children's growth (Worku et al., 2019; Wahedi, 2016).

The participants also recommended that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture collaborate with other ministries to build hostels in their circuits. This would help schools to be able to accommodate learners who travel long distances to and from school as well as those who must wait until a certain age to be able to walk the distances. Shiningayamwe (2023) emphasised that school hostels could protect learners from social problems in their communities, reduce long commutes to school, and discourage dangerous conduct after school, while encouraging academic focus and minimising dropout rates.

This study found that poverty is the primary cause of school dropout in the Ncamagoro circuit. Nambala (2022) and Nekongo et al. (2015) both affirm this. This study found that the government does not provide grants to any of the parents or children who participated in the study. This is because children and their parents lack the necessary national documentation to qualify for the grant. Two participants recommended that the government offer national documentation for the community's elderly people and children, particularly those who arrived from Angola and Osire Camp, for them to benefit from the social grant. This may aid in the reduction of poverty in the community.

Khama (2022) discovered that School Feeding Programmes improve learner attendance while decreasing dropout rates. To increase attendance and lower dropout rates, the

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should ensure that meals arrive on time at school.

The study discovered that most learners who dropped out and returned to school were encouraged by their teachers through communication with their parents. Teachers sent letters to the parents inviting them to school and encouraging them to bring their children back to school. Some learners who dropped out due to bullying and/or after the death of the parents, returned to school after receiving counselling from counsellors from Project Hope and social workers from the hospital.

5.5 Conclusion

This research aimed to explore factors that contribute to dropout among primary school learners in rural areas and effective strategies to reduce the dropout rate in Ncamagoro circuit. Based on the qualitative analysis of factors that influenced dropout, it can be concluded that social economic and system factors, lack of motivation among learners, limited stakeholders' collaboration, and limited knowledge about the importance of education among parents and learners have a major influence on the dropout among learners in rural primary school. The study also revealed that male learners in Ncamagoro circuit drop out of primary school more than female learners; male learners drop out at an early age as early as six years old. More male learners dropped out due to family factors such as child abuse, and system factors such as overage and long distance walked to and from school. On the other hand, more female learners dropped out due to social factors such as emotional problems and child-headed household factors. Some

learners returned to school because of the pressure applied by the teachers by asking them to return to school.

The study further found that more teachers in the circuit did not receive inclusive education training, including Life Skills teachers. This made it difficult for teachers to deal with emotional problems that learners face at school and home. Learners who returned to school still experienced emotional problems with little to no support as teachers and parents are unaware of the challenges these learners face at school and home.

The study also found that there is a gap between primary school enrolment and secondary school enrolment. This reveals that more learners in the circuit do not enrol for secondary education. Out of 20 schools in the circuit, 11 schools are Junior Primary with some having up to grade 2 only. Nine schools offer senior primary which includes the three Combined Schools. Although the Circuit accommodates a lot of learners, there is not a school with hostels in the circuit. Upgrading more schools to secondary schools and building hostels could reduce the dropout rate in Ncamagoro Circuit.

This study clearly illustrates the factors that influenced dropout among primary school learners and the strategies to be employed to reduce the dropout rate in the circuit. However, the study raises the question of how schools and parents support learners who returned to school. To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could address the support needed by learners who once dropped out and return to school.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore suggested the following recommendations.

Recommendations to the schools

- Attending community events can help teachers create solid relationships with parents. This may increase the involvement of parents in the education of their children.
- Collaboration between the school and the community, through leaders in the community such as church leaders and headmen and headwomen, is required to develop a relationship to encourage learners, educate them about the importance of school, and assist in monitoring learners' behaviour in the community.
- This study found that some teachers still use corporal punishment. Instead of using punitive measures, teachers should use approaches that enforce positive behaviour. School principals should prohibit corporal punishment and promote respectful teacher-learner relationships in schools.
- The study suggests that schools work with community members to create activities for children at school and in the community that drive learners to stay in school and help dropouts develop a love of learning.
- This study discovered that certain learners who drop out of school usually have low academic achievement. Teachers must effectively implement the learning support programme for learners with learning disabilities and those who have previously been absent to attain basic competencies.

Recommendation to learners

- It is recommended that learners communicate openly with their teachers when facing life issues that impair their learning. It will enable teachers to seek assistance from the appropriate authorities, on behalf of learners who are facing issues at home or at school which may lead them to drop out of school.
- Participating in school based social activities may help learners develop social skills and for relationship with teachers. This fosters trust in teachers and enables learners to open up to them when they have difficulties.

Recommendation to the parents and the community

- The study recommends that parents collaborate with teachers to develop a love of education in their children, address challenges that they encounter, and discover solutions to those problems.
- Community and religious leaders should urge children to go to school. They should also urge parents to attend teacher-parent meetings at school to discuss challenges their children are facing and how best to support them, as well as other community gatherings hosted by community leaders.
- The study additionally recommends that school board members collaborate with parents, community leaders, and law enforcement to curb children's behaviours, such as drinking and drug abuse, which may impact school dropout.

Recommendations to the Government

- The Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture should provide in-service training for teachers on inclusive education and learning support so that they can provide appropriate support to learners who have various learning difficulties.
- The Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, through the NSFP, must ensure that all schools receive maize meals on time. More learners drop out of primary school because of hunger and absenteeism rises when there is no food at school. Delivering meals on time will reduce dropout rates and absenteeism.
- As advocated by Nekongo et al. (2015), a policy should be devised to reprimand learners who miss school without valid reasons to ensure that all children under the age of 16 attend school. The policy should be created in such a way that it encourages collaboration among all education stakeholders to effectively minimise dropout rates.
- The Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture must employ social workers or assistance social workers in each school to support and collaborate with Life Skills teachers in identifying social problems that learners at risk of dropping out face, providing counselling, and motivating them to attend school until they complete their education.
- Stakeholder collaboration must be encouraged in order to promote awareness about the value of education and address issues such as child abuse, alcoholism, and child-headed families. This may involve:

- Community counselling or campaigns to increase awareness about the effects of child abuse and child-headed homes in partnership with the Ministries of Gender and Child Welfare, Health and Social Services, and Security. This programme aims to educate parents about the impacts of alcohol and child abuse, as well as how to help children with emotional and behavioural issues, as well as teenage mothers.
- Collaboration with ministries such as the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Health and Social Services to provide community counselling for children, educate them on the value of education, and encourage them to stay in school until they graduate.
- The study discovered that there is a concerning gap in the enrolment between primary school and secondary school. Additionally, out of twenty schools in the circuit, there is only three combined schools, and no school has hostels in the entire circuit. Hence, the study recommends that the government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, must work with private sector organisations to transform junior primary schools into senior primary schools and senior primary schools into secondary schools. This will help to ensure that secondary education enrolment rates remain consistent. Furthermore, hostels should be built in both primary and combined schools to solve the issue of child-headed homes as well as the distance learners must go to and from school every day.

- The Ministry of Home Affairs must work with community leaders to make it easier for community members, particularly Namibian-born children to get national documents to qualify for government social grants.
- The study concludes that more research is needed to identify effective strategies for teachers to assist learners who have previously dropped out of school and returned to school, as well as the factors that may contribute to high dropout rates among male learners, particularly in primary schools in the region.

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Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: **WKC0011**

Date: 04 July 2022

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC) 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 **School of Education (Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses) Decentralized Ethics Committee**.

Title of Project: Exploring determinants of dropout of learners in rural primary schools in Kavango west region of Namibia

Researcher: Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda

Student number: 201310821

Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee
4. The ethics committee 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.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Job U. Hengari'.

Dr. Job U. Hengari (Chairperson, Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses Decentralized Ethics Committee)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davis Mumbengegwi'.

Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi
(Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

Appendix 2: Research Permission Letter from UNAM

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation & Development

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park, Office F223 - Fblock, Second Floor

☎ +264 61 206 4673; E-mail:kmbulu@unam.na; URL: http://www.unam.edu.na



RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Date: 01/08/2022

Student Name: Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda

Student Number: 201310821

Programme: Master of Education in Inclusive Education

Approved Research Title: Exploring determinants of dropout of learners in rural primary schools in Okavango west region of Namibia.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

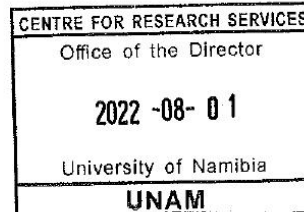
I hereby confirm that the above-mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached Ethical Clearance Certificate. Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.


Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AEE Shikongo', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. AEE Shikongo
Head: Postgraduate Support Services
Tel: +264 61 206 3129
E-mail: aeshikongo@unam.na



Appendix 3: Research Permission Letter from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

<p>Enquiries: Mr. G. Munene Tel: +264 61 -293 3202 Fax: +264 61- 293 3922 Email: Gibson.Munene@moe.gov.na File no: 13/2/9/1</p>	<p>Luther Street, Govt. Office Park Private Bag 13186 Windhoek Namibia</p>
---	--

Ms Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda
Email: 6221911/tkigonda@ymail.com

Dear Ms Igonda,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN KAVANGO WEST REGION

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 01 August 2022 seeking for permission to conduct academic research in the Kavango West region for your Masters of Education studies which is focusing on: "*Exploring Determinants of Dropout of Learners in Rural Primary Schools in Kavango West Region in Namibia.*"

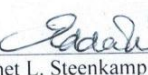
Permission has been granted to you. However, you have to seek for further clearance from the Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture to ensure that:


- staff members' normal work is not disrupted during your interviews;
- participation is voluntary; and,
- parental consent should be granted by the parents / guardians of all participants who are under the age of 16 years.

Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr. G. Munene on the above provided contacts at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of your research findings at the above indicated details.

We wish you the best in conducting your research and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your studies.

Yours sincerely,


Sanet L. Steenkamp
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director

Page 1 of 1

Appendix 4: Research Permission Letter from Kavango West Director of Education



**KAVANGO WEST REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE**

Tel No: (066) 274200
Email: kavangowesteac@yahoo.com
Enquiries: Leena Muhoka
Ref: 26 / 1 / 16

Private Bag 6193, Nkurenkuru
Namibia


23 August 2022

Ms. Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY ON THE TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAVANGO WEST REGION, (NCAMAGORO CIRCUIT)

1. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture Kavango West wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 22 August 2022, seeking permission to conduct an academic research for your Master in Inclusive Education on the topic: **Factors that contribute to the higher number of dropout among learners in primary schools and further explore strategies that can help retain learners in school until they complete Secondary school.**
2. Permission is hereby granted to you provided you seek for further clearance from the Circuit Inspector of Education where you wish to conduct your research to ensure that:
 - Permission is sought from the School Principals
 - Teaching and Learning is not interrupted
 - Participation is voluntary
3. Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry of Education Kavango West after completion of your study. You may contact the Deputy Director for Programme and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of a summary of your research findings.
4. We wish you all the best in conducting your research.

Sincerely,


PONTIANUS V. MUSORE
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
KAVANGO WEST




DATE

Appendix 5: Research Permission Letter from Inspector of Education Ncamagoro Circuit



KAVANGO WEST REGIONAL COUNCIL			
DIRECTORATE EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE			
Tel No: (066) 264976		Private Bag 6193, Nkurenkuru	
Email: kavangowestec@yahoo.com		Namibia	
Enquiries	: Mr. Kantana B	Telephone No.	: 26466-255774
Cell	: 0812134784	Fax No	:
E:mail	: kantbenz@gmail.com	Date	: 01/09/2022

NCAMAGORO CIRCUIT

To: Ms Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda

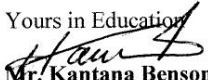
RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY ON THE TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NCAMAGORO CIRCUIT

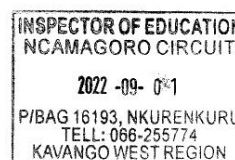
We received your letter dated 25 August 2022 on the above mentioned request.

The Inspector of Education and the Circuit Management Committee have granted you the permission to come and conduct research on: **Factors that contribute to the higher number of drop out among learners in primary schools and further explore strategies that can help retain in school until they complete Secondary school.**

Please ensure that teaching and learning is not interrupted on the chosen schools and participation is voluntary.

We wish you a fruitful visit to do research in our circuit schools

Yours in Education

Mr. Kantana Benson
Inspector of Education
Ncamagoro Circuit



Appendix 6: Certificate of Consent

I understand the research is about collecting data about the factors contributing towards school dropout in our community. I understand that there is no physical harm involved. I understand that the information obtained from this study will be used to help and find solution to dropout problem in our region.

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

.....

Name of Participant (print)

Signature of Participant

.....

Date (day/month/year)

If illiterate

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

.....

Name of Witness (print)

Signature of Witness

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Statement by the Researcher/Person taking Consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Meet at a comfortable place the participant agreed to meet.
2. Read and explain the instrument and instructions.
3. Start the interview and the conversation will be recorded until the end of the interview.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

.....

Name of Researcher/Person taking Consent (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

If Assisted by an Interpreter: Statement by Interpreter

I have accurately interpreted the information sheet to the potential participant in (insert name of target language), and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Meet at a comfortable place the participant agreed to meet.
2. Read and explain the instrument and instructions.
3. Start the interview and the conversation will be recorded until the end of the interview.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been interpreted correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

I declare that I will not divulge any information that I interpret during this research intervention to a third party outside this study.

.....

.....

Name of Interpreter (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Appendix 7: Certificate of Informed Parental Consent

I have been asked to give consent for my daughter/son to participate in this research study which will involve her completing one interview.

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily for my child to be a participant in this study.

.....
Name of Parent/Guardian (print) Signature of
Parent/Guardian

.....
Date (day/month/year)

If illiterate

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

.....
Name of Witness (print) Signature of Witness

.....
Date (day/month/year)

Statement by the Researcher/Person taking Consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the parent of the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Meet at a comfortable place the participant agreed to meet.
2. Read and explain the instrument and instructions.
3. Start the interview and the conversation will be recorded until the end of the interview.

I confirm that the parent was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

.....

Name of Researcher/Person taking Consent (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

If Assisted by an Interpreter: Statement by Interpreter

I have accurately interpreted the information sheet to the parent of the potential participant in (insert name of target language), and to the best of my ability made sure that they understand that the following will be done:

1. Meet at a comfortable place the participant agreed to meet.
2. Read and explain the instrument and instructions.
3. Start the interview and the conversation will be recorded until the end of the interview.

I confirm that the parent was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the parent have been interpreted correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

I declare that I will not divulge any information that I interpret during this research intervention to a third party outside this study.

.....

.....

Name of Interpreter (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Appendix 8: Certificate of Assent

I understand the research is about collecting data about the factors contributing towards school dropout in our community. I understand that there is no physical harm involved.

I understand that the information obtained from this study will be used to help and find solution to dropout problem in our region.

I have read this information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in the research.

Only if child assents:

.....

.....

Name of Child (print)

Signature of Child

.....

Date (day/month/year)

If illiterate

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

.....

Name of Witness (not a parent/guardian) (print)

.....

.....

Signature of Witness

Date (day/month/year)

I have accurately read or witnessed the accurate reading of the assent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given assent freely.

.....

.....

Name of Researcher (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Statement by the Researcher/Person taking Assent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Meet at a comfortable place the participant agreed to meet.
2. Read and explain the instrument and instructions.
3. Start the interview and the conversation will be recorded until the end of the interview.

I confirm that the child was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

.....

Name of Researcher/Person taking Consent (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Confirmation	Initial
Copy of IAF provided to the participant	

Confirmation	Yes (X)	No (X)	Initial
Parent/Guardian has signed an informed consent.			

If Assisted by an Interpreter: Statement by Interpreter

I have accurately interpreted the information sheet to the child in (insert name of target language), and to the best of my ability made sure that the child understands that the following will be done:

1. Meet at a comfortable place the participant agreed to meet.
2. Read and explain the instrument and instructions.

3. Start the interview and the conversation will be recorded until the end of the interview.

I confirm that the child was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by them have been interpreted correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

I declare that I will not divulge any information that I interpret during this research intervention to a third party outside this study.

.....

.....

Name of Interpreter (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Appendix 9: Interview Guide for Principals and Teachers

Dear Participant,

My name is Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda (Student number 201310821). I am a Master of Education (Inclusive Education) student at the University of Namibia. I am conducting research to explore determinants of school dropout among primary rural-school learners in the Kavango West Region and to identify strategies that might help retain rural primary school learners in the Kavango West Region of Namibia. During the interview, I will ask you some questions about why learners dropout of school and how to help learners remain in school. The results obtained from this study will be used to come up with methods that will help learners in rural primary schools remain in school until they have completed their studies.

You are selected to participate in this study because we believe that you have rich information about the reasons learner's dropout of school in this village and what can be done to help learners remain in school and complete their studies. The information in this interview is for research purpose only. It will be treated confidentially. Please respond to each question with your honest opinion.

After you have agreed to take part in this study, I will come to a place we have agreed to meet during the afternoon. I will start with the interview and record our conversation using an audio recorder. During the interview, you are allowed to ask any question about anything that is not clear to you or that you want to find out. After we are done with our conversation, you are free to continue with your day.

Instructions

- Your name will not be used in a manner that links you to your responses.
- Please feel free to answer in any language you feel comfortable communicating in.
- There are no right or wrong answers in this interview.
- Please feel free to respond to the best of your knowledge.
- Feel free to ask for clarifications where you do not understand.
- You are allowed to withdraw from this interview at any time

Section A: Biographical Information

1. What grade do you teach? _____
2. How many years have you been in the teaching profession?

3. Have you ever received inclusive education training? _____

Section B: Factors that Lead to School Dropout

1. What characteristics that learners who dropout of school have in common?
2. What are your views about the participation of learners with special educational needs in primary education at your school?
3. It has been observed that learners in rural schools drop out of school more than those in urban areas, what are your views on this?
4. What reasons do learners at your school who drop out of school provide?

Section C: Strategies to Address School Dropout

1. How does the school handle school dropout? Any strategy that is used to address the risk factors?
2. What strategies do you think teachers may apply to eliminate the dropout factors at school?
3. What do you suggest the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture should do to reduce dropout among these learners?
4. What do you think parents need to do to help reduce dropout among these learners?

THANK YOU, FOR YOUR TIME!

Appendix 10: Interview Guide for Parents

Dear Parent,

My name is Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda (Student number 201310821). I am a Master of Education (Inclusive Education) student at the University of Namibia. I am conducting research to explore determinants of school dropout among primary rural-school learners in the Kavango West Region and to identify strategies that might help retain rural primary school learners in the Kavango West Region of Namibia. During the interview, I will ask you some questions about why learners dropout of school and how to help learners remain in school. The results obtained from this study will be used to come up with methods that will help learners in rural primary schools remain in school until they have completed their studies.

You are selected to participate in this study because we believe that you have rich information about the reasons learner's dropout of school in this village and what can be done to help learners remain in school and complete their studies. The information in this interview is for research purpose only. It will be treated confidentially. Please respond to each question with your honest opinion.

After you have agreed to take part in this study, I will come to a place we have agreed to meet during the afternoon. I will start with the interview and record our conversation using an audio recorder. During the interview, you are allowed to ask any question about anything that is not clear to you or that you want to find out. After we are done with our conversation, you are free to continue with your day.

Instructions

- Your name will not be used in a manner that links you to your responses.
- Please feel free to answer in any language you feel comfortable communicating in.
- There are no right or wrong answers in this interview.
- Please feel free to respond to the best of your knowledge.
- Feel free to ask for clarifications where you do not understand.
- You are allowed to withdraw from this interview at any time.

Section A: Biographical Information

1. How many school learners live in your house? _____
2. How many learners ever dropped out of school? _____

Section B: Factors that Lead to School Dropouts

1. What brought the child to the decision of dropping out of the school?
2. As a parent, did you observe any other factors that you believe have possibly contributed to the dropout of the child?
3. What did you do after realizing that the child has stopped going to school?
4. What do you suggest the school should do to address the school dropout problem?
5. What do you suggest the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should do to reduce dropout?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Appendix 11: Interview Guide for Learners

Dear Learner,

My name is Tuwilika Kondjeni Igonda (Student number 201310821). I am a Master of Education (Inclusive Education) student at the University of Namibia. I am conducting research to explore determinants of school dropout among primary rural-school learners in the Kavango West Region and to identify strategies that might help retain rural primary school learners in school in this region. During the interview, I will ask you some questions about why learners dropout of school and how to help learners remain in school. The results obtained from this study will be used to come up with methods that will help learners in rural primary schools remain in school until they have completed their studies.

You are selected to participate in this study because we believe that you have rich information about the reasons learners dropout of school in this village and what can be done to help learners remain in school and complete their studies. The information in this interview is for research purpose only. It will be treated confidentially. Please respond to each question with your honest opinion.

After you have agreed to take part in this study, I will come to a place we have agreed to meet during the afternoon. I will start with the interview and record our conversation using an audio recorder. During the interview, you are allowed to ask any question

about anything that is not clear to you or that you want to find out. After we are done with our conversation, you are free to continue with your day.

Instructions

- Your name will not be used in a manner that links you to your responses.
- Please feel free to answer in any language you feel comfortable communicating in.
- There are no right or wrong answers in this interview.
- Please feel free to respond to the best of your knowledge.
- Feel free to ask for clarifications where you do not understand.
- You are allowed to withdraw from this interview at any time

Section A: Background Information

1. Name of the School? _____
2. In what Grade are you? _____
3. Which of the following is your age group?

Age group	Cross the appropriate box
9 – 11	
12 – 14	
15 – 17	
18 – 20	

Others	
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4. How far do you think is the school from home?

Distance between the school and home	Cross
1 – 2 km	
2 – 3 km	
3 – 4 km	
4 – 5 km	
5 – 6 km	
6 – 7 km	
Others	

5. Whom do you stay with at home? _____

Section B: Factors that Lead to School Dropout

1. Do you like coming to school?
2. Are there days you don't feel like coming to school?
3. On which days do you not feel like coming to school?
4. Why did you leave school earlier?
5. What motivated you to come back to school?
6. What difficulties do you most experience at school?
7. What difficulties do you most experience at home which affect your schoolwork?

8. What should the teachers do to ensure that all learners remain in school?
9. What should the parents do to ensure that all learners remain in school?
10. What should the government do to ensure that all learners remain in school?

THANK YOU, FOR YOUR TIME!

Appendix 12: Observation Checklist

Research Topic: Exploring Determinants of Dropout of learners in rural primary schools in Kavango West Region of Namibia

General objective: To analyse the school and classroom settings and the learners' situations.

School

1. Learner, classroom, and school setting

	Criterion	Yes	No	Comments
1	Are participants (learners) having school uniform?			

2	Is there a sign of negative emotions in learners?			
3	Is the school clean?			
4	Are the building infrastructures usable?			
5	Is school feeding program active?			
6	Is there a playground for learners?			
7	Are the classrooms overcrowded?			
8	Are the classrooms environment enticing?			
9	Are learners free to interact with other learners and the teacher?			
10	Any sign of bullying in classroom and in the school environment?			