

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Education brings many benefits to both individuals and societies. Education is viewed as being so fundamental to the development of individuals and as such, the right to primary education is legally guaranteed in most countries of the world (UNESCO, 2005). Above all, international human rights conventions as well recognise the right to education. The right to education has been ratified by a succession of UN Conventions, starting from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which received the status of international law in 1990. According to Article 28 of the Convention, governments have the responsibility of making primary education compulsory and available for free to all but in Zambia primary education is free but not compulsory. Education is recognised as crucial not only to human development and to the eradication of poverty but also to enable all people to live in dignity (Wils et al., 2006). The Education for All (EFA) movement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have resulted in more attention being paid to issues of both participation and completion in education. Universal primary education is goal number two of both EFA (Jomtien, 1990; reaffirmed in Dakar, 2000) and the millennium development goals (MDGs), and was adopted by UN Member States in 2000 (UNESCO, 2005).

However, the right to universal primary education (UPE) and education for all (EFA) has been under serious threat due to continued high numbers of school dropouts, making school retention hard to maintain over the past several years (UNESCO, 2001, 2005, 2012; Wils, Zhao, & Hartwell, 2006).

According to UNICEF & UNESCO, (2011), school dropouts refers to children who were enrolled in school but have left school before completion. Dropping out of school is related to a variety of factors that can be classified in four categories, namely: individual, family, school, and community factors. This study focused on school factors though recognizing that there is no single risk factor that can be used to

accurately predict who is at risk of dropping out. However, the accuracy of dropout predictions increases when combinations of multiple risk factors are involved. The study by Hammond, Linton, Smink, and Drew, (2007) found that pupils who drop out often cite factors across multiple categories. There are complex interactions among risk factors leading up to dropping out. Dropping out of school is often the result of a long process of disengagement that may begin in some cases even before a child enters school, and is often described as a process, with factors building and compounding overtime. School dropout is a complex, multifaceted problem and the decision to drop out of school is a process, not an event.

Education Policy and Data Center (2009) has cited that several studies, carried out in the United States of America (USA) and in 35 developing countries primarily concerned with the identification of characteristics associated with dropout have consistently cited school, as one of the characteristics associated with dropping out. It is for this reason this study focuses on identifying school related factors leading to school dropping out of primary school system. School is the focal point in the education process of pupils it is not expected to contribute to their dropping out of it. It is important to clearly recognise that the final goal is not only to get children in school but also to ensure their continued stay in school so that schooling results in good learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2005).

Hammond, Linton, Smink, and Drew, (2007) carried out a study in the United States of America found that, in-school factors such as lack of stimulation and pupil support combined with other factors like financial pressures and social processes such as teenage pregnancy and drug abuse resulting in pupils disengaging from their education and ultimately dropping out of school. The existence of school factors alone does not imply the pupil is at risk of dropping out but the existence of school factors in combination with other factors make dropping out more likely. Hence school factors leading to dropping out may not be discussed in isolation of other factors because dropping out is often the result of a combination of factors across various categories. This view was reaffirmed in the study by Hunt, (2008) who also found that dropping out is often a process rather than the result of one single event, and therefore has more than one proximate cause.

It is clear that the number of children enrolled in school has increased over time. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of children who start primary school are not completing this cycle. This study focused on school level factors because they are found to play a role in increasing pressures to drop out.

1.1.1 Global Context of School Dropouts

UNESCO (2012) global report on education quoted Hendrik van der Pol, UNESCO Institute for Statistics director as saying:

The world has just a few short years to make good on the promise to fulfill every child's right to primary education by 2015. ...School systems are reaching more children but losing them due to inefficiencies, which lead to early school leaving. It is far more difficult and costly to reach children once they leave school than to address the barriers and bottlenecks in the systems (UNESCO, 2012, p.1).

The major concern out of the report is that of global dropout rates, that do not seem to have gone down over the years. In many countries of the world, there are high rates of pupils leaving school, worse in the developing world. UNESCO, (2012) global report on education reported that Sub-Saharan Africa sees 42 per cent of its pupils leaving school early before completion, with one in six leaving before grade 2. In South and West Asia, out of every 100 pupils who start primary school, 33 leave before reaching the last grade. While in Latin America and the Caribbean, 17 per cent of pupils leave school before completing primary education. South Asian countries, sees 13.54 million of its children leave school before completing primary education. Pakistan has the highest rate of dropouts in the region at 38.5 per cent followed by Nepal with 38.3 per cent and Bangladesh comes third with 33.8 per cent, (UNESCO 2012).

1.1.2 Dropout Levels in the African Context

Though the study by Colclough, Rose and Tembon, (2000) found that poverty in Africa appears to have a major 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. As children grow older, the opportunity 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 education. The further found that only when poverty and opportunity cost are compounded by in school factors such as: poor quality of education provision, inadequate school facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate language of instruction, teacher absenteeism is dropping out more likely to occur.

In some countries such as Niger in 2006 and Burkina Faso in 2003 more than one-quarter of 14-year-old children who started school dropped out. This result reinforces the well known finding by Cameron, (2005) in his study in America that the older the child is, the greater the chances of dropping out of primary school This is due to the fact that for older children the opportunity cost of schooling increases significantly creating pressure to work or to get married. Similar studies by Cain, (1977) in Bangladesh and by UNESCO, (2005) also found that older pupils were at a greater risk of dropping out than younger ones. Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC), (2009) findings in 35 countries suggest that there is a strong positive relationship between relative age-in-grade and drop out rates at the end of primary school. In Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda over age children in school is also a problem, perhaps not as high as in Kenya, but non-completion of primary school remains relatively high as indicated by the high drop out rate and low completion rate. Late enrolment resulting in pupils being overage for their grade level is seen as on a major factor influencing pupil dropout on the African continent.

1.1.3 Dropout Levels in the Zambian Context

According to the 2010 Annual Global Report on education by UNESCO (2010) Zambia in 2007 had 11.80% primary school dropouts. UNESCO (2005) stated that, the Zambian education system in place today uses the same formula put in place by the colonial government with very minimal reform making such education not in a position to address the current educational challenges the country is facing. The failure by government to tackle deep and persistent problems in education is consigning millions of children to live in poverty and diminished opportunity. The government has a duty to ensure that no child drops out of school by removing factors

that make pupils drop out irrespective of their backgrounds. The national dropout rate grades 1-9 for Zambia in 2005 stood at 2.36% (MOE, 2006). The national dropout rate for the year 2010 stood at 1.79% for boys and 2.33% for girls giving an overall dropout rate of 2.06%. Table 1: below shows the dropout rates for Zambia from the year 2000 to 2010.

Table 1: Basic School Dropout Rates for the Years 2000 to 2010

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rate(%)	4.6	4.1	3.6	2.6	2.9	2.5	2.6	2.0	1.7	2.4	2.0

source: MoE, 2010 educational statistics bulletin

Though dropout rates have been on the decline over the years but rate of decline has been unstable as seen by the fluctuations in the table above. This picture indicates that dropout is still a problem in Zambia and needs to be tackled.

1.1.4 Dropout levels in Solwezi District

Solwezi district is the provincial capital of North-western Province of Zambia. The district has 119 primary schools of various grades. Solwezi district like other districts in the country has experienced large numbers of pupils dropping out of school for various reasons. Table 1.0 below shows the dropout rates for Solwezi district for the years 2010 to 2012.

Table 2: Solwezi District Primary Schools Dropouts for the Years 2010-2012

YEAR	FACTOR								TOTAL
	Illness	Economic	Marriage	Expelled	Pregnancy	Orphaned	Death	Other	
2010	70	453	147	12	306	186	30	598	1802
2011	105	266	170	15	295	136	36	463	1486
2012	40	407	107	11	280	206	31	632	1714
TOTAL	215	1126	424	38	881	528	97	1693	5002

Solwezi District Education Board Secretary DEBS database, MESVTEE, 2013

The statistics above show that over a thousand primary school pupils, drop out of school each year and being confined to poverty and diminished opportunity. The

district recorded 5002 dropouts between 2010 and 2012. This shows the magnitude of the problem of school dropout and the urgent need to find a lasting solution. The only school factor indicated in the table above is expulsion which saw 38 pupils drop out between 2010 and 2012. It is assumed that school factors are contained in other factors that contributed to 1693 pupils dropping out of school for the years 2010-2012. Inability to identify school factors contributing to pupil dropout makes planning interventions difficult that was what made this study necessary. The numbers in table 2 above indicate that dropouts are a big problem in Solwezi district.

For example, statistics in the District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) database indicated that in the year 2010, Luamvundu and Kachiwezhi primary schools had 92 and 93 pupils drop out for other reasons respectively; that is more than two classes dropping out of each of the two schools in a single year. It is the magnitude of the problem of school dropouts and particularly the silence on school factors that are contributing to dropouts at primary school level that made this study necessary.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

School is the focal point of the education process. UNESCO, (2005) states that the role of the school is not merely to get children into school but to ensure their continued stay in school to completion. This perspective suggests the need for schools to provide an environment conducive to ensure learners do not dropout.

In Zambia, despite the government providing free primary education, training, recruiting and supplying teachers, providing school infrastructure, teaching and learning materials; learners are still seen dropping out of school. For example, Solwezi district recorded 5002 dropouts between 2010-2012 (DEBS, 2013). Therefore the study sought to establish factors in schools that contributed to pupils dropping out of school.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study was aimed at establishing factors in schools that contribute to pupils dropping out of primary school and the signals transmitted by aspects school environment influence dropping out.

1.4 General Objective of the Study

The general objective guiding the study was to identify the role of school factors in influencing pupils' behaviour leading to dropping out.

1.5 Specific Objectives of the Study

1. To establish the school factors which contribute to pupils dropping out of school.
2. To determine what strategies exist in schools for pupil dropout prevention.
3. To establish messages or signals pupils receive from five components of the school environment (People, Place, Policies, Programs, Processes) influencing their behaviour leading to dropping out.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What factors in schools contribute to pupils dropping out of school?
2. What do schools do to prevent pupils dropping out?
3. What messages or signals do pupils receive from the five components of the school environment (People, Place, Policies, Programs, Processes), which influence their behaviour leading to dropping out?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study were expected to contribute to knowledge on school factors that contribute to school pupils dropping out of school. The study may also energise efforts toward school transformations aimed at preventing school dropouts due to school factors and promote pupil retention resulting in high completion rates. This may in turn lead to a step towards achievement of not only UPE and EFA but also MDG number two. The study may equip policy makers with knowledge of school factors that are contributing to pupil drop out making the designing of interventions possible. Finally, whether adopting an existing intervention program or developing a

new one, practitioners need to use evidence-based strategies to evaluate programs to assure effectiveness and this was what the study sought to provide.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the invitational learning theory by William Watson Purkey who first introduced Invitation theory in 1978. He is the developer of a model of communication called “Invitational Education”. It was developed as a method of creating environments in which self concept could be enhanced and human potential more fully developed (Purkey and Novak, 1984).

Invitational Theory is a view of professional practice that addresses the total environment and all relationships formed in educational organizations. It is a process for communicating caring and appropriate messages intended to summon forth the realization of human potential as well as for identifying and changing those institutional and relational forces that defeat and destroy potential. Having the ability to identify forces that destroy potential the theory was used in this study to identify school factors contributing to school dropout by checking the type of messages pupils receive from five components of the school environment (people, places, policies, processes, and programs) comprising the school environment and influences their behaviour leading to dropping out.

An invitation is simply a message that tells people that they are liked. These messages are the building blocks of community and of change. If teachers send messages that tell learners they don't like them, they undermine their best efforts to teach them and to retain them, with dropping out as the final outcome. Invitations can be formal or informal, verbal or nonverbal, intentional or unintentional. Educators need strive to be intentionally inviting and to make education a welcoming process, (Purkey and Novak, 1988).

Invitational Education consists of four value-based assumptions about the nature of people and their potential: (1) Respect- people are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly; (2) Trust- education should be a collaborative, cooperative activity; (3) Optimism- people possess untapped potential in all areas of

human endeavor; and (4) Intentionality- human potential can best be realized by places, policies, programmes and processes that are specifically designed to invite development, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally.

Invitational Education theory, believes that every person and everything in and around the school adds to, or subtracts from, the process of being a beneficial presence in the lives of human beings (pupils) depending on the type of messages they transmit to the pupil. The school environment comprises five factors namely: people, places, policies, programs and processes. The five factors should be so intentionally inviting in order to create an environment in which each pupil is cordially summoned to develop intellectually, socially, physically, psychologically and spiritually. Invitational education suggests some practical strategies for making schools the most inviting place. The theory helped to examine how people (school staff and pupils), places (physical environment of the school), policies (school rules and regulations), programmes (school curricula) and processes (methods used to come up with a better school) sends messages that influences pupils' decision leading to dropping out of school. A curriculum based on the tenets of invitational education positively impacts learning experiences by transmitting positive messages (Maaka & Lipka, 1996).

Teachers are in a helping profession and good teachers feel good about themselves, and they feel good about others. Therefore an intentionally inviting school environment impacts pupils positively and most likely to prevent pupils dropping out. When invitational education functions well, students are motivated to work harder and to meet a teacher's high standards. Educators can and do make a positive difference in the lives of students. Educators who function at the intentionally inviting level believe that people are valuable, capable, and responsible and intentionally invite them to share in these beliefs. Pupils should be encouraged to express their own ideas and opinions and to realize that it is all right to make mistakes as part of the learning process (Purkey & Novak, 1984).

Invitational theory was helpful to this study in the sense that it creates a school environment, which sends caring signals or messages to pupils that they are liked

preventing them from dropping out. The theory is critical to the creation of an intentionally inviting school environment in which learners are given the opportunity to work freely, which in turn helps them perceive school in much more positive ways that are helpful in preventing dropping out. Though pupils at times come to school already exposed to risk factors leading to dropout such as family factors, community factors and individual factors, school factors compound the existing risk factors making dropping out most likely. The invitational education theory promotes creation of inviting school environments in which pupils feel liked, welcome and free to express themselves, as they feel working among friends, (Cleor and Alexander, (1992).

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to some selected primary schools namely: Kimiteto, Kimale, Kabisapi Luamala and Mushitala in Solwezi District of North-Western Province of Zambia. The focus of the study was on school factors that contribute to pupils dropping out of school.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by five selected Solwezi District primary schools. Hence the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other districts in the province.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

In this study the following terms carry the following meanings:

School dropout- In this study refers to a child who was once enrolled in school but has since left school for various reasons other than completion.

‘At Risk’ – Pupils who exhibit characteristics that correlates to dropping out, though they may not necessarily drop out of school.

Invite- to send a message or a signal to someone, verbal or none verbal, intentional or unintentional that we like them or that they are welcome.

Invitational Learning- A theory of practice that believes that everything in and around the school has a potential to add or subtract from being a beneficial presence in the life of the learner/pupil.

Intentionality- A purposeful act carried out by teachers in the teaching and learning process.

Inviting- A caring school environment sending a positive message or signal, which summons pupils to feel welcome in school thus preventing dropping out.

Disinviting- A hostile school environment to pupils, sending a negative message or signal, which make pupils to feel not welcome in school thus promoting dropping out.

Pull factors- Factors in the environment outside the school that lead to children dropping out of school.

Push factors- Factors in the school environment that lead to children dropping out of school.

1.12 Organisation of the Study

Chapter one, presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study, theoretical framework and operational definition of terms used in the dissertation.

Chapter two focuses on review of literature. This chapter provides a review of related literature to the problem under study, that is: 'school factors contributing to pupils dropping out of school in selected schools of Solwezi district'.

Chapter three provides an in-depth look into the research methodology used in the dissertation. Included under this chapter are: research design; target population; sample size; sampling procedure; research instruments; data collection; data analysis.

Chapter four presents the research findings. All the research questions have been addressed in this chapter.

Chapter Five covers the discussion of the findings. In this chapter, the findings are discussed under the headings drawn from the objectives of the research.

Chapter Six concludes the study and also makes recommendations based on the major findings of the study.

1.13 Summary

The chapter presented an introduction to the study, (school factors contributing to pupils dropping out of school in selected primary schools of Solwezi district) by outlining the major features. These are the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, delimitation of the study, limitations to the study, theoretical framework and the definitions of terms.

The next chapter focuses on literature review. It provides a review of the relevant literature to the problem under discussion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the review of relevant literature on the school factors contributing to pupils dropping out of school. The chapter also discusses statistics available on school dropout in various parts of the world.

2.2 Global Situation of School Dropout

UNESCO (2012) Global Report on education stated that there was an urgent need to address the high numbers of children leaving school before completing primary education. The findings by UNESCO (2011) on the global picture towards attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) indicated that about 31.2million primary pupils in 2010 dropped out of school globally and may never return.

The findings of UNESCO (2006) study on global gains made towards attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) indicated that many countries have relatively high initial enrolment figures but poor primary school completion rates. This due to continued dropping out of school making attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) difficulty in several countries of the world like Malawi, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bolivia to name a few. Completion rates provide a much stronger test of UPE than enrolment rate alone.

Studies by Lloyd , Mete and Grant, (2009) in rural Pakistan on primary completion rates found that though Pakistan had a national enrolment of 83% its completion rate was only 48% as a result of high dropout rate. Cameron (2005) conducted studies on dropout rates in the United States of America (USA) and Canada. He found that USA national dropout rate in 2011 stood at 25% with some places like Mississippi having a drop out rate of as high as 38%. On the contrary, in Canada dropout rate has declined from 1990-1991 (16.6%) to 2011-2012 (7.8%). steadily since the academic year 1990-1991, reaching a low of 7.8% in 2011-2012. Dropout rates for girls were consistently lower than for boys. The decline in dropout rate in Canada was most evident in the Atlantic Provinces where dropout rates fell by more than 50%.

A study by Cairns et al (1989), on *Early School Dropout: Configurations and Determinants* observed that several longitudinal studies conducted in the United States of America revealed the extent of the problem in that country estimating the early dropout rate for boys and girls in at risk categories to be at 82% and 47% respectively. A survey carried out in 1983 found that of the 10,331,000 who had been enrolled in grades 9,10, or 11 in 1982, 535,000 reported that they were no longer in school in 1983 giving a dropout rate of about 15%.

Bacolod and Ranjan (2005) in their study on dropouts in America found that the annual number of high school dropouts in the USA alone in 2012 was estimated to be about 3,030,000 translating into 8,300 dropouts per day.

The study by Hall (2008) on primary school dropout rates in Latin American and the Caribbean region found the region to have the third-highest regional dropout rate to the last grade of primary education at 17%, though, the situation has been improving over the past decade, especially in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, although rates remain within the range of 15% to 24%. The lowest rates (below 5%) are found in Argentina, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico and Uruguay. Nevertheless, he found that high dropout rates persist in the following countries: Nicaragua, where 52% of pupils leave school without completing primary education. Guatemala has a dropout rate of 35%, followed by, Saint Kitts and Nevis (26%), and Honduras (24%).

A study by Cairns et al. (1989) in the USA on dropout determinants came up with the following findings: students who drop out are more likely to be male. Females who drop out often do so due to reasons associated with pregnancy. Dropouts were more likely to come from low-income families.. The rate of dropout was higher on average for Black, Hispanic, and Native American youth. Students were more likely to drop out if they lived in urban settings as compared to suburban or nonmetropolitan areas. Dropout rates were higher in the South and West than in the Northeast region of the United States of America. High levels of household mobility contributed to increased likelihood of dropping out. He further found that students with disabilities (especially those with emotional/behavioral disabilities) were more at risk of dropping out. Dropouts were more likely to come from families in which the parents were

unemployed. Students who come from single-parent families were at greater risk of dropping out. Homes characterized by permissive parenting styles have been linked with higher rates of dropout. Students whose families provide higher levels of educational support for learning were less likely to drop out. Increased levels of stress and the presence of stressors (e.g., financial difficulty, health problems, and early parenthood) were associated with increased rates of dropout.

Verkuyten and Thijs, (2002) conducted a study to examine the role of performance, peer relations, ethnicity and gender on school satisfaction in Netherlands. The study involved 26 schools, 51 classes and 1,090 respondents on school satisfaction of elementary school children. School satisfaction is a measure of children's quality of life and determined by the extent to which children feel good about themselves and the institutions in which they function. Individual and Classroom variables were examined simultaneously, using multilevel analysis. The study found that ethnic minority groups were more satisfied with school than the Dutch pupils, and girls were more satisfied than boys. The study further found that, the level of school satisfaction was important because it affects pupils' psychological well-being, as well as school engagement, absentee rate, drop-out and behavioral problems. The study recommended that schools should be caring and supporting settings that children value and enjoy. This will help to reduce the risk of pupils dropping out of school.

Though few studies have been conducted on pupils' reasons for staying in school, however, the study by Alexander (2008) in the United Kingdom on reasons why pupils remain in school found the following list of school interventions that has been developed based on a synthesis of information from a variety of studies: Interaction with and the involvement of committed, concerned educators and other adults, Development of perseverance and optimism, Improved attitude toward school and increased motivation to obtain a certificate, Positive, respectful relationships between staff and pupils, Satisfaction with the learning experience (e.g., social climate, instructional climate, school course offerings, and school rules), Relevance of curriculum and Fair discipline policies.

2.3 School Dropout Situation in Africa

Policies to improve school progression and reduce the numbers of children dropping out of school are critical if UPE is to be achieved. In Africa evidence indicate that children are starting primary school in greater numbers than ever before but drop out rates are significant in many countries. For, example, the study by Sabates et al (2010), on primary school completion rates indicated low primary school completion rate in 2005 for countries like Benin and Democratic Republic of Congo, due high dropout rate. As a result of substantial rates of drop out and non-completion of primary school, many children are leaving schooling without acquiring the most basic skills. The same study by Sabates et al. (2010), found that failure to complete a basic cycle of primary school not only limits future opportunities for children but also represents a significant drain on the limited resources that countries have for the provision of primary education. They cited the World Bank 2007 report on the Government of Malawi for example, which allocated 4.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) towards public educational expenditure in 2007, which represented around 195 million dollars. Of this, 55 percent was allocated towards primary school. With a primary school drop out rate of 65 percent in 2007, it is estimated that children, who fail to complete primary school, took up nearly half a million-school places. In monetary terms, this broadly represented an annual expenditure of 60 million dollars, 1.3 percent of GDP in 2007, on the education of children who probably left schooling without any basic skills.

A study by Hadley (2010) on primary school dropout rates of Sub-Saharan Africa region found that the region has the highest dropout rate, which rose from 40% to 42% between 1999 and 2009. This meant that more than two in five children who start school may not reach the last grade of primary education. Dropout rates were highest in Chad (72%), Uganda (68%) and Angola (68%), where more than two out of three children starting primary school were expected to leave before reaching the last grade. In contrast, dropout rates were lowest in Mauritius (2%) and Botswana (7%).

A study carried out in Kenya in Nyandarua District by Kinuthia, (1995) on *factors leading to secondary school drop-out in nyandarua district* identified school factors such as poor teaching, teacher resource, discipline, school type, and category, poor

pupil-teacher relationship, dilapidated school infrastructure, mockery, lack of guidance and counseling programmes in secondary schools, poor administration and transfer of teachers as some of the factors that led to secondary school drop-out .

In South Africa a study by Modisaotsile, (2012), on failing standards of basic education in South Africa found that dropout rate was very high, triggered by low levels of literacy and numeracy skills. In her study she found other challenges associated with dropping out of school to include: poor teacher training; unskilled teachers; lack of commitment to teach by teachers; poor support for learners at home; and a shortage of resources in education. The same study also found that almost 20 per cent of teachers are absent on Mondays and Fridays. Absentee rates increase to one-third at month end. Teachers in black schools (schools that were designated for blacks Africans during apartheid era) teach an average of 3.5 hours a day, compared with about 6.5 hours a day in former white schools. The other teacher behaviour that contributed dropouts at school was teachers' sexual involvement with learners. Some shocking reports indicated that sexual harassment of female pupils was a serious problem in many South African schools. More than 30 percent of girls were raped at school.

According to UNESCO, (2010), report, Ghana has had a steady decline in the proportion of children dropping out of primary school since it launched its major education reforms in 1987. Ghana had introduced programmes such as capitation grant scheme and school feeding programme at basic school level. These programmes helped reduce the 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. In 2005, when capitation was introduced enrolment across primary to junior high school increased by about 17 per cent (MOESS, 2007) as cited in UNESCO (2010). The Ghanaian experience shows that research based evidence and strategies are critical towards combating problems associated with school dropouts. The study into school factors contributing to school dropout is essential in dealing with problems of school dropouts associated with school factors.

In another related study conducted in Ghana by Ananga, (2010) on understanding the push and pull factors in school dropout, found that, there is some evidence that when teachers take a more proactive approach to the problem of drop out, the situation is able to improve. For example, the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) work in southern Ghana has revealed that a few teachers in some schools sensitive to the problem of dropout were able to intervene to prevent drop out and encourage 'drop-in'. This was achieved through identifying children at risk of dropping out and attended to the factors that contribute to their chances of dropping out. Other schools organized teachers to visit truant children and their parents and encouraged these children to attend classes. These measures are indicative of what schools can do if sensitized about their role in reducing drop out.

A study by Dalton and Watson, (1997) in America on classrooms where caring and learning prevail found that a school environment characterised by care and support to pupils at risk of dropping out is vital in preventing school dropouts. When teachers observe signs of dropping out and provide support and care to such pupils, the study showed that such pupils never dropped out but instead remained in school and signs of dropping out such as absenteeism, misbehaviour and other disciplinary problems diminished. A related study by Deal and Celotti, (1980) on the influence school administrators do and can have on classrooms, also found that school and other educational administrators had an influence on the child's decision to dropout or to remain in school. The study observed that, formulation of inclusive school policies, aimed creating a supportive school environment by educational administrators were vital in preventing pupil dropouts.

A study on achievements in primary education in Tanzania by Hakielimu (2007) found that Tanzania has an unusual profile of high enrolment, relatively low drop out and some 24.3 percent of students over age but remaining in primary school. According to available statistics in the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT, 2009), the drop out rate has declined significantly since the implementation of UPE in 2002 though with a slight upward trend in 2008-9 of 3.70%, up from 3.20% in 2006-7. Several factors contributed towards this. Firstly, there was 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 devolved 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 students. Tanzania is a typical example of how government will is critical in combating the problem of school dropouts.

2.4 School Dropout Situation in Zambia

In the year 2010 Zambia's basic school dropout rate stood at 2.0% (MoE, 2010). Zambia in 2007 had 2.22% children of school going age who were never enrolled in school, with 11.80% primary school dropouts, 26.70% of pupils in school were over age, hence at risk of dropping out. In the same year the country recorded a 61.50% primary school completion rate but this was still low in comparison to other countries that had achieved higher completion rates much earlier than 2007 like Nigeria and Ghana which in 2003 recorded primary completion rates of 83.66% and 79% respectively, (UNESCO, 2010).

Several factors contributed to school dropouts in Zambia among them school related factors. The minister of education in his address to the first conference for head teachers cited some school related problems contributing to pupil dropout such as bad elements among teachers and bad school administration. For example, the Minister indicated that 27 teachers were dismissed in 2012, 25 for cases of impregnating pupils and 2 for drinking on duty. However, the Minister reiterated governments' commitment to the creation of stimulating learning environments in schools necessary for avoiding pupils from dropping out of school, (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, 2013).

2.5 School Factors Influencing School Dropouts

Many studies have identified predictors and variables associated with dropout. For example the study on variables associated with dropping out of school by Hunt (2008) in America categorized the variables associated with school dropout according to the extent to which they can be influenced to change the situations leading to dropout. He came up with the following categories: Status variables like socioeconomic standing

[SES], disability or ability level and family structure which are difficult and unlikely to change. On the other hand, Alterable variables such as school attendance and identification with school are easier to change and can usually be influenced by pupils, parents, educators, and community members. According to the study by Hunt (2008) most school factors leading to dropout fall in the category of alterable variables.

The study by Hunt (2008) further found that there are often precursors to dropping out, where children could be seen to be at risk or vulnerable to early withdrawal. The study found that pupils who repeated grades, those who consistently performed poorly and those who were over age for the grade they were attending were more likely to drop out of school. Students who drop out tend to be older compared to their grade-level peers. A study carried out in America on causes of pupils dropping from school by Lockheed and Verspoor (1990), found that problems created by the school, make children, who do not like school not very motivated to stay in school. For example, failing grades were given as a reason for dropping out by some teens. Other school factors cited by some teens as the cause of dropping out of school included: Personality conflicts with teachers, mockery, bullying, punishments, labelling, ridicule, financial requirements, poor sanitation, and type of school as contributing to pupils leaving school.

The study of some sub-Saharan African countries on the effects of the relationship between age and grade by Lewin (2008) found that the relationship between age and grade attended were consistent with dropping out. The study found that pupils who were too old for the grade they attended were more likely to drop out of school. The study recommended enrolling children at the right age for a particular grade as one way in which schools and prevent pupils from dropping out.

A study by Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah (2009) on mapping the incidence of school dropouts in northern Ghana identified some school factors that contributed to pupils dropping out of school. These included grade repetition, low achievement, over age enrolment and regular absenteeism or previous temporary withdrawals from school. It is unclear whether grade repetition increases the chances of completion, but what was

apparent in this study was that grade repetition extends the age range in a particular grade, and thus increases the possibility of repeaters dropping out. The study found that children who were made to repeat grades with a view of improving their performance ended up dropping out of school.

Research evidence through studies by Lewin, (2009) in sub-Saharan Africa, Akyeampong et al. (2007) on basic education in Ghana and by Ampiah et al. (2010) in Ghana all identified grade repetition as one school factor (variable) associated with dropout. Grade repetition increases the age in grade, which in turn increases opportunity cost for repeaters.

A study by Alexander (2008) of elementary schools in West Africa found that holding students back to repeat a grade (retention) without changing instructional strategies is ineffective. Much evidence from the study of 35 developing countries on grade retention by Education Policy and Data Center (2009) suggests that the achievement of retained students still lags behind that of their peers after repeating a grade, making it an ineffective strategy for making students to catch up. Retention in grade also greatly increases the likelihood that the student will drop out of school and being held back twice makes dropping out almost certain. The study of primary school children in Ghana by Buxton (2010) found that pupils' poor performance were largely due to malnutrition and such their performance is unlikely to improve by making them repeat grades.

A study of some African countries like Niger, Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo and Malawi to name a few on school dropout: patterns, causes, changes and policies by Sabates et al. (2010) found that in 1999, 15 of those African countries studied had repetition rates exceeding 20%, compared to only six countries in 2009. The study also found that primary education repetition rates remain very high in some African countries and that many of the children repeating grades leave school before completing primary education. The study further found that students who drop out are more likely to have been retained than students who graduate. Using National Education Longitudinal Study data, the study found that being held back was identified as the single biggest predictor of dropping out. Retained pupils are

generally older than the average age for the grade level. Research evidence shows that over-age pupil above the average age for a grade level, are more likely to drop out. For example, the same study found that in Niger in 2006, where 56 percent of 16 and 17 year old were enrolled in primary school; of those who were enrolled 30 percent dropped out, but only 7 percent remained over age in primary school.

A study on gender inequalities in primary schooling by Colclough et al. (2000) found the language of instruction used in schools as one school factor, which contributed to pupils dropping out of school. The study found that pupils who come from non-English speaking backgrounds enrolled in schools where English language was used as the medium of instruction were more likely to have higher rates of dropout. The study also identified other school factors such as poor quality of education, inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate language of instruction, teacher absenteeism and, in the case of girls, school safety, as common causes for school drop out.

Studies by Brock-Utne and Halmdottir (2004) in South Africa and Tanzania on The Child Friendly School (CFS) initiative implemented in 11 districts from 2000, attempting to make classrooms more child-centered found that the use of Kiswahili, spoken by the great majority of Tanzanians as a first or second language, as the Language of Instruction in the first few grades of primary schools and as an official language contributed to the reduction in dropout rates in Tanzania.

Language of instruction used in schools is seen as a school factor with the potential to contribute to pupil dropouts. According to the study by King and Schielmann (2004) on challenges of indigenous education found that children face many language challenges when they enter school namely: they find teachers in school who do not speak their language, they equally do not want them to speak their language, they may even be punished for doing so, teachers say to them 'look at me' when it is disrespectful in the child's culture to look at an adult directly in the eye and pupils find no reflection of their society in school textbooks. The above factors make children find themselves as aliens in school resulting in dropping out.

A study on dropping out from school by Hunt (2008) found that language of instruction in the early years, can influence dropout rates. Ensuring that teachers are trained to use local language in the early grades to teach would mean better understanding for children starting school, reducing the likelihood of them dropping out due to lack of academic progress arising from inability to understand the language of instruction.

The study of achievements in primary education in Tanzania by Hakielimu (2007) and the study by O-saki and Obeleagu (2002) on classroom interaction in primary schools in Tanzania found that, Tanzania's policy of using only more experienced teachers for the first three grades together with the use of Kiswahili a local language for most children and use of remedial classes were seen as further ways to prevent drop out. This means that teacher quality and language of instruction used in schools have an influence on dropping out.

Rate of attendance or absenteeism is a strong predictor of dropout. A study of primary schools in sub-Saharan Africa particularly in Ghana on seasonality and access by Hadley (2010) found that many children, particularly those in rural, agricultural areas have pressures on them to work, which often clash with traditional schooling timetables. Temporary withdrawals in harvest times and for migrating communities pull children away from school, often leading to more permanent drop out. Flexible schooling timetables have been known to cut dropouts in areas where outside social and economic factors pose a serious threat to consistent attendance. In practice, schooling times might be adjusted during peak harvest periods or when local economic activity is highest to limit interference with children's work duties, shift systems and evening classes might be introduced. The annual school programme may also shift so those involved in seasonal tasks are not excluded (Kane, 2004).

The beliefs and attitudes that pupils hold toward school are important predictors of dropout. Chaiken (1980) defines attitudes as evaluations and associated beliefs and behaviors towards some object. Attitudes and attitude objects are joint functions of affective and cognitive components. Attitudes are formed through two systems of processing information received from the environment namely: systematic and

heuristic processing. Systematic processing occurs when individuals are motivated and have high cognition to process a message. According to Cialdini (2008) individuals using systematic processing are motivated to pay attention to signals or messages being received and have the cognitive ability to think deeply about a message; they are persuaded by the content of the message, such as the strength or logic of the argument. On the other hand, heuristic processing occurs when individuals have low motivation and/or low cognitive ability to process a message and as a result instead of focusing on the argument of the message, recipients using heuristic processing focus on more readily accessible information and other non-content cues, such as the authority or attractiveness of the speaker. As a result individuals who process a message through heuristic processing do not result in internalization, and thus any attitude formed resulting from such a message processing system is temporary and unstable.

A study on pupil control ideology and the quality of school life by Lunenburg and Schmidt (1989) showed that the general attitude pupils hold regarding their school determined what pupils viewed as the quality of life in a school and had an influence on their decision to drop out. They identified three factors that contribute to the quality of life in a school: level of pupils' general reactions to school, the level of student interest in work prompted by the educational opportunities available and the nature of the student-teacher relationship. The study found that pupils with low personal satisfaction with various elements of school life are more likely to drop out. The study further pointed out that students' resistance and resentment toward the school community was a major variable in their decision to drop out.

A study in America by Coley (1995) on high dropout rates in the United States of America found that learners with higher educational expectation are associated with low dropout rates than those with low expectation. Pupils who want to go far in their education are less likely to drop out. The study recommended that guidance and counseling department in school should help pupils to look beyond mere school attendance but look towards career building. By so doing pupils develop high educational expectations desiring to go far in their education in order to attain their dreams reducing the risk of dropping out.

Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah (2009) in their study of dropouts in Northern Ghana found that students who drop out are more likely to have exhibited behavioral and disciplinary problems in school. For example, child behavior researchers in America like Lehr et al. (2004) observed that early-school-age children with early assault conduct problems (aggressive behaviour in early years of life) are at high risk for school dropout as well as substance abuse, violence, and delinquency in their later years. The study suggested that developing treatment strategies to reduce conduct problems when aggression is in its more malleable form prior to age 8, and thus interrupting its progression, is of considerable benefit to both families and society. Among the school characteristics associated with dropout, many researchers have identified poor academic performance. Studies have found a positive relationship between a pupil's behaviour and performance with dropping out. Pupils whose peers include dropouts and pupils with criminal behaviour are more likely to drop out.

Studies have cited school management styles as a school factor that has the potential to contribute to pupil dropouts. A study by Hammond et al. (2007) recommended the need for administrators and teachers to design strategies to make the school a more attractive place for pupils to be. The same study found that school policies associated with dropout include raising academic standards without providing supports, tracking, and frequent use of suspension. The study observed methods schools used to regulate pupils' behaviour had a relationship with dropping out. The study defined pupil control ideology as the teacher's stated belief regarding the control of students in classrooms and schools. A custodial pupil control ideology stresses the maintenance of order, impersonality, unilateral-downward communication, distrust of pupils, and a punitive, moralistic orientation toward the control of students. At the other end of the scale, a humanistic pupil control orientation emphasizes the psychological and sociological bases of learning and behavior, an accepting, trustful view of pupils, and confidence in their ability to be self-disciplining and responsible.

The study found that a custodial pupil control ideology is associated with high dropout rates. Positive school climate is associated with lower rates of dropout. The findings of the study indicated that statistically significant relationships exist between teacher pupil control ideology and the quality of school life as perceived by pupils.

Quality of school life is a measure affected by the informal and formal aspects of school, social and task-related experiences and relationships with authority figures and peers as viewed by students, Hammond et al. (2007).

Because school is a major part of youngsters' lives, students who are negative in their evaluation of life in school may be more likely to drop out. They also may be more likely to behave in socially unacceptable ways in the school setting. The school classroom is a social system with an important degree of integration between teacher and pupils; hence, teaching cannot be effective if the pupil is simply a recipient of information without having any further relationship to the person delivering that information. Therefore, the study recommended schools to consider in-service programs designed to diminish the tendency of some teachers toward custodial pupil control ideology and that teacher training institutions should include activities designed to decrease the emphasis on activities, which reinforce rigid pupil control ideologies, Hammond et al. (2007).

School factors that have been linked to dropout include school type and large school size. The study by Lehr et al. (2004) on increasing rates of completion in the United States of America found that public schools and large schools had higher dropout rates than private and smaller sized schools. This finding was attributed to inadequate or lack of pupil support that characterises public as well as large schools.

A study by Coley (1995) in the United States of America presented school-related problems such as disliking school, receiving poor grades, not being able to keep up with schoolwork, and not getting along with teachers as four of the top six reasons for dropping out. The study found that pupils with poor grades are at greater risk of dropping out. Many public school pupils are not on grade-level in basic academic skills beginning in early grades and persisting through high school. In Zambia, National Learning Achievement Surveys (NLAS) consistently showed that learning achievement at middle basic levels in literacy and numeracy were below the criterion level of 40% for minimum level of performance. The implication of the survey is that pupils at this level have been performing poorly over time, exposing them to the risk of dropping out (MoE, 2006; 2008).

Bacolod et al. (2005), also in their study on why children work, attend school or stay idle: observed that, lower scores on measures of cognitive ability are associated with higher rates of dropout. Pupils with low ability are often the victims of grade repetition, which in most instances does not improve their performance but rather increases their chances of dropping out.

In Ghana, MoE (2009) education sector performance report for Ghana concluded that 43% of school pupils drop out because they are behind in credits because they have missed too many days of school due to stress in the household and lack of support at home, lack of connection with adults at school, compounded by school not having a plan to help them to catch up or in some instances distracted by misguided peers to pull from school to the streets.

Studies by King and Schielmann (2004) found that, if school curriculum does not reflect the pupils' society it affects negatively the ability for students to relate what they learn to their work and educational goals and equally impacts negatively on their decision to complete high school resulting in dropping out. The current curriculum provides few options, if any, for students. For example, Sabates et al. (2010) found that in Tanzania the curriculum assumes children have had some pre-primary skills so are ready to begin formal instruction. Urban children are the ones who are more likely to have attended pre-primary school than rural children and so both repetition and drop out rates are greater in rural areas.

Sabates et al. (2010) found that school level factors also play a role in increasing pressures to drop out such as teacher's absenteeism, school location and poor quality educational provision due to poor teacher quality. Teacher quality was found to be one of the school level factors that can have an influence on dropping out of school. In the case of Tanzania, which saw a significant reduction in dropout rates and an increase in primary school completion rates, teacher quality was instrumental in the process. For instance, from the year 2000, standards 1-3 were only taught by experienced teachers rather than, non-qualified teachers (NQTs). Some of these more experienced teachers were part of the cohort of long-serving teachers from the 1970's who saw teaching as a vocation and a form of political commitment (Barratt, 2008).

A study on Education for All by Alexander (2008) identified boredom, as a school factor contributing to pupil dropouts. Boredom comes in when schooling experience consists frequently of limited learning opportunities in overcrowded classrooms with insufficient learning materials and under-qualified teachers. This situation leads to boredom because pupils end up viewing school experience as a worst of time and eventually drop out. Deal and Celotti (1980) found that 47% of pupils dropout because they are bored, unmotivated and disengaged due to poor teaching methods with heavy reliance on lecture, drill and test preparations.

Munsaka (2009) in his study of dropouts among adolescents in southern Zambia found over enrolment and lack of functioning pupil support system in schools as school factors contributing to pupil dropouts. Over enrolment leads to lack of individual attention in the classroom by teachers making schooling experience consist frequently of limited learning opportunities. Lack of individual attention, results in pupil disengagement with schoolwork, because teachers are not available to help when they face challenges. Children who are disengaged with schoolwork are at risk of dropping out. Commenting on over enrolment, UNICEF 1997 Annual Report on children growing in the 21st century states: “There will be serious losses in efficiency if large numbers of children are provided with schools that fail to teach them effectively” (UNICEF, 1997, p. 107).

A study on the impact of poverty on young children’s experience of school by Horgan (2007) of elementary and middle school pupils in the United Kingdom found that school variables were consistent predictors of alienation from school arising from lack of functioning pupil support system. He also proposed that behaviors associated with dropping out of school stem from a withdrawal from school life. Many researchers have viewed pupils’ low level of engagement, in their education, as a major school factor leading to school dropouts.

2.6 Strategies for Reducing Dropout Rate Arising from School Factors

According to the study by Alexander (2008), school factors leading to pupils dropping from school are classified under alterable variables because they are easier to change and can usually be influenced by pupils, parents, educators, and community members.

School factors can be dealt with by making changes at local school level involving school staff, pupils and members of the local community. The study recommended schools to develop some strategies for making school matter which include providing support to at risk pupils thereby reducing dropout rates and implementing school reforms with a clear focus on how they will solve the problems of dropouts schools face. The study also observed that reducing dropout rates requires a change in how schools operate. Schools need to challenge assumptions about kids who fail by avoiding normalization of failure. Schools should put in place mechanisms for early intervention systems and to engage parents early by establishing partnerships between school and community.

A study by Deal & Celotti (1980) stated the need to personalize the learning environment by setting up schools where students are known so as to give them a sense of belonging. They found that 47% dropout because they are bored, unmotivated and disengaged due to poor teaching methods which rely heavily on lecture, drill and test preparations and that improve teaching by moving away from excessive reliance on lecture and test preparations to interactive strategies such as project-based learning, Socratic seminars, experiential learning, simulations, presentations and making class time, work time, reducing reliance on homework with teachers looking for evidence of learning reduces the risk of dropping out. They observed that making curriculum more relevant to the lives of pupils by including vocational education with marketable skills that do not limit options and establishing cultural relevance by building connections between what is learned and what is familiar to students and showing how what is learned in school can help students to address real problems in their lives makes pupils see the value for school reducing their likelihood of dropping out.

The study by Cleor and Alexander (1992) on inviting teacher characteristics and teacher effectiveness in England found that making pupils stuck in remedial courses, without having a plan for them aimed at connecting them to more challenging academic programmes by connecting what they learn to their lives, was essential in improving children's value for school and reducing the chances of them dropping out. They further found that weak literacy skills in most schools due to lack of reading

specialists, compounded by lack of organization skills, poor time management makes pupils not to make the most out their learning time resulting in low esteem due to lack of competence and lack of clear future goals. Having future clear goals was found to critical in helping pupils to be focused and have a sense of direction in their academic pursuits, thereby reducing the risk of dropping out.

Cleor and Alexander (1992) in their study on inviting teacher characteristics and teacher effectiveness further found that helping students to develop concrete plans for their future early, involving students in counseling about career options early, engaging parents in advising pupils, building stronger ties between adults and pupils, use of extracurricular activities effectively, developing small learning communities, pro-active mentoring, utilizing every teacher as an advisor, designing systems to identify at-risk pupils and to intervene early and targeting at-risk pupils with mentors, jobs, and services were essential strategies in reducing school dropouts.

However, they went on in their study to suggest that changing school culture was the most important thing that can be done to keep pupils in school. Changing school culture involves building a school as a community that adopts rituals and practices that reinforce values and norms that promote achievement and countering any behaviour that promote anti-intellectualism so that pupils valued to be a high achiever (Cleor & Alexander, 1992).

Little (2008) in his study on size matters for EFA found that low achievers usually come to school lacking basic skills that are prerequisites for learning. He observed that academic failure increases students' alienation from school, leading to absenteeism, which in turn increases dropout risk. Hence he recommends that, schools need to work towards establishing prerequisite skills for learning in children to reduce the risk of dropping out.

A study by Lewin (2007) also asserted that potential dropouts might have behavioral problems as a result of lack of interest in school arising from poor academic performance thereby increasing their risk of dropping out. He recommended the need for studies on school factors contributing to dropout because such research can

provide grounds for school based reform. He argued that since patterns of dropouts differ from school to school, school based reform and strategies to deal with the problem of dropouts are better placed to provide lasting solutions to the problem of school dropout.

Summary

Various relevant literature reviewed all seem to indicate that school factors contributing to pupils dropping out of primary school are mainly alterable because they can easily be changed through a proactive approach by school management, teachers, pupils and members of the community working together to identify risk factors and making early interventions aimed at preventing dropping out before it occurs. However, in Zambia little has been done to identify school factors contributing pupils dropping out of school making the designing of evidence based interventions difficult, hence this study.

All relevant literature reviewed agree on the fact that dropping out is a process not an event, compounded by a combination of factors before the pupil finally drops out. Prior to dropping out a pupil shows observable behavioral signs indicating that he or she is at risk of dropping out by showing 'at risk' signs consistent with dropping out. Therefore the active engagement of adults especially teachers can go a long way in preventing dropping out.

Preventing school factors contributing primary school pupils dropping out of school requires changing the way schools operate in terms of school policies, teaching methods, pupil-teacher relationships, time tabling, guidance and counseling services, teaching of literacy skills, remedial programmes, career guidance, disciplinary procedures, language of instruction, grade repetition, poor performance, mockery, bullying, labeling, sanitation, personality conflicts with teachers and school management styles with the aim of creating inviting school environment.

In Zambia, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education classification does not include school factors among school factors that contribute to pupil dropouts. School factors are classified under other factors

undermining the influence they have not only on pupils dropping out of school but also on the would be entrants to be enrolled due to the negative influence they have on children's perception of school. It is hoped that this study will attempt to bring to attention of policy makers the influence that school factors have on dropping out of primary school.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methods employed in this study. The chapter constitutes the following: research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection and data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey design. Kerlinger (1973) asserts that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact findings, but may equally lead to formulation of important principles of knowledge and coming up with solutions to significant problems. This study used a descriptive design because the study intends to present school factors leading to drop out, as they exist, (Kombo and Tromp, 2009).

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this study. Niglas (2004) points out that quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined at different stages of the research process in the study of the same phenomena. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods because several researchers advocate combining the two methods not only for the purpose of triangulation but also for the purpose of drawing from the strength of both methods since both have their own strengths and weaknesses. They argue that qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complimentary rather than as rival camps so that combining them allows the researcher to offset their weaknesses to draw on the strengths of both in order to ensure that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact (Creswell et al. 2003; Erzberger & Kelle 2003; Bryman 2004; Creswell 2003; Kothari 2004; Maxwell and Loomis 2003; Sidhu, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Smith, 1986).

3.3 Target Population

The target population comprised all teachers, currently enrolled pupils, and dropout pupils in Solwezi District in North-western Province of Zambia.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample comprised two hundred and fifty (250) respondents consisting of 200 pupils, 25 teachers and 25 school dropouts.

3.4.1 Characteristics of respondents

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by gender and status

Gender	Status respondents		
	Current pupils	Drop-out pupils	Teachers
Male	111 (55.0%)	20 (80.0%)	13 (52.0%)
Female	89 (45.0%)	5 (20.0%)	12 (48.0%)
Total	200 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

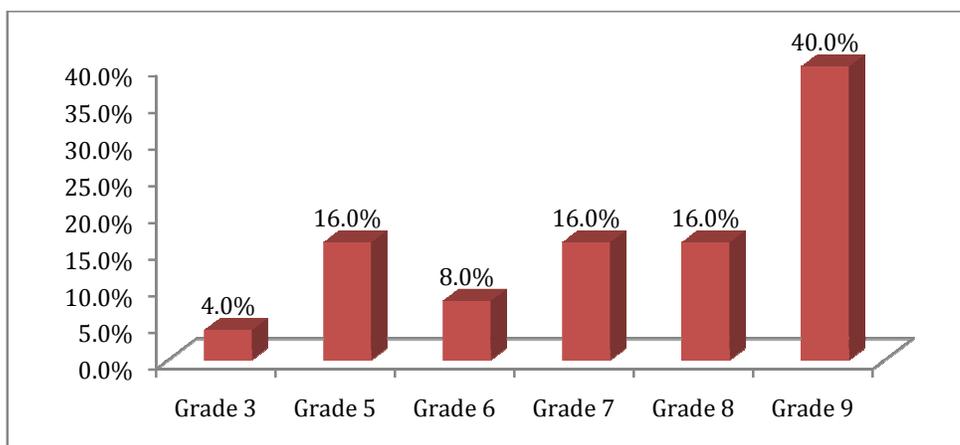
The table above shows that there were 111 (55.0%) male and 89 (45.0%) female pupils currently enrolled in school and 20 (80.0%) male and five female dropout pupils who participated in this study. The table also shows that 13 (52.0%) male and 12 (48.0%) female teachers participated in this study

Table 4: Percentage distribution of pupils by age and status

Age	Status of pupils	
	Current pupils	Drop-out pupils
12 – 15	70 (35.0%)	5 (20.0%)
16 - 19	122 (61.0%)	14 (56.0%)
20 – 23	8 (4.0%)	5 (20.0%)
28 and above	-	1 (4.0%)
Total	200 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

Table 4 above shows that most of the currently enrolled, 122 (61.0%) pupils indicated that they were aged between 16 and 19 years old followed by 70 (35.0%) of them who said that they were aged between 12 and 15 years old. As for the drop-out pupils, most of them, 14 (56.0%) indicated that they were aged between 16 and 19 years old followed by five each who said that they were aged between 12 and 15 years old and 20 and 23 years old respectively.

Figure 1: Distribution of dropout pupils by last grade (n = 25)



The figure above shows that grade 9 had the highest number, 10 (40.0%) of pupils dropping out of school followed by grade 5, 7 and 8 with four (16.0%) each. The figure further shows that grade 3 had the lowest with one pupil dropping out of school.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Simple random sampling technique was used to select schools that participated in the study. This provided each school in Solwezi district an equal chance of inclusion in the study sample (Kothari, 2004). In selecting the teachers, currently enrolled pupils in school and dropout children, purposive sampling procedure was used because these people were expected to have first hand information that provided the most needed information for the study. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 82) state that, “the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting participants who will provide the richest information for in-depth analysis related to the central issue being studied”.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

To collect data for this research, three instruments were used: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interview schedules and observation checklist. This study used both quantitative instrument (structured questionnaire) and qualitative instruments (semi-structured interview guides), in order to extend the breadth and range of enquiry by using different methods (Bryman, 2006). Semi-structured interview guides were used to collect data from teachers and dropouts. A structured

questionnaire with a three-point scale (Agree, Not sure, Disagree) was used to collect data from pupils on the influence that messages received by pupils from five aspects (place people, policies, programs and processes) of the school environment have on their behaviour leading to dropping out. The questionnaire measured various aspects of the school environment respondents who agree imply that they were receiving positive signals from the school environment meaning the school environment is inviting, hence expected to have no factors contributing to pupil dropout. Disagree means pupils are receiving negative signal or message meaning that the school environment is disinviting, hence at risk of dropping out.

3.7 Data Collection

The data were collected between 20th September and 30th October 2012. Semi-structured interview schedules were used to gather information from the key informants namely: teachers, and school dropouts on school factors that contributed to pupils dropping out of school while structured questionnaires were used to collect information from pupils on the signals pupils receive from various aspects that comprise the school environment namely: place, people, policies, programmes and processes due to its ability to collect a large amount of data and for lack of interviewer bias.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Interviews for both school dropouts and teachers were done on one to one basis to maintain confidentiality and give respondents a chance to speak freely without interference while the current pupils filled questionnaires at their own pace.

3.9 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft excel were used to analyse quantitative data from the questionnaires. Computer generated tables of frequencies and percentages were used in describing distributions of the variables, which were presented in the form of tables, graphs or pie charts while qualitative data, which was obtained through interviews of teachers and dropouts was analysed by coding and grouping the emerging themes (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were highly considered in this study. Prior to data collection, permission was sought from the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education Headquarters in Lusaka, the Provincial Education Office in Solwezi and the District Education Board Secretary Office in Solwezi to use the schools for the study. At school level, the Head teachers gave consent for the pupils and teachers to participate in the study. Permission was also sought from the participants and the aim of the study was clearly explained to the participants before commencement of the study.

3.11 Summary

The study used descriptive survey design. The target population was pupils, teachers and school dropouts in primary schools of Solwezi district in North-western Province of Zambia. The study involved 250 respondents comprising 25 teachers, 25 school dropouts and 200 currently enrolled pupils. The study used simple random sampling to select schools and purposive sampling procedures to select the respondents to participate in the study. The instruments used to collect data included semi-structured interview guides, observation guides and structured questionnaire. Data was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse quantitative data and qualitative data was analysed by coding and grouping the emerging themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on school factors contributing to pupils dropping out of school in five selected schools (Kimiteto, Kimale, Kabisapi, Luamala and Mushitala) in Solwezi District, in North-western Province of Zambia are presented. The findings are presented in relation to the following themes: School factors contributing to pupils dropping out of schools; School strategies for prevent pupil drop out and Signals pupils receive from five aspects that comprise the school environment (People, Place, Policies, Programs, Processes) influencing their behaviour leading to dropping out.

4.1 School Factors Contributing To Pupils Dropping Out Of School

This study sought to find out the school factors that contributed to pupils dropping out of school. To achieve this aspect, teachers and school dropouts were first asked to state whether they felt that there were some school factors that contributed to their dropping out of school. Their responses were as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Whether there are any school factors that contribute to pupil drop out.

Response	Status	
	Teachers	Drop-out pupils
Yes	16 (64.0%)	3 (12.0%)
No	9 (36.0%)	22 (88.0%)
Total	25 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

The table shows that of the 25 teachers that participated in this study, the majority of them, 16 (64.0%) agreed that there were school factors contributing to pupils dropping out of schools while nine (36.0%) of the teachers indicated that there were no factors in school which contributed to pupil drop-out. On the part of the dropouts themselves, a contrary picture to that of the teachers appeared with most of them, 22 (88.0%) out of 25 respondents denying the fact that there were some school factors, which contributed to their dropping out of school in Solwezi district. Only three of the

dropout pupils agreed that there were school factors, which led to their dropping out of school.

4.1.1. Response from Dropouts on School Factors Contributing to Pupil dropout

Twenty-five (25) dropouts were interviewed on school factors that led to their dropping out of school. Twenty-two (22) dropouts said that no school factors played a role in their decision to drop out of school while three dropouts said that there existed school factors that influenced their dropping out of school. For the three dropouts, who agreed that school factors played a role in their decision to drop out, cited poor performance, punishments, harshness by some teachers, and manual work as some school factors that contributed to their decision to drop out.

One dropout from Kimiteto said;

I beat up a fellow pupil and never returned to school after that incidence to avoid being punished because teachers are very harsh.

A dropout from Mushitala said:

Dropping out of school is never a correct decision, for example if was educated would not be working at a grinding mill and be dusted as am. I would have found a better job that is good paying but my performance in school was never good.

During interviews with dropout pupils, it was revealed that there were several non-school factors that contributed to pupils dropping out of school. However, the study treated some non-school factors as school factors depending on the nature of their occurrence. The most cited factor was lack of financial support. Lack of finances was treated as a school factor if the finances leading to pupil drop out related to primary school user fees when there is free primary education policy in place, or to grade 7 and 9 examination fees which have been abolished by The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) or sent away on

account of wearing school uniforms when there is a policy in place that child should be sent away from school on account of school uniforms. Pupils reported that they were being forced to quit school because they could not afford to pay examination fees, user-fees and buy school uniforms. One pupil from Kimale Basic School said:

Financial constraints after the death of my father forced me out of school because there was no one to buy the school requirements for me and also failed to pay examination fees.

Another pupil from Kibisapi Basic School said:

There is too much working in school almost everyday that is why I stopped school.

Pupils also revealed that pre-marital sex resulting in teenage pregnancy was a major single factor that contributed to pupils dropping out of school especially among female pupils in most rural schools. Pregnancy in this study was treated as a school factor because it was found that schools did not handle adequately issues of reproductive health as a result most pupils did not have adequate knowledge on reproductive healthy as such fell prey to pregnancies. The findings showed that four out of five dropout schoolgirls interviewed indicated that they left school because they got pregnant while two out of 20 dropout boys said they dropped out of school because they had impregnated a schoolgirl. One dropout boy from Kimiteto said:

I stopped school because I impregnated a school going child. The school authorities could not allow me to continue with school because of what I did.

4.1.2 Response from Teachers on School Factors Contributing to Pupil Dropout

Interviews with teachers revealed that pupils dropped out of school because of fear of class teachers, corporal punishment, behaviour of teachers towards pupils, non payment of user fees, over enrolment leading to disengagement due to lack of

individual attention, lack of teachers, bullying, poor performance and overcrowded classes.

One teacher said: *Pupils fear us and as such they decide to leave school on their own.*

A teacher from Luamala said: *Over enrolment leads to some pupils becoming passive and eventually drop out.*

Another teacher from Luamala said:

Lack of teachers is a factor causing children to drop out. When they come to school for some time and continuously find that their class has no teacher they become bored and stop coming to school.

The 19 respondents who admitted that school factors existed and contributed to pupil dropouts comprising 16 teachers and 3 pupils cited punishments, persistent poor performance, poor teacher-pupil relationship, language, poor administration, school policies, boredom and lack of functioning pupil support structures as some of the school factors contributing to pupil dropouts. Figure 2 below show the number of times each factor was mentioned as a contributing school factor to pupil dropout by both teachers and pupils.

Figure.2: School Factors Contributing to Pupils Dropping Out of School as Viewed by Teachers and Pupils

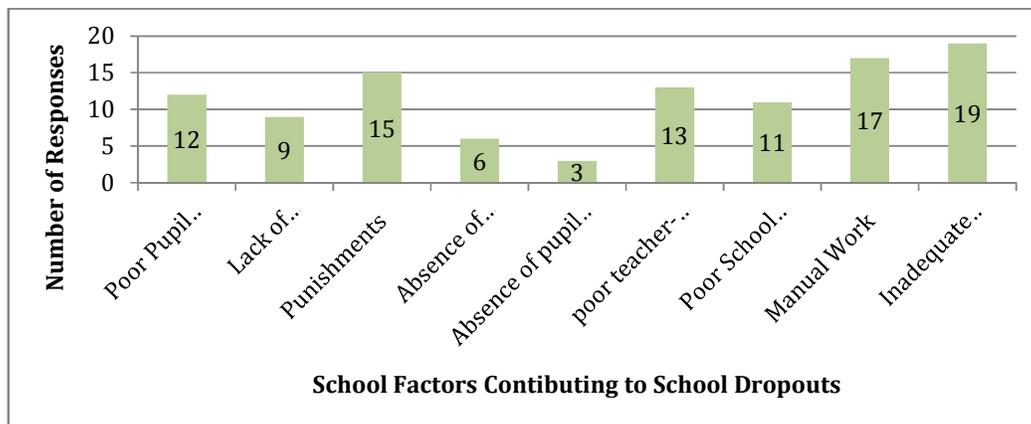


Figure 2 shows the school factors and the number of responses each factor received out of the total of 19 responses identified by the 19 respondents who reported that school factors did exist that contribute to pupil dropouts.

4.2 School Strategies for Preventing Pupils from Dropping Out of School

Both teachers and school dropouts were asked on what strategies schools undertaking to prevent pupils from dropping out. The study findings revealed the following:

4.2.1 Response from dropouts on what action the school took when dropped out

Most of the dropouts (23) indicated that the schools did nothing when they decided to drop out. Only two dropouts out of twenty-five (25) indicated the school took some action after dropping out of school by calling and or their parents to find out why they had dropped out of school.

Further more, dropout pupils indicated that the schools had not helped them in any way since they dropped out of school. One pupil from Luamala Basic School expressed his views by saying:

The school has done nothing from the time I dropped out of school. All I hear is that they follow pupils who have dropped out but no one has ever followed me.

Contrary to the above assertion, some dropout pupils from the same school (Luamala) indicated that, they were at one time, visited by the school authorities. One dropout child said:

The school called my parents. We went together with my parents to the school and the school authorities encouraged me to get back to school. They also promised to help me financially.

A dropout from Kimale said:

The school called me and asked me why I had stopped school, when I told them I had no one to pay fees for me they even promised to help me financially.

4.2.2 Response from Dropouts on Action School should take towards them

Dropout interviewed suggested bringing dropouts back to school, calling dropouts to school and talk to them about the importance of school, punishing them, make follow them up, helping them financially/making education free/giving financial help to pupils who can not afford fees and finding out from dropouts why they have dropped out as some of the actions that schools should take towards pupils who drop out of school. One dropout said the school should do nothing over dropouts since it is their decision.

A dropout from Kimale said:

Education should be made free for all grades to help pupils who cant afford fees to remain in school or they have to be assisted financially. They can also give them loans to enable them meet school requirements. Schools should counsel dropouts sensitising them on the importance of education.

A dropout from Luamala said: *School should Call parents of dropouts and explain the importance of education to them.*

4.2.3 Teachers Responses on Schools Strategies to Prevent Pupils from Dropping out of School

Figure 3 presents the main strategies teachers reported as being used to prevent pupils from dropping out of school.

Figure 3: Teachers' Responses regarding School Strategies for Preventing Pupil Dropouts.

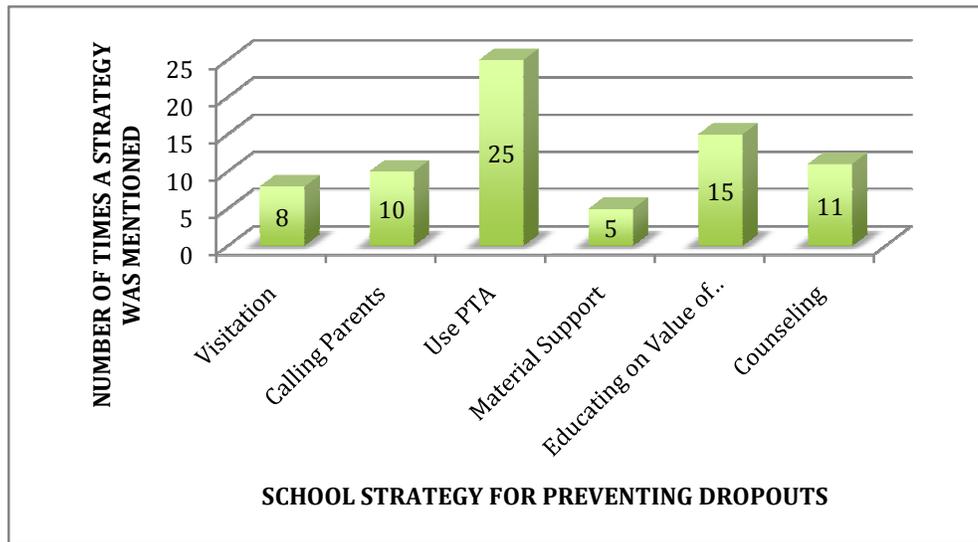


Figure 3 above shows most common school strategies employed in schools under study for preventing pupils dropping out of school and the number of times each strategy was mentioned out of 25 expected responses.

4.2.4 Indicators that a child is about to dropout of school

In order to understand indicators that a pupil is about to drop out of school, class teachers were asked to state some indicators that a child is about to dropout from their experience with dropping out. Interviews with class teachers revealed that the major indicator was missing classes or absenteeism. Other teachers cited missing lessons, unruly behaviour, and low concentration by pupils as some of the signs that the pupil is about to drop out of school. One teacher from Kimale Basic School said:

Missing classes lead to a pupil becoming a slow learner, stubbornness, low concentration and bad company were also indicators that a child is about to quit school.

4.2.5 Strategies used by school and class teachers to prevent pupil dropout

Teachers were asked to state what measures their respective schools have taken to reduce the number of children dropping out of school. Interviews with the teachers in the schools under study revealed that the most common measure put in place was to

call the parents of the child concerned and talk about the behaviour of the child. Another measure that was reported was counselling the child. One teacher from Kabisapi said:

We encourage pupils about the importance of education and the benefits that come after finishing school up to tertiary. We also allow pupils to attend classes without uniforms, providing free education, providing learning material, give financial assistance to the needy, punishing pupils for missing classes and giving books to pupils that attend class regularly as a way of motivating them.

4.2.6 Effectiveness of the Strategies used by the Schools and Class Teachers To Prevent Pupil Dropout

Teachers were further asked to say how effective these measures were. Out of the twenty-five (25) teacher respondents, only three said that the measures were effective. The rest of the teachers, twenty-two (22) indicated that the measures were not effective. One teacher at Kabisapi Basic School said:

The measures put in place to prevent pupils from dropping out of school at this school are not very effective because they are not strictly followed.

However, one teacher from Kimale Basic School said:

These measures are effective as they involve both the child and the parents. We report to the parents and find out why the child was behaving in such a manner.

When asked further why the school still had dropouts if the measures put in place by the school were effective. The same teacher from Kimale said:

Maybe we need to do more than what we are doing at the moment. It could mean that what we are doing is not working very well.

4.2.7 Efforts made by the Schools to Help Dropout Pupils

The study also sought to find out the efforts being made by the schools to help children that have dropped out of school. To this effect both teachers and pupils were asked to indicate the efforts made by the schools. Interviews with teachers revealed that they helped pupils through encouraging them to go back to school. A teacher at Kimiteto Basic School said:

As a school, we follow up the dropout children and encourage them to re-enter school by allowing them to repeat the grade after dropping out. We work hand in hand with parents of children and other cooperating partners like FAWEZA to bring back pupils to school.

Another teacher from Mushitala Basic School said:

We encourage parents to bring back their children to school by giving them advice and encouraging them that their children can still attend school through APU programme or re-entry policy.

4.2.8 Actions Schools should take to help Pupils who decide to drop out of School

Since the dropout children are the ones affected, they were asked to indicate what they thought schools should do to children who decide to leave school. Generally all the dropout children under study indicated that they needed more of sensitisation on the importance of education. One dropout child had this to say:

If we are called and talked to, sensitised on the importance of school and encouraged to stay in school,

we are more likely to come back to school. The schools should do enough in sensitising us.

A dropout child at Kimale Basic School said:

If the schools could motivate us by providing incentives such as counselling, free education, giving loans when we cannot afford to pay school fees; this would help us get back to school.

4.2.9 Linkage Existing Between Home and School Aimed at Preventing Pupils from Dropping Out of School

Finding out linkages existing between home and school aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school is vital. To this effect, teachers were asked to indicate the type of linkages that existed between the school and home. In an interview with the teachers, revealed that the only linkage that existed was the Parent Teachers Association where teachers and parents met once in a year to discuss the welfare of their children. A teacher from Kimale said:

We talk to parents of these children through PTA meetings discouraging them from sending their children to work in farms and instead encourage them to bring them to school.

Another teacher from Kabisapi said:

We normally visit parents whose children show signs of intentions of dropping out of school and encourage them to help their children to rescind their decision.

4.3 Pupils’ Responses Regarding Messages or Signals they receive from Five Components of the School Environment (People, Place, Policies, Programmes and Processes) which Influences Pupils’ Behaviour Leading to Dropping Out

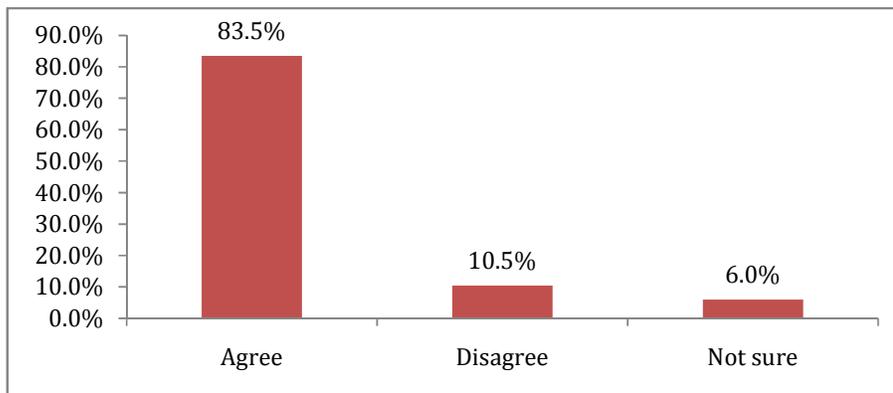
As regards the messages or signals that pupils receive from the five components of the school environment (people, place, policies, programmes and processes) their responses are classified as ‘Agree’, ‘Not Sure’ and ‘Disagree’ representing ‘Positive’, ‘Neutral’ and ‘Negative’ messages or signals respectively which pupils receive from components of the school environment and their constituents as shown in figures below:

4.3.1 Pupils Responses Regarding messages or signals received from single constituents of the five components of the school environment

4.3.1.1 Pupils’ views on General Cleanliness Of The School

Pupils were asked to indicate whether they felt that the school was clean and well looked after as one of the evaluation measure of invitational level. Their views were as depicted in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: The school was clean and well looked after



As can be seen from the figure above, the majority of the pupils, 167 (83.5%) “Agreed” while 21 (10.5%) “Disagreed” and 12 (6.0 %) were not sure.

4.3.1.2 Pupils' views on whether the classrooms were clean and ideal for learning

As regards whether the school had clean classrooms that were ideal for learning, the responses from the pupils were as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: School has clean classrooms and ideal for learning

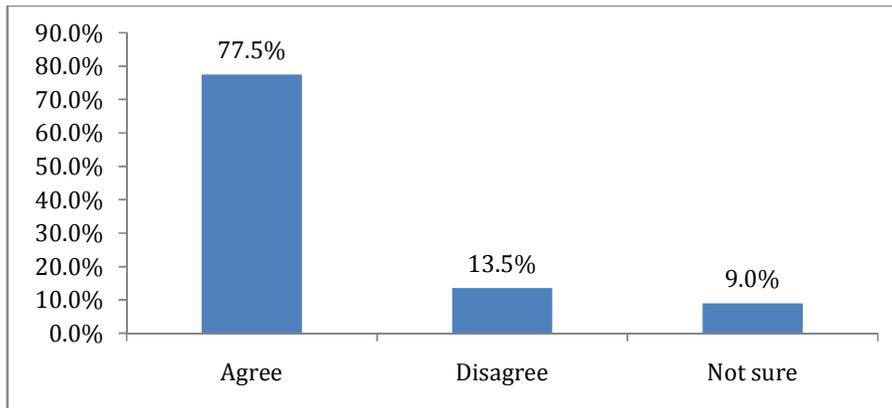
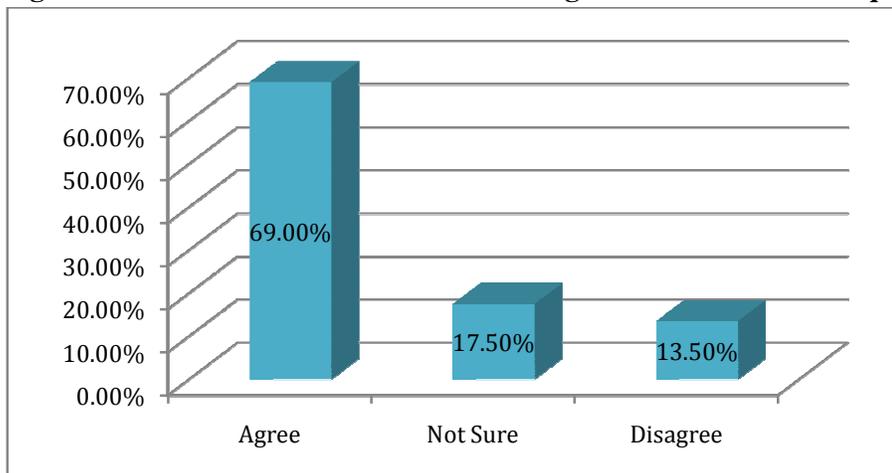


Figure 5 above, shows that the majority of the pupils, 155 (77.5%) agreed that their school had clean classrooms and ideal for learning while 27 (13.5%) of them disagreed. However, 18 (9.0%) of the respondents were not sure.

4.3.1.3 Pupils' views on whether classroom furniture was in good condition and adequate

Pupils were asked to say whether classroom furniture in the school was in good condition and adequate. Figure 6 shows their reactions.

Figure 6: School has classroom furniture in good condition and adequate

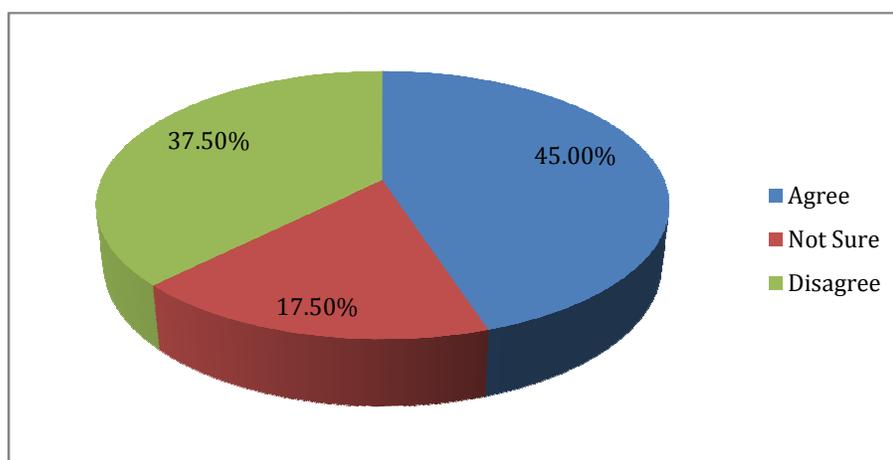


As regards condition and adequacy of classroom furniture in schools, Majority of the pupils, 138 (69.0%) agreed that these were in good condition and adequate while 35 (17.5%) disagreed and 27 (13.5%) were not sure.

4.3.1.4 Pupils' views on whether the school had clean, adequate and safe toilets to use

In terms of whether the school had clean, adequate and safe toilets to use, the study revealed the following as shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: School has clean, adequate and safe toilets to use

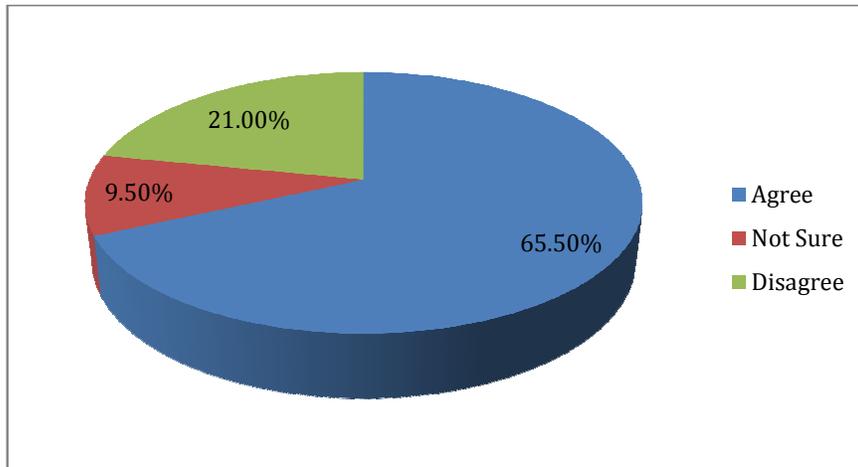


The findings of the study revealed that most of the respondents, 90 (45.0%) said that their respective schools had clean, adequate and safe toilets to use by both the pupils and teachers while 35 (17.5%) of them disagreed and 75 (37.5%) were not sure.

4.3.1.5 Pupils' views on whether the school had source of clean and safe drinking water

Figure 8 shows respondents views as regards to whether the school had a source of clean and safe drinking water.

Figure 8: school has source of clean and safe drinking water



The figure above shows that most of the pupils, 139 (69.5%) “Agreed” while 19 (9.5%) “Disagreed” and 42 (21.0%) were not sure.

4.3.1.6 Pupils’ views on whether members of staff were friendly and attended to pupils’ needs

As regards whether members of staff were friendly and attended to pupils needs, Figure 9 below shows pupils’ responses to this issue.

Figure 9: School has friendly members of staff and attended to Pupils’ needs

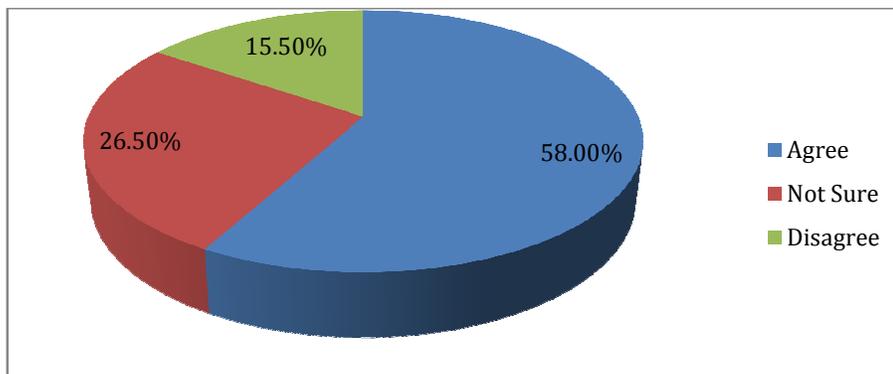
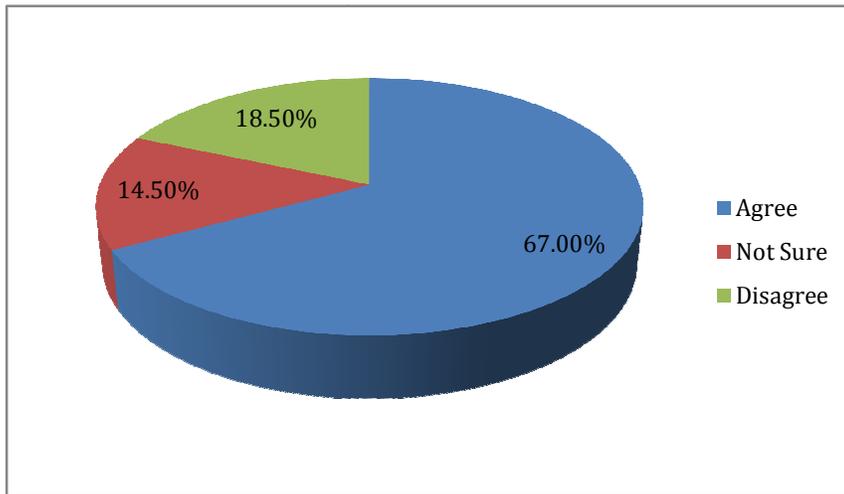


Figure 9 above shows that the majority of the pupils, 116 (58.0%) agreed that schools had friendly staff who, attended to their needs while 31 (15.5%) disagreed and 53 (26.5%) were not sure.

4.3.1.7 Pupils' views on whether school staff show interest in all pupils and kindly speak to them

As regards to whether school staff showed interest in all pupils and kindly spoke to them, Figure 10 below shows pupils' reactions to this enquiry.

Figure 10: School staff shows interest in all pupils and kindly speak to them

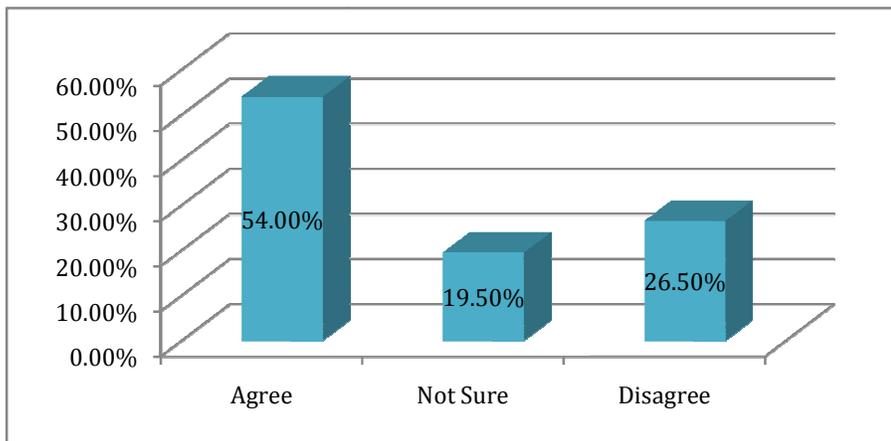


As can be seen from Figure 10, the majority of pupils, 134 (67.0%) agreed that school staff showed interest in all pupils and kindly spoke to them hat while 29 (14.5%) disagreed and 37 (18.5%) were not sure.

4.3.1.8 Pupils' views on whether school had sufficient learning materials for pupils to use

Pupils were asked to indicate whether the school had sufficient learning materials. Shown in Figure 11 were their responses.

Figure 11: school had sufficient learning materials for pupils to use

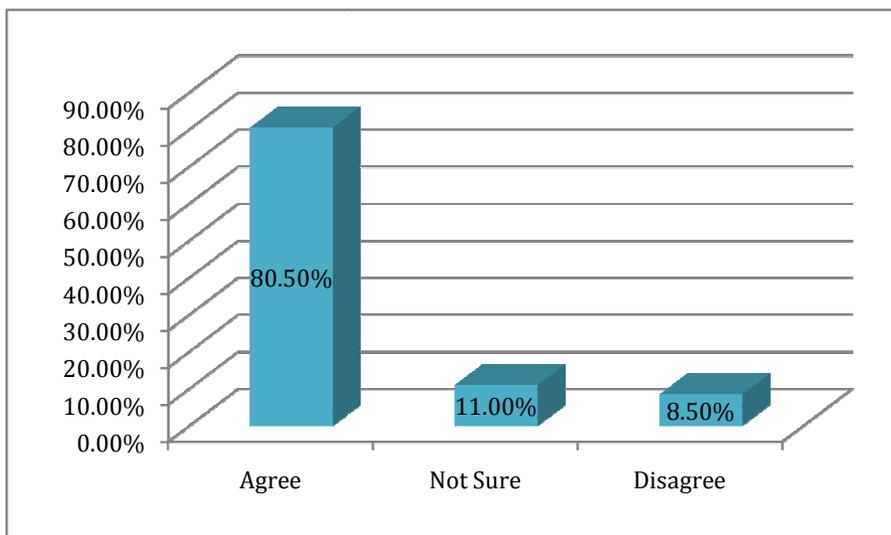


The illustration in Figure 11 shows that the majority of the pupils, 108 (54.0%) agreed that their respective schools had enough learning materials whereas 53 (26.5%) disagreed and 39 (19.5%) were not sure.

4.3.1.9 Whether pupils find time in school as most interesting part of the day

As regards to whether pupils find time in school as the most interesting part of the day, their responses were as depicted in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: I find my time in school the most interesting part of my day



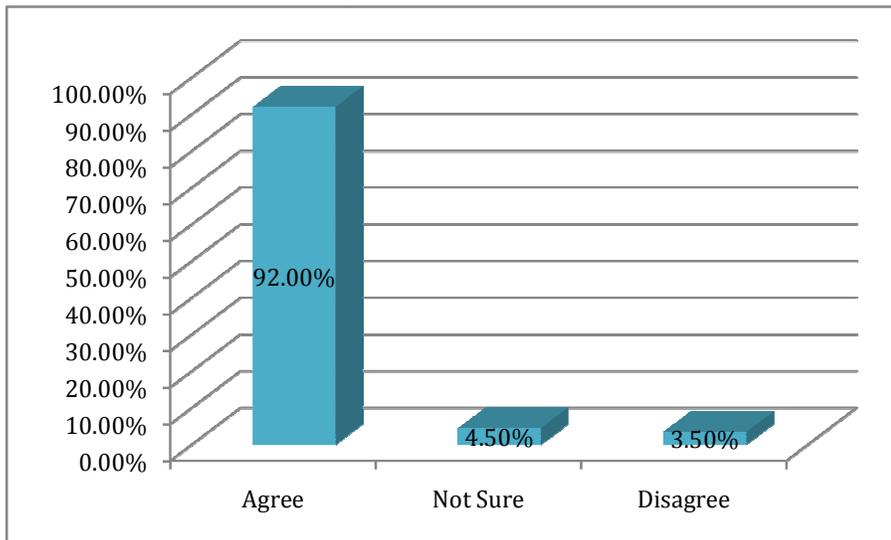
Regarding whether pupils found time in school as the most interesting part of the day, out of a total of 200 pupils who took part in this study, the majority, 161 (80.5%)

agreed that it was the most interesting part of the day while 22 (11.0%) were not sure and 17 (8.5%) disagreed.

4.3.1.10 Whether things pupils learnt in school were very helpful to their daily lives

Pupils were asked to indicate whether things pupils learnt in school were very helpful to their daily lives. Figure 13 shows their responses.

Figure 13: Things we learn in school are very important to my daily life

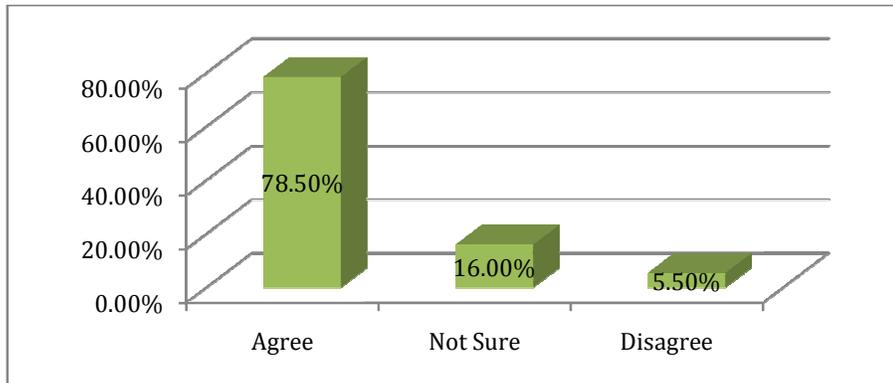


As can be seen from Figure 13 above, the majority of the pupils, 184 (92.0%) agreed that things they learn in school were very helpful to their daily lives whereas nine were not sure and seven of them disagreed.

4.3.1.11 Whether the school has fair rules which protect the interest of the pupils

As regards the above issue, the pupils' reactions were as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: The school has fair rules, which protect the interest of all pupils

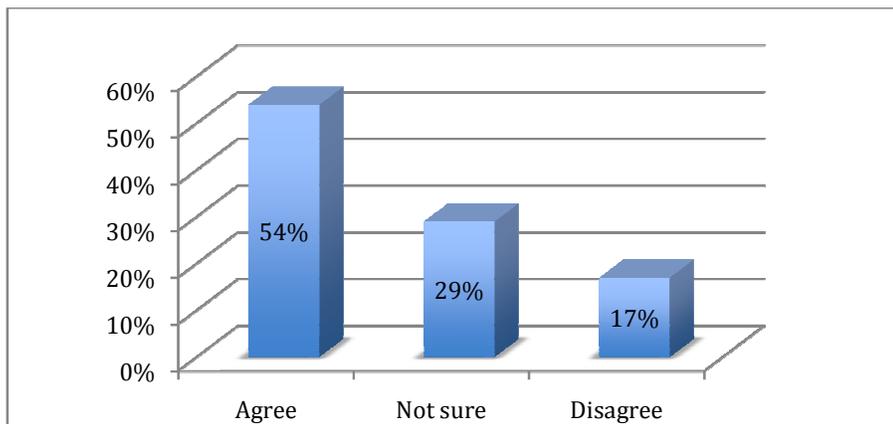


The above figure shows that the majority of the pupils, 157 (78.5%) agreed that their respective schools had fair rules, which protected their interest while, 32 (16.0%) were not sure and 11 (5.5%) disagreed.

4.3.1.12 Whether methods of implementing discipline in school match the offences committed and were acceptable

Pupils were asked to state whether the methods of implementing discipline in school match the offences committed and were acceptable. Depicted below in Figure 15 were their reactions.

Figure 15: Methods of implementing discipline in school match the offences committed and are acceptable



The illustration above shows that most of the pupils, 108 (54.0%) agreed that methods of implementing discipline in school match the offences committed and were acceptable whereas 58 (29.0%) were not sure and 34 (17.0%) disagreed.

4.3.1.13 Whether pupil were happy with the procedures of getting permission from school authority

As regards to whether pupils were happy with the procedures of getting permission from school authority, their responses were as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Procedures of getting permission from school authority are appropriate

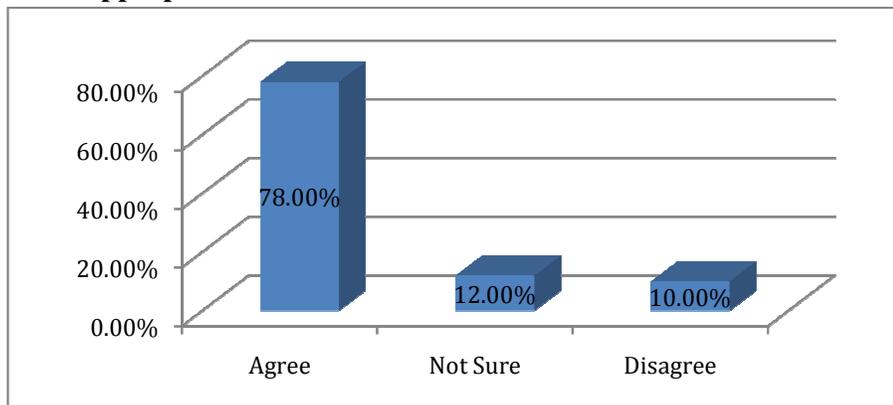
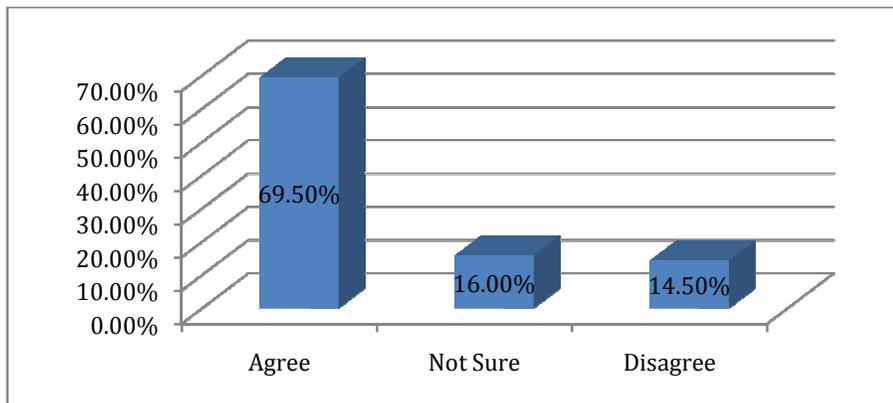


Figure 16 above shows that the majority, 156 (78.0%) of the pupils said that they were happy with the procedures of getting permission from school authority in their respective schools while 24 (12.0%) indicated that they were not happy and 20 (10.0%) were not sure.

4.3.1.14 Whether pupil related well with other pupils

Pupils were asked to say whether they associated well with other pupils in school. Figure 17 shows their reactions to this subject matter.

Figure 17: I relate well with other pupils

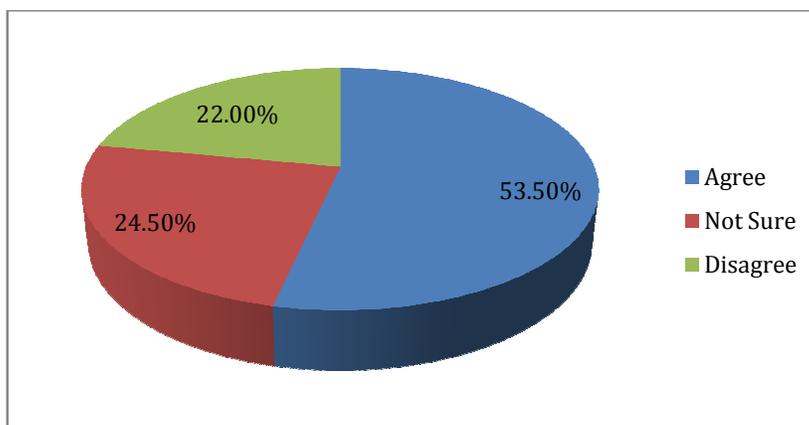


Regarding whether related well with fellow pupils in school, out of a total of 200 pupils who took part in this study, the majority, 139 (69.5%) agreed that they had good relationships with fellow pupils in school while 32 (16.0%) were not sure and 29 (14.5%) disagreed.

4.3.1.15 Whether all pupils related well with respondent and was given respect

Pupils required to state whether fellow pupils related well with them and received respect from them. Figure 18 below illustrates their responses.

Figure 18: All pupils relate well with me and respect me



The figure above shows that the majority of the pupils, 107 (53.5%) indicated that fellow pupils related well with them and that they were accorded the respect they deserved while 49 (24.5%) of them said that fellow pupils did not relate well with

them and did not respect them. However, 44 (22.0%) indicated that they were not sure.

4.3.1.16 Whether pupils loved school and wished to continue stay in school to completion

Pupils were request to indicate if they loved school and would want to stay in school until completion. Their responses were as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: I love school and wish to continue my stay in school to completion

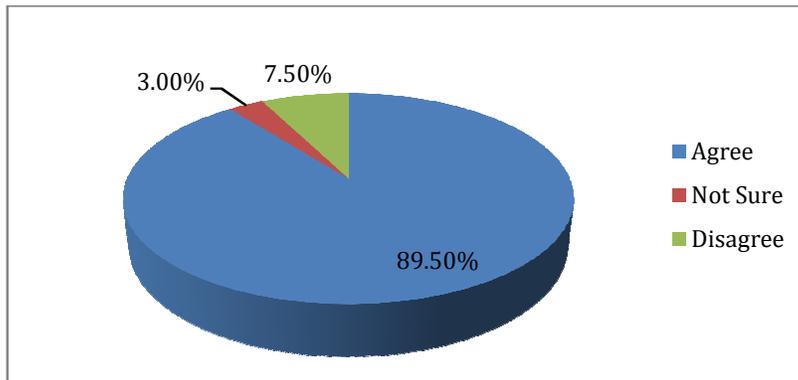
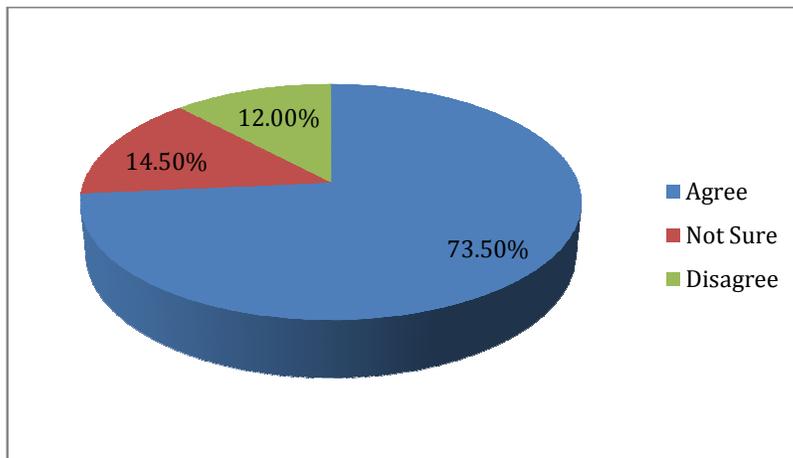


Figure 19 shows that out of 200 pupils who participated in this study, 179 (89.5%) agreed that they loved school and wished to continue their stay in school to completion whereas 6 (3.0%) disagreed and 15 (7.5%) were not sure.

4.6.17 Whether teachers always attended to their lessons

In terms of whether teachers always attended to their lessons, Figure 20 shows the reactions of pupils to this issue.

Figure 20: Teachers always attended to their lessons



As can be seen from Figure 20, the majority of the pupils, 147 (73.5%) agreed that teachers in their respective schools attended to their lessons while 29 (14.5%) were not sure and 24 (12.0%) disagreed.

4.3.1.18 Whether teachers were impartial and professional in their conduct of duties

Respondents were asked to say whether teachers in their respective schools were impartial and professional in conducting their job. Their responses were as disclosed in Figure 21 below.

Figure 21: Teachers are impartial and professional in their conduct of duties

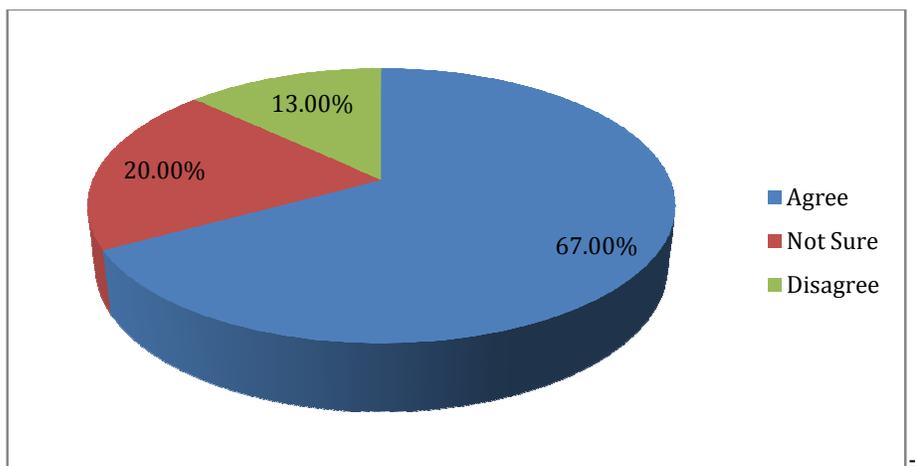
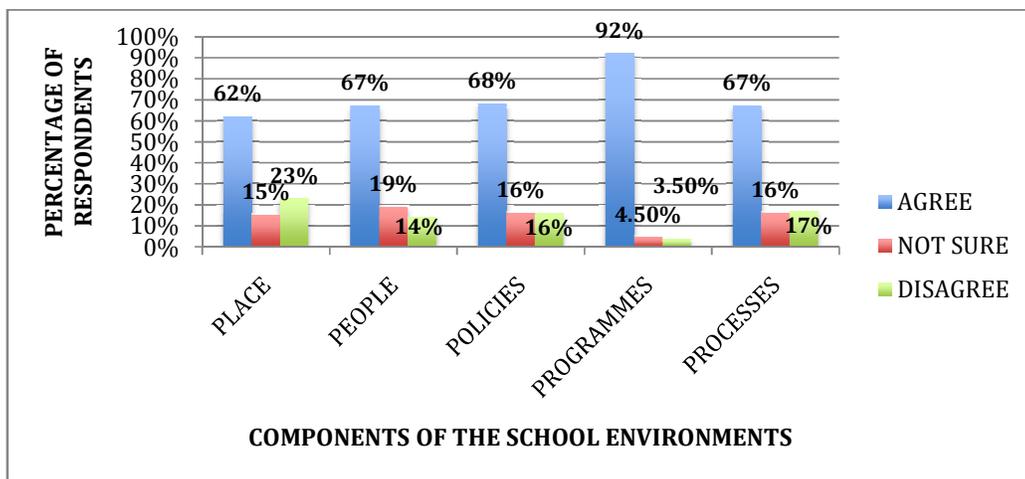


Figure 21 indicates that out of 200 pupils who took part in this study, 134 (67.0%) agreed that teachers were impartial and professional in the conduct of their duties whereas 40 (20.0%) were not sure and 26 (13.0%) disagreed.

4.3.2 Classification of Pupils' Responses on Signals they Receive According Five Components of School Environment

Figure 22: Pupils' Responses Regarding messages or Signals Received Categorised According to five components of The School Environment



The percentage pupils who disagreed meant that they were receiving negative signals from the five components of the school environment and likely to influence their behaviour leading to dropping out of school.

The percentage of pupils who agreed meant that they were receiving positive signals from the school environment and were satisfied with the quality of school life and most likely to remain in school. The highest positive signal was being received from programmes (school curricula) with 92% of respondents agreeing representing 184 out of 200 respondents. This means that 92% of respondents expressed satisfaction with school curricula, in other words 92% of respondents perceived school curricular as inviting. The least positive signal was being emitted from the place (physical surroundings of the school) with 62 percent of respondents agreeing representing 124 of the 200 respondents.

The percentage of respondents who indicated not sure represented a category of pupils who were receiving a neutral signal from the school environment making their behaviour unpredictable.

School pupils who disagreed represented pupils who were receiving negative signals from the school environment and were not satisfied with certain aspects of school life, meaning they were receiving disinviting signals putting them in at risk category and requiring support. The highest percentage of respondents who disagreed fell under processes (procedures used to come up with a better school such as how school rules and regulations are arrived at) of 27% representing 54 out of the 200 respondents. The second highest aspect of the school environment at sending negative signals to pupils was place (physical surroundings of the school) at 23% (46 pupils). The least aspect of the school environment at transmitting negative was program (school curricula) 3.5% (seven pupils) implying that few pupils found school programs or curricula disinviting.

Pupils who are classified to be at risk may not necessarily drop out of school because pupils who for example, find people (school staff and pupils) disinviting may find programs (school curricula) and other aspects of school environment inviting and compelling to remain school.

The study observed that there was need to do more to eliminate disinviting signals from all aspects of the school environment, which push pupils out of the school. Though, the extent of disinviting signals were found to be minimal in relation to inviting signals they still deserved attention in order to overcome the problem of dropouts.

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter indicate that there are several school factors that are contributing to pupils dropping out of school. The findings of the study show that strategies are in place to prevent pupils dropping out of school. However, the study established that these strategies are not effective because they are not enforced

and not generated out of research evidence. The study found that the school environment in schools under study were generally inviting or sending positive signals to learners but there still some disinviting/negative signals being transmitted by school environment with potential to influence dropping out behaviour.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, which was aimed at identifying school factors, contributing to learners dropping out of school, in selected primary schools in Solwezi District of Zambia. The findings are discussed under the themes derived from the objectives of the study.

5.1 School factors contributing to pupils dropping out of school

As regards whether there were any school factors, which contributed to school dropout, the study data collected from pupils through interviews and questionnaires showed that there were school factors that contributed to pupils dropping out of school though most dropouts indicated that school factors never played a role in their decision to drop out of school. Mentioning a single factor as a cause for dropping out of school is not easy because several factors influence dropping out such the factor mentioned as the cause for dropping out may not be even the major cause because identifying the cause of drop out is not easy since there is usually a combination of factors at play prior to drop out (Hunt, 2008).

However, pupils revealed that there were several other factors that contributed to pupils dropping out of school. The most common factor cited was lack of financial support. Pupils reported that they were being forced to quit school because they could not afford to pay examination fees, user-fees and buy school uniforms. Like one pupil from Kimale Basic School indicated; financial constraints after the death of his father forced the child out of school because there was no one to buy the school requirements and pay examination fees. Similar, sentiments were given by a pupil from Kibisapi Basic School who claimed the major contributor for dropping out of school as lack of a school uniform resulting into the pupil dropping out of school. The above findings are in line with Bacolod et al. (2005) who found that lack of finance to be significant constraint on education. UNICEF, (1997) also reported that the gains made by Zambia towards the attainment of UPE were lost with introduction

of cost sharing in education (MOE, 1992), which pushed upwards the cost for education making many parents to withdraw their children from school (Chali, 2009).

However, the pronouncement by His Excellency Dr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa of the free Basic Education Policy in February 2002, as a measure to improve access to basic education (Grades 1-7) to all eligible Zambia children and to increase enrolment rates should not make lack of finance a cause of dropping out of school. This measure was a political response to address declining enrolment rates and increasing dropout rates with immediate effect. Following the policy announcement, the Ministry developed the Free Basic Education (FBE) implementation guidelines immediately, which were circulated to all schools. It is, therefore surprising that to date children are dropping out from school because of lack of school uniform and failing to pay school fees or user fees.

In Ghana, for example, educational loan system called capitation grant scheme a fee free policy where government provided funding directly to schools and removed the burden from poor parents to pay for their children's education led to an increased school attendance and a significant reduction in dropout rates. (Ananga, 2010; Akyeampong , Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu, & Hunt, 2007; Ampiah, Akyeampong, & Rolleston, 2010; Ampiah, Akyeampong, & Rolleston, 2010). It is therefore important for government to have strategy on how to help pupils from poor families meet there education cost at all levels of our education system rather than simply provision of free education from grades 1-7. The Ghana experience indicate that major government educational reforms targeted at the problem of school dropouts can lead to a significant decline in the number of school dropouts, (UNESCO, 2010). Tanzania, also recorded a decline in dropout rate due to political will and government commitment by budgeting for universal primary education (UPE) is another illustration of how government will plays a critical role in dealing with the problem of school dropouts, (MoEVT, 2009).

Wearing of uniforms in all government schools was made optional and not a hindrance or barrier to accessing education. The uniform guidelines as cited by Mwansa, et al. (2004) stipulates that school uniform is not compulsory and that no

pupil should therefore be prevented from attending school on account of failure to obtain it. However, Mwansa et al. (2004) in their study found that despite these guidelines, uniforms were still compulsory in some schools, indicating a misinterpretation of the provision by Head Teachers.

Pregnancy was also mentioned as a big factor that contributed to pupils dropping out of school, especially for female pupils in most rural schools. The study found out girls rarely drop out and when they do it is usually on account of pregnancy. This is in line with studies carried out in America that found that dropout rates for girls were consistently lower than for boys, (Cairns et al, 1989). Of the five female dropout pupils four of them attributed their dropping out of school due to pregnancy. The study found that pregnancy continues to be one of the major causes of school drop out especially among girls in rural schools. For example, it was revealed that Kabisapi had twenty pregnant girls attending school at the time of the study; eleven of them in grade seven. One of the factors contributing to high pregnancy is of over-age for a grade level. The study found that girls who reported to have dropped out of school were overage for the grade they attended prior to dropping out. The study by Cameron, (2005) found that the older the pupil is the more likely the chance of dropping out because opportunity cost increases with age. In this study it was found that the girls who were pregnant were overage for their grade level. There is need to avoid late enrolment particularly for girls. The older the child is the more the pressures and demands to take responsibility to contribute to the welfare of the family through work increasing the likelihood of dropping out of school, (Cain, 1977; EPDC, 2009; UNESCO, 2006, 2010).

The study also showed of the 20 drop out boys, two of them indicated that they left school because they had impregnated a schoolgirl. This finding is saddening, because such cases as those of pregnancies have a policy in place, known as the re-entry policy, which allows pupils to go back to school after delivery, especially among the girls. This policy was introduced in 1997 to enable schoolgirls who fell pregnant go back to school to continue their education after delivery and boys who impregnant school girls to remain in school. It suffice to mention here that although the policy focuses on the re-admission of girls, MoE encourages both boys and girls who have

dropped out of school for various reasons to go back to school. The study found either lack of knowledge of policy issues or simply failure to adhere to policy issues to be common among school authorities.

However, repeating grades should not be encouraged because several studies have found that grade repetition positively correlates with dropping out of school. Studies by Hunt, (2008); Lewin, (2008) and Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, (2009) found that: grade repetition extends the age range a particular grade making repeaters overage for a particular grade level increasing their chances of dropping out. Studies have also found that grade repetition does not improve the performance of the pupil as long as methods of instruction remain the same. Being retained in a particular grade has been found to a single predictor of dropping out, but grade repetition was found in this study to be highly practiced in schools in Solwezi district. (Sabates et al, 2010). This is one of the weaknesses of re-entry policy because it does not provide adequately on how to deal with issues associated with grade repetition. Pupils with a history of a previous withdrawal from school are more likely to drop out of school as observed in studies by Hunt, (2008) and Lewin, (2008). Pupils who re-enter school are still in 'at risk' category though this does not mean they will drop out but they have a high likelihood of dropping out if intervention measures are not put in place help them continue their stay in school. Such pupils require a lot of support if they are to remain in school.

The study found that pupils receive very little support because support structures in schools are either non-existent or if they exist they are non functional. The problem of none functioning of pupil support structures like guidance and counselling in schools as school factor was equally observed by Munsaka, (2009) in his study on dropouts in southern Zambia. Intervention measures aimed at making school matter in the life of pupils are vital to ensure their continued stay in school. Most pupils drop out because they don't see the significance of school in their lives. It is vital that pupils should have future clear goals early in life if they to value school ensure their continued stay in school to completion. On the issue of helping children establish future clear goals, Cleor and Alexander, (1992) say that establishing future clear goals early in the life of a pupil helps a pupil to connect what they learn to their lives. Establishing a

connection between school and life is important to pupils' continued stay in school. However, establishing future clear goals is not very possible in the absence of functioning pupil support structures in schools such as guidance and counselling (Kinuthia, 1995). Lack of stimulation and support leads to pupil disengagement with school activities and eventually drop out of school. Therefore it is vital to have functioning pupil support structures such as guidance and counselling to guide and stimulate pupils towards their future goals and ensure their continued stay in school to completion because lack of guidance and counselling programmes in schools was one of the major school factors contributing to school dropouts.

However, teachers had different views from those held by pupils on school factors contributing to pupils dropping out of the school. Most teachers admitted that there were a number of school related factors that contributed to pupils dropping out of school. The majority of them revealed that pupils dropped out of school because of fear of class teachers, corporal punishment, poor performance, behaviour of teachers towards pupils and overcrowded classes, absence of teachers, ineffective teachers, inadequate resources and pupil absenteeism as some school factors that contributed to pupil dropouts.

Teachers cited pupils' fear of teachers as one of the school factors contributing to drop out of pupils from school. Luneburg & Schmidt, (1989) identified that pupil-teacher relationship influenced dropping out of school because it affects pupil attitude towards school. A negative pupil-teacher relationship leads to development of a negative attitude towards school in pupils putting them at risk of dropping out. According to the study by Luneburg and Stouten (1983) pupil resentment towards school community is a major variable in their decision to drop out. Teachers are supposed to be professionally inviting with others; being professionally inviting with others include such qualities as treating people, not as labels or groups, but as individuals. It also requires honesty and the ability to accept less-than-perfect behavior of human beings (Purkey, & Novak, 1984; Purkey, & Novak, 1988). According to invitational learning theory teachers are expected to operate under four basic assumptions of the theory namely: trust, respect, optimism and intentionality. Trust demands that teachers recognize the interdependent relationship between them

and their pupils, hence attempting to get pupils do what teachers want without involving the pupils is a lost cause because each pupil is the highest authority of his/her own personal existence. Respect demands that teachers view pupils as being able, valuable and responsible and should be treated accordingly. Optimism requires teachers to consider pupils as people who possess untapped limitless potential in all areas of human Endeavour and respect the uniqueness of each pupil. An optimistic teacher always has hope for the better future because no one embarks on a course of action without hope for a better future. An invitation is defined as an intentional act designed to offer something beneficial for consideration. Intentionality enables teachers to make a purposeful act to create and maintain total environments that consistently and dependably invite the realization of pupils' potential, (Purkey, & Schmidt, 1987, 1990; Purkey, & Stanley, 1991; Purkey, 1970, 1992).

Teachers need to be both personally and professionally inviting with themselves as well as with others in order to create an inviting school environment with low dropout rates as a result of strong relationships established with learners. Teachers are not supposed to be threats to pupils' existence. As in the case of Tanzania teacher quality affects dropout rates, good quality teachers means low dropout rates. Ineffective teacher-pupil relationship leads to high dropout rates because it makes pupils to develop low personal satisfaction when measured on the quality of school life scale (QSLS) as evidenced by study by Epstein & Mc Portland, (1976).

On the part of corporal punishment, it is unfortunate that this vice perpetuates the education system because corporal punishment had long been abolished in schools in Zambia. In Zambia, corporal punishment, as an evil that has been perpetrated with impunity in most schools, was abolished in 2003. This was as a result of international agreements on the rights of children such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the African Child Policy Forum and the Pan-African Research and Advocacy Organisation. Unfortunately, the ban on corporal punishment in Zambian schools has not been followed by measures that offer alternatives to the vice. Most parents feel that government prohibited corporal punishment without providing school administrators with proper guidelines and training on alternative methods of

maintaining discipline in schools (Kasonde-Ng'andu et al., 2012). The above developments are very unfortunate and calls for concerned authorities in the Ministry of Education to attend to such issues as they deprive pupils of the much, needed education for their future development.

Poor performance by pupils was cited by teachers as one of the major contributing factor to pupil dropouts. Most pupils in rural schools come to school without pre-requisite skills for learning due to lack of pre-primary education facilities in rural areas, (Holt, 1995). Interest in school and good performance according to Divine, (1996) are key to pupil retention. This study found that most of the dropouts had a history of poor performance, which was not dealt with over a period of time. Pupils who do not consistently perform well in schoolwork and are kept long in remedial classes are at risk of dropping out because they become bored with school, (Cleor & Alexander, 1992). Deal & Celotti, (1980) indicate that 47% of pupils dropout because they are bored with school life. They advocate there is need for schools to change the way they operate and avoid normalizing failure. There is need for schools to establish prerequisite skills in new school entrants in order for them to benefit from school programmes.

Poor performance was partly attributed to difficulties with language of instruction and lack of literacy skills by school entrants (King & Schielman, 2004). For example, Colclough et al., (2000) found that inappropriate language of instruction leads to dropout, particularly children from non English speaking backgrounds are more likely to have higher dropouts. Pupils experience language problems even in higher grades as was observed during the administering of questionnaires during the study as a result it affects their performance in class work. Poor performance affects pupils' attitude towards schoolwork negatively influencing their decision to dropout, Luneburg & Schmidt, (1989). Failing grades make pupils who, do not like school not motivated to stay in school, (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1990). Other studies by Hunt, (2008); Lewin, (2008) and Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, (2009) all cited low achievement as a cause of dropout.

In this study it was observed that schools had no programmes for underachievers apart from making them repeat grades cited by several studies as factor contributing to dropout (Sabates, et al., 2010). Since poor performance is mostly attributed to malnutrition making pupils repeat grades does not improve pupils' performance but only increases the risk of dropping out of school (Buxton, 2010; EPCD, 2009; Pridmore, 2007). The situation only improves when teachers take a more proactive approach to the problem of school dropouts by identifying pupils at risk and attending to the factors that contribute to their chances of dropping out, (Ananga, 2010).

Teachers' behaviour has an influence on the pupils' decision to stay in school. Inappropriate teacher behaviour has a negative effect particularly on at risk pupils with emotional or behavioral problems and increases their likelihood of dropping out, (Noguera, 2012).

Teacher absence is associated with pupil dropouts as seen from research evidence. A study in South Africa identified some teacher behaviour associated with pupil drop out such as 20% of teachers being absent on Mondays and Fridays, one third of teachers being absent at the month-end, teachers teaching far less hours than scheduled and teachers' sexual involvement with pupils, (Modisaotsile, 2012; Leach et al, 2003; Kasonde-Ng'andu et al, 2008). The study by Colclough, et al., (2000) also found teacher absenteeism as one the school factors contributing to pupil dropouts. This study found that teacher absenteeism was still a problem in most schools that needed to be dealt with. Teacher absenteeism affects more rural and remote schools and needs to be tackled to prevent pupils dropping due to boredom resulting from teacher absence.

Overcrowding in classes was cited by teachers in this study as one of the school factors contributing to pupil drop out. According to the study by Colclough, et al., (2000) found overcrowding as one of the school factors contributing to pupil dropout. Munsaka, (2009) found overcrowding in classes leads to deprivation of individual attention that pupils may require leading to pupils being disengaged from school activities and ultimately dropping out of school because school has nothing for them. This problem of overcrowded classes mainly affects schools in urban settings more

than rural schools, (Kelly, 1991). However, the problem of overcrowding in classrooms goes beyond the boundaries of the school both political will or government commitment by budgeting for UPE to expand education infrastructure as well as a community approach to education as in the case of Tanzania, (MoEVT, 2009).

5.2 Schools Strategies for Preventing Pupil from Dropping out of School

The study revealed that the most common strategy schools employed to prevent pupils from dropping out of school was talking to parents about the behaviour of their children mostly during parent teachers Association (PTA) meetings. It was noted that this strategy was mainly used when the pupil has already dropped out of school. School strategies need to focus on early identification pupils at risk of dropping out and make early interventions such as: strengthening literacy skills so that pupils can benefit from their learning experiences, counselling relating to career options and building a school culture that values intellectualism (Alexander, 2008; Little, 2008; Deal & Celotti, 1980; Cleor & Alexander, 1992).

Other measures, as reported by the teachers include: pupil sensitisation on the importance of education and encouraging them to attend classes, allowing them to attend classes without uniforms, providing them with learning materials and financial assistance, punishing pupils for missing lessons and giving books to those pupils that attend classes regularly. Another measure that was reported was child counselling. This involved informing the child on the importance of education and the benefits it carries upon successful completion.

As regards the effectiveness of the measures put in place by the schools to reduce pupil drop out, the study showed that the majority of the teachers were of the view that they were not effective as evidenced by quite a small number of the teachers, three (3) out of twenty-five 25 who acknowledged that the measures were effective. There is need to implement strategies to prevent pupils dropping out that are evidence based in order to ensure effectiveness. School based action research and evidence based government reforms are vital in ensuring effectiveness in preventing pupils dropping out of school as was observed in Ghana (UNESCO, 2010). The reason for

ineffectiveness of the strategies put in place was that they were not strictly followed up by action as most of the dropouts indicated that the school did nothing when asked regarding the course of action that the school took when they dropped out of school. However, one teacher from Kimale Basic School was of the view that the measures put in place were effective. The reason behind this teacher's statement was that the school always involved both the child and the parents in the counselling session in which the pupil reported his concerns. It was also in these counselling sessions through which teachers tried to find out from the parents why the child was conducting himself/herself in a certain manner. A proactive approach by teachers towards the problem of school dropouts can go a long way in bringing the desired change (Ananga, 2010).

Furthermore, schools made frantic efforts by following up dropouts and encouraging them to re-enter school and allowing them to repeat the grade at which they dropped out of school. The study further showed that this aspect was not done by the school alone, they worked hand in hand with other cooperating partners like Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA) to bring back pupils to school. In this way, as one teacher at Kimiteto mentioned that they somehow succeeded in bringing back some children to school. Parents were also sensitised and encouraged to bring back their children to school either through normal or still attend APU programmes. Purkey & Novak, (1988, 1996) suggest school policies do matter in influencing situations in schools especially when such policies are democratically arrived at involving pupils themselves. Situation of school dropouts only improves when teachers take a more proactive approach by identifying pupils at risk, dealing with factors that are contributing to their chances of dropping out and making early intervention programmes, which include teachers visiting children and their parents to encourage children to be committed to school activities, (Ananga, 2010). Interaction with concerned educators who are committed to helping children develop improved attitude towards school, perseverance, optimism and increased motivation are vital in lowering dropout rates, (Ananga, 2010).

Concerning the same issue above, dropout pupils on the other hand retaliated that the schools have not helped them in any way since they dropped out of school. One pupil

from Luamala Basic School expressed his views when he narrated that since he dropped out of school, school has done nothing about it. He only hears that the school makes some follow-ups on pupils who have dropped out but have not seen it happen to himself. Lack of active engagement by teachers in dealing with the problem of school dropouts will only see the problem continue (Ananga, 2010; UNESCO, 2010). However, some few dropouts acknowledged having been visited by the school authorities.

5.2.1 Indicators that the child is about to drop out of school

Dropping out is a process not an event with vital signs that a child is about to drop out of school, class teachers were asked to state some of the indicators they have experienced. Interviews with the class teachers revealed that the major indicator, according to them, was absenteeism or missing classes (Hadley, 2010). Other teachers said missing lessons and low concentration by the pupil were other signs that the child was about to quit school. Missing classes lead to pupils becoming slow learners and in due course they lose concentration in class and end up dropping out. Stubbornness and bad company were also some of the indicators that the study revealed as signs that the child was about to drop out of school (Hadley, 2010). Shifting to the fields increases pupils' distance to school making regular attendance difficult. The Ghana experience with absentees from agricultural areas was to give such pupils off during harvest and a programme of instruction designed for them when they return, Ananga, (2010). Other researchers like Kane (2004) found the planning of flexible time tables beyond the traditional rigid one as vital in helping such pupils.

Disciplinary problems such as unruly behaviour and stubbornness were cited in this study as some indicators that a pupil is about to drop out. Disciplinary or behavioural problems emerge as a result of pupil's resentfulness of school and may indicate that the child is about to drop out. Dropping out can easily be prevented if teachers and other concerned adults make early interventions upon observing disciplinary problems associated with dropping out in pupils. Disciplinary problems emerge as a result of prolonged poor performance that has not been attended to over time leading to the development of negative attitudes towards school (Lewin, 2007; Luneburg & Schmidt, 1989; Luneburg & Stouten, 1983).

Deal & Celotti, (1980) suggest that when indicators are observed, teachers need to take a more proactive approach by putting in place an early intervention programme which requires engaging parents of children showing indicators of dropping out early and establish school-community partnerships aimed at working together to avoid such children dropping out of school. However this study found that schools did not have any early intervention programmes for pupils who show indicators that they are about to drop out.

5.2.2 Linkages existing between the school and home aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school

Finding out linkages existing between school and community aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school is extremely important in dealing with problems of pupils dropping out of school. This study has shown that there was very little if any linkages between the school and home aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school, yet research evidence suggest that collective effort by both school and community is paramount in tackling problems of pupil dropouts (Alexander, 2008).

Interviews with the teachers revealed that the only connection that existed between the school and home was the Parent Teachers Association were teachers and parents met once in a year to discuss the welfare of their children. This aspect was narrated by a teacher from Kimale Basic School who revealed that teachers *usually talked to parents of these children through PTA meetings discouraging them from sending their children to work in farms as labourers and instead encouraging them to bring their children school*. Another teacher from Kabisapi Basic School confirmed the above statement when he stated thus: *“We normally visit parents whose children show signs of intentions of dropping out of school and encourage them to help their children to rescind their decision”*.

The foregoing statement bears some witness to the fact that teachers make some effort to retain pupils into school. However, the onus mainly remains on how the parents of these children pass on the information to their children especially in informing their children on the importance of education for their future development.

The complexity of the issue school dropouts stems from the fact that there are several variables that characterise it as a result devising interventions to deal with the problem becomes equally complex. Thus focusing on the school being the focal point in the educational process is most critical starting point in dealing with school dropouts. Globally, 51% of all primary out-of-school children are expected to never to enter school and a further 19% have attended but left school (UNESCO, 2011).

5.2.3 What schools should do to help children who decide to leave school

Since the dropout children are the ones affected, they were asked to indicate what they thought schools should do to children who decide to leave school. Generally all the dropout children under study indicated that they needed more of sensitisation on the importance of education. One drop-out child had this to say: *“If we are called and talked to, sensitised on the importance of school and encouraged to stay in school, we are more likely to get back to school. The school should do enough in sensitising us”*. There is need to strengthen capacities among teachers to enable them to deal with the problem of school dropouts (Ananga, 2010).

It should be mentioned here that lack of sufficient knowledge by both the school and parents on school factors that contribute to pupils dropping out of school makes designing interventions to deal with school dropout difficult. It remains therefore, that there should be proper dialogue between the school and the community on ways of finding out some of these factors so that solutions could be found and reduce the number of pupils leaving school. The MoESVTEE should also be fully involved by strengthening capacities of career guidance and counselling sections in schools by providing stocks of videos depicting various professions so that pupils start identifying themselves with various career options early in life thereby adding value to regular school attendance. Research evidence point to the fact that career building in the early years of school helps pupils to look beyond school attendance and increases their expectation out of school which is associated with low dropout rates (Coley, 1992). Involving pupils in career counselling during early primary school years helps them to have clear future goals early in life and reduces their risk of dropping out of school (Cleor & Alexander, 1992). During the search for dropouts at Kabisapi, the head-teacher led me to a small room at a market near the school where

dropouts spend their time watching videos, hence school need to capitalise on that interest and show them videos relating to careers and improve pupil retention.

However it was good to note that the programme was launched in February 2013 aimed at involving PTA committees in checking on pupil attendance. This programme by government was accompanied by the distribution of bicycles to aid the mobility of PTAs as they carry out the exercise of monitoring pupils' attendance. This initiative is a right step towards reducing dropout rates since pupil absenteeism is one of the indicators that a pupil is about to drop out, hence dealing with the problem of absenteeism is ultimately dealing with the problem of dropouts.

5.3 Existence of Negative Signals Pupils Receive From The Schools Environment Influencing Their Behaviour Leading To Dropping Out.

The study established that negative signals did exist and had the potential to lead to formation of negative attitudes towards school in pupils capable of influencing both their decisions and behaviour with the end result dropping out of school. School environment is deemed to be a crucial factor to the retention of pupils in schools. This study revealed that schools had enabling environment that would help pupils to remain in school and realise their full potential according to most responses by pupils. According to Chaiken (1980) and Cialdini (2008) information processed from the school environmental signals leads to attitude formation and attitudes that pupils hold about their school determines what they view as the quality of life in the school and has an influence on their decision to dropout of school (Luneburg & Schmidt, 1989). Positive signals from the school environment will lead to positive attitude formation in pupils, which are essential to their continued stay in school. Negative attitudes work otherwise.

5.4 Classification of signals pupil receive according to five components of the school environment

The school environment comprises, place, people, policies, programmes and processes.

5.4.1 Place

62%(124) respondents agreed an indication of receiving positive signals from the physical surroundings of the school. However, this component had the highest percentage of respondents who disagreed at 23%(46) an indication of receiving negative signals. This component of the school environment requires reform (Purkey & Schmidt, 1987, Purkey & Strahan, 1995).

As regards whether the classrooms were clean and ideal for learning the study revealed that the majority (76%) of the pupils affirmed that their school had clean classrooms and ideal for learning. In terms of classroom furniture, the study has shown that it was in good condition and adequate. The study also revealed that the schools were clean and well looked after (84%). Good school infrastructure is essential for the continued stay of pupils in school because pupils find it easier to identify themselves with a good school than a dilapidated one, (Alexander, 2008). A study by Kinithia, (1995) in Kenya found dilapidated school as one of the school factors, which contributed to secondary school dropouts in nyandarua district. If school is to be an inviting place which summons pupils and retain them in school good school infrastructure is a necessity, (Purkey & Novak, 1988, 1996; Purkey & Strahan, 1995).

Poor sanitation affects pupil satisfaction with the quality of school life negatively. Poor physical state of school affects pupils' identity with their school negatively and may leads to resentment in pupils towards school community influencing their decision to dropout (Epstein & Mc Portland, 1976). The study found that more should to be done regarding toilet facilities in schools. Lockheed & Verspoor, (1990) cited poor sanitation as one of the problems created by school, that make pupils who do not like school not motivated to stay in school.

5.4.2 People

As regards relationships in school, this study has shown that there was good relationship between teachers and pupils and among the pupils themselves as seen by 67%(134) out of 200 respondents who agreed. Furthermore, most members of staff were friendly and attended to pupils' needs and showed interest in all pupils and

kindly speak to them as reported by 67% of the pupils who participated in this study. The study also showed that fellow pupils related well and accorded the deserved respect to each other. The study found that schools have to do more to improve relationships in schools. Luneburg & Schmidt, (1989) found that pupils' attitude towards pupil teacher relationship has an influence on dropping out of school. Conflicts, mockery, labelling, bullying and ridicule have a negative impact on relationships in schools contributing to dropout, (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1990; Kinuthia, 1995). Creation of an inviting school environment necessary for pupil retention, calls for respectful relationships between school staff and pupils and among pupils themselves, (Purkey & Novak, 1996, Purkey & Stanley, 1991).

5.4.3 Programmes

In terms of school programs (curricula), the study showed that the majority of the pupils (92%) of the pupils reported that they found the things that they learnt in school to be very helpful in their daily lives. This finding is encouraging in that schools are deemed to be the places where pupils learnt various skills for their daily survival. The negative signals transmitted by this component of the school environment were very minimal implying that this component of the school environment was very inviting. Availability of learning materials increases pupils' satisfaction with learning experience and instructional climate as cited by Noguera, (2012). Most respondents were of the view that their respective schools had enough learning materials for them to use. It was also revealed that pupils found time in school as most interesting part of their day as affirmed by 81% of the pupils in this study. Schools should implement curriculums that are relevant to pupils' lives so that pupils can relate schoolwork to their own lives, which is essential in preventing dropping out of school. Changing teaching methods to pupil-centred methodologies is equally beneficial in preventing pupils from dropping out of school (Deal & Celotti, 1980).

5.4.4 Policies

68% (136) of the respondents were satisfied with school policies. The study found that the majority of the pupils in this study were of the view that the rules were fair and protected their interests. Furthermore, pupils revealed that the methods of

implementing discipline in school matched the offences committed and were acceptable. This finding is important in that it helps pupils perceive the quality of school life in much more positive ways. However, there is still room for improvement to further minimise the negative signals being sent by school policies if dropout rates are to decline, Noguera, (2012). Educational administrators have an influence on what happens in the classroom and on pupils' decision to drop out or to remain in school through the type of policies they formulate (Dalton & Watson 1977). Educational policies that promote an inviting school environment are vital in the battle to prevent pupils from dropping out of school.

5.4.5 Processes

67% (134) respondents indicated that they were happy with the processes (procedures used to come up with a better school). This sums up the basic goal of invitational education, to create a total school environment that intentionally summons success for everyone associated with the school (Purkey and Novak, 1996). However, there is need to involve pupils in the process of formulation of school policies that are critical to the creation of an inviting school environment which prevents dropping out (Purkey & Novak, 1996). 17% of respondents are at risk of dropping out due to negative signals they are receiving from processes. There is therefore need for school transformations aimed at establishing collaborative processes among school administrators, staff and pupils.

5.5 Summary

Generally the findings of this study showed that the environment in the schools under study seemed to be inviting pupils in the school as reflected by high percentages of respondents who agreed indicating that they were receiving positive signals from components of the school environment. The concern of this study was the percentage of pupils who disagreed meaning they were receiving negative signals from components of the school environment likely to lead to disengagement from school life and develop behaviours associated with dropping out (Dalton & Watson, 1997). The numbers and percentages of pupils who disagreed according to five components of the school environment were: People= 28(14%), Place= 46(23%), Policies=32(16%), Programmes= 7(3.5%) and Processes=34(17%). This scenario

indicates that all components of the school environment need improvements so that everyone associated with the school finds the school environment inviting and be prevented from dropping out (Purkey & Novak, 1996).

Environmental messages or signals lead to attitude formation and attitudes determine how we judge things. Positive messages or signals may result in the formation of positive attitudes culminating into positive judgements essential to pupils' continued stay in school. Equally negative messages or signals, which are the main concern of this study may lead to formation of negative attitudes in pupils towards school. The negative attitudes formed may influence their judgements, which in turn may influence their decisions and behaviour leading to dropping out. It is essential that all components of the school environment (place, people, policies, programmes, processes) transmit positive signals that are critical to positive attitude formation towards school in pupils necessary for their continued stay in school.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study and also makes some recommendations based on the findings of the study.

6.2 Conclusion

This study has shown that there are several school factors that contribute to pupils dropping out of school. Though school factors did not cause dropping out by themselves, equally other risk factors may not cause dropping without school factors acting as a catalyst. School and non-school factors compound each other in causing dropping out from school. It is therefore essential that school factors contributing to pupil dropouts are given the same attention that other factors causing pupil dropouts like socio-economic and individual factors are given.

School environments characterised by care and support to pupils at risk prevent dropout and encourage drop-in (Dalton & Watson, 1997). When all components of the school environment are inviting (place, people, policies, programs and processes), the presence of other factors have little effect on dropping out as was observed in Hakielimu, (2007) study in Tanzania that pupils who were at risk of dropping out as a result of being overage did not drop out as a result of school transformations that made school inviting places.

This study has shown that there are several school factors that contribute to pupils dropping out of school. The study has also shown that school dropouts are still a huge problem for primary schools in Zambia in general and Solwezi District in particular. As Nudelman, (2011) puts it, if Zambia has to attain EFA and UPE by 2015 efforts need to be doubled. The problem of school dropouts must not just be viewed as an educational problem but also as an economic problem in terms of a huge wastage of national resources that spending on pupils who do not complete school represents, (Sabates, et al., 2010).

Several factors contributing to dropouts were identified in this study though the study focussed on school factors because such research on school factors contributing to school dropouts can provide grounds for school based reform. Since patterns of dropout differ from school to school, school based reform and strategies to deal with the problem are better placed to provide lasting solutions to the problem of school dropouts. In addition, school factors are said (UNESCO, 1997) to be detrimental in the sense that they lead children to develop a negative perception of school making future entrants not willing to come to school and should that happen then both EFA and UPE may not be realised.

School factors identified in this study by both teachers and pupils such as punishments, poor teacher-pupil relationship, lack of functional pupil support structures, overcrowding, poor teacher attitude, poor performance deserve maximum attention by making school transformations aimed at creation of an inviting school.

Teachers, however, revealed that pupils dropped out of the school because of fear of class teachers, corporal punishment, negative attitude of some teachers towards pupils, absence or non functional career guidance office, grade repetition, poor performance and overcrowded classes. It is vital to develop a positive respectful relationship in schools between teachers and pupils to prevent dropping out (Alexander, 2008).

It is unfortunate that despite the efforts by the government, through various policies like the abolition of user fees, re-entry policy, abolition of corporal punishment in order to retain pupils in schools, authorities in schools do not seem to seriously enforce the implementation of these policies. School administrators seem to be ignorant of various education policies in the country or may not be committed to implementation of educational policies.

Dropping out is process not an event with vital signs that a child is about to dropout of school, the most common ones as reported by the teachers are pupil absenteeism or missing classes, low pupil concentration, stubbornness and bad company. Therefore

the involvement of concerned adults especially teachers upon observing vital signs of dropping out and intervening early is the most crucial strategy in preventing pupils dropping out (Ananga, 2010; Chali 2009).

The study has shown that among the measures put in place by schools to prevent pupil from dropping out of school the most common was the use of PTA meetings where issues pertaining to the importance of education are discussed. However, the effectiveness of this strategy remains questionable since PTA meetings are not held regularly. The study found that measures schools used to prevent dropping out were not effective because all parties concerned did not strictly follow them. Furthermore, schools should make frantic efforts by following such children and encouraged them to go back to school by allowing them to repeat the grade at which they dropped out of school. School efforts based on research evidence and effective teacher participation are vital in the struggle to end pupil dropout (Ananga, 2010; Dalton & Watson, 1997; Alexander, 2008).

As regards linkages existing between the school and home aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school this study has shown that there are very little if any linkages between the school and home. However, teachers revealed that the only connection that existed between the school and home was the Parent Teachers Association where teachers and parents met once in a year to discuss the welfare of their children. The foregoing statement bears some witness to the fact that teachers try their best to retain pupils into school.

In relation to schools as inviting places that help pupils to realise their full potential the study showed that majority of the pupils were in agreement that their schools were inviting because these schools had good infrastructure, sanitation, teacher – pupil and pupil – pupil relationships were good, learning materials were adequate and available and the school rules were fair and protected the interest of the pupils (Alexander, 2008). However, negative messages or signals were found to exist in schools with the potential to influence pupils' decisions and behaviour leading to dropping out and requires immediate attention.

Furthermore, pupils revealed that the methods of implementing discipline in school matched the offences committed and were acceptable. They also indicated that they were happy with the procedures of getting permission from school authority. From the above sentiments it is clear that the schools under study had enabling environment for pupils to like and continue schooling. The only need is for teachers and parents to continue giving proper guidance to pupils as regards the need for them to get enough education for their future personal and national development.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- Schools and parents should collaborate in making early interventions aimed helping pupils who exhibit behaviours consistent with dropping out be prevented from dropping out.
- MoESVTEE should sensitize school managers on the various policies that the government has put in place to allow pupils to continue with school in the absence of certain school requirements like uniforms.
- Schools and PTA should work hand-in-hand to make school transformations aimed at creation school climate where pupils find satisfaction with learning experiences and to strengthen existing strategies for dealing with the problem of pupil drop out.
- Homes should become part of the many institutions charged with provision of information on why children should be in school.
- MESVTEE should strengthen capacities of school career guidance and counselling units in primary schools by equipping them with videos depicting various careers which career guidance teachers can show pupils and follow-up with plenary sessions in order to help pupils link school attendance to career which is necessary for their continued stay in school.
- Teachers should take an active role in dealing with the problem of school dropouts and learn to be inviting with themselves as well as with others both personally and professionally.
- Schools need to initiate reforms at local school level at changing how they operate and creation of a positive school climate since demographics of school dropouts affects different schools differently.

6.4 Recommendations for future research.

Future research should focus on:

- Investigating why boys are more likely to drop out of school than girls.
- Investigating the relationship between school management style and dropping out.
- Examination of the effectiveness of Re-entry policy, Grade repetition and Over-age enrolment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

CONSENT FORM

I have read the consent form and I have had time to consider whether or not to take part in the study. I have been informed that my participation in the study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time.

I understand that as part of the research, audio tapes and digital recordings of my participation will be made, though my name and every information during these recordings will be treated in confidentiality and used specifically for academic purpose.

Name of participant (in block letters).....

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT -1

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for dropouts

Interview questions for out-of-school children aimed at collecting information on the factors in the school that contributed to their dropping out of school.

1. Name of pupil.....
2. Age of pupil.....
3. Gender: Male..... Female.....
4. Last grade attended.....
5. Period since leaving school.....

6. Do you think school is important in the lives of children?
.....
7. In which ways do think school is important in the lives of children?
.....
8. What led you to make a decision to leave school?
.....
9. In your opinion do you think the decision to leave school was a correct one?
.....
10. Are there factors in the school that contributed to making a decision to quit school?
.....
11. What did the school do when you decided to leave school?
.....
12. What action do you think the school should take towards children who decide to leave school?
.....
.....
.....
13. How did you find your school days to be?
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT -2

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for teachers

Interview questions for teachers aimed at collecting information on the factors in the school that contribute to pupils dropping out of school.

1. Are there factors in the school that contribute to pupils dropping out of school?

2. What factors in the school contributes to pupils dropping out of school?

3. What are the indicators that the child is about to drop out of school?

4. What measures do class teachers take to prevent pupils in their classes from dropping out?

5. What measures has been put in place by the school to prevent children dropping out of school?

6. How effective are these measures taken by both the school and individual class teachers in preventing school going children dropping out of school?

7. What efforts are being made by the school in order to help children that have dropped out school?

8. What can the school do to prevent pupils from dropping out of school?

9. In your opinion, what are the major school factors contributing to pupils dropping out school?

10. What Strategies can prevent pupils from dropping out of school?

11. What linkages exist between home and school aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school?-----

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT 3:

For pupils currently in the school

A questionnaire collecting data to help measure the levels of invitation in the school to determine the strength of school factors and how they influence pupil retention into the school or drop out of school.

Instructions: *Fill in the background information and tick the appropriate response to each item out the alternatives given.*

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: _____ years.
3. Grade _____
4. Our school is generally clean and well looked after.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
5. The classrooms are clean and ideal for learning to take place.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
6. Classroom furniture is in good condition and adequate.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
7. Classrooms have adequate lighting.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
8. School toilets are clean, adequate and safe to use.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
9. The school has a source of clean and safe drinking water.
(a) agree (b) not sure (c) disagree
10. Members of staff are friendly and attend to our needs.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
11. School staff, show interest in all pupils and speak kindly to pupils.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
12. The school has sufficient learning materials for pupils to use.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree

13. I find my time in school the most interesting part of my day.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
14. Things we learn in school are very helpful in my daily life.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
15. The school has fair rules which protects interests of all pupils.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
16. Methods of implementing discipline in the school match the offences committed and are acceptable.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
17. I'm happy with procedures of getting permission from school authority.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
18. I relate well with other pupils.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
19. All pupils relate well with me and respect me.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
20. I love school and wish to continue my stay in school to completion.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
22. Teachers always attend to their classes.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree
- 23 Teachers are impartial and professional in their conduct of duties.
(a) Agree (b) Not sure (c) Disagree