

**THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF LEARNER'S DROPOUT AT THE SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT OF NORTH-
WEST PROVINCE**

BY

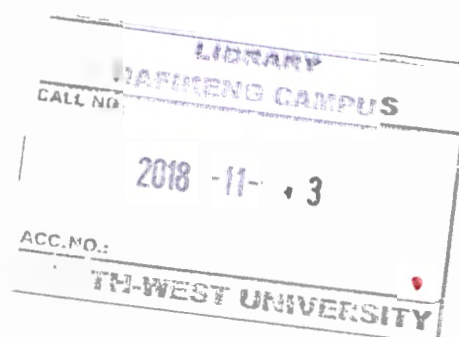
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN EDUCATION
MANAGEMENT AT MAFIKENG CAMPUS OF THE NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY**

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CERTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation entitled, “The causes and effects of students’ dropout at Dinokana Secondary Schools, Ngaka Modiri Molema District” in the North-West Province in South Africa, written by Tisetso Davidson Mokgosi, is hereby recommended for acceptance for examination.

Supervisor Dr. E. M. Mwenesongole



DECLARATION

I, Mokgosi Tisetso Davidson, declare that this dissertation for the degree of Master of Education at North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university and has not been submitted by any other person to this nor any other university. This is my own work in design and execution, and that all the sources used have been duly acknowledged.

Mokgosi Tisetso Davidson

Signature-----

Date-----

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the causes and effects of learner dropout in four selected secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district of North-West Province and to come with suggestions on how to control this dropout problem.

This study examined factors influencing learners to dropout and how these learners are affected by their actions of leaving school before they graduate from school. The researcher used a qualitative research method, using the semi-structured interviews, focus group, observation and document analysis to find out the reasons and contributing factors that led learners to drop out of school.

The researcher made use of the purposive sampling because it is relevant and accurate sampling method for participants to narrate the stories. In purposive sampling, the researcher wanted rich information from participants who could express themselves about the experience of dropping out of school.

The respondents in the research study were 32 learners and 16 teachers both from the four secondary schools, and 16 parents of the learners who were sampled in this study. The four secondary schools are situated in the Dinokana village in Ngaka Modiri Molema district.

The research data found a number of factors within families, within schools, within communities that affected learners to drop out or graduate from secondary school. These factors were: Family-child relationship, absenteeism, family problems, economic impossibilities, view of education, teacher-learner relationship, in-class behaviours of teachers, school structure, negative school atmosphere, adaptation to school and individual reasons.

These factors were complex issues that should be handled with great care by skilled and professional people. As learners spent most of their entire time in the school environment, teachers have become role-models and inspirations to assist learners to alleviate their problems. It was important that learners with social and academic problems should get professional help at an early stage. The teachers who were, due to the situation they found themselves in, were obliged to help these learners, were not well-equipped to give the necessary assistance. Suggestions and recommendations were adopted to alleviate the situation.

Keywords: Dropout, absenteeism, disadvantaged, school, learner and polices.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to understand and to interpret the composite collection of factors that contribute to the phenomenon of learners dropping out of school. In this study, the researcher wanted to investigate the causes and effects of learners' dropouts in the selected secondary schools at Ngaka Modiri Molema District of the North-West Province. Ngaka Modiri Molema is the district in which these four schools are located. The four schools names are; (i) School 'A' secondary, (ii) School 'B' secondary, (iii) School 'C' secondary and (iv) School 'D' secondary. The four secondary schools are given pseudo names to protect them to be recognised in this research study. Parr and Bonitz, (2015) said that a critical need exists for research on learner dropouts that go beyond each learner characteristics, to include the influence of school factors on learner's educational decisions. As the researcher, the deepest concern is about the effectiveness of education in the rural areas, and about the alarming number of learners who dropout of the schooling system. Another motivating factor to undertake the study was the feeling that the profession of teaching has lost its status in public schools.

School dropout is defined as the failure of a learner in completing the current stage of education he or she is enrolled for several years (Dekkers & Claasen, 2012). School dropout rates of learners in a country are discussed as an important criterion that shows the quality of education in that country and this is regarded as an important predictor of the existing and future problems of the education system (Graeff-Martins, Oswald & Rohde, 2016). If the learners are turning their back on the education they are provided, it means that the school and teachers need to ask themselves the questions (a). What is wrong in the education? (b)Is something happening in their schools and classrooms that distract learners from education? (Shute & Cooper, 2015)

The researcher is convinced that there is an urgent need for scholarly research into the phenomenon of school dropouts that is prevalent in the schooling system in disadvantaged communities. To this point, this study on school dropouts took place in the four secondary schools in the rural place of Ngaka Modiri Molema district, in the North West Province, South Africa. In the study, the researcher analysed the policy documents that are relevant to dropouts, especially the School Fee Exemption policy, that sets out the amended national norms and standards for the school funding of public schools in relation to compulsory attendance and human rights, in terms of Section 84 of the South African Schools Act (1996) (SASA).

In South Africa, the quality of basic education is of great importance to the general and economic wellbeing of any nation. If the school system fails to produce well-educated learners, the effects on the socio-economic standard of the people and their workplace are numerous. Nearly 21 years since the first democratic election, the South African school system unfortunately still suffers from some difficulties, partly due to the country's long legacy of apartheid. Despite government's substantial efforts over the years to improve access and quality in education, learner performance is still low.

According to Murtin (2013), the quality of basic education for a large proportion of Black learners is substandard. In addition, Murtin (2013) explained that education is a purposive aid that equips learners to independently complete their tasks in life. Thus, education is deliberate assistance for children towards their maturity. Education helps learners to accept a particular approved order and orientates them to progress independently in terms of that order. This contributes to the learners becoming more human.

Uys and Alant (2015) also found that there is no equality in access to resources, such as libraries, laboratories and computers, between previously disadvantaged schools. Furthermore, Murtin (2013), states that grade retention is especially high in grade 10 and grade 11 and also indicates that 58% of the learners drop out of school system

before matriculating. We found that 70% of the learners who started in grade 1 dropped out before finishing grade 12. Pugatch's(2012) study concluded that nearly one third of learners are re-enrolled in school, after having been dis-enrolled for at least one year.

Regular attendance at school is essential for learners' academic achievements, language development and social development. Learners who attend regularly can be successful in their future professional lives through achieving work-related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others to accomplish a goal (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). It is seen that learners who attend regularly have higher academic success, standardized test scores, graduation averages, university entrance rates and job opportunities (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Ferrell, Nance, Torres, Torres, 2013; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014).

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The researcher has been an educator at School E Secondary School for the past twenty five years. The researcher school was not one of the selected four secondary schools under the investigation in this study; hence the researcher had no intention to be bias. The researcher has observed a worrying number of learners who leave school without completing either Grade 9 or Grade 12. The researcher personally experienced the high rate of absenteeism and juvenile delinquency that led to learners dropping out of school. The researcher is a chairperson of disciplinary committee consisting of five members, dealing with matters of ill-discipline, truancy, misconducts and student dropout.

The study was conducted at four secondary schools, in line with the ethical needs. Thornton, Darmody and McCoy (2013), found out that the community where the study took place, argues that the whole community is earmarked by dysfunctional families and this is worsened by the negative aspects of overpopulation, and by teenagers in the community prostituting themselves to meet their everyday needs.

Ngobese, C, 2013. National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa (NUMSA) national spokesperson expressed disappointment in Department of Basic Education (DBE) for poor performance regarding the matriculation results of 2013 with the decline in the national pass to 60.6 percent. The Union stated that the results obtained confirmed the need for the Department of Education to help improving poverty in working-class and poor households (Ngobese, 2013). Ngobese further stated that the situation resembled a bomb that was waiting to explode. The poor matriculation results have given rise to a devastating number of school dropouts in our public schools. Schools attended by coloured and black learners tend to report high dropout and failure rates, with the majority of the learners involved facing a lifetime of having to work for a low wages. Modisaotsile (2015) states that, if we are serious about the pro-poor policies, we need to place dropout prevention at the top of the agenda.

The research study is based on Section 29 of the Constitution (1996) which stipulates that every child has a right to receive basic education. Uys and Alant(2015) confirm the researcher's argument that the receipt of a basic education is a human right, and it is an essential element of well-being in the modern world. Uys and Alant (2015) also said that the quality of basic education is of great significance to the society and the economic well-being of the country. In the South African situation, basic education begins at Grade 1 and ends at Grade 9. This means that those learners who leave school before completing Grade 9 are regarded as dropouts. However, Grade 9 is not yet an exit point, at the end of which a learner receives a school-leaving certificate. Prior to the introduction of the new Constitution, the term "dropout" referred to a learner who left school before completing Grade12.

In terms of South African School Act, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) must investigate the reasons for learner's absence from schools, and take the necessary steps to solve the situation. The school system should aim to retain learners in the schools for as long as possible, given the legislative provisions for compulsory education, and post-compulsory schooling should be made progressively more

available Since no country can afford to have large numbers of its citizens undereducated and incapable of working in gainful employment, every effort must be made to control the phenomenon of dropping out of school. In South Africa, dropout rates are very high: 60 percent of learners who enrolled in Grade 1 dropped out before reaching Grade 12. Modisaotsile (2012) reported on very high dropout rates and low literacy and numeracy levels, claiming that less than 50% of learners enrolled in Grade 1 finish Grade 12.

In South Africa, the major worry in education is teenage pregnancy which leads to school dropout, which is described as leaving school before completing a given class in a given school year (Department of Education, 2006). Although as many as 60 percent of South African children who start school dropout before reaching high school (Department of Education, 2003), very little is known about the complications adjoining the problem.

In terms of Section 3 (1) (a) of South African School Act (1996) a learner must be compelled or forced to attend school from the age of seven until she/he reaches the age of fifteen or reaches grade nine. In terms of Section 3(5) of South African School Acts(1996) states that if a learner is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of subsection (1) is not enrolled at or fails to attend school, the head of the department may:

- i) Investigate the circumstances of the learner's absence from school;
- ii) Take appropriate measure to remedy the situation;
- iii) Failing such remedy, head of department, can issue a written notice to a parent of the learner requiring compliance with subsection (1).

Any parent or guardian who, without any cause and after a written notice from the head of the department fails to comply with subsection(1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a period of not less than six months. The education is essential in changing the values and

attitudes of many students in today's world. The education and training system comprises of a vision of lifelong learning, which is learner- centred. The perspective shifts the focus towards school attendance and completion as a right of citizens that is to be safeguarded in any democracy.

In terms of Section 8 of South African School Act (1996) school governing body must adopt a code of conduct for learners, based upon the outcomes of consultation with learners, parents and the educators of the school. The code of conduct must aim at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate the effective teaching and learning in a school set up. In terms of Section 8(5) of South African School Act(1996)it is stipulated that a school's code of conduct must include a proper legal process in order to ensure that a learner who is guilty of misconduct is treated fairly by the disciplinary committee of governing body.

In terms of Section 3(n) of National Education Policy Act 27 of the Constitution (1996) the Minister of Education must determine national policy for the control and discipline of learners at the education institutions. In terms of Section 28 (2) of the Constitution (1996) states that the best interest of a child is of a paramount importance in every matter concerning a child. Again in terms of Section 3(1) of South African School Act of the Constitution (1996) stipulates that a learner must be forced to attend school until that learner reaches the age of fifteen, or reaches his or her grade 9.

Learner Attendance Policy, (Notice 361 of 2013). Government Gazette, GG33150, 4 May, stipulates that female learners who are pregnant are permitted to come to school and write their examinations. All the four secondary schools adhere to the rules written on the Government Gazette of South Africa. Learners drop out of school for a variety of reasons, including (a) missing too much school, (b) academic failure, (c) poor relationships with teachers and peers, (d) pregnancy, and (e) family or job obligations (Shutjer, 2012).

In 2011, 7,1% of 16-24 year-olds dropped out of high school in the United States (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2012). Learners who did not complete their high school education face a variety of negative consequences throughout their lives. Parr and Bonitz, (2015) stated that the employment rate of high school dropouts in 2008 was 45.7%, compared to 68.1% for high school graduates, and 86.7% for those with a least a college degree. High school dropout is often associated with lower wages, a delicate vulnerability in economic recessions, poor health, reliance on public assistance, high rates of divorce and being single parent (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

In addition, high school dropouts have a much higher incarceration and institutionalization rate (6.3%) compared to high school graduates (1.0%). Parr and Bonitz, (2015) stated high school dropout also has a negative effect on society; the consequences include lost tax revenue at national and local levels, increased spending on social programs, and difficulty attracting business that rely on a highly educated workforce. Parr and Bonitz, (2015) reported that one of the most widely studied predictors is parental socio-economic status (SES); a high SES is associated with lower likelihood of dropping out of school.

Different authors have conducted studies on dropping out of school. According to Sittichai (2012:156) part- time learners' dropout of Butondo Secondary school in Zambia stated absenteeism as the main cause. Alat and Alat (2014) found out that adolescents have opportunities to find peer groups that will encourage and support undesirable behaviour such as bunking classes, absenteeism and withdrawing themselves from school completely. Thornton et al., (2013) realized that the victims of cyber bullying and physical bullying do not report the incidents and victims ran away from school, because they are emotionally, spiritually and physically abused.

Thornton et al., (2013) reported that the extent to which a person is socially and academically integrated has an effect on his/her academic achievements. The prior knowledge and the people he/she hangs out with encourage his/her decision of leaving

school. Balfanz and Byrens (2012) confirmed that among learners who dropout from school studies an average of seventy percent come from low income families. Less educated families are the most likely to experience the problem of dropout. De Witte et al., (2013:20) said if learners first attend a private independent school, their level of performance tends to be lower, which could be explained by the fact their “ability deficits” of these learners are no longer compensated by higher resources available in the previous school. Alexander (2012) found out that the rates of dropout and non-completion of primary school is; that many children are not acquiring the basic skills.

Through this research, change can also be made by various kinds of organizations, such as those that foster the development of sport or social activities in the community. The researcher point of view is that the participants in the study would be able to break the cycle of poverty in their communities by completing their schooling. Communities should become aware of support systems in their midst, and they will be able to introduce value systems to fellow community members. Moreover, the incidence of the phenomenon of dropping out of high school points to the need for urgent intervention in this district.

The research in the four secondary schools in which the study of learner dropout is taking place has not been conducted there, hence this research.

1.3. RATIONALE

The researcher have the experienced and had been confronted with learners leaving school or dropping out of school for various reasons. The researcher believes that school dropout is a national issue and needs to be researched thoroughly. Different authors have conducted studies on issues such as dropping out of school.

In South Africa, the major concern in education is teenage pregnancy which is a cause of school dropout, which is described as leaving school before finalizing a given class in a given school year (Department of Basic Education, 2006). Apart from being faced with

the threat of economic and social difficulties, adolescents who dropout of school prematurely are at greater risk of behavioural, mental and family disorders, sexual and physical abuse substance use. Despite the difficulty of the problem and the resulting burden on society, there has been little research in developing countries to investigate the dynamics contributing to early school leaving. De Witte, Cabus, Thyssen and Van de Brink (2012) investigated the characteristics and risk-taking behaviour of high school dropouts living in a working-class community in Cape Town, South Africa.

They found that adolescents who dropped out of school had higher rates of cigarette and alcohol use compared with those still in school, and that girl dropouts were more likely to engage in sexual intercourse. Of the dropouts, 62.1% left school after less than 9 years of schooling. Most studies of education have shown outcomes of dropping out, such as low self control, lack of parental supervision, deviant peers and neighbouring disadvantage. Other effects of dropout are that learners do poorly in life in general. Without a high school diploma learners will have a harder time finding a job, and they will earn much less compared to their counterparts who graduated. These learners are likely to have poor health, to live their lives in poverty, and to have children at an early age, who in turn are also more likely to dropout of school.

The researcher explained the direct effects of arrests on later school dropout and college enrolment for adolescents with otherwise equivalent neighbourhood, school, family, peers and individual characteristics as well as similar frequency of criminal offending. The researcher has presented evidence that has a substantial large and robust impact on dropping out of high school among public school learners. The researchers also found a significant gap in four year college enrolment between arrested and same youth without a criminal record. The arrest will disturb and disrupt the schooling process and procedures collateral educational damages.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the learners around the Ngaka Modiri Molema District, particularly learners from the secondary schools are experiencing the problem of dropping out of school before completing their senior certificate. This study focuses on learners' dropout from school, with the intention of developing awareness in learners, teachers, parents and all stakeholders of education within the Ngaka Modiri Molema district on how to decrease dropout. The problem of the statement was to find out the causes and effects of learners dropout at four secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district.

1.5. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate the causes and effects of learners' dropout at selected secondary schools in the Ngaka Modiri Molema district.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will be guided by the following questions:

1.6.1 Main research question is based on the learners' dropout of school.

- What are the main causes and effects of learners' dropout at selected secondary schools in the Ngaka Modiri Molema district?

1.6.2 Secondary research questions

- Which strategies can be taken to control the situation at the four secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district?
- What does the relationship between learner and teacher has an effect on dropout?
- What advises can be given to learners at risk of dropping out of school?
- How can low academic achievement have a negative effect on learner dropout?
- What is the effect of learners' dropout?

1.7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study will be to:

- To investigate the causes of learners' dropout at the four secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district?
- To assess strategies that can be used to remedy the problem of learners' dropout at the four selected secondary schools in general.
- To examine the negative learners' behaviour and its contribution towards learners' dropout in general.
- To find out what advices can be given to learners who at risk of dropping out.
- To inquire how low academic achievements can have a negative impact on learners' dropout in general.
- To find out the effects of learners' dropout.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significant of this study was to make all the stake-holders and the Basic Education how important that learner dropout should be prevented so to have a country of educated and skilled citizens.

1.8.1. For the learners

The study is significant to learners because they are aware of how many of them fail to complete their studies before they graduate. It also reveals to them that those who managed to graduate get better jobs with huge salaries. Those learners who drop out have anti-social behaviours. They end up being street-kids or being arrested for crimes they have committed. It teaches them that dropping out of school is not a good thing to do.

This study makes them realise the importance of education. To have better life one should be educated, so it is not right to leave school before graduating. This study also gives the learners a chance to tell their side of the story, to share their feelings, fears and experiences.

1.8.2. For the teachers

The significance of this study to the teachers is to make them aware of the rates of dropping out of school. The teachers should find ways of preventing the problem of drop out

1.8.3. For the parents

The study helps the parents to know whether their children are progressing or not. The parents should be involved in the school activities in which their children participate. The parents should always be keen to know what is happening with their children' future and school work.

1.9. CONCEPTS CLARIFICATION

The following concepts are clarified for this study.

1.9.1. 'Dropout': means a person who stops going to a school, college, etc. before completing his or her studies.

www.merriam-webster-com/dictionary/dropout. Date: 17 Dec 2014.

A learner is considered a dropout if : a) the learner missed school for ten or more consecutive days of unexcused absences during the school year; b) left school and did not transfer to another school; or c) after completing the first year in high school did not re-enrol within the first thirty days of the next school year.

1.9.2. 'Delinquent': means failing to do what law or duty requires. A juvenile delinquent by the Free Online Dictionary

www.thefreedictionary.com/delinquent. Date: 7 January 2015.

1.9.3. 'Graduation': means the act of receiving a diploma or degree from a school, college, or university- From the Free Merriam Webster

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/graduation. Date: 11 September 2013.

1.9.4. "Accountability": means it cannot exist without proper accounting practices, in other words an absence of accounting means an absence of accountability- Wikipedia- the free encyclopaedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/accountability. Date: 8 May 2012

1.9.5. "Absenteeism": means a pattern of habitual absence by the employee or by the student- Tooling University

www.toolingu.com/definition-950135-54607. Date: 10 July 2013

1.9.6."Population": means the total number of inhabitants constituting population growth - by the Free Online Dictionary.

www.thefreedictionary.com/population. Date June 2013

1.9.7. "Achievement": means something accomplished successfully, especially by means of exertion, skill, practice or perseverance- by the Online Dictionary

www.thefreedictionary.com/achievement Retrieved: 25 January 2015

1.9.8. "Neighbourhood": is generally defined spatially as a specific geographic area and functionally as a set of social network- by Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighbourhood. 27 November 2012.

1.10. LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

This study will be classified into five chapters:

Chapter 1

Problem orientation

This chapter serves as orientation to the problem of the study. It will cover factors which lead to the investigation of the study, research objectives and research design.

Chapter 2

Literature review

This chapter should cover analysis of literature relevant to the topic under discussion.

Chapter 3

The chapter will describe the research design to be used in the study. It will also present the research paradigms, targeted population, sampling procedure, and instruments for data collection as well as data analysis procedures. It will also address issues of trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 4

The chapter will present data collected from the participants as well as analysis of data relation to research objectives and literature.

Chapter 5

The chapter will present a summary of the entire study with reference to the purpose of the study as well as the findings of the study. The chapter will also outline recommendations found from the study. Concluding remarks will be presented after highlighting the shortcomings of the whole study

1.11. TRIANGULATION

According to Denzin (2012:34) triangulation design is a type of mixed method design in which qualitative and quantitative methods are used simultaneously. This design is suitable when the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to understand the phenomenon of problem under study.

George (2008:105) quantitative research includes facts and figures, factual information on the characteristics of the phenomenon. Quantitative research is usually based on 'structured' questionnaires in which every respondent is asked the same questions.

Qualitative approach tends to focus on the interpretation of words rather than numbers; it is designed to interpret data, rather than taking it as read. Triangulation was used to strengthen the results of the investigation. The responses from the interviews were compared with the documents analysis the school used to record the causes of learner dropout. This was done to show the validity and reliability of the study.

1.12. CONCLUSION

This study set to investigate the causes and effects of learners' dropout in Ngaka Modiri Molema district of North-West Province. The study was classified into five chapters, each pertaining to a specific aspect crucial to the research of the identified area. This chapter outlined the background of the research work, the statement of the problem and the aims of the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate what are the causes and effects of learners' dropout, and whether are there any strategies and programs to be used to decrease dropout in Ngaka Modiri Mollema district's schools which educate learners, teachers and parents about learners' dropout in their area. For the true reflection of this study, the following terms were defined in full: Dropout, Delinquent, Graduation, Accountability, Absenteeism, Population, Achievement and Neighbourhood.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on what the writers and the researchers have to say about the causes and effects of learners' dropout in schools. The researcher also looked into literature review on dropout by teachers and parents which has an influence on these learners behaviour. Denzil and Lincoln, (2011) state that literature review is informative and that it leads into, or gives rise to, all aspects of the research: the field; the particular topic; the methodology; the data analysis; and the implications for future research on the phenomenon of the school dropouts. In addition, a literature review provided essential and up-to-date information on the topic that the researcher was researching.

Literature study is conducted to define the concepts relating to the causes and effects of learners' dropout as the major problem, and to determine which factors are associated with school dropout. Education in poverty-stricken communities in South Africa is hampered by family-child relationship, absenteeism, family problems, view of education, school structure, economic impossibilities, teacher-learner relationship, negative school atmosphere, adaptation to school, peer group influences, lack of intellectual stimulation in the environment, a poor disposition to schooling and learning, and conflict between the values of the school and those of home. The outcome among the country's learners is a negative academic self-concept, low levels of motivation, and growing academic disadvantage (Thornton et al., 2013).

Absenteeism does not only affect the academic progress of the learner, but also influences the in-class planning of teachers and at the same time the motivations of the other learners in the class (Thornton et al., 2013). According to Falland Roberts, (2012) absenteeism may indicate learner withdrawal and, ultimately, risk of dropping out of school. Chronic absenteeism has a significant relationship with certain dangerous

behaviours such as substance abuse, violence, physical injury, suicide, showing sexually explicit behaviour at an early age, pregnancy and eventually dropout (Ferrell, Nance, Torres, Torres, 2013; Gage, Sugail, Lunde, & DeLoreto, 2013; Nolan, Cole, Wroughton, Clayton-Code & Riffe, 2013).

Some researchers such as Akuzum, Tan, Yavas, and ve Ucar, 2014; Bayhan and Dalgic, 2012; Gomleksiz and Ozdas, 2013; Haberli and Guvenc, 2012; Oztekin, 2013; Sari, 2013; Simsek and Sahin, 2012; Tas, Selvitopu, Bora, and Demirkaya, 2013; Yildiz and Kula, 2012) investigated the causes of school dropout and the results of these studies were analysed, and has been observed that the causes of school dropout mostly originated from schools, learners, families, in-class behaviours of teachers, teacher-learner relationship, absenteeism, view of education, family problems, and economic impossibilities.

These factors in particular contribute to failure at school, and, ultimately, dropout of school. Poor and uncertain prospects of employment contribute to a continuing cycle of poverty and social inequalities. South African school dropout figures reflect a dismal circumstance of inequality, poverty, and waste human potential. According to Gage et al. (2013) many learners do not complete their schooling, mostly at the public schools.

Education refers to overall processes that assist individuals to develop their behaviours, attitudes and abilities. It remains as the major tool by which people become empowered and the economic, social, and personal well-being of all citizens in all societies are provided (American Psychological Association, 2010). The prosperity of a country depends on its well qualified and educated human capital. The education level of a society is one of the most important indicators of socio-economic development and productivity rates in a country (Tas et al., 2013).

Dropping out is a common severe problem for all countries in the world. It causes a big human and social capital loss in all countries. A high dropout rate also diminishes the

pool of well qualified people from various backgrounds who will enter the professional and political ranks that make important policy decisions (American Psychological Association, 2010). In the United States of America, for example, it is estimated that in the next ten years twelve million learners will leave school without a diploma and that will cost USA about three trillion dollars (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

According to the report prepared by European Commission, in Turkey 44.3 % of the 18-24 age group have left school without completing it (European Commission Press Release, 2011). It means about half of the 18-24 age group do not have the necessary competences for a better standard of living. It also means long terms losses that affect individuals and society at large (Schargel & Smink, 2012).

School dropout is an issue which can be an indicator of the academic, intellectual and socio-economic level of the learners, as well as the success level of the educational system and the school. Assuming that there must be collaboration between the social function of the school and the developmental, educational and learning needs of the younger population the dropout issue becomes extremely important. The school institution is supposed to carry out the socialization function without disregarding the developmental, learning and educational needs of the individuals.

Uys and Alant (2015) stated that access to education is lower than what most published sources suggest. The study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa by (Uys & Alant, 2015) affirmed this by finding a strong correlation between school performance and pregnancy related school dropout. Modisaotsile (2012) reported that sexual abuse of female learners and pregnancy and poverty are factors that increase the dropout rates in secondary schools. Shutger, (2012) also agreed that learners dropout of school for a number of reasons that include pregnancy. The world formed by the former generations is for the later generations, a totally unknown place where the later generations need the guidance of those who came before them (Strand & Grandland, 2014). In this development process, a human being needs the guidance of

the older generations. In the modern society, this guidance has emerged as a formal institution named school. A human being does not inevitably learn everything in the school institution. However, the school institution has been, in modern society, an elementary means of the socialization process, in other words, of learning to be social person.

Lamote et al., (2013) emphasised that a social entity cannot exist without being an individual and the other way round, the school institution is also an elementary means of the individualization process. For the younger generations, school dropout has a meaning more than being unsuccessful because of being refused acceptance as an individual and a social entity, in other words, as a whole personality.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is based on few theoretical frameworks under behavioural changes of the learners in a particular school which is under study. Theoretical viewpoints on school dropout generally involve low academic achievement, negative learner-teacher relationship, absenteeism, family problems, view of education, economic impossibilities, in-class behaviours of teachers, school structure, negative school atmosphere, lack of parental support and individual reasons. According to Davis, Campbell, Hildon, Hobbs and Michie, (2015) reported that human behaviours, including absenteeism and deviance, sexual practices, tobacco and alcohol consumption and physical activity play a role in many of the leading causes of school dropout in developing and developed countries.

Even small changes in such behaviours can have substantial effects on the health of learners who dropout House of Lords (in Davis et al., 2015) said that understanding those behaviours and the circumstances in which they happen is important for developing effective evidence-based health behaviour change interventions and policies and for reducing unnecessary and mortality. Michie and West (2013) reported that there is evidence for the effectiveness of behaviour change interventions at individual,

community and population levels. Interventions have been targeted at behavioural risks factors such as alcohol consumption and smoking. Carr and Ebbert, (2012) had encouraged protective behaviours by adapting to chronic illness and changing health professional behaviours to improve the quality and efficiency of services.

Head and Noar, (2013) focused on both theories of behaviour that tend to be sequential, and explain the reasons why behaviour may occur by considering number of predictors and the associations with one another and how these could influence the likelihood of a particular behaviour. Theories of change tend to be more recurring and identify interactional and vigorous behaviour change processes (Head & Noar, 2013).

According to Eccles, Roeser, Vida, Frederick and Wigfield (2006), learners may be inclined to ruminate on their negative experiences, feeling anxious and guilty about school performance or blaming themselves for failing in school, which could lead to feelings of helplessness. Social control theory proposes that when the moral bond that ties people to each other and to social norms is broken, mechanisms of social control in the form of restraints on anti- social behaviour becomes ineffectual (Aloise-Young & Chavez, 2002). When social controls are weak, individuals are more likely to deviate from societal norms for appropriate behaviour, for example, by using illicit and illegal drugs and drunkenness. They are also more likely to show poor commitment to conventional society and conventional social groups, school being one example of such a group.

Problem-prone behaviour and general deviancy theory describe adolescent dropping out and substance use as being two of a constellation of problem behaviours, co-varying with other deviant behaviours to which certain adolescents are prone (Battin-Pearson et al. 2000; Newcomb et al. 2002). Specifically, various forms of deviant behaviour co-vary because adolescents who hold non-conforming attitudes and values, and who try to establish their identities as independent and adult human beings, are more likely to be engaged in a variety of non-conformist behaviours such as smoking,

drug and alcohol use, and abandoning the learner rule including dropping out of school amongst others.

Primary socialization theory proposes that when ties to school or family are weak, and ties to peers and friends are strong, the adolescent is most at risk, (Bonell, Fletcher, Jamal, Wells, Hards, Murphy & Thomas, 2013). These writers also found that the support for this proposition that substance use was highest for those dropouts who cited leaving school to be with friends as a reason for dropping out. The primary socialization premises are mirrored in social learning theory, where it is proposed that learning processes that lead to deviant behaviours, happens in association with peers. These learning processes are thought to be most influential in the face of weak social bonds, where delinquent socialization becomes the strongest learning influence. Strain theory proposes that school failure causes frustration, which results in learners becoming separated from school (Bonell et al., 2013). In order to acquire status, students experiencing this frustration seek out alternative self-defining behaviours that are often deviant in nature, such as the use of various substances.

From this perspective, school failure, poor school performance and dissatisfaction with school, as well as high rates of absenteeism, are strongly related to dropping out of school. Contrary to these expectations, Bonell et al. (2013) realised that their sample of learners who left school because of bad grades, did not evidence the highest rates of substance use as would be expected. According to Rumberger (2011) learners may be made to mediate on their negative experiences, feeling anxious and guilty about school performance or blaming themselves for failing in school, which could lead to feelings of helplessness. The researcher used the problem-prone behaviour and general deviance in this study.

Michie and West, (2013) found out the problem behaviour proneness in the personality system includes lower value on academic achievement, higher value on independence, greater social criticism, lower self-esteem, greater attitudinal tolerance of deviance,

lower alienation and lower religiosity. The concepts that constitute the behaviour system include both problem behaviours and conventional behaviours. Problem behaviours include alcohol use, problem of drinking, cigarette smoking, marijuana use, other illicit drug use, general deviant behaviour, risky driving and precocious sexual intercourse. Involvement in any of one problem behaviour increases the likelihood of involvement in other problem behaviours due to their linkages in the social ecology of youth.

Conventional behaviours are behaviours that are socially approved, normatively expected, and codified and institutionalized as appropriate for adolescents. They include church attendance, and involvements with academic course work and achievement. Both church and school can be seen as institutions of conventional socialization, fostering a conventional orientation and enlisting youth into the traditional and established proneness in the behaviour system include high involvement in other problem behaviours and low involvement in conventional behaviours (Bonell et al., 2013).

Interpretivism according to Maree (2007) holds that there are no stable grounds for judgments, knowledge is not complete. In order to understand the whole it is necessary to understand the parts. It means researchers start out with the assumptions that lead to reality. Interpretivism studies understand phenomena through the meanings that people give to them. Interpretivism also advocates that the world should be studied in its natural setting rather than in controlled laboratory with minimum intervention by a researcher.

Finally, the correlation between drugs use, anti-social peers and dropping out of school were all positive (Battin-Pearson et al. 2000). Moreover, their latent construct, bonding to anti-social peers, was found to have both direct and indirect contribution, judge by poor academic performance, effects on dropout.

2.3. EXISTING POLICIES IN A FEW SELECTED COUNTRIES ON LEARNERS' DROPOUT

In South Africa, education is compulsory for ten years, or until a learner reaches the age of 15. The societies are facing school dropout problems that have personal, social and financial dimensions and trying to have policies in order to prevent or decrease this problem (Heers et al., 2014; De Witte & Csillag, 2014; Estavao & Alvares, 2014). Studies show that individuals who drop out of school have more health problems, have an increased risk of involvement in crime, are obliged to work at a job with low income (Cabus & Witte, 2015; Carlson, 2014; Carr & Galassi, 2012; Estevao & Alvares, 2014; Fan & Wolters, 2014; Lamote et al., 2013; Tas et al., 2013).

Lewis, Nyalashe, Hartley and Naicker (2012) argue that, although it is not stated a policy, learners are encouraged to stay in school until the end of Grade 12. Learners who are 15 to 18 year age group who are neither in an education institution nor employed should not necessarily be considered as part of the unemployed, but rather as dropouts. Every effort should be made to retain all learners beyond the compulsory schooling phase, which is not being done in South Africa at the moment.

In South Africa, dropout rates are high; about 60 percent of learners who enrol in Grade 1 dropout before reaching Grade 12. About 94 784 learners who enrolled in public schools in the Western Cape in 1997, only 43 470 managed to reach Grade 12. Of those learners who remained in school, only 33 percent qualified for matriculation exemption (Western Cape Government, 2013). So the information emphasizes the need for prevention efforts and strategies. There are educational policies that governed the school worldwide on learner dropout. Each and every country is having a different educational policy that they use to determine the minimum age which a learner is permitted to leave school.

Burger, Van der Berg and Von Fintel (2013) proposed nearest neighbour estimates for promotion, repetition and dropout rates. They used those rates further by studying the outcomes of two policies implemented by the Department of Basic Education in the late 1990's. The first was that schools were no longer allowed to enrol learners who are more than two years older than the current grade-ages, and the second was that learners were not allowed to repeat more than once in each of the four schooling phases. In particular, they consider the effect of these two policies on the unemployment in the South African labour market. Uys and Alant (2015) gave evidence that, although declining, there persists a racial gap in schooling in South Africa, mostly attributed to high rate of grade repetition of Black learners with only small difference in the enrolment rate across other racial groups. Uys and Alant (2015) further stated that repetition rates are poorly reported and poorly estimated. Uys and Alant, (2015) further studied the problem of dropout in-depth, claiming that 60% of learners enrolled in grade 1 do not reach grade 12 or its equivalent in Further Education and Training colleges.

In terms of Section 3(n) of National Education Policy Act (27 of 1996) Minister of Education must determine national policy for the control and discipline of learners at the education institutions. In accordance with Section 29 (1) (a) and (b) of the Constitution (1996) it is stated that: everyone has the right to a basic education including adult education and, to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible.

Again in terms of Section 8 of South African School Act (1996) emphasizes that the school governing body (SGB) must adopt a code of conduct for learners, based upon the outcome of consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school. The code of conduct must aim at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate the effective education and learning in a school set up. In terms of Section 8 (5) of South African School Acts (1996) a school's code of conduct must include a proper legal process in order to ensure that a learner who is guilty of misconduct is treated fairly by the disciplinary committee of the governing body.

The Policy on Learner Attendance of 2013 aims to promote punctual and regular school attendance and provides standardized procedures for recording and monitoring learner attendance. It also ensures that learners and their parents will be treated equitably across provinces. The Policy on Learner Attendance (2013) stipulates that it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that the learner attends school daily. The SASA (1996) provides for actions from to be taken if a learner who is within the age of compulsory school attendance abstains from school without providing an explanation. Permissible reasons for learner absenteeism are outlined in the Policy on Learner Attendance of 2013.

The Policy on Learner Attendance (2013:8) requires the timetable to indicate the time during which the class register will be marked. The class register must be marked at the start of the morning session. The school must do its utmost to promote and monitor punctual attendance at the start of the school day. Furthermore, learners are expected to attend school on time and must be required to do so.

Furthermore in South Africa, Department of Education, Government Gazette 33105 of May 2013 stated that if a learner is absent for 10 consecutive days the learner may be deregistered. This law prevents the learners from absenting themselves for no particular reason. It further states that only the grade 12 students are allowed to stay at home to study and then only during the final examination.

Ghana has witnessed a steady decline of children dropping out of school since it launched its major education reforms in 1987. The introduction of programmes such as capitation grant scheme and the school feeding programme at basic school level appear to have helped reduce overall rates of dropout. Capitation is a fee-free policy providing direct funding to all public schools based on enrolment. What it has achieved is to remove the cost burden to parents of enrolling their children in schools and attracted many children to enrol, including those who previously dropped out because of school fees. The enrolment in schools increased by 17 percent since the capitation was

introduced in 2005. Generally the introduction of capitation has encouraged some dropouts to re-enrol, about a fifth of out of school children enrolled as a result of this policy, many of them dropouts. Akyeampongi; Djangmah; Oduro; Seidu; and Hunt (2007) stated that the increase in enrolment included about a third of children who previously dropped out.

Inevitably, both capitation and the school feeding programme attract children back into school who are over-age and subsequently likely to dropout again. In Ghana, the likelihood of learners staying in school and not dropping out is much higher when children are enrolled at the correct age (Akyeampongi; 2009). It raises the importance of introducing policies which ensure that children enrol at the correct age for their grade in the first place if dropout is to be reduced even further in Ghana.

This is one important policy message coming out of Ghana CREATE work. Incentive structures are needed to make schools more pro-active in identifying children at risk of dropping out and instituting steps to address the risk factors. Ampiah; Akyeampongi; and Rolleston (2010) agreed that the role of research in identifying the specific factors that have direct implications for the kind of policy that might address the problem of school dropout in Ghana is important. Create studies is clearly showing that over age attendance, the nutritional status of children and underachievement are areas that should be the target of reforms if further improvement in completion of basic education is to be attained.

Tanzania has an unusual profile of high enrolment, with low dropout and some 24.3 percent of learners over age but remaining in primary school. The dropout rate has declined significantly since the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 2002. Some factors contribute towards this. Firstly, there is a political and budgetary focus on UPE and completion rates with compulsory enrolment of all children from 7 upwards including over age children not yet enrolled. Secondly, education was passed to the regions with a community approach to education from the village upwards.

Thirdly, learning was made more beneficial to young children in the classroom, and finally, alternative forms of education exist for out-of –school and over age children.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) introduced more educational policy by putting the greater part of the education budget into primary education (Mrutu, 2012). The MoEVT abolished school fees in 2001, and aimed for UPE by 2008. School enrolment was made compulsory for all 7 year old children and all over age children out of school from 8-11 years. The focus remained on the completion of primary education before the expansion of secondary school.

Education was devolved or passed to the regions, with community involvement and access through setting up the Ward-Based Education Management clusters and teachers' resource centres (Mrutu, 2012). The Child Friendly initiative was implemented in 11 districts in 2000, trying to make classrooms more child-centred. Kiswahili, spoken by majority of Tanzanians as first or second language, became the Language of Instruction in the first few grades of primary schools and an official language as well as English (Gage, Sugail, Lunde & DeLoreto 2013). Standards 1-3 are only taught by experienced teachers rather than not qualified teachers. Some of these experienced teachers are part of the cohort of long-serving teachers from 1970' who saw teaching as a vocation and a form of political commitment (Barratti, 2008).

There are several policy initiatives to improve learning outcomes in Sri Lanka. First, grouping schools into school families appears to raise school quality, by producing opportunities for teachers and principals from different schools to learn from each others' experiences. Presently, school family networks in Sri Lanka are arranged informally. An official policy to set up school families could increase learning. Second, teacher interactions with parents seem to improve learning. The parent-teacher meetings can persuade parents to do more for their children's schooling. One policy worth exploring is to get parents more directly involved in raising school quality, and

more specifically in holding principals and teachers accountable for their children's performance.

Higher learner attendance also increases learning. Currently, Sri Lanka offers incentives for children to enrol, such as free tuition, textbooks, and uniforms. Subsidized transport and mid-day meals in poor areas also encourage daily attendance. Learners who have exercise books and attend school with enough desks appear to learn more. This suggests that the government should equip all schools with basic learning equipment, such as pupil desks and chairs, and ensure that all children have basic writing materials.

Children attending schools with experienced principals have higher scores. Principals' management skills and leadership are probably important factors affecting school performance. Sri Lanka has a training centre that provides off-site support for principals, which may be even more effective. Lastly, child health also contributes to learning. Sri Lanka already has basic school health programs, health workers visit schools regularly to test children for several illnesses, and poor children receive free mid-day meals. Expanding school health programs could increase learning.

In United States of America, over thirty years, half of all states have changed their policy to raise the minimum age at which secondary school learners are allowed to dropout of school. Since 2009, places such as Alabama, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, Rhodes Island, South Dakota, and West Virginia have all raised their minimum dropout ages (Sanchez, 2012). Apparently, these policy changes are intended to increase the educational achievements of residents and thereby improve economic outcomes for the individuals and the state. National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel recently commented on minimum dropout age requirements by declaring, "Any young person without a secondary school diploma is at a severe disadvantage in our high-tech labour market with its accompanying demands for advanced education. We cannot prepare learners for the 21st century who are not in school" (National Education Association, 2012).

Haelermans and De Witte (2013) current federal educational policy emphasizes parents' involvement in their children's education. Such involvement is shown through parents emphasizing the significance of school, having expectations for their children's progress, monitoring homework completion, assisting in school and communicating with teachers and school staff. Researchers have observed that parent involvement can show children that parents think school is important, provide instruction and guidance at home, help inform parents of their children's academic strengths and needs, and establish clear relationships with teachers (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006). Simpkins, Fredericks, and Eccles (2012) believe that one component of parents' cognition about children's development is parents' knowledge of their children's capabilities and skills. Bornstein, Cote, Haynes, Hahn, and Park, (2010) agree that ensuring parents are knowledgeable about their children's academic skills is important, if parents are to effectively assist their children at home with schoolwork. Parents should shape their interactions to their children's competencies, if such interactions are to be maximally effective.

Low-income, Hispanic, and Black parents are generally less involved than middle-income White families (Balfanz and Byrns, 2012). It is very important to distinguish parental involvement at home and at school because there are differences of involvement in the patterns of involvement and in effectiveness of involvement in two settings (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). In addition to the claimed educational benefits, new research provides evidence that these policies change have had the side effect of reducing crimes committed by youths in the affected age groups (Anderson, 2012). Specifically, Anderson (2012) found that increasing the minimum dropout age to 18 was associated with large reductions in property and violent crime arrest rates among 16 to 18 year old males. Moreover, Anderson's results were consistent with the incapacitation effect, keeping teenagers in school decreases the time and opportunity available to commit crimes. Presently, all states have minimum dropout age of 16, 17, or 18. Damon and Glewne (2009) concluded that cash transfer conditional on daily attendance is a successful policy in several Latin American countries.

However, an unintended outcome of keeping youths from dropping out could be the displacement of criminal activity and delinquency back into schools, to the harm of the academic achievement and quality of life of other learners. In fact, efforts to lift up the minimum dropout age are often met with the argument that permitting the attendance of learners who no longer want to be in school can be disruptive to their classmates and unfair to teachers (Gomleksiz & Ozdas, 2013). This criticism is supported by Anderson (2012) who found that youths who dropout of high school have different traits than those who graduate, including lower motivation and a lower consumption value of school attendance.

2.4 THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF LEARNERS' DROPOUT

It is very clear that a number of children enrolled in school have increased over time. Nevertheless, an important proportion of children who start primary school are not completing this cycle. There are many factors associated with dropout, some of which belong to the individual, such as poor health or malnutrition and motivation. Others come from children's household situations such as child labour and poverty (Yildiz & Kula, 2012). Again Yildiz and Kula, (2012) found out that the biggest cause of learners absence from school was health problem. Among the individual causes of absenteeism, illness is the factor that has the biggest effect on absenteeism. According to Bayhan and Dalgic (2012) found that conflicts with teachers were reported by dropouts as one of the reasons motivating their decision to leave the school setting before obtaining their diploma. The problem remains largely situated in the school setting.

Wilkins and Bost, (2015) report that dropping out of high school is associated with many negative effects, including an increased likelihood of experiencing unemployment, low wages, incarceration, poverty, and poor health. These situations are costly for society in both social and economic terms. Academic achievement has a lasting negative consequence and effect for the individual, his or her family, and society at large. Much of the research suggests that the ninth grade year is especially challenging for most learners. During the ninth grade many learners begin experiencing a reduced sense of

belonging, a loss of achievement (Pharriss-Ciurej, Hirschman, and Willhoft, (2012), a lower grade point average, poor attendance (Cohen and Smerdon, 2009), and school disengagement.

Wilkins and Bost, (2015) found out that more learners fail ninth grade than any other grade, and making a poor transition to ninth grade is associated with dropping out of school. Learners who start to lose interest in school during middle school often have a difficult time transitioning to high school, particularly if they are struggling academically. Learners may begin to skip school and fail classes without any follow-up from the school. Wilkins and Bost, (2015) urged that learners typically drop out during high school, dropping out represents the culmination of a long process of disengagement. Learners who are engaged in school demonstrate behaviours consistent with academic success and graduating, such as attending school regularly, completing class work and homework, and participating in the school activities.

When considering all four years of high school, learners in the freshman year have the highest rates of retention; class failures; dropping out; absenteeism; and discipline referrals, and the lowest grade point averages (Kelley, 2010). These studies indicate that failure to graduate from high school results in substantially lower earnings over the life course. Henry, Knight, and Thornberry, (2012) identified poorer health, while Henry et al., (2012) identified more dependence on public assistance, the increased activities of youths in crime and incarceration; are the cause of their dropout.

School level factors also play a role in increasing pressures to dropout such as teachers' absenteeism, school location and poor quality educational provision. First, there is not one single cause of dropout. Dropout is a process rather than the result of one single event, and therefore has more than one proximate cause (Hunt, 2008).

Second, poverty appears to influence the demand for schooling, not only because it affects the inability of households to pay school fees and other costs associated with education, but also because it is associated with a high opportunity cost of schooling for children (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

Haberli and Guvenc, (2012) found out that factors emerging from the family such as obligation of learners to help their parents at home, look after their younger siblings and work and bring money home have significant affects on their dropout from school. Tayli (2012), working part-time during holidays and the school season has an increasing effect on learners' motivations and is suggested as an effective way of getting ready for their future roles in life. However, learners who work at full-time jobs and under working conditions have a higher possibility to drop out of school.

Learners who lack school supplies and cannot do their homework due to lack of a suitable study environment at home do not want to go to school and are often absent from school (Petrick, 2014). Again, lack of pocket money and travelling money emerges as a cause of school dropout. Studies show that constant school dropouts are highly common among learners who come from low-income families (Nolan et al., 2013). As children grow older, the cost of education is even larger hence increasing the pressure for children to work and earn income for the household as opposed to spending time in school setting and acquire knowledge.

Sari (2013) stated that when learners view themselves as an important constituent of school, their academic success increases and their possibility of dropping out of school decreases. Learners who cannot establish good relationships with their peers, friends and teachers, who do not like attending school and the subjects that are offered; have a higher tendency of dropping out from school. According to Fan and Wolters (2014) state that one of the most contributing factors of learners' dropout is being reluctant to attend school and disliking school.

Parents' lack of education and accordingly their disregard for education happen as an important contributing factor towards absenteeism and school dropout. Foley, Gallipoli and Green (2014) found out that parents' giving importance to end valuation of education have a positive effects on school dropout behaviour. Unwillingness of parents to send girls to school for religious reasons and early marriage of girls have a positive

influence in causing girls to dropout. Adiguzel (2013) urged that early marriage of girls and reaching puberty are considered as factors influencing school dropout. Alat and Alat (2012) point out that some families withdraw their children from school, especially the girls, to send them to Koran courses or marry them at tender age.

Gendered social practices within the household community and school, influence of different patterns of accessing both the boys and girls. In most contexts girls have less access and are more prone to dropping out, but increasingly, often in poor and urban environments, the pressure seems to be on boys to withdraw. Within gendered social practices, school safety seems to be an important factor for retaining girls at school, whereas availability of income generating opportunities and flexible seasonal schooling could promote school retention for boys. (Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira, Lemani & Machakanja, 2013)

Additional factors affecting motivations and decision-making relating to educational access are also keys to understandings of dropping out. Perceptions of education will influence lifestyle and career possibilities, life changes in the labour market are shown to be factors in both early withdrawal and sustained access in different contexts (Tayli, 2012). The availability of options to access secondary school and beyond, shape decision-making of parents regarding the contribution of children in primary level. It is also evident that children whose parents have received some sort of schooling are more likely themselves to attend school for longer. In particular, a mother's education level often influences length of access for girls, for example, in rural Pakistan, girls whose mothers have some formal education are less likely to dropout from school (Foley et al., 2014).

According to Alat and Alat (2012) there are precursors to dropping out, where children could be seen to be at risk or vulnerable to early withdrawal. These include grade repetition, low achievement, over age enrolers and children who have regular absences or previous temporary withdrawals from school. It is unclear whether grade repetition increases the chances of completion, but what is apparent is that grade repetition

extends the age range in a particular grade, and increases the possibility of dropout. Teaching to different age groups has different needs in terms of teaching and learning practices and curriculum (Tas et al., 2013).

Tas et al., (2013) urged that in some countries age ranges in Grade 1 class might be 4 to 11 years, and in Grade 6 can be 10 to 21 years. Children who are over age, due to late enrolment or high grade repetition, limit the number of years children have in school as older children have greater pressure to earn income for their families. Ghana introduces the programmes such as the capitation grant scheme and the school feeding programme at the basic school level appear to have helped reduce overall rates of dropout.

Capitation is a fee-free policy providing direct funding to all public basic schools based on enrolment. What it has achieved is to remove the cost burden to parents of enrolling their children in school and attracted many children to enrol, including those who previously dropped out because of fees. When the capitation was established in 2005; the enrolment across the primary and high schools increase by about 17 percent. Steady decline in participation across the basic school cycle is indicative of specific problems that continue to reduce completion with poverty mainly responsible for some children dropping out of school.

New evidence coming from CREATE studies in Ghana point to the contributory factors: teacher unavailability, unsympathetic teacher attitudes to children who attend irregularly because of poverty, school level practices, for example, corporal punishment, and over age attendance, all contributing to the increased likelihood of dropout (Foley et al., 2013). In Ghana, grade repetition, teacher unavailability as well as attractive pull of seasonal economic activities have been identified as key factors contributing to dropout (Ananga, 2010). Many children, especially in rural agricultural areas, have pressures on them to work which clash with schooling time-table. Temporary withdrawals in harvest times and for migrating communities pull their children away from school often leaving

to more permanent dropout (Hadley, 2010). According to Buxton, (2010) stated that government efforts for improving school access, retention and achievement will not be successful unless accompanied by early and continuous health interventions to tackle nutritional deficiencies and other health related illness and conditions that impact on children`s school attendance.

The connection between dropout and unemployment is ambiguous. Whereas fewer employment opportunities for young adolescents helped increasing high school attendance and graduation rates, so more job market opportunities in times of economic revival increased dropout rates (Cabus & De Witte, 2012). According to Cabus and De Witte, (2012) in Spain and Portugal, a lot of teenagers have been drawn to the labour market in greater numbers. It was when most of school-leaving learners started engaging themselves in part-time jobs or with short-term employment contracts. A significant number of youths are pulled out of school due to the attractiveness of the labour market.

De Witte, Thyssen, Groot, and van de Brink,(2012) observed that attention had been first focused on demographic and other risk factors like gender, race and ethnicity, parental education, income, poverty, property ownership and place of residence, home language, creating the impression that early school leaving is in part a natural process. De Witte et al., 2012) Perhaps the focus should not so much be on dropping out as a problem of perceived or actual failures of learners, but on dropout as an indication and origin of fundamental inequalities.

Most school-related characteristics are revealed as determinants of dropout over and above family related, work related and other motives (De Witte et al., 2013). However, a large part of the literature is still focused on factors not related to the school, but to learners themselves and their families. Children of families that do not communicate with the school are absent from school more and have higher risk compared to other learners. Thornton et al., (2013) state the participation in parent-teacher meetings and

other activities, monitoring in the child's school attendance and homework support the child's academic progress. Again, Thornton et al., (2013) emphasized that the families who are unable to communicate with their children, who are highly oppressive or who have no authority on their children and have accepted the failure of their children show considerably high cases of school dropout.

It is considered that cases such as divorce, domestic violence and death of a parent have a highly negative effect on the learners' attendance and learning progress at school. Hynes (2014) states that children who have one or both parents in jail are 79% more likely to leave school, children who lost a family member are 53% likely to drop out of school, and children who are abused by a parent are 45% more likely to discontinue with the schooling. The presence of a family member that requires care and involvement with school activities is one of the positive factors that affect academic progress of a child.

High school dropout rates in the United States of America are alarming. De Witte et al., (2012) stated that most high school learners in U.S. fail to receive a regular diploma within the 4th year. Dropping out of school is a serious problem because those who fail to complete school have poorer general health over the span of the life course, are more likely to be unemployed, more likely to be delinquent and use drugs, and more likely to be incarcerated (De Witte et al., 2012). Although it is known that family socio-economic status, school involvement, and parental involvement are factors associated with dropping out. The high academic failure and learners' dropout rates remain significant issues in the United States; more public school learners are failing to earn a diploma, (Hynes, 2014).

A study in South Africa, Sittichai, (2012) found that among learners who dropped out from high school, on average 70 percent come from low-income families, with 40 percent dropping out in the 9 grade, First generation learners from low-income, less educated families were the most likely to dropout. Sittichai, (2012) studied the causes of

dropout of part-time Butondo secondary school learners in Zambia, and found out that workplace activities, especially heavy demands at work that led to absenteeism from classes, was a main cause of learner dropout. In southern Thailand, there is one public, medium-size university, the Prince of Songkla High. This is the only public high of multi-racial in the predominantly Muslim southern region of Thailand. It is a multi-campus system in Hat Yai, Phuket. The study reported is from Pattani Campus before the recent violence, PSHP had a very multi-cultural learner body. Unfortunately, after the public's perception towards Deep South changed in a negative way, parents of learners and even learners themselves from other parts of the country are more reluctant to choose PSHP and to spend their high school life there due to the insecure feelings and unseen circumstances in the area.

The study on high school dropouts at Prince of Songkla High Pattani Campus was reported by (Sittichai, 2012) from 1st June 1999 to 31st March 2003, 6610 learners were admitted to four-year matriculation programs at PSHP. The overall dropout or discontinuation rate for them, as at March 2006, was found to be 15 percent for that period. Learners who dropped out came from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances; most of them dropped out in the first year (48%) and the second year (33%) of their study. Muslim learners had a lower dropout rate than those from other backgrounds; and especially males from non-Muslim backgrounds had the highest dropout rates. The problems with academic results were considered as the main causes of dropping out.

Another factor is absenteeism. According to Department of Basic Education, (DBE) Government Gazette 33105 of 4 May 2013 states that if a learner is absent for 10 consecutive days the learner may be deregistered. It further states that only the Grade 12 learners are allowed to stay at home to study and then only during the final examination. When a learner exceeds the limits of absenteeism that learner should leave the school. Every school teacher knows the negative impact of learners being absent from class. Learners who are absent for the whole day or part of a day, if they

arrive late, they do not progress as well as their classmates who are in class daily. In fact, they may not catch up and their self-esteem and sense of being part of the class may suffer. Their absences harm attempts to do group work and group projects.

In South Africa, on any one day as many as 5 to 15 percent of learners are absent from school and the number is even higher if we include those learners who arrive late because of transport or other problems. Learners who are frequently absent are likely to be more socially isolated and may be at risk of harm during periods of absence (Buscha & Conte, 2014). They are more likely to become involved in unacceptable or even illegal activities such as delinquency, vandalism, alcohol and drug abuse and risky sexual behaviour. Compared to their peers, learners who do not attend school regularly have lower academic performance, limited future employment opportunities and will experience social and emotional problems in adulthood (Askeland, Haugland, Boe, & Hysing, 2015).

Some children in our schools are heads of households as a result of their parents being dead. These children tend to be absent from school to carry out caring or household duties (Carlson, 2014). It is important that a teacher identifies these children so that they can be helped through accessing support in the communities where they live. Children who live in rural areas may be absent because of duties at home, such as tending cattle. The teacher needs to encourage parents to send these children to school regularly. School transport should be arranged so that rural children do not have to walk long distances to school. Schools need to be aware of the impact of floods or heavy rain that may also affect learners' attendance (De Witte & Csillag, 2014).

The teacher plays a very important role in reducing absenteeism. A good teacher knows the learners in his or her class and notices when anybody is absent. Keeping a record of absenteeism will help the teacher to identify any pattern in the absences, whether it is because of illness or truancy. It is good to contact the parents by letter, phone call, SMS, to check on absence, particularly when they are frequent. It is also important to

remember that in the community child labour, excessive household responsibilities, or perceptions that school attendance is less important than the tasks given to the child may mean it is clear that the problem has to be addressed with the parents, not the child. School engagement with parents can have very positive effects in reducing absenteeism. Where truancy is a problem it is important to find out why the child is staying away from school. Is it happening because of peer pressure, or is the child not coping with learning?

According to Charles Taylor (2013) poor attendance of learners can disrupt their own learning and of that of other learners. Quickly these learners begin to fall behind their friends and often fail to fill in gaps in their skills or knowledge-sometimes in basics like reading or writing. Over time these learners can be bored and disillusioned with education. These learners are lost to the system, and can fall into anti-social behaviour and crime. That is why it is vital for schools to tackle absenteeism (Charles Taylor; 2013).

Heers et al., (2014) learners with discipline and behavioural problems in middle school are more likely to fail the ninth grade year which eventually may lead to dropping out. Research about high school graduation tends to be divided into two sections: the social effects of graduation and the life-long economic outcomes associated with high school graduation (Hauser & Koenig, 2011). Hauser and Koenig (2011) trying to determine a “cause” for an individual graduating from high school or dropping out is very difficult, if not impossible.

Rumberger and Sun (2008) part of the reason for researching the topic of graduation is so difficult is that is the typical reasons learners are not successful in high school are the same reasons they do not function successfully in society in their future lives. For example, low achievement and low motivation are often factors demonstrated in individuals who dropout of high school as well as those who are not successful in society. Hauser and Koenig (2011) speculated that these personal characteristics,

along with others, may be underlying causes of the poor economic and social outcomes experienced by this group. Dropping out may be more of a symptom in lieu of the cause of the problem (Hauser & Koenig, 2011).

A common view is that the road to high school graduation begins in the ninth grade (Neild, 2009), but most ninth grade are not thinking about high school graduation. A poor transition from the smaller, more protected environment of middle school to anonymity of a high school can cause a learner to have difficulty catching up-and some learners never do. They are more concerned with adjusting to life in high school, and for many learners the ninth grade year is a make-it or break-it (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). The ninth grade year is the first time that many learners are required to earn passing grades in core subjects to be promoted to the next grade in school (Neild, 2009). These core subject classes tend to be the most difficult and academically rigorous courses learners will take during their time in high school (Neild, 2009; Smith, Akos, Lim, & Wiley, 2008).

Fan and Wolters (2014) high school size has been a topic of discussion for more than a century without resolution. Fan and Wolters (2014) stated, "Although the ideal high school size has been debated for so long, the issue is currently the subject of intense discussion within a broader educational reform agenda." Ready et al. (2012) discussed two distinct components taken by the researcher: the sociological aspects of school size, and the economics of school size. Researchers arrived at very different conclusions. Sociological research suggests that small schools ought to have some significant advantages over large schools, namely more personal relationships between learners and family and fewer curriculum choices. On the other hand, studies conducted by economists tend to focus on improved efficiencies expected at larger schools along with more varied curriculum and greater number of choices (Delvin, 2011). The chronology of high school size over the past century has moved from small to large in apparent regard to the economic point of view.

Fan and Wolters (2014) the average American learner at the end of 20th century was more likely to attend a small one room school than a large complete high school. It would have been very unlikely for the average learner to even attend high school, as most learners of that time only attended school through the eighth grade. Gage et al., (2013) explained that only about 10 percent of learners in the American school system at the turn of the century attended high school. By the end of 1910 that figure had only increased to 35 percent (Gage et al., 2013).

According to Gage, high school was usually a means to prepare for college, and only about 4 percent of learners at the turn of the century would ever end up attending college. Conant suggested that a larger high school could more economically offer a greater selection of courses at a higher level of quality than smaller high schools with less than 750 learners and suggested that the complete eradication of small high schools should be a top priority. Today, nearly 60 percent of all American high school learners attend a high school with an enrolment of more than one thousand learners (Gage et al., 2013).

Ready et al., (2012), while the construction of large, complete high schools continues without becoming any weaker or less violent, the justification for doing so has essentially disappeared. Royer (2007) current literature demonstrates that smaller schools are outperforming larger schools in most of the important measurements studied. In smaller schools learners perform better academically, graduate at a higher rate, are more likely to go on to college, and therefore will typically earn higher salaries throughout their lives. Learners in smaller schools have a lower dropout rate and have a higher rate of participation in extracurricular activities (Fraker, 2006). So the small learning communities began to take place.

Educational practitioners and researchers tend to agree on what makes up a successful high school education. Fleishman and Heppen (2012) and Oxley (2013) discussed the need for bringing together accurate and relevant curricula for all learners. These

curricula are joined with a learning community that is personalized and responsive to the needs of both learners and parents. The relationships between the learner and the teacher, the school and the parents are critical to the success of this educational reform model. Small learning communities (SLC) is the overarching and influencing term this reform movement which is influencing education in more communities throughout the United States (Armstead, Bessell, Sembiente, and Plaza, 2010).

Each of the variations is intended to provide a more personalized learning environment for the learner and allow teachers to individualized instruction to the needs of each learner with the goal of helping the learner becomes better prepared for life after high school, whether that includes college or career development (Gewertz, Dorko, & Cain, 2012; Oxley, 2013; Shakrani & Michigan State University., 2008). Interdisciplinary teams are built to allow a group of learners to stay with the same teachers for multiple years throughout their high school career (Oxley, 2013). Levine (2010) pointed out that while SLCs as a whole do not conclusively improve academic achievement, attendance, and graduation rates, an improved experience for learners due to the supportive environment are proven benefits of SLCs.

The word “dropout” implies a specific event in the life of nearly one-third of all high school learners (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009b) and high school dropout rates in the United States have been mentioned as being at crisis levels (Neild, 2009). Ninth graders have the highest dropout rate of any grade in high school (Donegan, 2008), and ninth graders account for over one-third of all high school dropouts lost (Editorial Projects in Education, 2007). By 2010 nationwide, nearly seven thousand learners dropped out of school every day, totalling approximately 1.3million learners per year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). The learners’ who are comprising the lowest 25 percent relative to academic achievement, are 20 times more likely to leave high school before graduation than the top 25 percent of high school learners (Carnevale, Strohl, & Smith, 2009).

Dropping out has several consequences for both the person and the society. A dropout will have serious educational deficiencies. Therefore, he will have difficulties in finding a good and well-paid job in the future. These individuals also have higher tendencies to work in illegal jobs, have health problems, increased demand for social services, and will cause high crime rates. These are the consequences of dropping out for a person. On the other hand, social consequences of school leaving can be as follow: high crime rates, higher health costs, social integration problems, income inequality, low tax rates for the state (Rumberger, 2010).

2.5 POTENTIAL REASONS FOR LEARNERS' DROPOUT.

2.5.1 Learner-related factors

One of the learner-related factors that have been associated with early school leaving is academic achievement. According to Business Council of Australia, (2002a) most scholars have found that early academic achievement in elementary and secondary school is predictive of early school leaving. De Witte et al., (2013), suggest that early academic achievement can lead to less retention, and hence a lower chance of dropout.

De Witte et al., (2013) further found no effect of academic achievement for older subgroups of learners; for them grade retention may predict early school leaving more accurately. The latter authors additionally stress that not only early achievement, but also grade point average in most recently completed term could predict non-graduation. Struggling in school and failing classes is one of the main reasons learners' dropout, and this pattern often shows up early. Learners who fail eighth grade English or Maths, for example, are seven-five percent more likely to dropout of high school.

The predictor of early school leaving, however, is grade retention, sometimes bracketed together with an accumulation of credit deficits. Linked to academic difficulty, learners who are held back and who are older than the children in their grades also tend to drop out. Many studies suggest that being past the typical age in a grade significantly increases the hazard of leaving school early, and indicate that being 'off-age' is a factor

that overshadows most other effects, including academic ability or achievement (De Witte et al., 2013). The last mentioned authors furthermore add that grade retention significantly increases the likelihood of leaving school permanently, rather than temporarily. They ascribe this effect to the fact that being retained in the strictly age-based school system is associated with the stigma of being unintelligent, having failed, and lagging behind.

De Witte et al.,(2013) agreed that the strong relationship of learners` grade level and early school leaving is entirely explained by age. In addition, (De Witte et al., 2013) suggest that several factors `pulling` learners away from school, such as teenage pregnancy and high school employment, which have a high chance of occurring for older learners. Retention revealed less univocal effects; it significantly increased the likelihood of early school leaving in those learners already off-age. De Witte et al.,(2013) concluded that grade retention provides a short- term solution at best.

Other predictors of both early school leaving and graduation are academic and professional aspirations or expectations, even if exogenous factors are taken into considerations (De Witte et al., 2013). This is the influence of engagement, typically measured by school attendance or absenteeism, and good or problematic behaviour (De Witte et al., 2013). Learners who struggle in school are also absent a lot, and along with academic failure, absenteeism is an important future predictor for dropping out. Learners who are absent for twenty percent of their eighth grade year (one day a week) are also highly likely to dropout in high school.

Quite some learners found that lack of engagement in elementary and middle school predicted early withdrawal from high school. De Witte et al, (2013) noted the effect of psychological and cognitive subtypes of engagement. However, De Witte et al.,(2013) have remarked that even if engagement is a good opinion or estimator of non-graduation, it is not as powerful as retention. Apart from engagement, other factors

mentioned are negative attitudes, feelings perceptions and traits, which potentially result in problematic compartment and discipline problems.

According to De Witte et al.,(2013) psychological or behavioural problems such as aggression, anxiety, and disciplinary problems, suspensions, cutting classes or trouble with the police can contribute towards dropout. Apart from that, substance use is sometimes mentioned as a factor contributing to early school leaving. De Witte et al., 2013) found out that learners who use cannabis had a higher risk of school leaving, even though nothing in their prior school history indicated that this would be the case.

The research shows that academic performance and behavioural problems such as bullying and peer victimization are identifiable during middle school and appeared to be affective predictors of their future. In the past 15 years, peer victimization, especially bullying, has become recognized as a persistent and often neglected problem in schools around the world (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, and Hymel, 2010). A national school indicated that approximately twenty-eight percent of United State adolescents reported bullying is victimization at school during the past school years (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2012). Another national study found that one fifth of children and youth reported bullying experiences, and one fourth reported being teased and harassed in the past year

Peer ill-treatment has been conceptualized as a chronic stressor that has traumatic impact on adolescent development, on disrupting the individuals, on self concept and trust in others and leading to avoided behaviour and social withdrawal Carney, (2008). Bush, Ladd, and Herald, (2006) found out that victims of bullying and peer aggression experience emotional problems and become fearful for their safety, less engaged in the classroom, and more likely to avoid school. One method is that victimization generates depressive symptoms that impair concentration and reduce motivation for school work (Schwartz, Gordon, Nakamoto, and Toblin, 2005). Another is that victimized learners

experience lower academic achievements because they become less engaged in school activities, reducing both their classroom participation and self-esteem.

Nakamoto and Schwartz, (2010) concluded that there was small but statistical significant negative correlation between peer victimization and academic achievement. This correlation may be satisfied because studies compared victims with non-victims in the same school. When victims are influential in a school, comparison of victims and non-victims within the same school may underestimate the effect bullying has. Bullying has been described as a particularly dangerous form of peer aggression that can affect all learners in the school even if they are not victims (Olweus and Limber, 2000).

Research on bullying has been guided by sociological theory that bullying is not just an interaction between two individuals, but a social happening that affects school climate and influences bystanders as well as victims (Swearer et al. 2010; Unnever and Cornell, 2003; Vreeman and Carroll, 2007). Learners have claimed that bullying generates a school climate of fear and insecurity, weakened motivation to attend school and poorer academic performance (Swearer et al. 2010). However, there is substantial evidence that bullying is a serious problem in schools which affects academic performance (Vanderbilt, 2010). Peer victimization and bullying are directly influencing the high rate of high school dropout.

2.5.2 Family-related factors

Among family-related factors, social class or socio-economic status is the most contested one. It is often measured by parents' occupational status, education and income, all of which are considered influential (Dalton, Connie & Ingels, 2009). For instance, parents' educational level, and the educational aspirations for their children, is mentioned by many authors, such as Ishitani and Snider, (2006), Koball, (2007). Parental employment is also believed to be an adequate estimator of the learners' likelihood of leaving education before graduation. In addition, the extent to which the

families have reading materials available in their household has been argued as a more solid predictor of early school leaving across all racial and sex groups.

The school dropout determinant over which most disagreement exists is family income. Several authors stress the importance of parental income, either without clear specifications, for example, De Witte et al., (2013) said in case parents' income is below the poverty line. Again, De Witte, (2013) found out that when low family income combined with structural aspects such as disruption, children will leave school at tender age.

More unanimity is observed with regard to family structure; learners from large families, that is with five or more siblings, prove to be disadvantaged in terms of graduation prospects (De Witte et al., 2013), while children from single-parent households also seem to be more likely to dropout, and as do children with step parents (De Witte et al., 2013). The emotional climate of the parent-child relationship is an important predictor, often in interaction with other family aspects.

2.5.3 School-related factors

With respect to school-related aspects, the type of school may relate with learners' educational outcomes, including eventual graduation. De Witte et al.,(2013) argued that grammar schools that are more selective tend to have fewer early school leavers than non-selective, secondary modern technical or vocational schools. Furthermore, De Witte et al., (2013) have stated that if a school has more 'promoting power', that is, an overall higher percentage of learners passing timely from one grade to the following, dropout is less. The schools that are attended by a majority of learners tend to have low promoting power, especially schools with large class sizes. With regards to college leaving, it may also matter whether one has been at an independent or state school (De Witte et al., 2013).

If learners first attend a private independent school, their level of university degree performance tend to be lower, which could be explained by the fact that in college eventual 'ability deficits' of these learners are no longer compensated by higher

resources available in their previous school. Similarly, learners attending a public or government school, rather than a Catholic or other private high school in the US, have a higher chance of leaving school early, as do learners frequenting a “poverty school”, that is, a school with a high percentage of learners on free or reduced-price lunch programs Dalton et al., (De Witte et al., 2013).

Closely related with the type of schools are schools’ resources, a standard most frequently defined by class size, and the teacher-learner ratio (Balfanz & Legters, 2012). In fact, one of the reasons why independent schools may perform better and why parents often choose independent schools, are because they have small-sized classes. As De Witte et al., (2013) has contended, there are a number of reasons why smaller class sizes and lower teacher-learner ratios may have a positive effect on school achievement. For one thing, different aspects vary between smaller and larger classes, among which is teachers’ educational practice (Van Klaveren & De Witte, 2012).

Other aspects may reduce the benefits of small-sized classes, such as the age of learners, their well-being, teachers’ workload, etc, (De Witte et al., 2013). Some authors have contended that smaller schools, having less than 1500 learners; De Witte et al., 2013) are likely to result in lower rates of early school leavers. In contrast, De Witte et al., (2013), have demonstrated what may seem self-evident, namely that the effect of school size on dropout is almost entirely related to schools social climate, and more particularly the influence of learner participation as well as the amount of problems in the school environment. In general, larger schools have greater programme or curriculum diversity, but a less positive social climate.

A crucial factor seems to be schools’ social and academic climate, made operational, for example, through a general sense of cohesion, a high level of participation in school activities, smooth learner-faculty interaction and the extent to which there are problems at school (Pittman & Haughwout, 2011). Also group differences in educational attainment may play a role, as well as academic and social integration and the kind of

courses available (De Witte et al., 2013). De Witte et al, (2013) noted that with respect to course taking, there is a clear effect for younger learners, but not for older ones. That may be due to the fact that children who made it through the earliest grades, are better situated to make it to the final grades. Having appropriately challenging courses in each case appears important, as well as having plenty of opportunities for extracurricular activities, and after-school, summer or special programs. According to De Witte et al., (2013) the issue of never failing which is connected to schools' social capital, that is, the presence of caring teachers, enjoyable school culture and good learner-faculty interaction, reduce dropout.

2.5.4 Community-related factors

Community-related factors may have detrimental effects on learners' school performance, either directly or indirectly. If youths live in poor and distressing environments they may be more susceptible to early school leaving (De Witte et al., 2013). They refer to neighbourhood characteristics like the geographical location of families' residence, eventual housing problems, lack of playgrounds and green areas. Just as "urbanicity" may to some, correlate heavily at early school leaving, so could a whole region in which students live be associated with higher dropout rates (De Witte et al., 2013). At least equally important appears to be the presence of a network of high achieving and high aspiring peers in children's and youths' environment. This factor could exert or bring an influence independent from other variables (De Witte & Rogge, 2013).

In addition, employment or apprenticeship opportunities could act as powerful "pull factor" stimulating learners to stop out or dropout. Much depends on the type of employment in which youth engage, the intensity of work done, the amount of stress associated to the job, whether or not a stable work pattern is kept, whether one is male or female, and whether one works in order to support one's family or not (De Witte et al. 2013). Many other community factors and societal mechanisms could play a crucial role, like social discrimination and prejudice. Such processes have caused minority groups to

be “streamed” into special and vocational education tracks for ages. Kalmijn and Kraaykamp, (2012) stated that these factors are responsible for differences in dropout and downward mobility between minority and majority learners.

2.5.5 The complex interaction

As De Witte et al., (2013) has contended, within education it is not important to notice that numerous variables are at work, but which of these factors have a more significant influence on dropout. Not many separate elements are likely to be relevant but clearly the complex and dynamics interactions between them.

For example, the interaction of ethnicity or race and sex, respectively, with attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, and retention seems noteworthy. De Witte et al., (2013) have found for the US that if a student is black or Hispanic and male, he is more likely to display negative attitudes towards education, perceive his teachers as having low expectations of him, and situate the position of control over important things in his school life outside of himself. At least some minority learners evidently risk ending up in a vicious circle.

The interaction between parental involvement, on the one hand, and ethnicity, family income, and home environment, on the other hand, seems to be of some importance. Hynes (2014) found out that, although parental involvement matters a great deal, its effectiveness depends on the type of involvement parents show, and maybe equally important, on the ethnicity, income and home environment. In other words, cultural and structural barriers may have to be removed before parental involvement can be successful.

Likewise, employment among high school learners, with or without grade retention, does not by definition result in early school leaving. It has been observed that the job market heavily interacts with learners’ family background (De Witte et al., 2013). According to De Witte et al., (2013) observed in particular that learners from less

advantaged backgrounds working after school were not more likely to dropout, contrary to their more well-off counterparts. In fact, the schoolwork of learners from families with very low incomes, did not deteriorate when the so-called “intensity threshold” of twenty hours per week was surpassed. For them, and for other learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, employment may assist them acquire otherwise unobtainable human capital. The authors further found that among retained learners, those who maintained an intensive or adult but stable work pattern between the age of fifteen and sixteen had a lower risk of dropping out than those who took on easy jobs at the age of fifteen and more tough ones the following year.

In addition to those interactions, intermediary factors, that is, factors that cannot easily be situated on just one of the levels involved could matter substantially. For instance, cultural discontinuities that originate from frictions between learners`, families`, schools` and society`s goals, values, perceptions, activities, styles of communication, etc (Cooper et al, 2006), may play a key role.

2.6 ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIES USED TO AVOID LEARNERS' DROPOUT

One of the eight Millennium Development Goals is that all children in the developing countries should complete primary education. Much progress has been made towards this goal, but completing primary school does not ensure that learners attain basic literacy and numerical skills. Indeed, there is ample evidence that many children in developing countries are not learning these basic skills. The question to be asked is: What can schools and communities do to increase the learning that takes place in schools?

South Africa and Sri Lanka are two countries that demonstrate these issues. They have achieved universal primary completion, but many primary school learners perform poorly on academic tests. In the school class-teachers are keeping attendance register to check for learners who have absented themselves. It is checked on daily basis, so to control absenteeism of learners. A child is not allowed to absentee himself or herself

without a valid reason reported by a parent or guardian. A child who is absent from school for two weeks is automatically deregistered from school.

Code of conduct for learners is used in applying disciplinary measures in combating dropout. As a school we apply South African School Act document to assess measures to be used to remedy learners' dropout. Dropout factors include both "push" and "pull" effects (Jordan, McPartland, & Lara, 2012). Push effects include situations or experiences within the school environment that increase the feelings of alienation, failure, and desire to dropout. Pull effects include factors that are external to the school environment that prevent school completion. Both factors are considered equally important.

Effective strategies such as providing vocational education for those who are non-performers in the academic line and counselling programmes that deal with personal issues of learners such as stress, suicidal, traumatized, disabilities should be done (Trainor, Smith, & Kim 2012). Schools should consider opportunities for learners with disabilities to explore careers in a variety of settings so that learners can make connections with people who know about job vacancies and employers who are open to hiring young people with disabilities (Trainor et al., 2012). We provide opportunities for success in schoolwork, for example, intensive reading instruction in early grades, tutoring, and curriculum modification to increase relevance.

There is early intervention which includes comprehensive family involvement, strong reading and writing programs as well as group discussions among learners, and basic main strategies to promote opportunities for learners to form bonding relationships which include mentoring, tutoring, service learning, alternative schooling, and out-of-school enhancement programs (Wilkins, 2011a). It is prudent or sensible for the school not to wait until students are dropping out or dropped out, of school to intervene. The learners', who are at risk of dropping out, especially those who are at puberty stage, are

prime candidates for interventions designed to improve school dropout. According to our policy, we strive to move interventions to an early stage.

Intervention is targeting youths while they are still enrolled in school and therefore while it is easier to reach them and their families. Second, effective interventions offered to them will potentially have multiple positive impacts, for example, early intervention reduces the likelihood of school dropout which is associated with numerous economic-health-and-crime related consequences (De Witte et al, 2013). Effective interventions also will reduce delinquency and substance use in the short term, as well as the long term.

An important implication is related to the measures in our school disengagement warning index. They are based entirely on basic indicators- standardized test scores, attendance, grades, suspensions, and grade retention- that are almost universally found in official school records. The most effective interventions for these youths are the ones that target a wider variety of problem behaviours, as these youths appear to be on a path of serious delinquency and problem drug use as early as middle adolescence.

2.7. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE LEARNERS DROPOUT?

It is the duty of all stake-holders to ensure that the strategies and relevant policies are in place to curb the school dropout problem. The school management team, SMT, the school governing body, SGB, and the teachers and parents should examine the effective dropout prevention strategies according to their observations. The following strategies must be implemented and should be categorized into several themes (Schargel & Smink, 2012; Jordan, MacPartland, & Lara, 2012; Ready et al., 2012).

2.7.1 Dedicated and qualified teachers

It is imperative to note that teaching and learning is a give-and-take activity and if it is done effectively, it will produce anticipated outcomes. Our learners and the community at large expect to have dedicated and highly qualified teachers who are willing to go an extra mile with acquiring learners with knowledge and some skills. Teachers of morals,

values and conducting themselves professionally, above all who are doing their duties to the best of their abilities. The learners need someone whom they can look up to as their role-model and inspiration. Our teachers should continue improving their profile by becoming life-long learners, that is, keep on studying to acquire knowledge and be abreast with their work. Learners will respect and have trust in their teaching staff and this will encourage them to attend school regularly. By having these kind of the teachers' learners will want to see themselves in classes every day. So, learners' dropout will be reduced in our schools.

2.7.2 The importance of engagement of parents

According to Johnson, (2014) states that it is of paramount importance to conduct home visits to develop relationships with family members, especially parents. Schargel and Smink, (2012) observe that parents tend to depend too much on teachers to take care of their children. The rich do not mind donating money and the poor do not bother to check their children's school work. Once inside the school doors everything is left to the teachers to decide, so it better for teachers to communicate with parents on a more regular basis. Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack, (2011) found out that parent involvement is displayed through parents emphasizing the importance of school, having expectations for their children's progress, assisting with and monitoring homework completion, providing supplies and helping children structure their time, helping in school, and communicating with teachers and school staff. The parent involvement declines as learners get older and become more independent.

At kindergarten parents are so concerned about their children safety but at the primary and secondary schools they see their children as more independent. Therefore regular communication with school staff on the child's schedule, courses, remains important. We must be aware of the fact that parents are educators. They need to be actively involved not just appearing at the end of the school semester to meet the teachers to discuss grades. The collaboration and co-operation between teachers and parents will be of

great importance in controlling dropout. It is very important to have parents' involvement in the learning of their children (Pomerantz et al. 2011).

2.7.3 Developing safe and conducive learning environment

Heers et al., (2014) agreed that societies are intensively facing learner dropout problems that have personal, social and financial dimensions and trying to develop policies in order to decrease this problem. Studying in school is not just academic in nature; it involves non academic factors such as relationship. Teachers and learners should have a working relationship whereby learners learn from a teacher while a teacher should teach them. The relationship of both teachers and learners should be working together in a productive harmonious way. Are teachers concerned about potential dropouts? They have a tendency to favour the brilliant high achievers and leave out the slow and underachievers behind.

Teachers should be more empathetic toward the slow learners. There are learners who hated to go to school: simply because their teachers ignored them. As teachers we should be more sensitive towards these learners and should not talk down on them. Everybody involve should try by all means to develop a supportive relationship in schools. We should make the learners to feel they are in family situation in schools. This will definitely lessen learners' dropout.

2.7.4 Detecting early warning signs

Teachers should be able to detect that learners are at risk by noting their behaviours in class and not wait till they fail (Jordan, McPartland, & Lara, 2012). Teachers should always do remedial work and they must make these works to be functional. Teachers should be taught to monitor and identify learners at risk. It is worse that most teachers teach to the mass of majority of learners and it becomes very hard to detect those who are at risk. Nevertheless, teachers should attempt to be able to set aside the poor ones. The development of proper profiling of learners achievement should be put in place (Jordan, McPartland, & Lara, 2012).

2.7.5 Relevancy and joy in learning

Trainor, Smith and Kim (2013) indicated that learners who are slow learners get bored as the lessons to them are not interesting, so teachers should try to make these lessons more fascinating to capture their interests. They feel ignored because teachers pay a lot of attention to the brilliant and wise learners. The slow learners always complain about spending too much time in class even though they are not achieving academically. All they do is to discuss the examinations and how to spot examination questions in class, something they know nothing about. They wish to have active learning sessions outside in the real world.

The school should cater for these learners who are able to perform in extra-mural activities such as singing and playing different sporting codes (Trainor et al., 2013). The underachiever and the smart learners will all be catered for, and they will all have something to look for when attending school. Teachers should unearth the raw talents learners are having by permitting them to show case their abilities in the field of play.

2.7.6 Developing a more challenging curriculum

It is also important for teachers to share information about what learners are learning in school and recommend specific ways that parents can support that learning at home (Wilkins & Terlitsky, 2016). Teachers should ensure they communicate with parents on a more regular and on-going basis. Fleishman and Heppen (2012); Oxley, (2013) discussed the need for bringing together accurate and relevant curricula for all learners. These curricula are joined with a learning community that is personalized and responsive to the needs of both learners and parents. According to McPartland, (2012) the school should have a more challenging curriculum that meets the needs of all learners. It should also have a curriculum for both gifted learners and the left behind ones.

A more interesting syllabus must be provided for these learners to face the real world outside school. The school should make use of co-operative learning in the class to

develop group cohesion and acceptance. This will assist learners to work together as a group for a common goal. On the other hand, they will accept one another strengths and weakness, and this will help them to face the studies as a team.

2.7.7 Personalizing learning through class size

Personalize the learning environment through small class sizes, a freshman academy, mentoring programs, or learner participation in school activities (Wilkins et al., (2014). According to Gewertz, Dorko, and Cain, (2012); Oxley, (2013); Shakrani and Michigan State University. (2013) intended to provide a more personalized learning environment for learner with the goal of helping the learner become better prepared for life after high school, whether that includes college or career development.

Overcrowding is one negative aspect effective of teaching and learning. The class size in an ordinary or public school is ranging from fifty to sixty learners in a single class and this affect teaching and learning in a very negative way. The school needs to reduce class size that will suit effective teaching and teacher-learner ratio should be 1:20 to get modified or personalized attention. Learners can be naughty in a large class and they do not pay attention, so teachers tend to lose focus and control. A good size of one teacher to 20 learners will be a good thing. If we have smaller schools or smaller class sizes, this would help in discipline problems. So teachers will be able to manage the class with ease (Wilkins et al., 2014).

2.7.8 Develop a community plan

Encourage learners to participate in school activities Bohnert, Wargo Aikins, & Arola, (2013). According to Wilkins et al., (2014) stated that learners should be motivated to focus on development of peer relationships so that they can enjoy coming to learn. Schargel and Smink, (2012) suggest the policy makers and the teachers should form effective community dropout prevention program that will see to it that learners attend regularly. Parents need to attend workshops on dropout prevention program and

detection so to be empowered about issues of how to prevent dropout. Research should be conducted to evaluate the existing profile of learners at risk.

2.7.9 Investment in pre-school

The government should train more educators who can teach in pre-schools. Teachers should be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle these small children. The government should build more pre-school centres. There are learners who lack behind because they did not have early pre-school education. Parents and teachers should make sure that more opportunities are given to four and five years old children to attend pre-school. Children from slum areas should be considered too. There are poor learners who do not have adequate resources and we need supportive mechanisms for them (Schargel & Smink, 2012).

2.7.10. Adopting a learner-centred funding model

Our government is doing a great job by providing learners with no fee schooling. It means learners are not paying school fees until grade 12. It could be more appropriate if the government can increase funding for the poor and disabled. There should be more budget for the poor and the needy and more provision of free tuition for these children.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Although, various researchers have done research on the learners' dropout, no educational research was done on the topic: learners' dropout in the selected secondary schools in general. Hence there is a research gap in School A Secondary.

The following chapter deals with Research Methodology

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research design and methods used in this study. It also clarifies how the research will be conducted. According to Strydom (2005) research design can be defined as a plan according to data collection to answer the research questions. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) state that research methodology dictates how data is acquired and arranged in an orderly manner, sets up approach for processing and blending data, suggest how data will be interpreted and produces one or more conclusions that lead to more knowledge. The aim of the chapter is to explain the research methods and methodology used in the study as explained. The chapter also gives a detail account of research methods and design used including measures to make sure ethical issues, data collection, trustworthiness and data analysis as well as sampling.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

For this study a qualitative approach was used in order to investigate the causes and effects of learners' dropout in selected secondary schools, in Zeerust District. The researcher worked at one of the four secondary schools under study which made things much easier for him to interview the respondents in the natural setting which was the school where they were attending and working. He got to the other high schools under study to form a positive relationship between himself and the school especially with the people who participated in this study.

Qualitative approach was the correct and relevant approach appropriate for the research questions in this particular study. The qualitative method was used to improve the researcher's ability to study events as they naturally happened. It was also well suited for situations where the researcher wanted to understand the reasons why

behaviours happen as they did and how these behaviours occurred (Drew et al, 2008:189).

In order to understand the causes and effects of learners' dropout, personal interviews were used to get information from teachers who experienced learners' dropouts and their learners who were recently re-admitted back to school. Those learners who had experienced dropout had been granted permission to tell their side of the story. Interviews were conducted to gather more information from the participants.

Denzin and Lincoln, (2005: 96), Silverman, (2004:146) agreed that this method was appropriate for researchers who sought to understand how people made sense of their surroundings and circumstances that shaped their lives, that is, the natural setting. Maree (2007:78-79) stated that qualitative research approach was an umbrella used for a wide range of approaches intended at collecting valuable data in respect of a particular phenomenon with the aim of understanding a situation from the participants points of view. Qualitative methods are humanistic because the researcher have to understand and knew the respondents personally and experienced what they were going through with dropout. The researcher was able to interact with respondents and was able to feel exactly what they were experiencing as human beings.

Qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study because during the interview which was the central activity of this study, the researcher was personally in direct contact with the respondents. This was done in the respondents' own environments, the school setting. Creswell, (2009:275) showed the importance of a study conducted in a natural setting rather than in a laboratory or a different place. Qualitative approach ensured that the voices were those of the respondents not of the researcher.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVISM

Maree, (2007) explained that a paradigm as a set of assumption or beliefs about fundamental aspects of realities which gave rise to a particular worldview. Methodology as a broad framework, Van Wyk (2004) further argues that methodology might also be considered as a paradigm. Paradigm assists the researcher to tell the story in a simple and meaningful way for people to understand the research study. Research paradigm was very essential for the researcher to provide assumptions and meanings for people to understand the research easily and meaningfully.

Interpretivism according to Maree (2007) holds that there are no stable grounds for judgments, knowledge is not complete. In order to understand the entire process it is necessary to understand the parts. It means that researchers start with the assumptions that end up in reality. Interpretivism studies understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. Interpretivism also advocates that the world should be studied in its natural setting rather than in the controlled laboratory with minimum intervention by a researcher. The interest in interpretive analysis were encouraged by Terre Blanche, Durheim, & Painter (2009), who argue that the key to interpretive analysis is to stay close to the data and to interpret data from a position of empathetic understanding.

Interpretivism is the research paradigm adopted in this study of learner dropout. The reason for adopting interpretivism in this study is because it points out human interaction with phenomena in their daily lives. This means that through data collection process, the researcher will be able to interpret, understand and analyse data as it is presented by the respondents. The data will then help us understand the causes and effect of learners' dropout at the four selected secondary schools. Learners and teachers are active human beings and make choices as a result we need to understand them before making a decision. This means that we need to interview learners, teachers and parents to find out what causes learners to dropout of school and how learners and parents are affected by dropping out of school.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Creswell (2009:3) states that research design is a plan, strategies and procedure for research comprising decisions from worldviews to methods of data collection and analysis. Research design is a plan or strategy which moves from philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, data gathering techniques to be used and data analysis to be done (Maree, 2007:70). Strydom (2005:87) says research design can be defined as a plan according to data collection to answer the research questions. In view of the above explanations research design is a plan which is systematically. In order to achieve relevant and accurate information the researcher need to follow that plan to the end.

3.4.1. Triangulation design

According to Denzin (2012:34) triangulation is a type of mixed method design in which qualitative and quantitative methods are used at the same time. It is the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. It is a technique in social sciences that attempts to explain more fully, the rich and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint, for example, if the outcomes of the interviews correspond to those of the documents study of the same phenomena. It is a method-appropriate strategy of founding the credibility of qualitative analyses; it becomes an alternative to traditional criteria like reliability and validity.

In this study, the researcher used the qualitative method to collect the information from the respondents through the interviews and documents. During the study interviews were conducted to explore the causes and effects of learner dropout. In order to intensify the result, document analysis was conducted and what transpired in the interviews was also reinforced the documents which proved the causes and effects of learner dropout.

The qualitative approach was used in this research study. All selected participants expressed their views on the causes and effects of learner dropout in the selected four

secondary schools in Ngaka Molema Molema district. A semi-structured interview and focus group interviews were conducted on learners, teachers and parents sampled for this study. All the respondents in their respective interviews revealed comprehensive information about the causes and effects of learner dropout in the Ngaka Modiri Molema district.

In qualitative research the suitable research design is phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is the study of people's conscious experiences of their life-world, that is, their everyday life and action (Schram, 2003:71). A phenomenological approach is well suited to studying affective, emotional and intense human experiences.

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

3.5.1 Population

White (2005:113) defines population as a collection of objects, events, or individuals with some common characteristics that the researcher intended to use in the study. The population of the study is made up of 266 Grade 9, 10 and 11 learners overall who attend in four (4) secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district, and 16 teachers in the four secondary schools, and the 16 parents of learners attending school in the four secondary schools. The consent forms were made available to ask permission for the use of the learners' data in the research study. The four secondary schools are:

- (a) School A Secondary School
- (b) School B Secondary School
- (c) School C Secondary School
- (d) School D Secondary School

The four secondary schools are given pseudo or code names to protect the participants and the schools in which the study is occurring. The four secondary schools have only ten classes among them, that is, School A Secondary have five classes, School B Secondary has one class, School C two classes and School D has two classes. All ten classes are taught by twelve teachers in the four secondary schools. The total selected

respondents were 32 learners, 16 parents, 16 teachers from the sampled secondary schools. It meant that the overall number of the respondents selected was sixty-four (64) participants. In qualitative research, a researcher sampled teachers, learners and parents of selected learners as respondents using purposive sampling.

3.5.2 Sampling procedure

White (2005:144) defined sampling procedure as a process of making a selection from the population in order to identify the people or issues to be included in the research. According to McMillan and Schumacher, (2010:138) in qualitative research, the best and relevant sampling is purposive sampling. It meant that the researcher selected particular participants from the population that was informative about the topic under study. On the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a decision was made about which respondents were to be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. The learners who dropped out of school and then were re-admitted, teachers and learners' parents were the holders of the data needed for the research. So the researcher sampled learners who have been re-admitted after dropping out, and experienced teachers who teach in the four high schools, and parents of selected learners.

According to Jakuja (2009:72) purposive sampling strategy is a non-probability sampling strategy which is consistent with the interpretive paradigm on which the research is based. In line with the above explanation the purposive sampling strategy was the preferred strategy for the research stratified.

The selections of participant in the purposive sampling were people who yield the most information about the causes and effects of learners' dropout. So, in the research 32 learners, 16 teachers and 16 parents were sampled from the selected secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district were really the relevant and capable participants for the research study. They were the best to provide the richest and correct information to answer the research questions as they have spent in these schools.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection method is the techniques to be used to collect data. In qualitative research there are various types of data collection methods in connection with participatory or advocacy approach. They are documents and interviews. For the purpose of this research study only three data collection methods were used which are reviews of interviews, documents and respondents observation.

3.6.1 Documents

The researcher asked for the following policy documents to collect data: Learners' attendance register, learners' code of conduct, admission register, learners' performance report and Annual National Assessment (ANA) reports for English and Mathematics. Since the study was based on the causes and effects of learners' dropout the researcher' focused on the school documents such as learners' code of conduct, school policies, agenda of meetings, minutes of staff meetings, and school disciplinary committee. These documents were analysed so as to get a clear picture of what the school had done as an organisation. It was also important to note that Clifton et al. (2011:207) stated that the culture of the organisation's imprint is left on the printed materials that are produced. The researcher asked for the clarification of documents because the documents were used to get analysis.

3.6.2 Interviews

The researcher used this method to collect information from the respondents by interviewing them. The respondents answered the questions posed by the researcher about the topic under study. The types of questions are as follow: (a) what are the causes of learner's dropout? (b) Which disciplinary measures can be taken to control learners' dropout? (c) What role does teacher-learner relationship play in making learners to drop out? (d) What are the effects of learner dropout? The interview schedule that contains questions for the interviews for learners, teachers and parents is attached in the appendix in the study.

Mertler, (2009:108) describes an interview as the conversation between the teacher-researcher and the participants in the study in which the teacher-researcher posed questions to the participants. The researcher asked the participants questions to gather information and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participants. Interview was used to access what a person knew as a result, it was important to give the participants enough time to tell their stories.

Interviews in a qualitative research were classified into structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. According to Mertler (2009: 109-110) unstructured interview referred to a conversation with the intention to explore the participant's views, ideas, beliefs and attitude about the phenomena. Structured interview questions were detailed and developed in advance. Semi-structured interview required the participants to answer a set of predetermined questions and allow for probing and clarification.

For this study, semi-structured interview was used to collect data because it was suitable and appropriate for the researcher to be in control of the process of getting information from the participants. According to Maree (2010: 87) probe and clarification of answers were allowed. The semi-structured interview was best for this research since it allowed the participants to be free to express their views, feelings, and ideas.

Qualitative interviewing required the researcher to ask truly open-ended questions. The participants in this study consisted of 26 learners, 16 teachers and 16 parents of learners who have experienced drop out from School 'A' secondary schools teaching grade nine learners. Some of the teachers and parents had asked to be excused due to attending workshops and work commitment; hence we have lesser number compared to the sampled one. The use of the interviews helped to answer questions asked in Chapter one.

The researcher, with the participants' permission asked to use the tape recorder to do semi-structured interviews. Tape recording interview was done in a meticulous way. The

researcher wrote the answers down. A tape recorder was used to record the participants' responses. Even though the researcher had taped the interview, it was advisable to make notes so that he can review the answers and asks additional questions at the end of the interview. This was to give the researcher time to analyse and transcribe so that the responses can be read and processed.

3.6.3. The interview questions

The interview questioning strategy was vitally important. The researcher asked open-ended questions to give participants a chance to explain themselves. The researcher ensured that he avoided questions where the participant may answer yes or no. The researcher asked probing and clarification questions to get the participant' perceptions and understanding. The researcher asked the learners how they felt about dropping out. The researcher also asked the teachers what kind of strategies they are using to control learners dropout. The researcher wanted to know what were the causes and effects of dropping out of school. The researcher also wanted to find out about how learners and teacher get along, and what remedies are applied to control the drop out problem,

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

Drew, Hardman, and Hosp, (2008: 53) referred to the actual execution of the investigation and involved recording data in some form. This includes the process of conducting interview and recording responses. In this study, the researcher was responsible to collecting data himself. In qualitative research, data collection was done by using semi-structured interviews. Interview questions were forms on experiences, behaviours, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge and the participants' background.

Qualitative interviewing required asking truly open-ended questions. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were used to permit probing and clarifications. The researcher established trust, by being genuine, maintained eye contact and used the voice tone that a participant hears. Each interview lasted about an hour and was done on separate dates for each participant. Interviews were conducted after school as it was seen as the

appropriate time and did not disturb the smooth running of the schools. None of the participants showed any reluctance to take part in the study. The researcher had a chance to be left alone with participants without any disturbance from the staff members and other learners.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Drew et al. (2008) described data analysis as the steps in the research process whereby the investigator summarizes data collected and prepares it in a format to determine what happened. Qualitative study, require reviewing the narrative data to determine developments. In this case the researcher tried to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analyzing observations, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences. Data analysis gave sense to the data the researcher has collected from the participants.

The significant voices in this study were those of individuals who were interviewed. The central part of qualitative data analysis in this study was a twofold task. Regard less of the quantity of data, the researcher was able to analyze it with ease since he has be familiar with categories and knew his data well. This was done through listening again to tape recorded interviews as the researcher transcribed the notes to draw conclusion.

3.9. ETHICAL ISSUES

The researcher asked permission to conduct the research from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) since the study involves teachers, parents, and learners. A letter requesting permission to conduct the interviews was written to principals of the four secondary schools clearly stating the purpose of the study. A preamble letter and letters of consent to participate in the study was written to parents of learners since learners are minors. The researcher also received ethical clearance from Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, before the interviews were conducted. Since the research deals with human beings the names of the participants are not real names. Pseudo names are used to hide the real names of the participants. The use of

pseudo names ensure that people who will read the research report will be unable to link the responses to individual participants. Participants were informed of their guarantee to anonymity and confidentiality during the course of the study.

The respondents were made aware that they have a choice to participate in the research voluntarily or to decline as they will not be forced to participate unwillingly. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from participating in the research should they so desire. The researcher was sensitive to and observed the ethical and legal responsibilities involved in conducting research. The researcher strictly adhered to ethical principles, which include: voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and objectivity.

The researcher respected the rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities of the research population, and the integrity of the schools which the study was conducted. According to American Educational Research Association (2002) educational researchers are careful in dealing with children and other vulnerable population such as learners dropouts. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) suggest three important issues that a researcher should address, namely, protecting participants from harm, ensuring confidentiality of research data and deception of subjects. Ethics was based on what is good, right, fair and just. The following ethical issues were considered and respected in the study.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Informed consent involved the procedure by which an individual chooses whether or not to participate in the study. The researcher ensured that the participants have full understanding of the purpose and methods which were used in the study, the risks involved, and the demands placed upon the participants (Best & Kahn, 2006; Jones and Kottler, 2006). The researcher explained to the participants that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher obtained permission directly from the participants because they were teachers and parents of the learners.

In case of substitute consent permission was given by parents when it was determined that the person did not have the capacity to make decision or depended on others for his or her welfare such as children under the age of 18 (Nagy, 2005a; Roberts, Geppert, Coverdale, Loure, and Edenharder, 2005:57). The researcher made sure that both direct or substitute consent met the requirements for the informed consent.

In this study consent forms were given to participants that describe the expectations of them and were also informed of all aspects of the research. They were also informed about the purpose of the research.

3.9.2 Voluntary participation

For this study, the participants were informed that taking part in the research was absolutely voluntary and they are at liberty to withdraw at any time if they no longer feel interested or comfortable with the research. The researcher determined whether or not the participants were willing and available to participate in the follow-up interviews at a later stage. The researcher reminded the participants that the participation was not compulsory, but an optional exercise. The researcher made it clear the importance of their taking part in the research study and encouraged them to complete the research. Participants were motivated, encouraged and prepared to give relevant and rich information.

3.9.3 Violation of privacy

According to Burns (2000) both the researcher and the participants had to have a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study. The researcher ensured that all the participants' information and responses shared during the study were kept private and the results to be presented in an anonymous way to protect the identities of the participants. The researcher personally saw to it that all recorded documents and taped-recorders were destroyed after the study was completed.

3.9.4 Anonymity and confidentiality

Confidentiality was not disclosing the identity of study participants. In this research study participants names could were revealed anywhere and under no circumstances and no personal or sensitive information could be released without their consent. The researcher did not use the participants` proper names and institutions to avoid reluctance from participants once they suspect the investigation was invading their privacy. It meant that anonymity and confidentiality were maintained and respected throughout the study and once the study was over. No harmful effects should happen to the participants even after the completion of the research study. This significance of this meant that participants remain anonymous throughout the research-even to the researcher.

3.10. CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the research design and methodology. The design for this research study has been outlined, with a clear reference to the identified research problem. The selection method of the sample was also outlined. The interviews and analysis of documents were used to collect data whereby the manner and the way and how they were used have been outlined. The purpose of this chapter was to show how this study was organized in collecting information about the causes and effects of learners' dropout by learners, teachers and parents in Ngaka Modiri Molema district. The following chapter deals with data presentation, interpretation and analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter deals with data analysis, data presentation and interpretation through documents analysis and interviews. The interviews were conducted with teachers, learners and parents of the four secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district. As indicated in the previous chapter, the researcher used a qualitative method in conducting this study to find the causes and effects of learners' dropout in the four selected secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district. Thirty two learners, sixteen teachers and sixteen parents participated in this study. The data collected helped the researcher to come up with the findings, recommendations and conclusion. The following is a presentation of the data collected.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION

For the interviews in the four secondary schools to take place, the researcher was asked by the University to request for permission to interview participants in the above mentioned schools where the interviews were to be conducted. (Appendix A1). Furthermore the Area Manager's Office where these four secondary schools are located also requested the schools to grant the researcher permission to conduct the research in their schools and to give the researcher any assistance he may need (Appendix A2).

The learners who are still minors cannot do interview without their parents or guardians' consent, so their parents gave their children permission to partake in the research questions (Appendix F). The four secondary schools' principals also allowed the researcher permission to conduct his research study in their schools (Appendixes B, C, D and E) respectively. The researcher interviewed thirty two learners, eight teachers and eight parents. Eight teachers and eight parents did not take part in the interviews due to work commitments and workshops. The researcher respected their apologies not

to participate in the interviews. The researcher managed to interview only eight teachers, eight parents and thirty two learners in the interview. The interview schedule of questions for all participants is found on Appendix B2. The names of learners who participated in the interviews are pseudo names, that is, their names are not real. Parents were not given identities of schools because they have other children in more than one secondary school.

Question 1

4.2.1 What are the causes of learners' dropout?

Learners' Responses:

Learners are having different factors that can force them to dropout of school. In addition, drug or alcohol use during secondary school is associated with relatively high dropout rates. Drug addiction and alcohol use are the forms of counterculture that have been found to be the most dominant. Police statistics indicate that dropouts are six to ten times more likely to be involved in crime than those who complete their schooling. The Educator's Voice (2010) describes substance abuse amongst teenagers, especially in the form of the abuse of alcohol and "nyaope", as the leading factors to the most vulnerable among the learners dropping out of school.

The researcher asked Learner 19 why she dropped out of school, to which she responded:

Learner 19 – female- 18 years old from school C responded:

"I did wrong things. My friends were doing drugs, and, later on, I was also dependant on drugs. I had so much trouble in my mind. It was impossible to focus in the classroom any more. When I was in the classroom, I could only think of my next "fix", how I was going to smoke the next drugs. The reason why I left school was because I totally lost my focus in doing my schoolwork. I lost my concentration about my schoolwork. At that stage, I could not concentrate anymore. At the time, I smoked "dagga", and I used various kinds of drugs. I hang out with my friends who did not attend school in the same community. They influenced me negatively."

The researcher found that male learners were more likely to misbehave in secondary school, and that delinquent behaviour outside the secondary school was also significantly associated with dropout rates experienced.

Male participant, Learner 20, who was an unemployed 19 years old at the time of the study, had left school in Grade 9.

Learner 20- male- 20 years old from school D recalled:

"My parents wanted me to continue my schooling at the time, but I was not serious enough about my education. I loved school very much, and the teachers also loved me. They reprimanded me on daily basis. I was in school every day, but for the wrong reasons. I was naughty. I could not ignore girls. My friends at school were the same as me. Schoolwork was not important to us at the time. Our behaviour was often disruptive. I did not worry... the outcome was that I failed Grade 9."

Flisher et al. (2010) confirm the impact of early school leaving and substance use among adolescents in a working-class community in Cape Town. Their study found that dropouts had higher rates of current cigarette use, lifetime cannabis use, and current and heavy alcohol use compared with those still attending school.

Learner 21 revealed the following disturbing behaviour, as a result of her drug abuse while she was attending school,

Learner 21- female- 17 years old from school A revealed:

"I had decided in my mind that I was going to leave school. I could not focus on my schoolwork anymore. I was occupied with my own mindset. I felt sick. At that stage, I concentrated on making an ending to my own life, to commit suicide. I talked to a counsellor at the local hospital. The counsellor referred me to the institution for psychiatric patients. I was confused and frustrated during that time. I had feelings of suicide, and I was aggressive. I felt that I wanted to be on my own, to be left alone."

Social learning theory proposes the learning processes that lead to substance use in association with peers, claiming that such processes are most persuasive in the face of weak social bonds (Flisher et al. 2010).

When Learner 22 was asked whether his peer group had any impact on him dropping out of school, he responded as follows:

Learner 22- female- 18 years old from school B responded

"My peer group had a negative influence on me. My friends were the same as I. We did not worry about our school activities. Schoolwork was important for us only when it suited us. We concentrated on having nice time and be the centre of attraction for older guys and matured men. We really did not care about our schoolwork."

Masitsa, (2012) confirms that peers are extremely important during adolescence, and that teenagers spend their school days interacting with them. Having friends who engage in criminal behaviour: or having friends who have dropped out of school also tends to increase the likelihood of dropping out of school.

Learner 17 reacted as follows when asked whether peer group had any big influence on her,

Learner 17- female- 16 years old from school A reacted:

"Yes, in a negative way, my peers introduced me to alcohol and boys until I realised that I was pregnant, so I dropout in Grade 9, but I have decided to stop associating with them. They are the bad influence."

Learner 26's peer group had a major influence on her, she explained,

Learner 26- female- 17 years old from school B explained:

"Children will always do anything to be part of a group. I could not smoke, but to be part of the group I had to smoke. I saw my friends smoke so I also started smoking. Do you know what? Your friends can tell you to smoke, but when you do it, it is your choice, because people make their own decisions. Each day people make their own choices. It is a wrong choice that I made. Whenever you make wrong choices, you open yourself up for any possibility without you knowing it. My friends could have had an influence on me, but the day I decided to smoke, the choice was mine."

Learner 27 noted that her peer group had no major influence on her. However, she felt pressured at school by her friends for doing her schoolwork.

Learner 27-female- 19 years old from school C stated:

“They put pressure on me only at school, yes. My friends in school used to tell me to stop doing my schoolwork, while we were supposed to do our schoolwork. My friends did not have a major influence on me.”

Christie (2008) argues that home backgrounds influence learner achievement. A theory that is used these days is that the poor live in a “culture of poverty”. The meaning is that a culture of poverty ambushes the poor into cycles of low achievement and low expectations, which are passed from generation to generation. An explanation such as this implies that the poor have themselves to blame for their circumstances. It also suggests that the reasons for poverty are to be found in the attitudes and in the behaviour of the poor themselves, who are seen as deficient, or lacking in capacity. Poverty is portrayed as a problem that is experienced by individuals, to which they and their families contribute.

In South Africa, it is estimated that approximately 75 percent of children live in conditions of poverty (Flisher et al., 2010).

When Learner 10 was asked why she left school, she answered,

Learner 10- male- 17 years old from school B answered:

“I was in Grade 11 when I left school. My mother told me to go back to school. I felt at that time that I did not have a choice. Both my parents were not working. Financially, circumstances were very bad at home. I am the eldest of my three siblings. When I was in Grade 10, I already felt inclined to leave school, because of my financial problems at home. There was never any income or money available at home. My parents were drinking alcohol excessively. There were many times when I slept on my own at night, with my three little brothers. Many times my parents did not sleep at home because of their drinking problems.”

Learner 28-female of 20 years old from school D was at that time doing Grade 11, a grade before the matriculation examination. Being the eldest of the four siblings, she had felt obliged to go out to work to care financially for the whole household and for her three younger brothers. Both her parents were unemployed at that time. Circumstances at home were not conducive for any of the children. Learner 28 from school D had too

much burden to carry on her shoulders. Unemployment can have devastating effects on the community, as well as on individuals and their families.

When I asked Learner 11 from school C the same question,

Learner 11- female – 16 years old from school C replied:

“Circumstances at home compelled me to leave school. I had financial problems. I had to go out and look for the job ... I had to go and work to maintain me and my child. My baby’s father did not pay maintenance. We did not have any contact with each other.” [She cried in the middle of the interview.]

Through the emotions shown by the participants, one had to come to understand the difficulties and the hardships that these dropouts have gone through. I have realized through research; that poverty is more of an issue than is education in the poor communities. However, dropouts also create dreams and visions for themselves, despite them living in the culture of survival. The participants interviewed felt constrained by their circumstances, and appeared to express feelings that reproduced the constraints experienced.

Learner 13-female-16 years’ old from school A poor circumstances at home gave her no alternative but to leave school in Grade 10. She was a teenager with a child, who had no financial aid for her child. The financial circumstances at home were poor. Soudien (2007) confirms that approximately one-third of all young South Africans live in households with the income of R750 per month. It is clearly that with only a small amount of income, life has no guarantees for these participants. The poor, particularly the rural poor, are marginalized, and their voices are greatly ignored (Christie, 2008).

The policy makers and the media often *mention* pregnancy and marriage as being the primary drivers for female adolescents leaving school prematurely, that is, before the completion of secondary school in Southern Africa, the circumstances that affect young women to have premarital sex, or to marry early, such as poverty and poor school

performance lead learners to dropout (Ball & Melhado, 2008). The argument is that teenage parenting and childbearing increase the tendency to drop out of school.

Learner 29 from school A replied as follows when asked her why she had left school,

"I fell pregnant. My parent told me to leave the house. Although I could have attended school while I was pregnant, I did not feel like going to school any more. I went to stay with my baby's father."

Other learners' responded as follows:

Learner 30- male 18 years old from school B responded:

"We lack commitment in our daily work, we share one's work and copy it as our own. We do not make time to study; hence we spent lot of time on social networking chatting and tweeting. These social media consume too much of our time and we neglect our school work. We are also caught in company of anti-social behave people who are so influential on bad behaviour."

Learner 31-female- 15 years old from school C said:

"Some learners' bad attitudes towards teachers play a role in dropping out of school. They are constantly in conflicts with teachers make them decide to leave school permanently. They behave this way because they are always under the influence of the drugs they are using."

Learner 5- male -16 years old also from school A said:

"Our main cause to dropout is absenteeism. We absent ourselves because we feel neglected and cast out by our parents and teachers. In case of parents, they do not get involve in our school activities and teachers seem to favour bright learners and slow learners feel isolated and alone. This is discouraging us to attend school."

Learner 9- female -15 years old from school A responded:

"Many factors contribute to dropout of school. The poor quality of education of our schools, over-crowding of learners in classes and the huge size of the school unable teachers to be aware of those learners who are not present. Under the above-mentioned circumstances the smooth running of the school is very difficult."

Interpretation and analysis:

Learners found themselves faced with difficult hurdles to cross when coming to the causes of dropout they have to overcome. The response is supported by literature review in Yildiz and Kula, (2012) found out that the biggest cause of learner absence and dropout from school is teenage pregnancy and ill health. There are so many challenges that face the learners. They make their decisions based on the spur of the moment without thinking things through. Lack of commitments and focus on their schoolwork and their goals. They cited that they are over-crowded, the teacher-learner ratio is too high for teachers to keep control, so it not easy to do they work properly.

Other learners put pressure on their friends to do illegal things like doing drugs and not writing their tasks. For learners who do not have backbone they eventually give in to temptation. The interpretation is that our learners need to be guided and monitored at all times. We need to bring them closer to us, so that they should not be left alone and feel neglected.

When teachers were asked why the learners are dropping out of school, they had this to answer,

Teachers' Responses:

Teacher 5 – male- 49 years old from school A answered:

“We encounter difficulties when dealing with learners who are over-aged in the class of young classmates. They feel out of place especially when making mistakes. The young ones always make fun of them. They do not feel comfortable in such situations and decide to dropout of school.”

Teacher 6 – male- 32 years old from school B replied:

“Those learners who are having low academic performance and repeating a grade are very much ill-discipline and are not attending school on regular basis. Most of the time, these learners are at risk of dropping out because the atmosphere at school is not conducive for them.”

Teacher 7 – male- 45 years old from school C commented:

“Learners who come from a dysfunctional family or broken family is likely to dropout because of the situation that he or she finds himself/herself in. This situation makes the child to lose focus and be stressed and the school will never be enjoyable. Abusive or dysfunctional home setting creates children who are angry, frustrated and who got nothing to live for. They drop out of school because of lack of motivation and support from home.”

Teacher 8 – female – 37 years old from school D said:

“Some of our learners are having friends who are working, so they drop out of school because they are offered job opportunities that are offering them attractive salaries. They want to earn a living so to support their families and themselves because their friends are also employed.”

Interpretation and analysis:

It seems that teachers put the whole blame on the learners for the problems in their respective schools. On the other hand learners also accused the teachers for not getting along with learners in a professional manner. Learners blame teachers for the harsh treatment and are always in conflict with them. They feel that teachers are ill-treating them, while teachers are complaining about the behaviour of ill-mannered learners who are putting the school into disrupt.

Teachers also raised the issue of learners who come from dysfunctional families that are at all times fighting and not giving their children necessary support. These learners are identified as problematic and troublesome to the smooth running of the school, at long last they leave school permanently.

Learners' attitudes and behaviours are unpredictable, so you will never know what their next move is. Teachers do not have control over the learners once they have taken a decision of leaving school for good. Teachers are also faced with a difficult task in connection with dropout problem.

Parents answered the dropout question by stating the following responses.

Parents' Responses

Parent 5 – male- 40 years old responded:

"I am a single parent mother; who have never got the chance of attending school. I do not have a say in the life of my son. He is out of control and he goes to school whenever it suits him. He has anti-social behaviour that led him to be arrested a number of times. This caused him to dropout of school."

Parent 6 – male– 45 years old answered:

"Our children do not care about their studies and their future and they also have no respect for their teachers as well as their parents. They loiter around during the nights and you can hardly see them studying."

Parent 7 – female- 36 years old said:

"Many of us as parents are to be blamed. We are not supportive of what teachers and learners are doing at school. Lack of our involvement in our learners school work is a contributing factor to dropout problem. We should attend parents meeting whenever we are called upon by the school. This is really a call for concern to pull our socks and start supporting our children in a more positive way."

Parent 8 – male- 39 years old replied:

"A mentor or a role model is needed in a family who will encourage our children to be like him/her. A person who will give them inspiration: so that they should strive to be educated so that they can realise the importance of education. Children lose hope when they find themselves in the hopeless situation."

Interpretation and analysis:

Parents admit that their children are out of control. This statement is supported in literature review by (Shute and Cooper, 2015) state that learners sometimes go to school and skip classes during the day and such cases happen more often in the whole day. They need to be assisted before it too late. Parents also acknowledge their mistakes by not getting involved in their children's education. They realize that some inspiration is needed to encourage learners to focus and to succeed. Parents want their children to attend school and graduate. They are in need of assistance to put back the

culture of learning among their children. This statement is supported in literature review by (Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership, 2013) establishment of parents involvement co-ordinators also served as home-school liaisons to build parent capacity to increase achievement. But parent 5 made some excuses about being a single parent who knows nothing about education, so she does not want to take responsibility of her own child's future in her hands. This statement is contrary to literature review by Thornton, Dalmody and McCoy, 2013) the participation in parent-teacher meetings and other activities, monitoring the child's academic progress and school attendance is the decent thing to help learners to continue with their studies.

Question 2

4.2.2 How does absenteeism contribute to learner dropout in schools?

Learners' Responses:

Most learners in the four selected secondary schools' responses show very clearly that absenteeism of both teachers and learners play a vital role in learners' dropout in many schools. They mentioned various reasons for bunking or absenting themselves from schools. Some of their comments were as follow:

Learner 1- male- 16 years old from school A said:

"Absenteeism from school means that as a learner you have missed the entire school day work, which is not ease to recover in time. Some teachers are absenting themselves from school hence learners spend a day without be taught. We see no need to attend school regularly because it is a waste of time. Teachers don't give learners attention and proper education, hence we stay away from school."

Learner 2 – female- 15 years old from school B said:

"Classroom management is totally out of order due to lack of teachers attending their periods. There is less teaching, so it is useless to go to school under those circumstances. Our school lacks discipline and order; learners come to school when they want."

Learner 3 -female- 15 years old from school C said:

"Learners absent themselves because of lack of proper guidance from parents and elderly people because they live on their own. Learners

lacking parental support are at risk of dropping out before graduating and we are left alone to fend for ourselves without being supervised. We are not performing well at school because of lack of commitment in our studies. You got no-one to encourage you with your school work."

Learner 4 – female 15 years old from school D said:

"Teachers who do not attend school regularly contribute towards learners to drop out of school before completing their studies. Most of the learners are under-achievers, but our attendance is poor. We know how important education is, but we are not committed to our school work because of the teachers who saw no seriousness with their job. We are really lost"

In response to the question on dropout, the learners indicated that schools are experiencing lots of problems when it comes to absenteeism of both teachers and learners which ultimately forces learners to dropout. These learners put blame on their teachers and parents for not showing competence and support. Learners reveal the poor school administration and lack of discipline in the whole school.

It is shown that school management is not doing its task. Teachers are not respecting contact time of teaching and learning. Learners do as they wish hence there are lot of problems in these four selected secondary schools. The schools are dysfunctional due to high rate of absenteeism.

Educators' Responses:

Educators are at the mercy of teaching learners who are ill-disciplined and lack morals and respect. Some of the learners are old enough to be of the same age as their teachers, so there is no respect in this regard. Another factor is that most learners are substance and drugs users. It is not easy to mould a person of this calibre. The teachers are not solving anything if they absent themselves from the school premises. The responses of teachers to absenteeism contributing to learner dropout question were as follow:

Teacher 1 – female- 39 years old from school A said:

"Teaching children of today is not a simple task. It requires so many things such as patience, tolerance, understanding, acceptance and love. Learners are not focused on things that are of importance. The rate of

absenteeism is too high. They show no commitment and are not visionaries."

Teacher 2 – male- 50 years old from school B said:

"Our learners are very problematic; they lack respect towards their parents and to us teachers. They are misled by friends they have, and they do things to be accepted in the peer group. Learners find themselves using substance abuse such as drugs, dagga, and drinking alcohol excessively. Most of them are addicted to these drugs. When they are high they do not even think of school."

Teacher 3 – female- 44 years old from school C said:

"Female learners are also troublesome, especially when they are in puberty stage. The girls become absent themselves to attend their personal needs such as boyfriends and using drugs then they become pregnant at an early age. These learners find themselves in this situation because of poverty, that is, they do this to have access to children support grants from the government. The social grants are paid from the 1st to the 5th of every month, so during that period female learners are not attending school at all."

Teacher 4- male-46 years old from school D said:

"Most of our learners are orphans and they are the heads of their household, this means that they have the responsibilities of providing for their siblings while they are children too. It is a huge burden placed on their shoulders and this makes it very difficult for elder children to cope at school. Eventually they decide to go and look for work in order to take care of their little siblings. Lack of parental care and support forces these learners to leave school. Parents are called to parents meetings only to find that learners' representatives are also children themselves."

In response to the absenteeism question, teachers put the blame on the unruly behaviour of the learners. Teachers mentioned that learners are disrespectful and ill-disciplined and very problematic. This kind of conduct is because they are using drugs. One teacher revealed that female learners fall pregnant on purpose to get social grants for their children. Another response is the lack of parental care and support which made learners to get out of school and look for work. It is obvious teachers' blame learners and parents for the problem of learner dropout. Teachers never mention their

contribution to the problem. According to their responses teachers are not to be blamed for the absenteeism.

Parents' Responses:

Most parents are neglecting and ignoring their responsibilities when it comes to their children's education. They tend to leave education matters in the hands of teachers alone. The rich parents donate large sum of money to the school without attending to their children's needs. Most parents fail to attend the parents meeting called at school because they refuse to be part of decision-making when it comes to school matters. They leave their children to be on their own.

Parent 1 – male- 33 years old said:

"We do not attend school so we have our own problems to attend to. We gave teachers our children to teach, it is their duty to look after them."

Parent 2 – male- 43 years old said:

"Teachers are not doing the work they are paid for. It is the responsibility of the teacher to keep an eye on the learners. They are the ones who spend more time with learners, so they should come with a solution to solve the problem of absenteeism."

Parent 3 – female- 39 years old said:

"Honestly speaking, we are afraid of our children. They are lawless and do as they wish in front of us. We left things in the hands of teachers. We should form a united front with teachers to help with absenteeism and take part in our children's education in the dropout problem."

Parent 4 – male- 38 years old said:

"Generally speaking today' children are not properly brought up. They are not taking their education and life in general very seriously. They do drugs and hang out in the streets doing absolutely nothing. They absent themselves every Monday and every Friday. They should be taught the importance of attending school."

In response to the question of absenteeism some parents have shown that they have nothing to do with the problem of children leaving school, because they want teachers

to take the blame. Teachers are paid to look after their children so it is their responsibility to make sure that children come to school regularly. Other parents were fair enough to tell the truth about how they relate with the children. They revealed that children are lawless and are not brought up in the right way. Children do as they want without confrontation from the parents.

Interpretation and analysis:

Most of the learners agree that there is absenteeism in their schools. Learner 1 cited absenteeism as one of the main reasons that cause learner dropout. This statement is supported in literature review by (Uys and Alant, 2015) stated that negligent control of learner absenteeism, failing to contact the parents in case of absenteeism and not investigating the causes of absenteeism and the occurrence of learner dropout. Learners 3 and 5 came up with the same problem of lack of parental care and involvement. They put the blame on the shoulders of the teachers who are not passionate enough to teach them.

The researcher interpreted that most schools are facing the disciplinary problems of absenteeism that leads to learners to dropout of school. Learners are putting the blame on their teachers and lack of parental involvement and support. The teachers, parents and learners complained about one another instead of finding a common ground of solving the problem of not attending school regularly.

Question 3

4.2.3. What strategies can be used to avoid dropout?

The schools have academic effective strategies put in place to deal with dropout problem; according to the perceptions of teachers and parents. As mentioned by the participants, the state of learners' dropout in these secondary schools is not at the level where the stakeholders would want it to be. The schools experience the on-going learner dropout problems. One of the main reasons why these strategies are not functional is because the majority of these strategies revolve around parents who are not at all times available to carry them on.

Responses from the combinations of learners 9, 14, 25; and teachers 6, 8; and parent 7 all together.

Learner 9- female- 16 years old from school C said:

"We have disciplinary committee which is a representative of learners, teachers and parents to ensure that there is a smooth running of the school. The school committee adopted the effective strategies whereby vocational education should be provided to learners who are non-performers in the academic line and counselling program that deals with personal issues of learners such as stress."

Teacher 6- male-32 years old from B replied:

"The importance of engagement of parents plays a significant role in getting a solution to dropout problem. Parents tend to depend too much on teachers to take care of their children. The rich parents do not mind donating money and the poor do not bother to check their children's school work. Once inside the classroom everything is left in the hands of a teacher to decide, it is better for teachers to communicate with parents all the times. The parents' involvement declines as learners get older and become independent."

Teacher 8- female- 37 years old from school D said:

"At crèche parents are so concerned about their children safety but at secondary schools they see their children as more independent. Regular communication with school staff on the child's schedule, courses, remains important. Parents need to be actively involved not just to come and fetch their children's reports at the end of a semester. The collaboration and co-operation between teachers and parents will be of great importance. It is very vital to have parents' involvement in the learning of their children."

Parent 7- female- 36 years old said:

"Early intervention which includes complete family involvement, early childhood education and out-of-school enrichment programs should be conducted to help learners who did not achieve academically. I suggest that learners, teachers and all parents should work together to see to it that our school succeed."

Learner 25-female-17 years old from school A said:

"We should hire dedicated and highly qualified teachers, who have morals and values. Teaching and learning is a give and take activity that produces good results if it is done in a more proper way. Teachers who are prepared to guide and teach our learners to realise their full potentials. The teachers, who are willing to perform their work to the best of their abilities. Learners respect and trust such teachers who encourage learners to attend school regularly and stay focused on their school work."

Parent 8-male-39 years said:

"A development of community plan is of great significant in combating dropout problem. The policy makers, the teachers and the entire community should form the effective community dropout prevention program that will see to it that learners attend school regularly. If a child is not a school, this community should ensure that strong actions are taken against the child and his parents. Parent need to attend workshops on dropout prevention program and taught how to detect and evaluate the existing profile of learners at risk of dropping out."

Learner 14- male- 15 years old from school B said:

"A school needs safe and conducive learning environment. Each and every learner is in need of safe, secure and encouraging learning surroundings. Teachers and learners should have a good working relationship. Both learners and teachers should trust and respect each other so to have a productive relationship. Teachers have a wrong tendency of liking learners who are bright and high achievers than slow and underachievers; this makes slow learners to feel neglected and cast out by the teachers. Teachers should always show sympathy towards all learners. Slow learners should also be conceded when coming to teaching and learning."

Interpretation and analysis:

Learners 9 from school A, Learner 14 from school B, Learner 25 from school A; Parents 7, Parent 8 together with Teachers 6 from school B and Teacher 8 from school D have the same idea of working together where parents are going to be hands on with the work at hand. The main idea is that all the stake holders should work together to make the teaching and learning for the learners to be conducive. All the participants' responses show that if all these secondary schools could adopt these strategies their dropout problem could be solved.

The following main points should be utilised to assist in the reduction of learner dropout; Dedicated and qualified teachers can make learners to idolise them and want to be successful as they are. These teachers also have the interest of children at heart; they will be the inspiration to learners. Dedicated teachers have the respect of the community and the learners they teach because teachers are their role models. Teachers who demonstrate a strong sense of professional commitment and influencing learners towards higher levels of engagement in their learning process and more significantly, tend to have much higher classroom on-time attendance rates than teachers who do not display the stated. This plan will work in favour of dropout reduction.

Early learning centres: Parents should be encouraged to take child through crèches before attending school. This helps children to enjoy and see the importance of attending school. This exercise makes children to do well in the school setting and they will never dropout.

Interventions: Whenever a learner show any symptoms of being at risk of dropping out, that is where teachers and parents should come together to assist the learner before is too late. Parents must always come to school and monitor his or her child school work and check whether the child is doing well in the school activities including attending school regularly.

The importance of parents' involvement in the child education is one important factor that will assist learners to attend and adore school. The child will be pleased that the parent is taking interest in whatever the child does at school. This will boost self confidence of the learner and the will work even harder not to disappoint the parent. These learners need sense of appreciation from the side of their parents and teachers.

Safe and conducive school environment is where the learners feel that they belong because school is the place where learners spend most of their times. The school

environment should be free of criminal activities and should be a place of harmony where learners can study and learn peacefully. The learners and their teachers should have a sense of belonging so that teaching and learning can be achieved.

The extra-curriculum should be introduced and implemented where learners will get a chance to show case their talents in various sporting codes. These sporting codes help the low academic learners to be accepted and be recognised for what they can do for their schools. They will like coming to school because of the part they play in the school set-up. The researcher feels that these strategies can be implemented they can help the schools with the problems of learner dropout.

Question 4

4.2.4. What role does teacher-learner relationship play in making learners to drop out?

Once the relationship is negative it will yield bad attitudes between both the teacher and the learner, this will result in learner to decide to leave school for good. When the relationship is positive there will never be any dropout problem. Learners who are showing a positive attitudes and good behaviour towards their teachers are enjoying coming to school because the atmosphere at school is conducive. But on the other hand, learners who do not abide by the rules and regulations of the school are demonstrating bad behaviour and disciplinary problems, and they do not complete their studies because they eventually drop out of school.

The comments from learners 6 and 12; teacher 5 and parent 4 about how learners and teachers get along in their institution, the school

Responses from learners 6 and 12; teacher 5; parent 4

Learner 12- male- 18 years old from school D commented:

“Some teachers’ conducts and behaviours towards the learners are the major problem during the process of dropping out of school. We feel that some teachers are treating us unfairly due to our intelligence quotient (IQ), some learners are underachievers and others are bright and intelligent.

Teachers pay too much attention to the learners who are well and tend to neglect learners who are struggling with their studies and disciplinary problems.”

Parent 4 said:

“Learners who are having negative and bad attitudes and behaviours such as using drugs, substance use, absenteeism, bunking classes and not complying with what teachers are asking them to do are faced with problem of not finding peace and harmony in the school setting. Teachers are tolerating such kind of mischievous behaviour and cannot allow those learners to put the image of the school in jeopardy.”

Teacher 5 from school A said:

“Every school has rules and regulations that everyone should adhere to these laws found in the learners’ code of conduct. The code of conduct indicates how learners should conduct themselves in the school premises and outside school area. Learners who break the laws are always in trouble with school management and teachers. These learners are having problematic relations with teachers at all times by refusing to abide by the rules of the school. The learners find it difficult to establish good relationship with other learners and teachers. They find themselves in the group of friends who influence them negatively. At last, these bad behaving learners end up leaving school due to ill discipline they are displaying at school.”

Learner 6 –male -17 years old from school B replied:

“Yes, all the teachers were very fond of me at school. I was an A candidate at school. I attended a Model C school from Grade 8 to Grade 9. I only attended a state school mid -year in Grade 9. The reason for me attending the state school was because of the convenience of me walking to school. I could walk to school, as, with the Model C school, I had to wake up earlier, and arrived later at home from school.”

Learner 16, however, did not feel appreciated and valued as a learner at school, and had not yet come to terms with a number of issues that she had had to deal with at her school. She was starting to realise some realities that had faced her having the baby at the time. The following conversation reflects much of the dialogue around the theme:

Learner 16- female- 17 years old from school D said:

"The teachers had a negative attitude towards me, because of me having the baby at the time. I was not allowed to take part in any school activity. I was not allowed to attend any school activity. I was not permitted to attend the matric farewell function of the school. My mother contacted the North West Education Department, but they said that if it was the policy of the school, then they could not do anything about the school's decision."

Interpretation and analysis:

Negative behaviour of learners contributes to the problem of learner dropout and making learners to reach a wrong decision of not completing their studies. Most learners who make it in their studies are those who humble themselves and have great respect of other people. They have a good working relationship with their teachers and also with other learners; hence they manage to be successful in their studies. Learner-teacher relationship determines the failure or the success of learners to stay at school or not. It depends on how learners conduct themselves in front of the teachers.

A number of learners' background, characteristics, including demographics and past experiences- are linked to whether learners drop out or graduate from school. As Munsaka (2003) argues, he investigated the influence of race, sex and family background on the phenomenon of dropping out of school. Rumberger (2009) found family background to be a strong indicator of the phenomenon. Orr (in Suh, Suh & Houston, 2007) points out that educational and socio-economic backgrounds, in combination, are the strongest determinants of whether or not a learner will dropout of school.

Learner 32 revealed her decision for dropping out of school:

Learner 32- female- 18 years old from school D said:

"I felt like leaving school in Grade 10 already, due to my poor circumstances. There was never any money. My parents were drinking a lot. I had to look after my two brothers in the evenings. My parents did not even come home sometimes at night. At that moment I met my boyfriend. He even brought us food in the evening. At the end of the month, I ended up pregnant. I could have gone back to school, but I could not cope with

the baby. I was 18 at that time, with nothing.” [At the moment, she cried, so that we had to stop the interview].

Learners were asked if they have consulted anyone when they decide to drop out of school. Their responses were as follows:

Learner 14- male- 15 years old from school C responded:

“No, I just decided on my own to leave school.”

Learner 24-male-16 years old from school D had no reason for dropping out of school:

“I did not have a valid reason for leaving school. I just felt that I wanted to leave school at that time.”

Learner 19 also did not consult anybody before she dropped out of school:

“Nobody; I did not consult anybody before I left school. I was pregnant at that time.”

Learner 23-female of 20-year old from school C participant, clearly reflected the above-mentioned issues when she emphatically stated:

“Do you know what, when you do lot of wrong things, then you get a lot of wrong friends? When you do not want to get into trouble, it is best to stay in the house. In the community where I stay, everybody is busy with wrong things. If people are not busy drinking, then the other one is busy doing drugs- “nyaope”. So, it is best to stay indoors.”

The researcher also noticed that the participants showed symptoms of withdrawal from normal activities in their community. Learner 23 from school C revealed an important element in her lifestyle, when she stated that it was best to stay indoors to protect herself from being tempted to use drugs and other illegal substances to excess. When the researcher asked Learner 19 from school C how her life has been since she dropped out from school, she revealed the following:

Learner 19 –female- 18 years old from school C said:

“Disgusting. I used drugs. I came to my senses when my parents come to fetch me from the baby’s father’s house. I realised that I could not go on like that, because of my baby’s sake.”

4.2.5. Communities

The researcher found that the community plays an important part, along with families, schools and peers, in a learner's life. Population characteristics of communities are associated with dropping out. Townsend et al. (2008) argue that living in the neighbourhood that is described by high levels of poverty and crime is not necessarily detrimental to completing high school. Rather, living in any prosperous neighbourhood is beneficial to school completion and graduation.

Learner 6 responded as from school B follows:

"I think the community does have an influence on learners' development and at last his/her future. I think that if I were staying in a more up-market, better community, I would have completed my schooling career up to Grade 12. Where I am staying is a bit rough, meaning that the community is earmarked by drug and alcohol abuse, and gang violence."

In addition, when a researcher asked Learner 18 from school B what part the community played in shaping his life and career, he answered as follows:

"The neighbours and the people in the community ask me why I left school. They advised me to go back to school which I did not take."

The above data indicated to the interviewer that the population characteristics of communities are associated with the phenomenon of dropping out of school. Learner 19 from C revealed that the community where she stayed has a negative influence on her. Learner 18 from school B also revealed that the community had been disappointed in him for leaving school early. His neighbours and other community members had urged him to return to school to complete his schooling up to Grade 12. The community probably saw in Learner 18 from school B that he could be an asset to the community if he were to matriculate.

4.2.6. Families

The interviewer noted the following three aspects of families that can predict whether learners' dropout or graduate: (a) family structure; (b) family resources; (c) family

practices. Learners living with both parents have lower dropout rates and higher graduation rates, compared to learners living in other kinds of family arrangements. More significantly, the interviewer has experienced changes in family structure, along with potentially stressful events, such as the death of a parent, that tend to increase the odds of dropping out.

A number of parenting practices have been shown to reduce the odds of dropping out of school, including high educational aspirations for their children; monitoring their children's school progress; communicating with the school; and knowing the parents of their children's friends. (See Learner 19's response in this regard under subsection 4.2.6. above).

Some of the participants had experienced the loss of a safe structure that they once had in their school and in the families. Furthermore, there was also a factor of rebellion. (See Learner 18's response in the above statement under subsection 4.2.6. above).

The parents' level of education also plays a vital role in either motivating or discouraging their children's education. In this regard, the parents' own schooling experience might give the parents a "taste" for education, which might then motivate their children to stay at school. When parents are educated, then it is easy for their children to be successful in their school endeavour. If uneducated parents are less successful in the educational matters, educational deprivation can be transmitted from one generation to another.

The same message was encountered by Learner 10, Learner 16 and, Learner 20 in an interview that they held about the highest education qualification that members of their immediate family had. The highest education qualification in Learner 19's immediate family was Grade 10, which was attained by her whole family, including herself and both her parents.

Learner 10 had the highest education qualification in her immediate family. She replied to the question in this regard as follows"

"I am the eldest in the house. My highest qualification is Grade 10."

The highest education qualification attained in Learner 20's immediate family was that his mother and his sister, both qualified for their senior certificates.

"My mother and my sister finished matric, and my father completed Grade 11."

The interviewer found out that none of the participants in the study had completed a senior certificate qualification. This is the indication that parents are not motivating their learners in a very positive manner. Furthermore, Knight, Shi, & Quheng (2009) argue that low level of education in the community; whether among the adults or among children, can set a social norm for education in the community, which can deter individual investment beyond the social norm.

4.2.7. School

While effective schooling promotes the valuing of the voices and the experiences that learners bring to the classroom, it also calls for appreciation and respect for individual learners, evidence in teacher-learner relationships, and characterized by feelings of active trust and mutual respect. At the classroom situation, such school needs teachers to create opportunities to come to know and to get on with the others, on the basis of who they are (Gale & Densmore, 2000 in Mills & Gale, 2010).

Learner 17 from school A was asked if she thought that the education system was adequate to assist her make a success of her studies, to which she responded,

Learner 17 –female-16years old from school A responded:

"Yes, I had a chance to attend school while I was pregnant. Nobody discriminated against me at school while I was pregnant. I have another chance now to further my studies at night school by means of Adult Basic Education."

Learner 16 thought that the education system had not adequately helped her to make a success of her studies at school:

Learner 16- female-17 years old from school D said:

"I felt that I failed my family and embarrassed myself. I felt the Lord had abandoned me to be an outcast. I think to redeem myself to do better if given a second chance."

4.2.8. Educational performance

The following aspects of educational performance have been identified in the research literature as being strong predictors of dropping out or graduating: test scores and grades in high school; academic achievement in both primary and high school; non-promotional school changes during primary and high school; and retention (being held back one or more grades) in primary and high school. Suh, Suh & Houston, (2007) agree that poor academic achievement is the strongest predictor of school dropout.

Learner 20 from school D told the interviewer that he was not interested in writing schoolwork while he was at school. The fact that he had had to repeat Grade 10 was also a factor contributing to him deciding to drop out of school. Learner 23 claimed that she had experienced the following emotions after leaving school:

"After I left school, I felt free. I felt I did not have any worries about doing any schoolwork or homework, but I knew I wanted to complete my schooling up to Grade 12. I am attending the community learning centre, where I am busy to prepare myself to complete Grade 12 schooling qualification."

The interviewer noticed that one of the most important challenges for the dropouts in the study was learner engagement, which included their active involvement in academic work, for example, coming to class, submission of written tasks, and doing homework, and the social aspects of school (e.g. participating in sports, or other extracurricular activities) (Lim, 2008).

4.2.9. Attitudes

The academic literature suggests that holding high expectations of learners and engaging in "noticeable" pedagogical practices that are characterized by "high intellectual demanding" might be some of the key to make a difference for disadvantaged learners (Mills & Gale, 2010:60). It should come as no surprise that

educational expectations have found that higher levels of educational expectations are in connection with lower dropout rates.

As Learner 14- male- 15 years old from school B explained,

"I did not have any courage and bravery to attend school any more. I did not have a good reason not to attend school any longer. I just felt to stay away from school for no reason at all. I stayed with my two younger sisters, so there was no-one to supervise me."

When learner 14 from school B was asked if he thought that the education system had been adequate to assist him to make a success of his studies, learner 14 from school B responded like this:

"Yes, I decided on my own that I was no longer interested to attend school. I wanted to leave school permanently because I found the school not the ideal place for me."

All the participants in this study were immovable that learners should complete their studies up to Grade 12. The learners who participated in this study clearly saw the significance of having a senior certificate as an assurance of a prosperous and a successful life. Learner 12 from school D a male and 18 years old said:

"It is not worth it to leave school before finishing Grade 12. It is extremely hard to be uneducated and without Grade 12, everything is just not worth anything."

Learner 19 from school C noted that, as she had not completed her schooling up to Grade 12, she was put under a lot of pressure for being without a job and being unemployed:

"Do not decide to dropout. Please don't leave school before completing Grade 11. You will regret your decision. I could have completed my studies already. I could have completed my tertiary education already. My parents had big plans for me. They planned financially to further my studies. I am unemployed at the moment."

Learner 20 from school D explained the kinds of challenges that learners face without a senior certificate:

“Do not leave school; complete your matric, even if you fail a grade. Without a matric, you are nothing. It is even worse when you are looking for work without qualifications. Make sure that you complete your matric certificate. Then your chances will be better to get a proper job.”

Learner 19 from school C school dropouts must realise the full implications of how they will live their entire lives just like that:

“You will never achieve anything. You will come nowhere in life. Whenever you come, people are looking for matric certificate. You will be nobody. Complete your matric, because you need it. You might feel you do not need it now, but at the end of the day, you need your senior certificate to open doors in your life. Do it for yourself, not for anyone else.”

Learner 23 from school pointed out the negative consequences for learners who do not complete their schooling. A sense of self-blame arises as they try to make sense of what actually is happening in their lives:

“If you do not complete your schooling up to Grade 12, you have to prepare yourself to be a maid for somebody, to work part-time jobs that do not pay much and working for long hours. You will work in a subordinate position for the rest of your life. Our modern way of life needs that you must have qualifications to be accepted in the work force.”

Learner 23 from school C further wished to advise the learners:

“My advice to learners is to focus on their studies and complete their schooling and graduate, so that they do not have any regrets in their lives, due to dropping out of school before reaching their goals.”

Interpretation and analysis:

In this research study, the researcher found that learners who participated were confronted with their lack of schooling qualifications. They were called secondary school dropouts, which terrified them. They also put the blame on their parents for not being involved in their schooling as it was supposed to be. Clearly, they realized that they had to achieve their secondary school qualifications up to Grade 12 if they wanted to earn a decent salary and decent life. No learner will be considered for tertiary tuition without the Grade 12 certificate that shows that that learner has met the required pass

requirements. Even when a person is looking for a job, the first requirement is Grade 12 certificate. It is very significant to complete at least Grade 12.

Question 5

4.2.10. How does low-academic achievement have an effect on dropout?

When a learner is not performing well at school, this becomes a factor that will make him or her uncomfortable and stressful. Low academic achievement plays a crucial role in making learners to feel useless and hopeless about going to school. Under achieving has a negative impact to the learner who cannot be helped on time. The responses of participants about under achieving are:

Teacher 3-female-39 years from school C said:

"Due to lack of parental assistance and supervision of their children's school work, learners find it difficult to cope with the demands of the school written activities. They absent themselves if they did not do the homework and assignments, by so doing they cannot be able to catch with what teachers had taught that day. Most of the learners are too lazy to do the work properly; they copy someone's work as their own. They pay more attention in the usage of social media rather than school work. So they obtain less marks in their formal activities, these activities help them to pass at the end of the year because they are continuous assessment marks that play an important part in the final mark."

Parent 8-male 39 years said:

"They do not want to repeat a grade; they feel that grade retention is not good for them hence they are not performing well. Our children are surely not doing well at school due to lack of showing commitment in their school work. You can hardly see a child studying at home during his/her leisure time. They are always watching soapiest on television and they know all the characters in these dramas. They also concentrate on how they look in the mirror."

Learner 15-male-19years old from school C explained:

"We are not serious and focus with our school work. We are losing a lot of time because we hang in the tavern drinking and not doing school work. We are to be blame for the poor results and it is true that low academic achievement is affecting us in a negative way. We know that the department of education will allow us to proceed to the next grade even if we did not do well because of age limit. I think that is what is making us to take things for granted."

Interpretation and analysis:

Teacher 3 complained about learners who are neglected by their parents or guardians and stay without supervising their whereabouts and their progress at school. These parents are at all times been away from their children and leave someone in charge of them who does not even care about their well-being. The above response is supported in literature review by (Carlson, 2014) some children in our schools are heads of households as a results of parents been away or dead and they tend to be absent from school to carry out household duties. Older children have the burden of taking care of the household and the younger siblings, which is a very great task to do. This statement is in agreement with the literature review by (Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack, 2011) stating that parental involvement declines as learners get older and become more independent. When parents are away, children will obviously misbehave and pay attention to the social network where they concentrate on mischievous things such as pornography and internet dating. That means they will never achieve in their studies.

Absenteeism was considered a big contributing factor for learners to obtain low academic achievement and eventually drop out of school. The statement agrees with literature review by (Yildiz & Kula, 2012) found out that academic failure and learning disabilities emerge as highly important causes of learner dropout.

Parent 8- male of 39 years old said, "Our learners are not in favour of repeating a grade hence they do not show any seriousness in their studies. This statement is contrary to literature review by (Sari, 2013) found out that when learners view themselves as an important constituent of a school, their academic success increases and their probability of dropping out of school is decreases. Parents make an appeal to teachers to encourage these learners to study hard." This response is supported in literature review by (Foley et al., 2014) parental involvement in their children's education has a positive results and their children do not dropout of school.

Learner 5- male of 16 years old from school A confessed that they are not serious with their school work. He also emphasized that they spend their entire time in bars and taverns drinking alcohol and doing drugs. The statement is in agreement with literature review by (De Witte et al, 2013) state that learners who use cannabis had a higher risk of dropping out of school. He said that they are aware of a government policy that allows learners to progress to the next grade even if the learners did not perform well. They take advantage of that situation. Other neighbouring countries such as Botswana and Zimbabwe are promoting their learners according to the right criteria. In South Africa the education policies are leading our children astray by such actions. In terms of education our learners cannot compete with the likes of Botswana.

Question 6

4.2.11. What are the effects of learner dropout?

Learners who drop out before graduating are faced with lot of the socio-economic problems in their lives. In the South African' education learners are expected to have grade 12 certificate to show that h/she has been to school. This is the only certificate that is issued in all the grades of a learner' schooling. If a learner drops before completing grade 12 there is nothing to show that a learner has attended secondary education. There is no way that a person can be employed without providing a proof of grade 12 certificate. This is one disadvantages of dropping out of school before graduating.

Unfortunately, the effects of dropping out of school before completing ones studies are having negative impacts towards learners who drop out. What is absolutely predictable is that many learners who do not finish high school do poorly in life. Without diploma they will have a hard time finding job, and they will earn much less when they do find a job. They are likely to have poor health, to live in poverty, and have children at early age. Nationally, 70% of inmates in prison did not graduate from high school.

The effects of dropout are as follows:

Learner 25- female-17 years old from school A said:

"The dropouts are the burden to the country and to their families. They will totally depend on other people in order to survive financially and otherwise. Dropouts are unable to support and contribute financially towards their siblings and families. They are always looking for handouts from their parents and the grants from the government. Most of the dropouts drown their sorrow by using drugs and drinking alcohol excessively. They become addictive on drug use."

Teacher 7 from school C said:

"Learners who drop out are uneducated and illiterate. They lack knowledge and are not skilful to do any kind of a job in order to earn a living. A dropout chance of getting a decent paying job is highly unlikely. Dropouts are faced with the life that is uncertain and doomed. They increase the rate of unemployment in the country. The easiest and quickest way to survive being a dropout is to resort to criminal activities;

that are of no use. We know that crime does not pay, at the end they will be arrested for committing crime."

Parent 6 said:

"Everybody wants to earn a decent salary and a good living; but a dropout learner cannot achieve such pleasant things in life if he or she is not qualified academically. A dropout will have to find some means of surviving. The dropouts are associated with people who are having anti-social behaviour that lead them to trouble with the law. They start befriending thugs and criminals who will use them to accomplish their evil deeds of crime. They always bring shame to the name of their families once they are arrested and have criminal record for committing illegal activities."

Interpretation and analysis:

Learner 25 from school A, Teacher 7 from school C and Parent 6 all agreed that the effects of learner dropout are having negative impact and unfavourable consequences for learners themselves, teachers, parents and the whole country. This statement is supported in literature review by (Hauser and Koenig, 2011) speculated that the personal characteristics, along with others, may be contribute causes of poor economic and social outcomes experienced by the dropouts.

If you look at the rate of unemployment in South Africa is sky high for many people who have graduated with diplomas and degrees. Rumberger, (2010) fully agrees with the above response by stating that social consequences of school leaving can be as follow: high crime rates, high health costs, income inequality; low tax rates for the state. So if it is hard for these graduates to find suitable jobs; it is going to be even harder for someone who did not graduate at all. It shows the seriousness of how things are in the real world. Learners should be more equipped with the type of qualifications that are necessary on the market. People who are surviving in today's world are those with relevant skills; skills that are needed to make progress in the world we are living in.

What is absolutely predictable is that many learners who don't finish high school do poorly in life. Without a high school diploma they will have a hard time finding a job, and they will earn less salary when working. The responses are supported in literature

review by Buscha and Conte, (2014) that learners who frequently absent are likely to be more socially isolated and may be at risk of harm during periods of absence. They are more likely to have ill-health, to live in poverty, and to have babies at a tender age. These are some of the negative effects of learner dropout of school before graduating. Though non-completion and study delays may turn out to be favourable for the learners in some instances, generally they can be considered unfavourable for the learners, the institution and the society.

For learners, delay is costly, and not obtaining a diploma means fewer job opportunities in the future. The institutions may be penalized by the government through cuts in funding due to less enrolment. For the society at large, permanent dropout from school means waste of the money invested and fewer highly educated citizens, the latter are considered necessary for social, cultural and technological development.

4.3 DOCUMENTS

4.3.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct not in agreement with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled.

- In terms of Section 29 (1) of the Constitution (1996) (a) states that every child has a right to a basic education, including adult basic education;
- (b) It also states to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

4.3.2 South African Schools Act

This act applies to school education in the Republic of South Africa. In terms of the South Africa School Act 3 (1) of the Constitution about compulsory attendance every parent must ensure every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend a school from the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever happens first.

In terms of South African School Act 3 (2) of the Constitution (1996) the Minister must, by notice in the Government Gazette, determine the ages of compulsory attendance at school for learners with special needs.

In terms of South African School Act 3 (5) of the Constitution (1996) if a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of subsection (1) is not enrolled at or fails to attend a school, the Head of Department may-

- (a) Investigate the circumstances of the learner's absence from school;
- (b) Take appropriate measures to remedy the situation; and
- (c) Failing such a remedy, issue a written notice to the parent of the learner requiring compliance with subsection (1).

In terms of South African School Act 3 (6) of the Constitution (1996) subject to this Act and any other applicable law-

- (a) Any parent who, without just cause and after a written notice from the Head of Department, fails to comply with subsection (1), is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding of six months; or
- (b) Any other person who, without just cause, prevents a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance from attending a school, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.

Exemption from compulsory attendance

In terms of South African School Act 4 (1) of the Constitution (1996) Head of Department may exempt a learner entirely, partially or conditionally from compulsory school attendance if it is in the best interest of the learner.

- (2) Every Head of Department must maintain a register of all learners exempted from compulsory school attendance.

Admission to public school in terms of South African School Act 5 (1) of the Constitution (1996) a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way, and

In terms of South African School Act 5 (3) of the Constitution (1996) states that no learner may be refused admission to a public school on the grounds that his or her parent-

- (a) Is unable to pay or has not paid the school fees determined by the governing body under section 39.

All the above statements of different acts are the proof that a learner is not to be denied the opportunity to attend school. School dropout is not tolerated in any way in the South African Educational system.

Other school documents that were analyzed are the following:

4.3.3 Time Register

Time register is used for teachers when they sign on in the morning before the start of the day's work. They also sign off when the school is out. This register assists to monitor the teachers' arrival and teachers knock off time. It helps the principal to know which teacher did not report for duty that day.

4.3.4 Admission Register

The admission register was used to enrol the total number of learners who are admitted in the school on that particular year. Admission register have the names and admission numbers of all learners admitted in the school. It assists the school to know how many learners have enrolled that year. The admission registers have all the particulars of learners and their parents, for consultation purposes. The admission register helps the teacher to realize when the school roll is increasing or decreasing.

4.3.5 Attendance Register

The attendance register is a document that is used on daily basis to check whether learners are present or not. Names of learners are written in the attendance register and the teacher's duty is to mark it every day to ensure that learners are attending school regularly. This is one educational document that gives accurate evidence of how

learners attend every day. This register is used to notice and identify learners who are at risk of dropout. They should be taken care of before it is too late and encouraged to attend school.

4.3.6 Summary Register

Summary register is used to summarize the learner's attendance every quarter to know how many learners are present and how many are absent. In case of teachers the school used the movement register to control the movement of teachers. Movement register helps in knowing the whereabouts of the teachers. This movement register is signed by each teacher who asked permission to leave the school premises, it should appear in writing what time did the teacher leave. It also helps to minimize teacher's chance of asking permission for minor problems.

4.3.7 Learners Code of Conduct

In terms of South African School Act, Act No. 84 of the, Section 8(1) of the Constitution (1996) empowers a governing body of a school to maintain discipline in a school. The code of conduct must prescribe behaviour that respects the right of learners and teachers. Under the code of conduct for learners Act 3(3.9) says a learner who falls pregnant may not be prevented from attending school. A pregnant girl may be referred to a hospital school for pregnant girls.

Learners' code of conduct is a very important school document because it is drawn by all stake-holders including learners' representative council. It is a set of regulations that assist in governing the school. The code of conduct has the vision and mission of the school. School A's vision reads: "Hold on tight to what you have." The mission statement states that, "To teach learners to acquire skills and knowledge to pursue their future dreams".

4.4. Triangulation in the findings

According to Denzin (2012) the purpose of triangulation in qualitative research is to increase the credibility and validity of the results. According to O' Donoghue (2013) triangulation is a method of crosschecking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data. The researcher aims to triangulate the findings from the semi-structured and focus group interviews and the documents in order to facilitate the verification and validation of the findings.

4.4.1 Interview responses of various participants

Most of the responses in question of absenteeism were as follow:

The study revealed that learners feel that learner dropout is caused by absenteeism which is a contributing factor towards learner dropout. Learners absent themselves for various reasons which among them absenteeism was key to learner dropout. They put the blame on teachers who also absent themselves from their duties of teaching, so learners feel that coming to school without been attended by teachers is worthless.

Absenteeism also has a negative impact on learners' academic achievements whereby learners cannot perform satisfactorily. Learners explain that they also absent themselves because teachers are not taking them seriously hence they perform dismally and they see no reason to come to school.

4.4.2 Documents

The study show that educational documents such as attendance register has the real evidence to back up the problem of absenteeism; whereby learners' names are checked on daily basis to see if they have attended school. The interviews and documents analysis show that absenteeism plays a crucial role as one of the causes of learner dropout.

In case of teachers, time register is the official document used by teachers to indicate signing on and off duty. Time register helps to show the availability of teachers on duty.

The teachers' signature is evidence enough to check whether teachers are reporting on time. Records of absenteeism are kept in these official documents to keep record of what is happening in the school environment.

Teachers explained that learner dropout results in absenteeism and ill-discipline and low academic achievements. Teachers complained about the problematic learners who are disrespectful and ill-disciplined. This statement is supported by literature review in Heers et al., (2014) state that learners with discipline and behavioural problems in middle are more likely to fail the ninth grade year which eventually may lead to dropping out. Teachers say learners lack respect towards their parents and as well as their teachers. They also complained about learner's lack of commitment in their school work and absenteeism. The above response is strongly supported in literature review by Carlson, (2014) some children in our schools are heads of households as results of parents been dead and they tend to be absent from school to carry out household duties.

Parents explained that learner absence impact negatively on the future of learners. Parent 1 and 2 put the blame on the teachers for failing to see to it that learners attend school on regular basis. Parent 1 said that they do not attend school so they got their own problem to attend to. They gave teachers children to teach so it is the teachers' responsibility to look after learners. This statement is supported in literature review by (Schargel and Smink, 2012) observed that parents tend to depend too much on the teachers to take care of their children.

Parent 2 responded that teachers are not doing what they are paid for. It is the responsibility of teachers to keep an eye on learners and teachers should ensure that they come with a solution to the problem of absenteeism. The response is in agreement with what appear in literature review by (Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack, 2011) found out that parental involvement in schools declines as learners get older and become more independent.

Parent 3 and 4 came with different responses from the two parents who responded before. Parent 3 said: "We as parents are afraid of our children because our children are lawless and do as they want in front of us. We left things in the hands of teachers. We should unite with teachers and take responsibility as parents about the future of our children".

Parent 4 put the blame on the upbringing of their children, saying the children are not properly brought up. "Our children are not taking their education seriously. Children should be taught the importance of attending school"

Learners feel that strategies to be applied to avoid the causes of learner dropout are that the school committee should adopt the effects strategies which give lesson to offer vocational education to learners who are non-performers in the academic live, and counselling program that helps with personal issues of learners such as dropout and stress.

Teachers came with a good advice to involve parents in their children's school work. The importance of parental engagement plays an important role in finding a solution to the causes of learner dropout. Parents are only involved when their children are still attending crèche, but when they grow up parents tend to leave children in the hands of the teachers. Collaboration and co-operation between parents and teachers is of utmost best, so the learners should stay focused. It is very significant to have parental involvement in the teaching and learning of their children.

Teachers feel that learners' low academic performance is due to lack of parental assistance and supervision contribute towards learners poor performance and poor results. So learners find it more difficult to cope with the school work. Most learners are too lazy to work on their school activities. Learners pay attention on social media, when they concentrated on social network rather than school work. When they fail to get sufficient marks they decide to dropout.

Parent explained that their children do not repeat a grade or standard, they feel that retention is not good for them; this is why they do not perform. These learners do not show commitment in their studies.

However, Learner 1 from school A and Learner 2 from school B put the entire blame on teachers not taking them seriously and not attending their classes. Lack discipline made learners to bunk classes and eventually lost interest in coming to school. Learner 3 from school C admitted that dropout is a problem and she complained about not getting parental support and care in her schooling activities. The contrast was that she did not have problems with teachers like learner 1 from school A and Learner 2 from school B. She was concern about the parents who leave their children to be on their own without any assistance.

Teachers have a complaint about the learners' behaviours, attitudes and not concentrating on their studies. Teacher 4 from school D has the same concern as Learner 3 about lack of parental involvement in their children's education. She said the blame should be directed to parents because the school holds parents meeting and these parents do not show up in the meetings.

Parents also were quick to respond to question one and 80% agreed that causes of learner dropout were very disturbing issues to deal with in their schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district. Parents 1 and 2 were in agreement with Learners 1 from school A and Learner 2 from school B and also accused teachers that they should do their work. Everything was left in the hands of teachers and parents excluded themselves from their children's school work. Parent 1 said, "We do not attend school, so we have our own problems to attend to. We gave teachers our children to teach, and it was their responsibilities to look after them".

According to Parent 1 she was not prepare to play any part in her child education, which means that there was an element of irresponsibility on her part. Parent 2 said,

“Teachers are not doing the work they are paid for. It is the responsibility of teachers to keep an eye on learners. These statements has a contrary effect in literature review by (Foley et al, 2014) parental involvement in their children’s education has a positive effects and their children do not dropout of school. Teachers spend more time with learners, so they should come with a solution to prevent learner dropout.” Again to show disagreement of literature review with the above responses by (Thornton, Darmody and McCoy, 2013)state the participation in parent-teacher meetings and other activities, monitoring the child’s academic progress and school attendance is a decent thing to help learners to continue with their studies. Parents 3 and 4 agreed with Teachers 1 from school A, Teacher 2 from school B and Teacher 3 from school C when they pointed the problems towards learners of being lawless, not taking their work seriously and they were afraid to confront them about their bad behaviours.

According to respondents, on question two (2) from the interviews point of view, there are many main reasons why learners dropout of school before they graduate. Learner 17 from school A acknowledged that she dropout because of peer pressure where her friends introduced her to alcohol and boys and she realised that she was pregnant and had to leave school to have a baby while she was in Grade 9. While Learner 19 from school C admitted his wrong doings by doing drugs. He became addicted and was very hard for him to concentrate in class and was always looking for a ‘fix’. He started bunking classes and eventually gave in to drugs.

Learner 20 from school D had a strong support from home and teachers because he was doing well in his studies, but of late he was going to school for wrong reasons. He paid too much attention to girls and ignored his studies. He failed his grade and was ashamed to go back to school and decided to leave school permanently. Learner 21 from school A had a health problem whereby he was suffering from a terminal illness that made him aggressive and wanted to end his life. Unfortunately, he was admitted in hospital where he spent more of the time away from school and was taken out of school due to illness.

The interviewees were quick to respond to question three (3) and said: Learner 9 from school A spoke about disciplinary committee made up of learners, teachers and parents. Their task was to see to it that there was a smooth running of the school. Adoption of effective strategies for non-performers; whereby they are taught skills of using handy work. Again, counselling programs were introduced to help learners who stressed.

Learner 10 from school B requested that dedicated and highly qualified teachers should be hired to help in their schools. These teachers will bring a lot of knowledge and experience needed to assist learners to achieve and enjoy attending school. While Learner 11 from school C pleaded for the safe and conducive learning environment for learners and also for their teachers. He also encouraged the good working relationship between learners and teachers, together with the parents.

Teacher 6 from school B and Teacher 8 from school D suggested about the importance of parents involvement in their children's education. There should be communication between teachers and parents at all times, so to inform the parents about the affairs of the schools. Teacher 6 said that the involvement of parents decline as learners get older and become independent. It was suggested that parents' engagement in the learning of their children is vital.

Parent 7 pointed out that all the stake-holders in the schools environment should work as a unit, co-operation was encouraged so to make the schools function in a proper way. Parent 3 asked for the development of community plan that will see to it that no learner was allowed to roam the streets of the village during school hours.

The response to question four by Learner 12 from school D was not happy about the bad conducts and behaviours of certain teachers towards learners in their school. He was convinced that those behaviours by teachers are the major contributing factors to dropout. Learner 6 from school B on the other hand, got along with teachers because teachers were very fond of him as he was on his best behaviour at all times. Teacher 5

from school A advised the school to apply the rules and regulations that govern learners which is learners' code of conduct. Every member of the school should adhere to the rules; and in case of teachers they have their code of conduct. Parent 4 reprimanded learners about their deviant way of behaving, even in the public domain. She said that these learners were bringing shame to the education system.

Responses to question 5 were as follow: Learner18 from school B said that they do not show any commitment in their studies because we know that progression policy will rule in our favour. But the problem is in grade 12 where we increase the percentage fail of our schools. Teacher 3 from school C explained that low-academic performance forced the learners to stay away from school because they do not want their peers to laugh at them. Parent 8 said, when these learners fail they do not want to repeat the same grade.

Question of effects of dropout was answered this way: Learner 16 from school D said learners who drop out of school are the burden of their families and even the country they are living in. They depend on the handouts they get from other people and the grants from the government. Teacher 7 from school C said dropouts are not educated and are unskilled, so they will never get a decent paying job. They increase the rates of unemployment in our country. They ultimately got locked up in prison for committing crimes. Parent 6 said everybody needs prosperity and good life, but if who are a dropout where are you going to get such luxury? They bring only shame and headache to their families.

4.5. CONCLUSION

This is an analysis of the data taken from the interviews and the documents conducted at selected four secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district about the causes and effects of learners' dropout. It identifies interviews and narratives as the research methods that complement interpretive analysis. This chapter dealt with the data analysis, interpretation of the individual interviews undertaken with school dropouts. The

aim was to explore and to describe their experiences as secondary school dropouts, in terms of what they have experienced.

The analysis of the research data examined all the factors under study, from individual factors to institutional factors in families, and in the school, and in the disadvantaged communities. The researcher had argued that no single factor can be accountable for a learners' decision to leave school without finishing Grade 12. The learner participants themselves stated different reasons for quitting school, the research data also identified a number of factors that had seemed to influence the learners' decision to leave school.

The lessons that can be learned from these lived experiences of female participants in the study expressed an outcry for help. The participants acknowledged, through their emotions, the sense of restlessness that they experienced regarding their present status as secondary school dropouts. The researcher sensed that they felt as though they are losers and failures, due to them not finishing their senior certificate. The researcher also sensed that they felt depressed and disappointed with themselves. The data was presented and analyzed exactly as the respondents answered.

The following chapter deals with the findings, recommendations and conclusion,

CHAPTER 5

THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the findings of the literature review, and of the interviews, observation and documents with regard to secondary school dropouts. The objective of the study was to find the causes and effects of learners' dropout in selected secondary schools at Ngaka Modiri Molema district. The most essential findings of the literature study, and the interpretations of the results, are also indicated. The chapter concludes with findings and recommendations and the conclusion regarding the causes and effects of learners' dropouts.

5.2 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In the light of the literature review and the responses to the interviews, the following findings were made. The findings are interpreted in accordance with the recognized aims that the research study addressed. In this research, the researcher wished to explore the causes and effects of learners' dropout at the four selected secondary schools in the disadvantaged community in Ngaka Modiri Molema district, through listening to the genuine voices of the participants.

5.2.1. What are causes of learners' dropout?

While Learner 19 from school C, who was pregnant at that time had a chance and the right to attend until labour time, but decided to absent herself from school. In literature review, according to Foley et al. (2014) found out that parents unwillingness to send girls to school for religious issues and early marriages to become mothers at tender age also contribute towards causes of learner drop out of school. Again, it was realised that there are studies about causes of learner dropout reasons. According to Uys and Alant, (2015) stated that negligent control of learner absenteeism, failing to contact the parents in case of absenteeism and not investigating the causes of absenteeism and the

occurrence of dropout. Yildiz and Kula, (2012) found out that the biggest cause of learner absence from school was health problem. Among the individual causes of absenteeism, illness is the factor that has the biggest effect on absenteeism and later dropout.

Attending school is critical for learners to stay on track, and attendance monitoring should therefore be a component of any school completion initiative. When learners miss school, it indicates that they are disengaged and are on the trajectory toward dropping out. School completion initiatives should address learner engagement by providing learner opportunities to connect with adults in the school setting, participate in school activities, and take courses that are relevant to their future, while providing interventions focused on learners' academic and behavioural needs and support from the family.

Learner 17 from school A, Learner 22 from school B, Learner 26 from school B and Learner 27 from school C; and Teacher 8 from school D all came to the same agreement that peer pressure played its part in learners to dropout of school Teacher 8 from school D revealed that learners are having friends who are working, so they influence these learners to leave school and work just like them. Learner 22 from school B said that her peer group had a negative influence on her. She said that they were not interested in the school work; they only did it when it suits them. They were only interested in having fun and paid attention to older men. Learner 17 from school A said her friends introduced her to alcohol and boys and she could not say no to them. Later on she found out that she was pregnant, and she had to drop out from school.

Learner 26 from school B wanted to be accepted in the group and she smoked drugs to be part of that group. According to Carney, (2008) in the literature study, stated that peer ill-treatment has been conceptualised as a chronic stressor that has traumatic input on adolescent development, on disrupting the individuals on self concept and trust in others and leading to avoided behaviour and social withdrawal. Again, learners'

friendship with their peers is one of the most influential factors that affect their attendance at school. Altinkurt, (2012) states that causes such as wanting to meet girl/boyfriend, trying to be accepted by their friends, the pressure of friends who are truant and wanting to go to internet cafes have a highly significant effect on the dropout of learners from school.

5.2.2. How does absenteeism contribute towards learner dropout?

Absenteeism is another factor that can cause school dropout. In the literature review it is stated that in South Africa, on any day as many as 5 to 15 % of learners are absent from school and the number is even higher if include late comers. It shows that learners are absenting themselves in high rates. Still on literature study it is evident that the Department of Education, in the Government Gazette 33105 of 2013, states that if a learner is absent from school for 10 consecutive days a learner may be deregistered. Charles Taylor (2013) reported that poor attendance of learners can disrupt their own learning and that of other learners. Learners stay away from school for no reasons at all.

One teacher respondent said; the rate of absenteeism is too high. Learner 7 the main cause to dropout is absenteeism. "We absent ourselves because we feel neglected and left out by our parents and our teachers. In case of the parents, they do not get involve in our school activities and teachers seem to favour the bright learners and slow learners feel isolated and alone. This is discouraging us to attend school".

Strand and Grandland, (2014) stated three-quarters of all absenteeism involve the interconnected issues, such as boredom and stressful relationship with teachers. The teacher-learner relationship originates from in-class negative behaviour of teachers, who are the operators of the education system, decreases and destroys the learners' interest and attention to classroom life. This leads to absenteeism and later on to dropout in the long term.

5.2.3. What strategies can be used to avoid dropout?

Learner 9 from school A, Learner 10 from school B and Learner 11 from school C; Teacher 6 from school B, Teacher 8 from school D; Parent 3 and Parent 7 all are in agreement to find strategies that can be utilised to avoid dropout problem in our schools. They all came with various strategies to be implemented to curb the dropout problem. Learner 9 from school A suggested that disciplinary committee of learners, teachers and parents should ensure the smooth running of the school by adopting strategies whereby vocational education be provided for non-performers and counselling programs to deal with stress issues of learners. We found similarity in Wilkins et al., (2014) stated that Agricultural science and biology were also integrated and team taught by content areas teachers in both subjects, with the intentional focus on hands-on projects for learners who had not been successful through traditional teacher-directed instruction.

Learner 10 from school B urged the management to hire dedicated and highly qualified teachers with lot of experience to help learners to enjoy school. Learner 11 from school C advised that there should be safe and conducive learning environment where the school should be at all times protected from criminals and hooligans. The school should be situated away from the taverns. Teacher 6 from school B indicated the importance of parents' engagements in the affairs of their children's education. Parents should always be taken on board about matters of the learners' school activities and they should be there for the school and the learners. We found the same results in literature in

Thornton, Darmody and McCoy, (2013) state the participation in parent-teacher meetings and other activities, monitoring the child's academic progress and school attendance is a decent thing to help learners to continue with their studies. Again, Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership, (2013) establishment of parent involvement co-ordinators also served as home-school liaisons to build parent capacity to increase achievement.

5.2.4. What role does learner-teacher relationship play in learner dropout?

Another factor was learner-teacher relationship: Learner 12 from School D and Learner 16 from School D agreed that teachers conduct and behaviour and the negative attitudes had a major contribution toward learners forced them to leave school. Learner 12 from school D's response in question 4.2.4 stated teachers pay too much attention to learners with high intelligent quotient and tend to ignore learners who are struggling with their studies. We need to be treated equally. Learner 16 from School D felt teachers had a negative attitude towards her for having a baby while attending school. She was not allowed to take part in the school activities and not to attend the farewell function. She felt discriminated against. In terms of Section 10 of the Constitution (1996) says everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected and again in terms of Section 28(d) of the Constitution (1996) every child has a right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse and degradation.

According to Bayhen and Dalgic, (2012) also reported that the negative way teachers behave towards learners compel learners to leave school setting for good. Contrary to the above statements, Learner 6 from school B, Teacher 5 from school A, and Parent 4 responses to the question of learner-teacher relationship seem to have different views compared to Learner 12 from school D and Learner 16 from school D. Learner 6 from school B seems to have no problems with teachers and said that teachers were very fond of him. This statement is contrary to literature review by (Bayhen and Dalgic, 2012) reported that the negative way teachers behave towards learners compel learners to leave school setting for good. Parent 4 complained about the bad ways our learners are conducting themselves especially learners who are doing drugs and not complying with the rules and regulations of the school. This above response is supported in literature review by (Bayhen and Dalgic, 2012) found conflicts with teachers were reported by dropouts themselves as one of the main causes of learner dropout.

Teacher 5 from school A emphasized the learners' code of conduct that it should be put in use and every learner should adhere to the code of conduct. We found the same

results in literature, Shute and Cooper, (2015) state that learners sometimes go to school and skip classes during the day and such cases happen more often in the whole day. This finding shows that the importance of the factor of liking the teachers and the subjects which they are teaching. Again, Bayhen and Dalgic, (2015) found conflicts with teachers were reported by dropouts themselves as one reasons motivating their decisions to dropout of school setting.

5.2.5 How does low-academic achievement have negative effect on dropout?

Teacher 3 from school C emphasized that learners need parental assistance and supervision of their home work. Parents involvement will help to detect any weakness in the learner' academic performance and intervention can be done at an early stage to assist the learner with the school activities. The statement is backed by literature review by (Foley et al, 2014) parental involvement in their children's education has a positive effects and their children do not dropout of school, Learner 18 from school B stressed the fact that learners are not committed in their studies. Learners are too lazy to study. They are concentrating on social network for silly things that are not going to help them with their future. Parent 8 said learners do not want to repeat a grade. They feel grade retention is not good for them hence they show no commitment in their studies. The above response is an opposite of literature review by (De Witte et al, 2013) suggest that early academic achievement can lead to less grade retention, and hence a lower chance of learner dropout.

We found the same results in Yildiz and Kula, (2012) also found out that academic failure and learning disabilities emerge as highly important causes of school dropout. Again, they stated that academic performance and school engagement are some of the indications that might lead to school dropout. Academic performance of these learners who struggle in classroom and fall behind academically, turn to be disengaged from the school and develop disciplinary problems such as high rates of absenteeism and truancy, show poor classroom behaviour, learners who participate less in extramural activities and have bad relationships with teachers and peers. Contrary to the above

statements, Sari (2013) found out that when learners view themselves as an important constituent of a school, their academic success increases and their probability of dropping out of school decreases.

5.2.6 What are the effects of learner dropout?

This study has revealed that, for some reason known to the learners, some of the learners are estranged from school by the time when there are already in the middle of secondary school studies. The type of education offered at the school does not interest them, they get bored easily, they do not see a reason why they learn, they are unable to meet the schools' and society's standard for success. The research data have provided a number of factors from family background, within the school environment, within the community and the learners themselves that affect learners to leave or attend the secondary school.

Learner 25 from school A, Teacher 7 from school C and Parent 6 have the following comments to make: Learner 25 from school A said that dropouts are burdens to the country and to their own families. They will totally depend on other people in order to survive financially and otherwise. They are always looking for handouts from their parents, from the community and the social grants from the government. Most of the dropouts drown their sorrows and pains in the excessive use of alcohol and drugs. They ultimately become drug addicts. According to Wilkins and Bost, (2015) stated that dropping out of high school is associated with many negative adult outcomes, including an increased likelihood of experiencing unemployment, low wages, poverty, incarceration and poor health.

Teacher 7 from school C said dropouts are uneducated and illiterate. The lack of knowledge and skills cannot assist them to earn a salary. The dropouts chance of getting a decent paying kind of a job is highly unlikely. The increase the unemployment rates of the country and poverty. They will look for a quick way of earning a living by stealing and committing crimes. Eventually they will end up in prison for breaking the

law. We find the same results in literature review where the United States Department of Commerce, (2012) stated learner who fail to complete their high school education face a variety of negative consequences throughout their lives. Again, Alyssa and Bonitz, (2016) state that the employment rate of high school dropouts in 2008 was 45.7% compared to 68.1% for high school graduates, and 86.7% for those with a least a college degree. High school dropout is often associated with lower wages, a heightened vulnerability in economic recessions. Poor health, reliance on public assistance, high rates of divorce and being single parent. Contrary, to the above statements, regular attendance helps learners to have higher academically success, graduation rates, university entrance rates, score high test marks and job opportunities (Balfanz & Byrens, 2012; Foley et al., 2013; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014).

5.2.7 Poverty

Poverty in South Africa marks in ill health, under nourishment, deprivation of privileges, unsupportive environment in informal settlements and squatter camps, language deficiencies, limited social status and a negative view of the future. Other factors which contribute to poverty in South Africa are the excess in technology, conflict and violence, crime and substance abuse (Yildiz & Kula, 2012). Poverty had been identified as the major risk factor for learners to drop out of school. That is why the Department of Basic Education has started a nutrition programme at schools, which takes to alleviate hunger among learners coming from poverty-stricken communities.

Poverty is seen as the big problem that is experienced by many individuals from the poor and dysfunctional families, who were found to be more likely to dropout of secondary school than their counterparts, who came from families with sound financial backgrounds to which they and their families contributed (Munsaka, 2003). Hunt, (2008) stated that poverty interacts with points of social disadvantage, with the interaction of factors putting further pressure on vulnerable and marginalized children to dropout. The study found that poverty is indeed, an obstacle and a challenge to completing school (Knight et al, 2009). It is clear that the educational system is not adapted to meet the

requirements of poor learners, and the outcome of this is that a quite number of learners drop out of school.

The research revealed that South Africa has high levels of poverty, and that there is evidence that poverty impacts negatively on education, which sometimes leads to learners dropping out of school. Cabus and De Witte, (2012) reported that lot of teenagers have been drawn to the labour market in great numbers, and more job market opportunities in times of economic revival increased dropout rates. This is in connection with what learner 20's responses: "I left school because I impregnated my girlfriend. I wanted to be a father and a provider for the baby at the same time". Learner 20 wanted to be a provider that means he needed to look for a job in order to provide for his baby, so it is an indication that he will drop out into the job market.

Another example in the participant's responses is that Learner 19's circumstances at home force her to drop out of school and work. She had financial problems and a baby to look after, and the boyfriend did not pay maintenance for the child. Poverty and lack of income compel Learner 19 to be a dropout and get into the market place. These are the statements to support that poverty is one of the main factors that can cause learners to leave secondary school and look for greener pasture in labour market.

Most of school dropouts become engaged only in part-time jobs with short term employment contracts. A significant number of youths are pulled out of school due to the attractiveness of the labour market (Cabus & De Witte, 2012). Hynes, (2014) confirm the argument that poverty increases the possibility of family stress, and that it might put a lot of pressure on learners to take part-time jobs while they are still at school, or to leave school as soon as possible.

5.2.8 Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy seems to be the main personal problem facing learners who dropout of schooling. The analysis of the data revealed that close to half of the

participants dropped out due to teenage pregnancy. The analysis also revealed the difficulty that these participants experienced when they had children of their own. They had to find someone to look after their children if they wanted to return to school. They had to hire people to take care of their babies, with the result being that they all dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy.

The data analysis also has shown the fact that dropping out of school is due to economic barriers and poor performance, and that growing up in communities where poverty is deep-rooted, and where parents are physically or emotionally unavailable, contribute to the occurrence of early pregnancy. Girls who struggle to make ends meet are vulnerable to the temptation of exchanging sexual favours for economic gain. In relationships where there is a power imbalance, forced sex might take place, and the girls involved might not realise that they have right to resist.

Fleisch, (2008) also confirms that one of the strongest predictors of underachievement is parents' educational attainment. Studies have consistently found strong positive associations between the duration of parents' school careers and their children's success at school. Lloyd, Mete & Grant, (2009) found out that children whose parents have received some sort of schooling are likely to dropout of school.

The data analysis revealed that some of the learners' parents who participated have little education if not no education at all. So the parental education is an indirect indicator of household poverty. Knight et al. (2009) points out that the years of education of both parents have a significant effect on their children. The response of parent 5 indicates that she is a single parent who has never had a chance of attending school. This is an evidence to show that some parents are illiterate, and this is discouraging their children to further their studies. Their parents are not role models in their children's lives.

Parent 8 said in the response; a mentor or a role model is needed in a family who will encourage the children to be like them. A person who will give them inspiration, so that they should strive to be educated so that they can realise the importance of education. Children lose hope when they find themselves in the hopeless situation.

5.2.9 Behaviour

Social behaviour is another factor for learners to dropout of secondary school. The participants in the study stated that they could not keep up with their schoolwork, or that they did not have sound relationships with their teachers or other learners who might have experienced disciplinary problems. A big number of learners who dropped out of school were suspended at one time or another. In this study, suspension from school is considered to be a sign of deviant behaviours.

One of the respondents, learner 16 said the teachers had a negative attitude towards her, because of her having a child. She said she was ill-treated because of having a baby while attending school. She was not allowed to partake in any of school activities such as farewell function. Learner 12 indicates that some teachers' conduct and behaviours towards the learners are the major problem during the process of dropping out of school. "We feel that some teachers are treating us unfairly due to our intelligence quotient (IQ), some learners are underachievers and other are bright and intelligent Teachers pay too much attention to learners who are well and tend to neglect those who are struggling with their studies and have disciplinary problems".

5.2.10 Peer Pressure

Makwinja-Morara (2013) found out that peer pressure is considered to be one of the influencing factors of learners to dropout of school. The influence of peers extends beyond encouragement towards delinquency, and some learners, especially during their teens, are subject to pressures from their peers that are more powerful than the pressures that they encounter from their families, or from school. Masitsa, 2012 confirms that peers are extremely important during adolescence, and that teenagers

spend their school days interacting with them. Having friends who engage in criminal behaviour; or having friends who have dropped out of school, also tend to increase the odds of dropping out.,

Learner 21 from school A's comments about being part of the group learners would do anything to be accepted by their friends She admitted that she smoked to please her peer and that her peers had an influence on her. But, Samantha seems to differ, she responded by saying that her peer had encouraged her to continue with the evening studies to obtain her senior certificate in Abet. The peer pressure had both positive and negative influence on these learners

The lack of a caring home and stability, bad school experience, anti-social behaviour, and rebellion all have one negative impact on the increase in the national dropout rate of secondary school learners in our country. It is very important for both parents and teachers to work together to find a solution to the problem of dropout, instead of blaming one another. Learners must be taught to take responsibilities for their actions and stay focussed on things that are of importance.

5.3 CURRENT STUDIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes and effects of learners' dropout at the four selected secondary schools, Ngaka Modiri Molema district. The study revealed that some of three out of four secondary schools have serious problems of learners' dropout. The principals and school management team and government officials in education should come with proper strategies to combat the dropout problem. This will assist to control learners with problem of misbehaviour such as absenteeism, substance use, bunking classes, rebellion and having lower academic achievements, lastly dropping out completely.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that:

1. Poverty should be eradicated by providing learners' parents jobs so to look after the well-fare of their children. These authors agree that chronic school dropout is highly common among learners who come from low-income families (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Nolan et al, 2013; Petrick, 2014). The wealth of South Africa should be shared among its citizens equally. The government should ensure that education is a top priority for every child. Children should be looked after so that they should only focus on their studies and nothing else. Just take a look at learner 19 from school C's predicament was that she was forced to leave school and find work due to poverty and no income in her household. Some learners were compelled to find greener pastures in the labour market because of poverty.
2. In literature review Adiguzel (2013) stated that, female learners when reaching puberty and early marriage of girls are taken as contributing towards dropout after falling pregnant. Teenage pregnancy is a serious concern among young girls' learners these days. This is happening because there is a social grant given to babies who are not having working fathers to look after. Lot of these learners fall pregnant to have access to the child grant. The government is encouraging these girls to have children because it gives social grants to the newly born babies. The government must come with better way of encouraging the girls to attend school until they complete their studies, by providing them with bursaries and scholarships. This will help to reduce the high rates of teenage pregnancies.
3. According to Strand and Granland (2014) the stressful relationships with teachers cause learners to dropout. Rebellion is experienced in most secondary schools because of the way these children are been brought up. Most of these children are experiencing violence in their different households. Learners should be brought up in the caring and loving home, so that they too can be caring people. They must be the people who are passionate and kind towards other

living beings. They must at all times be surrounded by people who are not violent and not using vulgar words to solve a dispute.

4. Absenteeism also plays an important part in learners' dropout and must be considered to be a problem. According to Thornton et al., (2013) state that many families ignored absenteeism by not sending their children to school for reasons such as going to holidays or someone has passed on in the family. The teachers and the parents must have a common ground where they can work together to ensure that learners are not absenting themselves from school without their knowledge. If both teachers and parents are collaborating together, learners will never have a chance of manipulating them.

Another thing is to make the learners teaching and learning so much interesting to keep them at school all the time. Extra-mural activities to make them to showcase their skills and talents will keep them occupied and they will have something positive to look up to. Again, parents should check their children's school work on a daily basis; this will help the parents to know whether their children are attending school regularly.

5. Peer pressure is when a child is influenced by his/her peers to do things that will please the entire group. Children should be encouraged to have friends who are focused on positive things in life, such as finishing school and finding a decent job that will make them prosper in life. The friends who are well groomed and well behaved, and are doing their school work properly. Children should be in control of what they want in life, they should not do things to impress their peers. They must be taught to be independent in their choices.
6. Substance use is one of the factors that destroy many children these days. Local clinics should always visit the secondary schools and teach learners about the danger of substance use. The children should know how to say no to drugs, and lead a healthy lifestyle whereby they can participate in various sporting codes to take their minds off drugs and alcohol. Taverns should be abolished near the school surroundings, to give the learners a chance of attending school without

any disturbance. Tavern owners should be arrested when they are found to be selling alcohol to school children.

7. Behaviour: Conflicts with teachers seem to be a huge predictor for learners to eventually dropout from school because of their bad behaviour towards their teachers. Learners are continuously fighting with one another in and out of the school premises because of gangs and negative attitudes that they have among themselves. Sometimes learners are disrupting classes for no apparent reason, and strong actions must be taken against such a learner. Code of conduct for learners to guide them how should the conduct themselves during the whole year.
8. According to Foley et al (2014) found out that parents' involvement in their children's education has a positive effects and their children do not dropout of school. Parent's involvement is of paramount importance to the learners and their well being. When parents are fully involved in their children's school activities, the children tend to succeed in their school grades. The children will know that they have the support of their parents in whatever they are doing. It also shows that school is important, so the children will be motivated to do their best knowing that they are been monitored and supported. It is revealed in the literature review that parental engagement plays a significant role in the success of the child's education (Darmody & McCoy, 2013).

These recommendations can be helpful if they could be implemented by all principals and the school management team and area-office managers in the education system.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This study has explained factors contributing to learners' dropout in the four selected secondary schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema district of North-West Province. The

analysis of the research findings made reference to theories adopted in the literature review.

Dropping out implies that a learner exits the education system before completing the programme for which he or she was registered. In this study, it emerged from the findings that learner dropout is among other things caused by social factors such as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, health problem, peer pressure, dysfunctional families and learning barriers. These factors are composite issues, which should be handled by skilled people. As learners spend a great deal of their time in the school surroundings, the teacher has become an important role-player to help learners to alleviate social problems. It is important that learners with social problems must be at early stage provided with professional assistance. Teacher who are obliged to help these learners, are not necessarily equipped to give the necessary assistance.

From this study, it is apparent that learners and teachers need to be supported, motivated and competent to ensure progress with the implementation of the new curriculum. The school has a responsibility to support learners who are at risk of dropping out of school. Providing support to learners is one of trying to make learning situations and lessons accessible to all learners. Support is also given when a school review its cultures, policies and practises to determine support for the individual teacher, parent and learner needs. Support is provided when teachers plan lessons in such a way that they accommodate all learners. All staff members must be involved in support activities. This will lead to effective support that will focus on the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and institutional needs.

The phenomenon of young people dropping out of school affects government, individuals, societies and labour market. The effects of dropping out are not only financial but also social. Dropping out of school challenges self-sufficiency, self-esteem and the ability to make educated choices. The government always invests in education in South Africa. When a young person decides to dropout of school, employability becomes a challenge for the individual, and thus less economic participation happens.

At the end this affects the taxes that the individual might have had to contribute to the state and personally represents no return on the government's investment.

Motivation of learners can be characterised by their willingness to initiate learning activities, their continued involvement in a learning task, and their long-term commitment to learning. Learners need to be motivated both in the home and school environments. Teachers and parents should be aware that motivation in the home and school is important factor to encourage learners to continue with their studies. When learners are motivated, they manage stress and are also eager to initiate learning activities, they are willing to take risks, they remain involved in learning and they show commitment.

Preventing learner dropout of school is a difficult work and it needs a multi-disciplinary prevention and intervention strategy to address it effectively. Early identification of learners, who are at risk of dropping out of school, is important to ensure support and intervention. The social factors that lead to dropout need to be addressed in the context in which the learner is experiencing it. The school, as an institution established to educate, has a responsibility to give support to learners at risk of dropping out. The systems need to function as a whole, to build resistance in learners and to ensure that they reach their maximum potential

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