Internal Efficiency Indicators in Education: Examining the Causes of Dropouts in Selected Secondary Schools of Mongu District, Zambia

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Abstract

The article sought to examine the nature of secondary school dropouts in selected secondary schools in Mongu district. The objectives of the paper were anchored on understanding the causes of secondary school dropouts and to establish the proportion of learners that dropped out for the period 2012-2017 in Mongu district. This article employed a concurrent mixed method design that involved combining qualitative and quantitative research. In qualitative perspectives, interview guides were central while the usage of questionnaires were key in empirical quantitative investigation. Purposive and simple random sampling were used to select interviewees and respondents respectively. The sample size was 232 participants who included; 90 teachers and 122 pupils that responded to the questionnaire, and 6 Head teachers, 3 planners, 1 DEBS and 10 dropouts that were key informant interviewees. Furthermore, qualitative data was analysed according to emerging themes while quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics in which factor analysis was employed. The result of this study established that pregnancy, financial challenges and truancy were the major reasons explaining the nature of school drop outs among pupils in Mongu district. Pregnancy emerged as the single most influential factor accounting for dropping out amongst girls and financial challenges was the major reason for boys. In order to reduce dropout rates and improve opportunities for pupils in the secondary school system, the study recommended that there be an introduction of a form of financial support and intensify sex education among the pupils.

Key Words: *Internal Efficiency, Indicators, Drop Outs, Mongu, Zambia*

Background and Context

The importance of education in any given society can never be overemphasised. Most developing countries, Zambia inclusive, have placed education at the centre of their social and economic development strategies and have invested in strengthening the ability of their education systems to enrol more children and youth (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2012). As a result, the enrolment, progression, and completion rates are much higher today than they were in the 1980s, and the number of years of schooling has increased in the past 25 years (Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines (GPE), 2014, Masaiti, 2018).

The Government in the past twenty-five years increased the number of schools through expansion of already existing schools and developing infrastructure as a means to improve enrolment and the number of secondary schools in order to meet the growing demand for the same and reduce the number of people dropping out of the school system due to limited secondary school places (Ministry of Education, 2012). However, even with the above successes recorded internal efficiency indicators show that dropout rate has continued to be a challenge in the Zambian

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school system (Education Statistical Bulletin, 2016; Masaiti and Mwale, 2017). Although dropping out is generally considered a status or educational outcome that can readily be measured at a point in time, it is more appropriately viewed as a process of disengagement that occurs over time specifically, The National Centre for Education Statistics (2012), defined dropout rate as leaving, droping out of school without completing a high school education or equivalent credential such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

The goal of the Zambian education system is to have more learners complete school and reduce wastages (Banda, 2008). The Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines (GPE) (2014), elaborated that the quantitative goals of education systems are not limited to increasing the number of children enrolled but also to ensure that children who begin a cycle complete it (do not dropout) and do so in the set number of years (do not repeat). Consequently, the pedagogical programmes of each cycle are developed in such a way as to progressively provide learners with a coherent and self-reinforcing set of knowledge and skills (Masaiti, 2015). Hence, the early abandonment of a cycle is likely to lead to the partial or total loss of the knowledge and skills acquired in the years that were effectively attended.

Therefore, to understand the phenomena, various researches have been conducted in Zambia and abroad, and they list several factors that have led pupils to drop out of the education system. These include poverty and a combination of poor quality of education provision, inadequate school facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate language of instruction and teacher absenteeism. These factors are among the major reasons which have been sighted as reasons for dropping out and is more likely to occur in developing countries like Zambia (Colclough, Rose and Tembon, 2000). Other reasons include: student burnout, health problems and lack of academic capacity.

Regardless of the reason, however, the consequences of dropping out of school can be severe because the school serves many essential functions for adolescents, including training in general education, vocational and life skills, and socialisation (Banda et al; 2014). Subsequently, youths who do not complete high school are far more susceptible to health, economic, and social problems than those who do (Sabates, Akyeampong, Westbrook and Hunt, 2010). These consequences can even be more severe in developing countries such as Zambia.

Turning to the present study which focused on Mongu district, the provincial capital and most urbanised district of western Zambia, the situation of dropouts is not so different from those elaborated in studies above. Some vital statistics for Mongu, according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in 2010, approximated the urban population to be approximately at 52, 324. Additionally, the district recorded eighty-five schools of which seventy were primary and fifteen were secondary schools, that had close to 25 000 pupils enrolled. From the statistics on the number of primary schools and secondary schools one can notice a huge

disparity between the two levels of education which poses a challenge to having an efficient education system that has low dropout rates and minimum wastage (MNDP, 2010). The above statistics on primary and secondary schools, though scanty, is alarming, hence the need to conduct this study to examine the cause of dropouts and to establish the proportion of dropouts from 2012 to 2017 in selected secondary schools in Mongu district.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose

The study focused on examining the causes of secondary school dropouts in selected secondary schools in Mongu district. Through various researches conducted in other parts of Zambia, it has been established that pupils drop out of the school system due to various reasons ranging from academic capacity, financial, social and health reasons among others (Katolo, 2013; Chaponda, 2016; Lifuka, 2009). However, it is unclear if the same factors necessitate dropping out in Mongu district. As a result, the aim of this study was to establish the causes of secondary school dropouts in selected secondary schools in Mongu. The objectives were:

1. To determine the causes of secondary school dropouts in Mongu district as a way of measuring efficiency in educational provision.

2. To establish the proportion of pupils dropping out of the selected secondary schools in the period 2012 to 2017.

Methodology and Design

The study adopted a concurrent mixed methods design. A concurrent design is characterised by the collection of both types of data during the same stage and the findings from both methods are integrated at the end of the study during the interpretation phase. As explained by Changwe and Mulenga (2018:218) this may also be used 'for comparison in order to determine if there was convergence, divergence or a combination' of qualitative and quantitative data sets. 232 participants were engaged. Quantitative data was collected from 90 teachers and 122 pupils that responded to the questionnaire, whilst 6 Head teachers, 3 planners, 1 DEBS and 10 dropouts were key informant interviewees in the qualitative aspect. Document analysis was also done. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools and the key respondents for interviews, while stratified random sampling was used to select students and simple random sampling for teachers. Questionnaire data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPPS) and interviews were analysed thematically. Validity and Reliability was ensured by triangulation, member check and large sample size.

Findings

Causes of Dropouts

Table 1: Shows descriptive results presented on the nature of dropouts in secondary schools in Mongu district.

Teachers	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pupils Drop out because of high cut-off point	92	1	5	2,14	1,105
Cultural influences and beliefs contribute to dropping out	89	1	5	3,2	1,179
Lack of role models	92	1	5	2,97	1,386
Lack of financial support	90	1	5	4	1,017
Failing a national exam	89	1	5	3,56	1,076
Fell pregnant	91	1	5	3,71	1,108
Got bored with school	89	1	5	2,29	1,281
High school fees	91	1	5	3,6	1,191
Truant behaviour	91	1	5	3,67	1,184
Ill health	89	1	5	2,78	1,194
Not performing well academically	89	1	5	3,25	1,227
Distance from school	91	1	5	3,38	1,227
Got married	91	1	5	3,26	1,114
Made to repeat a grade	90	1	5	2,52	1,134
Lack of counselling and interest in pupils by teachers	91	1	5	2,74	1,332
Pupil involvement in business	91	1	5	2,9	1,193
Unfriendly school environment	89	1	5	2,36	1,264

Source: Researchers Field work

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviations for the first objective generated from questions seven to twenty-six on the teacher questionnaire (check *Appendix vii*). Teachers were responding using the five-point Likert scale of agreement and

disagreement were 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 =Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Concentration of mean responses was on agree. 0 to 3 ($0 \leq$ mean $\leq$ 3) represented the scores 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Neutral'. Variables with a mean score of 3.1 to 5 on the continuous Likert scale: (3.1 $\leq$mean $\geq$ 5) represented 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree', and a standard deviation of >1 implied that the variables were more spread out and had a significant difference on the impact among respondents.

The results in table 1 indicated that lack of financial support was the most significant variable to explaining the nature of secondary school dropouts in the district with a mean score of 4 and a standard deviation of 1,017. The second most significant variable was pregnancy with a mean score of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1,108. According to table 2, truant behaviour with a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1,184 came third.

Factor Analysis for Underlying Trends is Highlighted Below:
The results were then further analysed using factor analysis as elaborated in the Table 2. Consequently, Table 2 presents the results of the factor analysis carried out on ninety Teachers to establish the nature of school drop outs. With varimax rotation of 9 of the 5 Likert scale survey questionnaire that was conducted, the results indicated four factors which are discussed in further details below:

Factor 1: Three items loaded onto the factor. It is clear from Table 1 that the three items all related to the most prevalent factors that led to high school drop outs among pupils. Hence, this factor loaded reported pregnancy, cultural influences and, high school fees, as lead factors to school dropouts. Thus, this factor was labelled "Most prevalent nature of high school drop outs" for teachers. Factor 2: Three items loaded factor 2 which were unfriendly school environment, irrelevant curriculum and teacher absenteeism. Results showed that factor two was the least likely to cause dropouts in Mongu district. Factor 3: Three items loaded factor 3, which included financial challenges, truancy and repetition of which teachers showed agreement in the variables explaining the nature of dropouts in secondary schools in Mongu district. Factor 4: Two items loaded on factor 4, which included failing examinations and distance from school, which teachers were generally neutral on the influence these variables had on influencing dropout. However, Banda (2008: 45) argued that 'those that leave school because of not reaching the cut-off point system are not failures per say since the are just pushed out of the system; hence should be called 'push outs.'

Table 2: Presents the results of the factor analysis carried out on ninety Teachers

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Pupils Drop out because of high cut-off point	-.004	.028	.059	.822
Cultural influences and beliefs contribute to dropping out	.678	.102	.370	-.207
Lack of role models	.038	.019	.628	.058
Lack of financial support	.494	-.032	.593	.119
Failing a national exam	.241	.133	.088	.742
Fell pregnant or impregnated	.585	-.025	.079	.305
High school fees	.691	.210	.116	.292
Truant behaviour	.324	-.065	.540	.363
Ill health	.131	.482	.479	-.131
Made to repeat a grade	-.054	.503	.602	.199
Lack of counselling and interest in pupils by teachers	.320	.381	.476	-.110
Unfriendly school environment	.548	.592	-.034	-.069
Irrelevant school curriculum content	-.161	.753	.038	.171
Teacher absenteeism	.280	.698	.063	.058

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

The summary of the factor analysis of the four factors that were extracted from the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of results extracted from factor analysis on the nature of school dropouts

Factor	Items loaded on to Factor
Factor One: Most prevalent nature of high school drop outs	Pregnancy, cultural influences, and high school fees
Factor Two: Least likely to cause dropout	Unfriendly school environment, irrelevant curriculum and teacher absenteeism
Factor three: Second most significant variables leading to dropout	Financial challenges, truancy and repetition
Factor Four: Neutral on its influence on dropout	High cut off points, failing examinations

Source: Researchers field work

Pregnancy and Early Marriages

All the ten (100%) interviewees indicated that the major contributing factors to high numbers of school dropouts were pregnancies and early marriages. This case was cited to be more prevalent for females in rural areas. Some contributing factors leading to the high rates of pregnancies and early marriages included the curiosity of females to experiment sexual intercourse once they reached puberty, which likely led to unplanned pregnancies thus getting married afterwards. In addition, the other factor was the inability of the female to return to school after marrying due to responsibilities within the matrimonial homes. One respondent aptly asserted that:

> Approximately 5,000 female pupils fall pregnant each year, this is especially high in the rural areas and most pupils resort to early marriages after getting pregnant and it is very difficult for them to return to school from their matrimonial homes.

Financial Challenges

The other cause of secondary school dropouts mentioned by the respondents was that school drop outs lacked adequate finances and or faced financial challenges to pay for the high school fees that led them to dropping out from secondary school in Mongu district.

Accordingly, one interviewee agreed with the notions of financial challenges as he explained that:

> Poverty and financial challenges are the reasons why some pupils drop out of school. Most parents and guardians cannot afford the seemingly high school fees in most secondary schools. Economic problems and poverty pose a great challenge to some families.

Trend analysis from 2012-2017
The results of the document analysis revealed that there had been a notable reduction in dropout incidences in the selected six schools for the set period as shown in Figure 1.
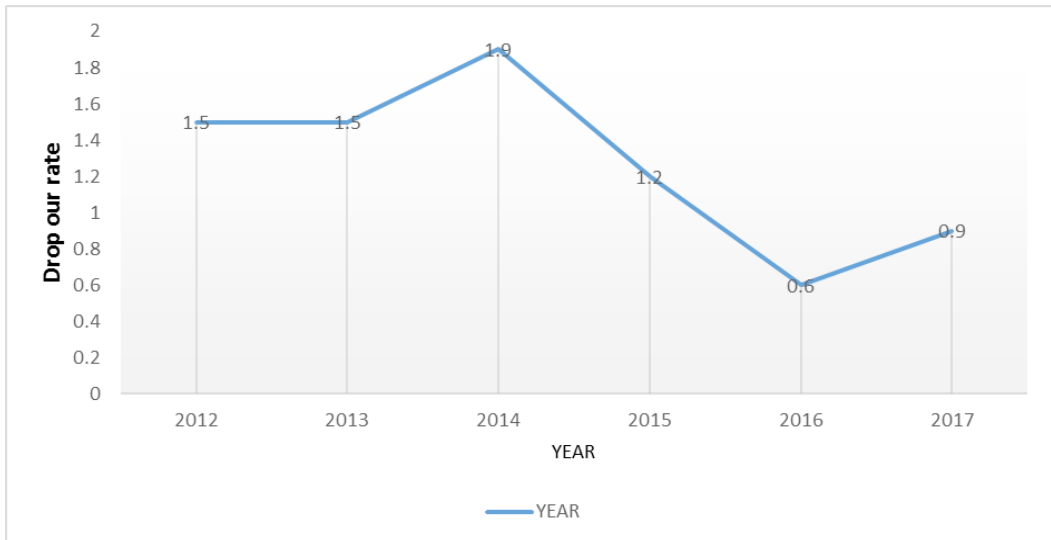

Figure 1: Dropout trend from the year 2012-2017
Source: Reseachers Fieldwork

The years 2012 and 2013 maintained 1.5 dropout rate, which rose to 1.9 in 2014, dropped to 1.2 and further 0.6 in 2015 and 2016 respectively but however increased to 0.9 in 2017.

Numbers of secondary school dropouts from 2012 to 2017
Further, a tabulation of the numbers of pupils that dropped out from the year 2012 to 2017 due to pregnancies, financial challenges, marriage, illness and death per each respective school as obtained from the annual school census reports are shown.

Number of School Dropouts because of Pregnancies Per School from 2012-2017
The figure 2 below shows percentages of pregnancies per school for the five-year period.
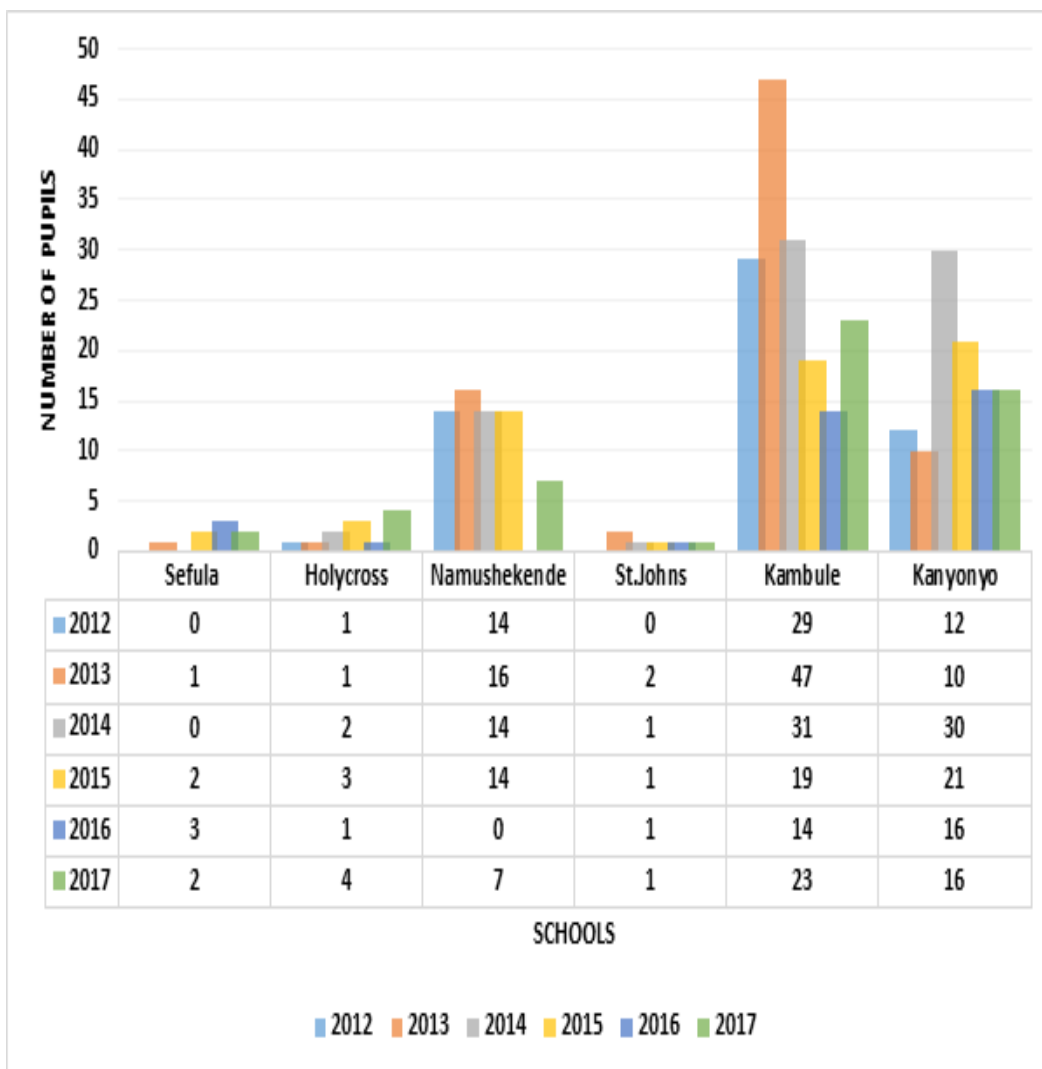
	Sefula	Holycross	Namushekende	St.Johns	Kambule	Kanyonyo
2012	0	1	14	0	29	12
2013	1	1	16	2	47	10
2014	0	2	14	1	31	30
2015	2	3	14	1	19	21
2016	3	1	0	1	14	16
2017	2	4	7	1	23	16

SCHOOLS

■ 2012 ■ 2013 ■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017

Figure 2: Number of School dropouts because of Pregnancy Per School from 2012-2017

Source: *Researchers Field Work*

The Figure 2 shows that there was a consistent increase in dropout numbers from 2012 to 2014, which significantly reduced in 2015 and further in 2016. However, 2017 recorded an increase from the previous year. Further, the figure shows that one of the leading causes of dropouts in secondary schools in Mongu district was pregnancy, these findings were in agreement with those found among pupils and teachers.

Number of School Dropouts because of Financial Challenges Per School from 2012-2017

Figure 3 presents findings on financial challenges explaining the cause of secondary school dropouts in each selected school.
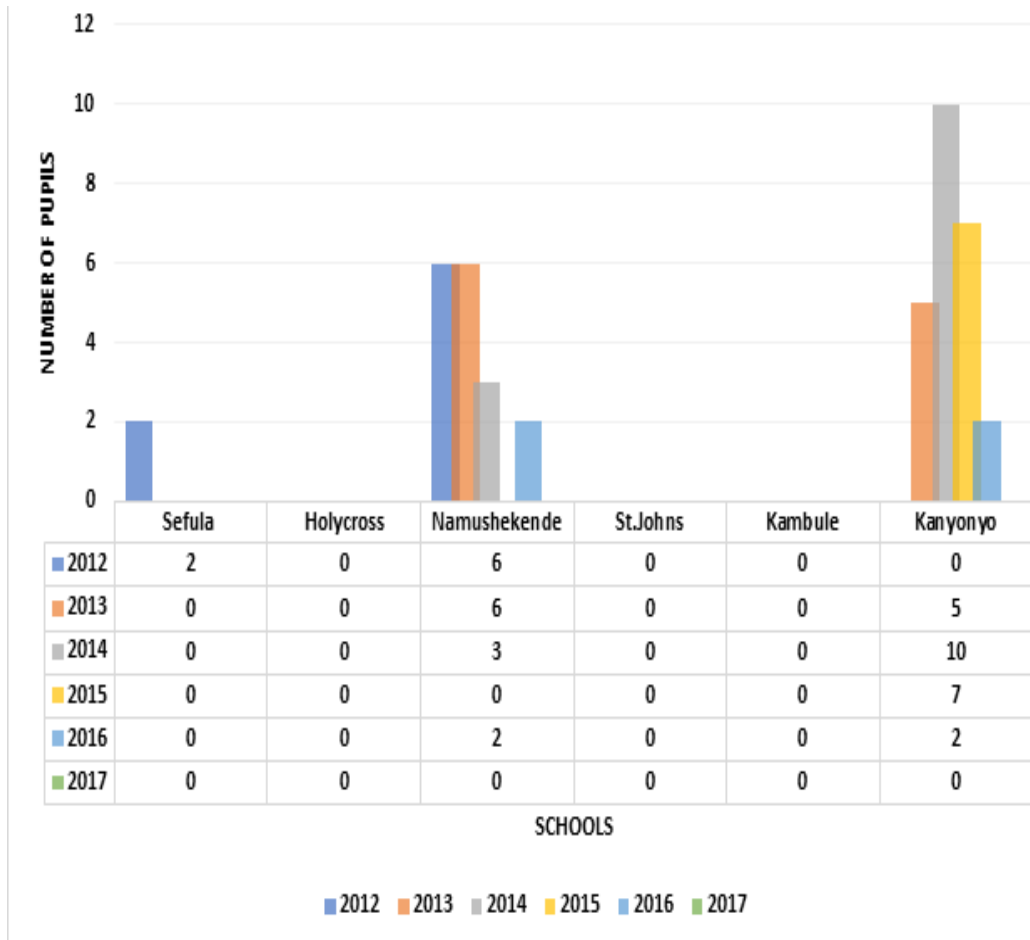

	Sefula	Holycross	Namushekende	St.Johns	Kambule	Kanyonyo
2012	2	0	6	0	0	0
2013	0	0	6	0	0	5
2014	0	0	3	0	0	10
2015	0	0	0	0	0	7
2016	0	0	2	0	0	2
2017	0	0	0	0	0	0

SCHOOLS

■2012 ■2013 ■2014 ■2015 ■2016 ■2017

Figure 3: Number of School Dropouts because of Financial Challenges Per School from 2012-2017

Source: *Researchers Field Work*

Figure 3 shows a significant reduction in dropouts due to financial challenges for four schools (Sefula, Holycross, St. Johns and Kambule) from 2013 to 2017 but an increase in the numbers for two schools (Namushekende and Kanyoyo) for the period 2012 to 2016. The figure shows that one of the second most influential causes of dropout in secondary schools in Mongu district was, financial challenges, a finding which was in agreement with quantitative and other qualitative results.

Discussion

The main causes of dropouts in Mongu District, based on emerging themes, were:

Pregnancies and early marriages, financial challenges, academic challenges and truancy. It is vital to note that the themes, though separated in the discussion were overlapping, and one cause of dropout would be a leading cause to any of the themes.

Pregnancies and Early Marriages

In this study, it was established from findings solicited from teachers, school dropouts, other stakeholders and pupils that pregnancy was primarily the major reason why girls dropped out of the secondary school system in Mongu district. This finding is corroborated by a study from Jaccard (2013). His study found that pupils who engaged in acts of delinquency, such as, sexual activities were more likely to drop out of secondary schools than pupils that did not. In the same vein, this study's research finding showed that pupils that fell pregnant engaged themselves in sexual activities early, owing partly to cultural influences. In addition to the lack of comprehensive sex education that was not intensively taught in both grant-aided and government schools.

Further, other studies show that poverty, pregnancy and early marriages were significant at almost the same scale. Chadzuka (2008), however, observed that girls seemed to face greater challenges than the boys in trying to access education because of various reasons ranging from pregnancies, early marriages and long distances to schools. This was a similar picture in the Zambian context as well, where most girls especially those in rural districts and schools fell pregnant and opted to marry than go back to school (Chaponda, 2016). This was also reflected in the findings of this study where the number of girls that dropped out due to pregnancies were significantly higher than the number of girls that re-entered school. This situation could be partially attributed to some schools especially grant aided ones, that did not implement the re-entry policy, consequently, leading to increasing the numbers of girls that continued to stay out of school due to pregnancy related issues (Dube, 2011; Fulawulu, 2014; Simatama, 2016; Chaponda, 2016). This situation was actually confirmed in a study by Mulenga and Mukaba (2018:57) who stated that 'even in the presence of the re-entry policy, the number of girls completing secondary school in Zambia is still lower than that of boys.'

Document analysis showed that the years 2012 to 2017 had a total of 439 dropouts in the selected secondary schools of which 361 were because of pregnancy, as the most influential reason. Ncube (2004) and Wedekind and Milingo (2015), further validated the present study findings by arguing that pregnancy was a main challenge amongst female learners in the quest to access and complete schooling. Because of the high pregnancy cases, girls' secondary enrolment and completion rates were significantly lower than those of boys (MESVTEE,2014).

The present research established that the large numbers of female learners dropping out were because of pregnancy and early marriages, thus, the females needed more attention to curb the incidences. The District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) agreed with the introduction of stringent measures when she

stated that 'stringent measures should be put in place to ensure the girl child remained in school'. Further, the findings revealed that the highest dropouts existed in grade ten, followed by grade eleven and the lowest number of dropouts was in grade eight. Some reasons for high number of dropouts in grade ten, rather than grade eight could be attributed to the following reasons: most of the girls in grade ten came of age, thus began to experiment sexual intercourse and the excitement of passing exams and not having much academic work, hence students did not put in much effort at school.

Further, according to reviewed literature, cultural influences could be another reason that could explain the ever-increasing numbers of girls that fall pregnant in secondary schools. This reason was supported by findings in Table 2 from teachers that scored a mean of 3.26 representing 65 per cent of the teachers.

Similarly, Colclough (2003) suggested that cultural influences play a big role in determining whether a pupil stays in school or not. He argued with what he called a gendered society, that a child is heavily influenced by the culture and environment they grow and are raised in. When the cultural aspect does not favour educational knowledge but advocates for girl children especially, to value marriage, the chances of many girls completing school in that cultural dominated area are significantly reduced. Additionally, Mulenga and Mukaba (2018:57) in their study observed that 'social economic and cultural factors have been commonly cited as reasons for this failure but it was also assumed that if guidance and counseling was not effectively conducted in schools, this could lead to high drop-out rates due to teenage pregnancy. This statement seemed true in the case of Mongu district that is still heavily influenced by the local culture, particularly, it was noted that as soon as a girl attained puberty, girls were secluded and taught how to make good wives. Additionally, Mohammed, Mberia and Mutiri (2017) highlighted that some of the local communities contribute to girls not being in school because girls are booked for early marriage, some underestimate the result of the girl education and some parents use their daughters as a source of wealth through getting dowry.

Further, this study's findings are validated by these found by the EMIS (2012) in Namibia (cited in chapter 2), where in 2011 and 2012 it recorded that over 22,000 learners dropped out of school because of pregnancy and early marriages as leading reasons. Girls were engaged in early pre-marital sex without comprehensive knowledge of its consequences and this was attributed partly to the cultural influences on the value of marriage unlike education attainment for girls.

Financial Challenges
On financial challenges influencing dropout, this article established that it was the second leading factor that explained the cause of secondary school dropouts in Mongu district, since education heavily relies on financing to meet its production costs and there comes direct and indirect schooling costs to that effect (Masaiti, 2018; Masaiti, Mwelwa and Mwale, 2016). Wambua (2014), agreed with the

present study findings when he indicates that schooling costs, especially school fees, are a central reason for early dropout from schools. This study established that thirty-seven of the total dropouts for the period 2012 to 2017 in the selected secondary schools were because of financial challenges and failure to pay school fees. Choudhary and Hammayun (2014), further agreed with the present study finding as they elaborated that financial challenges experienced by parents and guardians, among other reasons, were among the major reasons why pupils dropped out of the school system in developing countries. This is not surprising since other studies on Zambia done by Mubanga *et al*. (2019:154) revealed that 'unemployment has been cited as one of the main causes of poverty standing at 60 per cent'.

In districts like Mongu, that have high unemployment and the few in employment are mostly employed by government (CS0, 2010), the statement proved to be true. Demographic information of the pupils from this study showed that 32 percent and 27 per cent of the pupils' parents were unemployed and informally employed respectively, inherently suggesting they could most likely have challenges with paying their children and dependants school fees. Additionally, schools had varying school fees and most pupils alluded to the pricing as expensive for their parents and guardians to afford termly, most teachers indicated this as well. Meeting the ever-increasing financial obligations required of them by the schools such as school fees, project fees and other user fees, were seen to be hurdles towards ensuring that all pupils completed their education. UNESCO (2015), noted that as many as 29.8 million children in sub Saharan Africa were out of school because of failure to pay school fees which were high for most households.

Furthermore, the World Bank (2004) noted that rural districts that did not have a lot of economic activities had a reflection on most pupils leaving school because of the inability of their parents and guardians to meet the financial obligations, a statement that is in agreement with that of the Ministry of General Education Headquarters Planner, who explained that most rural districts had a challenge with keeping pupils in school because they valued more economic activities that brought money almost instantly unlike staying in school and seeing no immediate returns. Furthermore, the head teacher cited that school fee payments presented a huge burden on household income. The poorer the family, the greater the burden of education spending, the World Bank (2004) noted. As a result, this heavily jeopardises the ability of the education system to attain internal efficiency as the numbers of the learners leaving school will not drop if severe economic challenges continue to exist. Lastly, Hunt (2008) found that school fees were a significant areason for the dropout rate of 27 per cent of boys but 30 per cent of girls before secondary school graduation in South Africa.

Further, because of the high poverty levels, the children dropout out of school so that they could help their parents or guardians with economic activities (Wambua ,2014). The value of school was measured against their present economic

status and to most pupils, having food on the table was better than learning on an empty stomach, stated the DEBS. Although certain schools had put up measures in place to identify the most financially challenged pupils and put them on some scholarship schemes, not all vulnerable pupils benefited. As a result, children from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes were faced with challenges of making resources available leading many to drop out. Evidently, the study carried out by Ncube (2004) indicated that the chief drivers of school dropouts were inability to pay school and examination fees (the parents were economically vulnerable) being expensive and posing a challenge to learners. Finally, the IIEP (2001) further pointed out that school and examination fees, which parents cannot afford, may cause dropouts.

The financial challenge factor justifies the Human Capital Theory, used for the first objective, that supports the investment in educational provision as it is a form of capital whose future returns are almost always guaranteed. The theory suggests the need to invest time and resources in education and in this context the need to have learners complete the full education cycle without dropping out as each stage in the education process has a significance on the output. Failure of students to survive through the full course of secondary schooling, as result of inability to pay school fees, and social pressures such as pregnancy and poverty as alluded to by UNICEF (2012), does not help improve education efficiency and ultimately does not help reap the full benefit of education even when prior investments were made before.

Truancy
Truancy is any intentional, habitual act of being absent from school without proper reasons or permission (Rivers, 2010). Truancy can affect the overall success of education for any given child. It further extends nationally and contributes significantly towards the undermining of internal efficiency of education. According to Pridmore (2007), truancy influences dropout in schools. It is with that, that the findings from teachers and pupils indicated that truancy played a role in dropout incidences in schools. Data from teachers and pupils indicated that truancy was one reason that explained the nature of secondary school dropouts in Mongu district. According to Zhang *et.al.* (2007), the causes of truancy can be positioned into four categories, which include family factors, school factors, economic influences and student variables. Each individual factor or acting with other factors plays a significant role in making a learner truant.

Schools that record children with truancy behaviour are therefore mandated to observe and bring to counsel the ailing learners and tackle the factors where possible. Truancy, if left unchecked, jeopardised the actualisation of internal efficiency in education in the district.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The article concludes that dropout levels were significant in Mongu district with many learners opting out of school due to many reasons ranging from financial challenges, pregnancies, early marriages and truancy. This, therefore, means that internal efficiency in Mongu district was low, as the measurement of internal efficiency involves the interplay of all indicators. The improvement of one indicator, in this case repetition, without the overall improvement of other indicators (transition and dropout) does little towards the improvement of internal efficiency indicators.

Considering the findings elaborated in the previous chapters, the following are the recommendations:

a) Setting affirmative policy that encourages sex education among the pupils in all schools. Intensification of teaching of sex education in schools by giving one period a day dedicated to teaching pupils on issues of sex and dangers of indulging in early unprotected sex.

b) Ensuring uniformity in the re-entry policy implementation in all types of schools, government and grant aided alike. Grant aided schools have for many years, after the introduction of the re-entry policy, been adamant about implementing it in their schools.

c) Intensifying learner and teacher monitoring and supervision especially, in government schools to reduce teachers' and pupils' laisser-faire kind of attitudes. Roll call, class monitoring lists and permission slips signed by grade teachers, teachers on duty and deputy heads will be helpful in reducing absenteeism of pupils.

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