AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE HIGH DROPOUT RATE AMONG THE SAN CHILDREN IN FORMAL SCHOOLS - A CASE STUDY OF THE OMAHEKE REGION IN NAMIBIA.

BY

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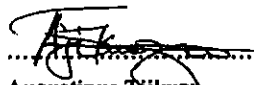
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DECLARATION

I Augustinus Tjikuzu hereby delcare that:

a. The research reported in this dissertation is a true reflection of my own original work. All the sources that I used or quoted in this study have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

b. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree at any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

School dropout is a global challenge with serious negative repercusions for the socio-economic well-being of individuals as well as for the entire society. Studies and official statistics indicate that many San learners in the Omaheke region, Namibia, drop out of school in high numbers. The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons that contribute to many San learners dropping out of primary and secondary schools in the Omaheke region, Namibia.

The study adopted a qualitative approach, following a case study research design. The study employed a non-probability sampling design and utilised purposive sampling in the selection of participants. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews, focus group discussion, and analysis of available documents.

The findings of the study revealed that there are a variety of factors that contribute to the high school dropouts of San learners. Some of the causes included the inability of the San parents to afford the school-related expenses, ignorance on the importance of education, poor parental involvement in education, early courting and teenage parenthood, inability to handle transition from primary to secondary schools, and an unwelcoming school environment which is irresponsive to the cultural and living realities of the San population and in addition characterised by bullying and ridicule of San learners.

The study recommended an intersectoral approach to address the school dropout challenge. It proposed among others the strengthening of the existing livelihood programs to improve the socio-economic conditions of the San population, the establishment of programs to build the self-esteem and resilience of San children from younger ages, and the creation of a conducive school environment that is friendly and culturally responsive to the needs of the San children.

Keywords: School dropout, socio-economic conditions, resilience, learners, parental involvement.

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UNICEF	:	United Nations Children Education Fund
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Program
GRN	:	Government of the Republic of Namibia
MDG's	:	Millenium Development Goals
OVC's	:	Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
CESCR	:	United Nations' Committee on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights
PCETC	:	Presidential Commission on Education, Training, and Culture
ILO	:	International Labour Organisation
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
NSA	:	Namibia Statistics Agency
NGO's	:	Non-Governmental Organisations
LAC	:	Legal Assistance Centre
USA	:	United States of America
US	:	United States
UK	:	United Kingdom
ORC	:	Omaheke Regional Council
CREATE	:	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
IEC	:	Information, Education and Communication
TB	:	Tuberculosis
SACMEC	:	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Education is recognized worldwide, as an important instrument in promoting human development (UNESCO, 2014: 9). The importance of education was strongly asserted by the United Nations' Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR), at its twentieth session in 1999, when it stated that the right to education "epitomizes the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights" (UNESCO, 2014: 9).

The international community has over the years continued to demonstrate unwavering commitment to ensure that children have access to quality education. The adoption and implementation of various international instruments and frameworks such as Education for All (EFA) Goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and Post Millenium Development Goals, were clearly aimed at achieving this noble right (UNESCO, 2014: 12).

Namibia is a signatory and has ratified most of the international instruments on provision of quality education. Moreover, the Namibian Constitution through article 20 guarantees the right of all persons to education (Government of the Republic of Namibia-GRN, 2010: 14). In sub-article 2, it is stated that "primary education shall be compulsory and the state shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining state schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge" (2010:14). The subsequent article prohibits children from leaving school until they have completed their primary education or have attained the age of sixteen (2010:14).

In spite of notable achievements in the area of access, the education sector in Namibia is battling with many challenges in delivering quality learning outcomes at all levels. According to UNICEF these pitfalls "include high repetition (on average 20% at grades 1, 5 and 8) and dropout rates, resulting in only 57% net enrolment rate at the

secondary level" (UNICEF, 2013 n.p.). The above figures indicate a worrying trend since the new developmental era requires post-secondary school education in order to capacitate the population with adequate skills and knowledge.

From a global perspective, the UNICEF report on the 'State of the World's Children' for 2014, revealed that some 57 million primary school-aged children were out of school in 2011 (UNICEF, 2014:18). Furthermore, the report disclosed "that only 64% of boys and 61% of girls of secondary school age are enrolled in secondary schools worldwide, and 36% and 30%, respectively, in the least developed countries" (2014:18). Numerous studies have revealed that the indigenous groups such as the San community are the most affected by the school dropout rate, contributing to their further marginalisation (International Labour Organisation-ILO, 2009 (a) & (b); Anaya, 2013). Similarly, a study done in Australia found that the school completion rates for indigenous students were with more than 30 percentage points far below the rates for non-indigenous students (Long 2009 as cited in Helme & Lamb, 2011: 4).

Studies done in Namibia attributed the low level of educational attainment of the San population to the high level of school dropout (Suzman, 2001; Ministry of Education-Omaheke, 2010). The low level of school attendance by the San population is perceived as a major obstacle in improving their economic situation, and for them to achieve a social and political status equal to that of other Namibians (Dieckmann, Thiem, Dirkx, & Hays, 2014: 524).

According to the UNDP (2007:16) the gross school enrollment ratio for the San population was by far the lowest of all the groups, as it reflected 34% compared to the national average of 66%. In the year 2008, there were 7 000 San children in Namibian schools leaving an estimated 10 000 San children of school going age not attending school, demonstrating that the San are grossly under-represented in the school system (Terres Des Hommes, 2012 n.p.). In 2010, the number of San learners enrolled in school was 6, 942. Out of this, 67% were in lower primary schools, 22% in upper primary phase, with only a mere 7% at the junior secondary school level (Hays, Hopson & Le Roux, 2010: 40).

The abovementioned figures show the huge gap between those who enrolled for primary grades as opposed to those who proceeded to secondary school level. This is attributed to a high number of San learners who drop out of school at an early stage. In view of this, the need for addressing factors that inhibit any child from attending or advancing in education cannot be over-emphasised.

In the light of the aforementioned, and taking into account the slow progress in addressing the educational backlog of the San community, a need exists to find what the obstacles are and how they can be addressed. Although a lot has been written about the impoverishment and marginalisation of the San community, no intensive studies have been done with specific reference to the causes of their school dropout rate (Boston University CGHD, 2009).

This study is borne out of the need to investigate the causes of the high dropout rates of San learners in formal schools. By the same token the study strives to explore possible solutions for these phenomenon. In the sub-sections to follow attention is given to the historical background of education in Namibia focusing on the San population. This is followed by a presentation of the problem statement as well as the aims and objectives of the study. A brief overview of the research methodology employed in this study is then highlighted. The final sub-section deals with the outline of the chapters to follow.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In this sub-section a brief profile is given of the specific region in which the case study was done. The conceptualisation of the population group which is the focus of the study, with specific reference to the name or term 'San', is then presented. Following this, attention is paid to the transformation that the San population has gone through over the years. Finally, a brief historical overview of the involvement of San communities in education in Namibia is presented.

1.2.1. Brief profile of the study area

Omaheke is one of the 14 political regions of Namibia. It is situated in the eastern part of Namibia, bordering Botswana along the 21 E Longitude. It is a vast region with a total land surface area of 84 612 sq. km, which is 10.3% of the country's land surface (Omaheke Regional Council-ORC, 2014). The region has a population of about 71 233 people, according to the 2011 Census. This represents 3.4% of Namibia's population (Namibia Statistics Agency -NSA, 2011). *Annexure (A) presents the map of Omaheke Region.* The population of the San in Namibia is estimated to be close to 50 000. The Omaheke Region accounts for about a fourth of the entire San population in Namibia, totaling about 12 500 (NSA, 2011).

Omaheke region is divided into seven constituencies (Gobabis, Otjinene, Otjombinde, Kalahari, Okorukambe, Aminuis, and Epukiro). Gobabis Town is the regional capital and the seat of the regional authority. It is located 210 km's east of Windhoek, the country's capital city. There are eight recognized traditional authorities for different communities in the Omaheke region of which two are of the San population.

There are 42 schools in the region. Thirty five (35) are state-run while seven are private. Some of the private schools in the region are owned and run by the Catholic Church while some belong to other private entities. All the schools in the region accommodated approximately 21 457 learners during the 2015 school calendar year (NSA, 2016). Omaheke region has 706 teachers. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the teachers possess a tertiary qualification of two years plus (ORC, 2014).

1.2.2. Conceptualisation of the term "San"

The clarification of the meaning of the term "San" need to be dealt with at the onset since this concept is linked to the subjects that are the primary focus of the study. Furthermore, the elaboration of the term or word 'San' is also intended to justify why the study adopted it in reference to the population group under discussion. Many scholars and historical writers view the identity and categorisation of the San population as problematic, since this group did not share the same identity in the past (Barnard, 1992; Lee, 1984; Guenther, 1986; Suzman, 2001).

According to Lee (1989:9) the San "are a cluster of indigenous peoples in Southern Africa who speak a click language and who have a tradition of living by hunting and gathering" (Lee, 1984:9). They are primarily found in Southern African countries such as Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa with some smaller numbers also residing in Angola and a few other countries (Schapera, 1930:5; Suzman, 2001). They consist of different ethnic groups who speak different languages/dialects such as Ju/'hoansi, !Xun, Hai//om, !Naro, Khwe or !Xoon, Naro, #Khomani, //Gana. The word "San" or "Sãn" was coined by the Khoekhoe or Khoikhoi and was derived from the word "Sonqua" meaning 'foragers' or "bushmen" (Barnard, 1992:8). The use of the word "San" has been disputed by some scholars because of its derogatory or pejorative connotations. It is argued that in earlier years this term referred primarily to those Khoekhoe who had lost their cattle, or an "impoverished" or "degenerated" Hottentot (Guenther 1986: 28-30). According to Alan Barnard the term 'San' is commonly employed today by anthropologists who object to the use of 'Bushman' on the grounds that it is, in their view, a racist or sexist term (Barnard, 1992:8). The word "Bushmen" has its origin from the Dutch word "Bosjemans" meaning "people of the bush", a label coined by the Dutch settlers who came to South Africa in 1652 in reference to this population group (Barnard, 1992; Lee, 1984).

Suzman (2001:3) maintains that there is no collective name for this group which has become to be known as the San. Evidently, some San people prefer to be identified by their different specific ethnic groups such as Ju/'hoansi, !Xun, Hai//om, !Naro, Khwe or !Xoon, Naro, #Khomani, //Gana and so forth (Suzman, 2001:3; Le Roux & White, 2004:2). According to many authors the abovementioned names, in most cases mean "real people", "first people" or just "people" (Le Roux & White, 2004:2). Yet, others seem not to have a problem with them being referred to as "Bushmen" (Guenther, 1986: 10).

The above discussion clearly shows that the debate as to the most appropriate name for this population group is not settled. In this study the term "San" or San population will be used because it is reflected in almost all official documents and publications in Namibia.

1.2.3. The socio-economic transformation of the San population in Namibia

Historically, the San population was known as hunter-gatherers, who lived a nomadic life in multi-groups of social bands. They maintained strong cultural values characterised by robust kinship ties and an ethos of sharing (Guenther, 1986; Schapera, 1930; Barnard, 1992; Lee, 2003).

The San population's way of life has gone through tremendous transformation over the years and very few of them practice the traditional hunter-gathering lifestyle in the true sense of the word. Literature indicates that nowadays many of them live in small groups, scattered and isolated in many parts of the countries where they are commonly found (Nthomang, 2002:103). Some of them are found in informal settlements of bigger villages and townships, others are working as labourers at commercial farms and communal villages, herding livestock and repairing fences. In the Omaheke region, a substantial number of the San population resides at the government resettlement camps such as Drimiopsis and Skoonheid. Others are located at remote, isolated settlements such as Donkerbos and Eiseb. Many of them have now adapted to a sedentary lifestyle at these settlements and would occasionally engage in seasonal migration.

However, a substantial number of them, especially the unemployed are generally restless, resorting to a social existence that resembles some elements of a nomadic style, common to a social band (Guenther, 1986: 289). According to Keitseope Ntomang, one of the most noticeable characteristics of the San population today "is their common experience of dispossession, mistreatment, exploitation and neglect by those more economically and politically powerful than themselves" (Ntomang, 2002:102). Despite some notable efforts made by governments and NGO's to improve the livelihood of the San population, their quality of life remains comparatively extremely poor. Most of them are challenged by a host of social problems such as poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, delinquencies, poor nutrition, inadequate shelter, and other social ills (Guenther, 1986; Nthomang, 2002:102; Lee, 2003; National Planning Commission-NPC, 2006). According to Nthomang (2002:103) "the lack of group organisation, lack of educational services in their own languages and lack of knowledge about their rights leave them in an extremely vulnerable situation".

In spite of all the challenges, the literature points out some positive features remaining in the lifestyle of the San population such as the values of egalitarianism, sharing and kinship ties (Lee, 2003: 289). In general, the San population are known as extraordinarily gifted and talented in many areas such as arts, craft and technical related competencies.

1.2.4. Brief historical overview: San population's involvement in education

Following the attainment of Namibian independence in 1990, access to education in general was increased substantially. However, despite all efforts, the challenges facing the San population continued, especially the non-completion of school. The Regional Conference on Development Programs for Africa's San/Basarwa populations, held in Windhoek on 16-18 June 1992, recognised this challenge. Resolutions were adopted and recommendations were made at this conference. This gave currency to the plight of the San population. However, these noble recommendations were seemingly not followed by any concrete action (Von Wietersheim, 2002). In response, government initiated a number of interventions such as the provision for school fees exemption, and other measures aimed at increasing enrollment. The implementation of the new measures was seemingly not satisfactory (Suzman, 2001). The blame for the poor outcome in this regard was partly attributed to poor policy enforcement, lack of cooperation from some school principals, and red-tape involved in the implementation process (Dieckmann et al., 2014).

The slow progress prompted various stakeholders to insist on flexibility in the policies to respond to emerging needs (Suzman, 2001). They recommended that access to education be facilitated by enforcing adherence to the exemption of marginalised children from payment of school fees. A call was made on the need to increase the awareness level of parents on the value of education, to strengthen early childhood development programs, to establish mobile schools, to introduce gender and cultural sensitivity training for teachers, to change attitudes towards marginalised children, and to provide transport facilities for easy access to schools (Suzman, 2001: 123-129). In response, the government of Namibia, among other measures established satellite schools in line with the nomadic lifestyle of the San community in the Tsumkwe

constituency, as a pilot. Furthermore, the school feeding program for the poor communities was rolled out (Chigovera, 2009).

In 2008, a unit was established in the Office of the Prime Minister to deal specifically with the challenges facing the San community including their high school dropout rate and other socio-economic challenges that they faced. This unit was upgraded to a department in 2015, and moved to the office of the Vice-President. Honourable Royal //Oo//oo, a prominent member of the San population who worked for many years in San community development programs, is the deputy minister in charge of this department.

The latest notable intervention by the government of Namibia to improve access to education for the poor and to maximize school retention was through the abolishing of the payment of school fees for primary education and for secondary education in 2013 and 2016 respectively. The impact of this measure is yet to be determined as no studies have been done in this regard.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems that the San population of Namibia faces today, specifically the high school dropout rate and the resultant low educational level is a long standing issue, dating back to the time when the country was under colonialism. According to Suzman (2001:124) in 1984 only 1 out of 20 San school-going age children were attending school. The report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Training and Culture (PCETC) in the year 2000 and the report by Suzman revealed the precarious situation of the San. The report revealed some serious deficiencies, noting that only 1 out of 5 San children of school-going age were attending school and only a few of them ever reached secondary level.

An analysis of the school dropout rates over the period 2005 to 2009 revealed that Omaheke region ranked third out of the 13 regions in Namibia with an annual average dropout rate of 9.6% (Nekongo-Nielsen, Mbukusa, Tjiramba & Beukes, 2015: 102). This dropout rate is high compared to other regions such as Zambezi, Khomas, Erongo, Oshana and Oshikoto where an annual average of 5% and less was recorded.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture indicate that school attendance rates are lowest among the San population in all age groups from seven to nineteen. The figures show that the average school attendance rate for San children is 43% for the seven year old, declining to less than 20% for older age groups. This is in contrast with the other population groups where an average of 70% school attendance rate was recorded (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, UNESCO & UNICEF, 2015: 4).

According to Rumberger, "dropping out of school is costly for both the dropout and the society as a whole" (Rumberger, 2001:4). The future prospects of the individual, the family and the society at large are negatively affected. Numerous studies have found that school dropouts in contrast with those who eventually graduate are more probable to be unemployed, likely to be dependent on public assistance, and more likely to be in trouble with the law (Patterson, Hale & Stressman, 2007:1).

The U.S. Department of Education, revealed that in 1998, the unemployment rate for dropouts was 75 percent higher than for high school graduates (Rumberger, 2001: 3). A study done in Canada among the indigenous Aboriginal people found "that in addition to its market relevance, educational success holds important consequences for the social health of Aboriginal people and for those who provide services to that population" (Wotherspoon & Schissel, 1998:4). Poverty, injury and ill health, violence, substance abuse problems, family difficulties, early childhood concerns, and involvement in criminal activities were all viewed as strongly interconnected as both barriers to educational success and consequences of educational problems (1998:4).

The impact of continued dropout from school by San children clearly has a detrimental effect on the socio-economic conditions of the population as a whole. According to Suzman (2001) poor education among the San community results in a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills, which in turn make them less confident and hinder their active participation in national development issues. In addition the San, due to their lack of education find it difficult to compete with others in the job market with some taking only lowly paid unskilled work (Suzman, 2001).

The abovementioned clearly illustrates that school dropout holds serious social and economic repercussions for the society in general and for the San as a marginalised population in particular. The need to come up with tangible strategies to address this problem can therefore not be over-emphasised. However, for such strategies to be effective there is a need for in-depth investigations of the causes, focusing on the affected population groups and taking the diverse geographic dynamics into account. It is widely maintained that the issue of school dropout has not been researched adequately, hence its continued persistence. In support of this, notable scholars argue that "unless the nature and characteristics of the critical events in the dropout process are understood and clarified to inform policy, any policy intervention intended to prevent dropout and/or encourage drop-in is a waste of scarce resources" (Sabates, Akyeampong, Westbrook & Hunt, 2010: 1).

In view of the aforementioned it can be concluded that there is a high rate of school dropout among the San population in the Omaheke region. It is further clear that this problem adversely affects the socio-economic status of the San population and perpetuate their continuous state of poverty and marginalisation. This study is therefore of great significance to inform policy and strategic plans of various stakeholders in education. The study is intended to contribute to the efforts of raising the educational attainment of San children which in the long run will contribute to them gaining skills and competencies and making them competitive in the job market. It is assumed that once the latter are achieved, their marginalisation will be reduced and their quality of life will improve.

1.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the causes of the high level of school dropout rate of San learners in formal schools. The objectives of this study are to:
- ➤ Investigate the factors that contribute to the high dropout rate among the San children in formal schools (primary as well as secondary schools).
- ➤ Explore the possible strategies which can be employed to reduce the dropout rate of San children in formal schools.
- ➤ Make recommendations towards reducing the high level of school dropout of San leaners.

1.5. DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

The key concepts that feature prominently in this dissertation are defined below.

School Dropout: A student who leaves school before completing a course of study or before the end of the term.

Indigenous: This refers to those population groups or people originating in a country or region.

Marginalised population: These are groups in a society that are excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural and political life.

Multi-grade teaching: It refers to a situation where a teacher is capable and expected to teach many and diverse grades in a school, all at the same time and not only limited to teach one grade.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC's): The Namibia National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children refers to an **orphan** as "a child who has lost one or both parents because of death and is under the age of 18 years" and a **vulnerable child** as "a child who needs care and protection"(Ministry of Woman Affairs and Child Welfare, 2004: 2).

1.6. OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

This section gives a brief outline of the methodology employed in this study, with reference to the study design and data collection methods. The mothodology is discussed in detail in chapter three.

a. Research Design

The study followed an exploratory, descriptive approach. It employed a qualitative research approach which has the advantage of allowing the subjects in the study to express themselves freely on how they experience their own social realities. A case study research design was therefore, preferred to gain a deeper understanding of the population group forming the subject of this study by obtaining their views in their own settings.

b. Population and Sampling

The target population for the study consisted of San learners who dropped out from primary and secondary schools in the Omaheke region. The other groups that formed part of the target population were the parents of those San learners who dropped out of school, current San school attending learners, principals/teachers of selected schools, and resource persons in the community. The study employed a non-probability sampling design, and made use of purposive and convenience sampling methods in the selection of participants.

c. Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were collected through face-to-face interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis. The data were analysed employing an inductive method. The raw data were transcribed, followed by the coding of data into themes and categories based on the aim and objectives of the study.

1.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations were considered in this study since the population group studied is regarded as vulnerable and marginalised. In the selection of those to be interviewed, the researcher obtained informed consent. The other ethical considerations were closely observed at all times such as confidentiality, right to privacy, protection from harm, and respect to individuals and their cultural norms. The ethical considerations are discussed in detail in chapter three.

1.8. LIMITATIONS

In this study a number of limitations were anticipated and strategies were put in place to mitigate them. One of the limitations anticipated by the researcher was the mobility of the San population, because of their semi-nomadic lifestyle. The study was limited to one region, Omaheke, and although findings might be helpful to a broad spectrum of users, generalising them to the whole country may not be possible.

1.9. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In chapter two, an overview of the literature is given, covering the theoretical framework of the research topic and highlighting findings of empirical studies done in this area. Chapter three presents a detailed explanation of the research design and methodology. Chapter four is devoted to the presentation of the data gathered and interpretation. Finally, chapter five presents the conclussions on the main findings and provides recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the phenomenon of school dropout focusing on the San children as reflected in the available literature is outlined. Firstly, attention is given to the theoretical frameworks that are considered to be relevant to the issue of school dropout. The causes of school dropout and proposed solutions as found in the literature are then discussed.

2.2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Effective evaluation of the relationship between the causes of the problem and the response is intended to pave the way forward in identifying neglected strategies which could possibly result in improvement. A number of theoretical frameworks can be used to explain the school dropout phenomenon.

2.2.1. Tinto's model for educational engagement

The role of the school system and the learners' experiences of schooling are critical in explaining the school dropout issue. This theory maintains that learners who do not identify or participate in school activities are more likely to perform poorly or to drop out of school (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994 n.p). Absenteeism and students' discipline problems are some of the indicators that show the level of engagement that a learner has with the school (Rumberger, 2001:3). This theory "supports the idea that dropping out is influenced by both the social and academic experiences of students. In other words, dropping out is not simply a result of academic failure" (Rumberger, 2001:3).

Schools are therefore implored to foster a climate where learners are active and view themselves as being part of the school system. Involving learners in academic and extracurricular activities are thus considered crucial (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994 n.p.). An interesting phenomenon in the model is Tinto's incorporation of the aspect of cost-

benefit analysis. Tinto argues that if learners experience a sense of disengagement they are prone to be attracted to their perceived "benefits" beyond the school system (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994 n.p.). This literally means that a learner who has reached a level of disengagement is likely to start looking for benefits outside the school environment, thus increasing the likelihood of him or her dropping out.

2.2.2. Walberg's model of educational productivity

Walberg's theory emphasises positive re-enforcement. Walberg believed that there is untapped potential within both the learner and his/her environment. The model therefore postulates that "motivational orientations, self-regulated learning strategies and social interpersonal abilities in facilitating performance" are important domains (McGrew, 2008:1). It is further maintained that if students are made to become more self-aware, instilled with the necessary self-confidence, are able to set learning goals, then they are more likely to develop greater attachment to schools, resulting in better performance (2008:2).

2.2.3. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory

Bronfenbrenner's theory provides another angle of understanding school dropout. It is based on the premise that development should be viewed as a "direct consequence of the interactions that occur within a micro system such as school, family and the peer group, and indirectly, a consequence of the interactions across the systems" (Abuya, Oketch & Musyoka, 2013:743). The macro-system with which the micro-system interacts refers to community and societal characteristics that determine whether a child stays or drops out of school (2013:743).

The bases of the abovementioned theories are supported by various studies on school dropout. The discussion to follow provides an overview of different explanations of the issue of school dropout by various authors and theorists. It will also include aspects that are of relevance to the San population, specifically factors related to the dropout of San learners from the perspective of the available literature.

2.3. CAUSES OF SCHOOL DROPOUT

School dropout is viewed as a complex process due to a variety of proximal and distant factors (Hunt, 2008). Many academicians agree that there is not one single reason for school drop-out, but that instead it is often a process rather than being caused by a single event (Rumberger, 2001; Hunt, 2008; Sabates *et al.*, 2010). According to Spaull (2011:5) "education is a social process, embedded within a national context which is influenced by historical, political, cultural, social, economic and geographic factors".
The literature reveals two broad themes in explaining the reasons why learners drop out of school early. The first category relates to those factors which stem from the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of the affected group (Rumberger, 2001; Hunt, 2008; Nekongo-Nielsen *et al.*, 2015). The second category is premised on the contribution of the educational system and the school environment to the school dropout (Rumberger, 2001; Nekongo-Nielsen *et al.*, 2015; Sabates *et al.*, 2010).

In the discussion to follow, attention is paid to the causes of school dropout from various perspectives as reflected in the literature. The findings of various global, continental, and national studies are also integrated in the discussion.

2.3.1. Socio-Economic Perspective and School Dropout

The child's household economic status, issues of child labour and migration, and the availability of resources in the community are some of the factors that are advanced as contributing to school dropout from a socio-economic perspective. These factors are elaborated below.

(i) Children's Household Economic Status

Sabates *et al.*, (2010:12) noted that children's household situation has a direct bearing on the issue of school dropout. They maintain that the poverty status of the parents affect their ability to pay school fees and to afford associated costs. Research has further found that even in the fee-free schools it is often the indirect costs which the parents are struggling with, such as stationery, transport costs and school uniforms (Hunt 2008:9; Ananga, 2011:6).

It has also been established by some scholars that children from low income households, particularly those whose parents are unemployed, are more likely to drop out of school prematurely (Branson, Marbory, Brown, Covington, McCauley & Nash, 2013:4). On the other hand it has been established that children from well-off families are more likely to attend and to remain longer in school compared to those from poorer families (Hunt, 2008). The inability of poor parents to provide adequately in the nutritional needs of the children is cited as a concern in many studies (Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014; Spaull, 2011). The result is that often, many such children go to school on empty stomachs. This compromises their focus and concentration on school work, thereby making schooling an unpleasant experience for them. Although education is highly valued in most communities around the globe, the reality is that in the context of poverty-stricken households education of children is often sacrificed over other priorities such as food, and certain basic necessities (NPC, 2006:28).

As noted earlier, the San population is the poorest in Namibia and similarly in the Omaheke region (NPC, 2006:28). Incidents of San learners dropping out because of being ashamed, as they had ragged clothes or no toiletries were noted in most of the nine (9) regions covered in the study by the Legal Assistance Centre (Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014). The issue of toiletries and related needs are particularly of importance to girls. A study done in Kenya found that the parents' inability to buy sanitary towels for girls contributed to some of them dropping out (Abuya *et al.*, 2013:755).

The abovementioned challenges were noted in studies done among the !Kung (part of the San population) in neigbouring Botswana. It was observed that when the first school opened at !Kangwa, Botswana in 1973, the parents complained about the school related expenses such as school uniform, fees, and the weekly cost of the laundry soap to keep the clothes clean (Lee, 1984:142). The cost of schooling was therefore not affordable to the majority of the families. In addition, the !Kung population then depended on mobility to search for a livelihood and this stood in direct conflict with regular school attendance.

(ii) Child Labour and Migration

Studies done by Sabates *et al.*, (2011) and Abuya *et al.*, (2013) have shown that older school-attending children from poverty-stricken households are pressured to sacrifice their school career, opting for a job to earn an income for the household. According to Ananga (2011), in Namibia, many San children are forced by circumstances to work as herders, farm labourers, and as full-time child-care attendants. During the peak of the harvesting season the students' school attendance is often disrupted. This is because the children migrate with their parents to the farms or plantation areas and in some cases the older children are recruited together with their parents. The school at !Kangwa referred to in the previous section experienced similar challenges. The !Kung population then depended on mobility to search for a livelihood and since the new school was located near drinking places, the parents feared for the safety of their children (Lee, 1984: 142). This resulted in the children being withdrawn from school.

Related to the above, Rumberger (2001:17) also makes reference to the role of communities in availing employment opportunities to learners either during or after school, resulting in such children opting to quit school. This trend is referred to by some studies as the "pull factor of the labour market" as opposed to the "push factor of poverty" (Ananga, 2011:7). In a study of factors contributing to boys dropping out of secondary school in the Khomas region (Namibia), it was found that "some boys did not want school anymore; instead they wanted to work and make money....overlooking the fact that education leads to stable and better wages" (Mapani & Mushaandja, 2013:28). In Australia, studies have shown that "in general, a weak youth labour market increases the likelihood that students will stay on at school" (Lamb *et al.*, 2004: 41).

(iii) Resources in the Community and Dropout

Non-availability of resources in a community or a specific neighbourhood contributes to the likelihood of children dropping out of school (Rumberger, 2001:17). The absence of pre-schools, playgrounds, and after-school centers coupled with other factors put children from such neighbourhoods at a disadvantage (2001:17). The mentioned resources are vital for the children's cognitive development, physical and emotional

growth and for developing effective social skills. Hence, the lack of adequate resources has a direct bearing on the children's school performance and completion.

2.3.2. Socio-Cultural Perspective and School Dropout

(i) Family Environment, Parenting Style and Parental Involvement

The family is regarded as the foundation of any society. It therefore plays a pivotal role in the life of a child, through socialisation and securing a safe, and a stable environment. This is critical for their growth, development and learning. Ananga (2011:6) notes that the "household composition, arrangement, interaction and support play crucial roles in retention and completion". Family dissolutions, which can be due to either death of one parent, separation or divorce often affect the children's schooling. Research has shown that children from single-parent and step-families are more likely to drop out of school than those from two-parent families (Rumberger, 2001:11; Ananga, 2011:16).

In support of the above, a recent study among the rural poor in Nairobi (Kenya) found that family dissolution accounted for 10 out of 30 reasons of school dropout (Abuya *et al.*, 2013:751). Children from the affected households are overburdened with the extra responsibilities of caring for their siblings and are expected to do many household chores in order to fill the gap left by the absent parent. This has a negative impact on their school attendance and performance, resulting in early school exit.

Another socio-cultural aspect considered to be an important ingredient in the success of the children's progression in education is the level of parental involvement in the education of their children. School authorities in Namibia have been on record complaining about poor parental involvement in education. In a study that covered five schools in the Khomas region, poor parental involvement was underscored (Mapani & Mushaandja, 2013:26). Educators pointed out that parents are only seen at schools when there are disciplinary cases. The top-down nature of the education system was blamed by some as contributing to poor parental involvement in education. The parents feel left out in the school's decision-making process (Molosi, 2013: 20).

Research has also revealed that parenting style plays a bigger role and is a critical predictor of school dropout (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014). An authoritative parenting style has been found to be useful, as children are more likely to be attached to their school (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014:779). The authoritative approach is credited for putting parents in a position to monitor and regulate the activities of their children, while providing them with encouragement and emotional support (Rumberger, 2001:13). In contrast, the non-authoritative parenting style is blamed for the children's tendency to deviate from the norms which affect their education (Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014). The parents in this category often lack warmth and fail to educate their children on developmentally appropriate expectations. Children from such households are easily negatively influenced by their peers, and most end up leaving school.

(ii) Early Marriages and Teenage Parenthood

Early marriages are widely acknowledged as a problem in many countries, especially in Africa. According to a UNICEF report on the State of the World's Children "eleven per cent of girls are married before they turn 15, jeopardizing their rights to health, education and protection" (UNICEF, 2014: 4). Early marriages have been blamed for fueling teenage pregnancy and increasing school dropout among San girls (Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014). From the literature it appears that early marriages are rooted in the traditional practices of the San population. According to Lee (1984:79), "traditionally, girls were married at ages 12 to 16, boys at 18 to 25". The age at first marriage increased slightly from 15 to 18 for girls in the 1970's. Some informants who interacted with Robert Lee during his studies of the !Kung or Ju/'hoansi argued that San parents prefer for their daughters to be married at a young age. This was attributed to "the desire of parents to have their daughters safely married before rivals could stake their claims, or before the girl was old enough to have an affair with one man after her parents have betrothed her to another" (Lee, 1984: 81).

Another traditional practice that could be seen as the reason for the occurrence of early marriage is known as "marriage by capture". This practice involves "the mock forcible carrying of the girl from the parents' hut to a specially built marriage hut and the anointing of the bride and the groom with special oils and aromatic powders" (Lee,

1984: 80). A study done in three regions, namely Kunene, Kavango and Omaheke found that some communities still continue to allow arranged and forced marriages among girls, even if they are still in school (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015:112).

Another aspect that is closely related to early marriages is teenage parenthood. The high school dropout among the San girls is attributed to teenage pregnancies (Chigovera, 2009). Studies have established that poverty renders young San girls vulnerable to sexual abuse by older men (Dieckmann et al., 2014:533). In some instances early pregnancies for girls are linked to domestic violence and rape, closely tied to alcohol abuse. The official statistics of pregnancy-related school dropout in Namibia for 2007 showed that 1465 learners dropped out of school for this reason, with 96% of them being girls (Ministry of Education/LAC, 2008: 2).

The high teenage pregnancy in Namibia is further associated with the early onset of sexual activity of both girls and boys. The Namibia Demographic Health Survey (2005/2006) has revealed "that about half of girls aged 15-19 are sexually active, as well as about two-thirds of the boys in that age group" (Minstry of Education/LAC, 2008: 15). Contributing factors to the early pregnancy have been noted to be peer pressure, "sugar daddy" relationships, lack of parental love and guidance, failure of parents to discuss sex with their children, lack of recreational activities for youth and alcohol abuse" (2008: 15). In other studies that focused on the urban poor, it was discovered that girls engaged in transactional sexual relationships which often affected their attendance and interest in school (Abuya et al., 2013:752).

The tendency of San parents to withdraw girls from school once they reach puberty has been noted (Dieckmann et al., 2014). A closer analysis of the literature shows that the practice of female initiation among the San has been practiced for many years and is still in use (Schapera, 1930: 118-122; Guenther, 1986: 274-281; Barnard, 1992: 60). The attainment of puberty among the San people was highly regarded and it was marked by performance of rituals and ceremonies (Schapera, 1930:118). Traditionally, a San girl at her first menstruation is kept in isolation and only one or two people are allowed to be in contact with her for that period. A tiny hut with a very small opening would be made for her, usually by her mother (1930:118). "She will spend four or five days in the hut which is kept shut. An old woman keeps her company and gives her

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food and water. This woman is an old joking partner, ideally her maternal grandmother" (Guenther, 1986: 279). During the time that she is in retreat no man was allowed to come near her. This period in the girl's life is accompanied by a number of ceremonies, such as the Eland Bull Dance, and a feast (Schapera, 1930: 119).

Guenther (1986: 278) who studied the !Nharo (one of the ethnic groups of the San population) reported that female initiation was widely practiced during the time of his fieldwork. He described this kind of ceremony also referred to as "//gai kaxu (woman's thing) as an extended and relatively elaborate passage rite that was held for each individual girl at the onset of her menstruation period" (1986:278). After these festivities girls are re-introduced to the community, and are now considered as women. According to the above narration, it is possible that San parents withdraw their daughters who reach puberty for the observance of these rituals or possibly to arrange for them to get married, since they are now considered as women. A recent study done in Namibia found that the practices narrated above are still prevalent. Nekongo-Nielsen *et al.*, (2015:102) found that in some communities a girl who has reached puberty is taken out of school to get married and to have children. This study cited a Grade 5 learner who got married early and who was carrying a third child at the time of the study (2015:102).

(iii) Health Issues

Ill-health is linked to irregular school attendance, poor performance and dropout. Malnourished children, especially those who are stunted experience challenges with their learning, affecting their level of attention and cognitive functions (Hunt, 2008). Such children are therefore likely to have low motivation which can result in them repeating the grades, or dropping out.

Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and emotional problems are cited as contributing factors to the dropout problem (Branson, Marbory, Brown, Covington, McCauley & Nash, 2013). Many schools do not have access to readily available professional counseling services. As a result, learners with such challenges are not detected early. Some become regular absentees from schools, while others may also get involved in substance abuse and other anti-social behaviour. Subsequently, they

are likely to lose a place in school through either dismissal or by dropping out. Parents' illnesses have been found to have a negative effect on the learners' school attendance and completion. Affected children are left with no choice than to take care of their ill parents, as a result school dropout becomes inevitable (Abuya et al., 2013:753). It is clear from the aforementioned discussions, that the community context of learners has a bearing on the child's educational attainment. There is a need for a broader understanding of such factors to inform measures to curb school dropout. The next sub-section looks at how the educational system and the school environment cause school dropout.

2.3.3. Educational System and the School Environment

The literature offers explanations of various factors within the educational system and the school environment that lead to children dropping out. The discussion below elaborates on these factors.

(i) Conflicting School Culture and Student's Household Culture

A number of studies have found that there is a mismatch between the school culture and that of the learners' family environment, especially learners from minority groups (Patterson et al., 2007:5). This often led such learners to leave school prematurely. Schools are guided by the organisational policies and structures that often do not take cognizance of the diversity of the student population. Bureaucratic school culture is seen as being in contrast with the familiar environment to which some learners are accustomed to. Research indicates that San children find formal schooling "authoritarian and competitive" in contrast with their home environment which is "informal, egalitarian and cooperative" (Le Roux, 2000; Mafela, 2014). This school culture resonates with the rigid educational system, causing the system to be irresponsive to the needs of the highly culturally attached indigenous groups such as the San (Suzman, 2001; PCECT, 1999; Chigovera, 2009; Anaya, 2013; Dieckmann et al., 2014).

The school culture is often characterised by hierarchical power relations, control and impersonal relationships. The educators, in following this culture, at times are said to

conduct their work in isolation, and in the process overlook some students who may have problems at home, or requiring alternative approaches (Patterson *et al.*, 2007:5). The curriculum and the way of doing things in schools are usually highly regulated and prescriptive, leaving little room for flexibility. The teachers, especially in public schools, often take a hardline position, believing that it is the only way to control the learners. In most cases, these practices drive children out of school, especially those who are vulnerable.

Anaya (2013:16) asserts that "the overall lack of education that is offered in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way" is a challenge to some indigenous children's educational attainment in Namibia. Some scholars observed that "education that is divorced from the students' culture and ways of knowing results in failure and frustration" (Ketsitlile, Bulawa & Kgathi, 2013: 47).

In support of this, Dieckmann *et al.* (2014:534-5) affirm the insensitivity of the Namibian school curriculum; denoting its failure to reflect the history and social realities of the San population. The absence of the teaching of San languages in schools is cited, as an example of this mismatch. San learners are expected to learn in new languages at an early age, and are deprived of learning vital cultural symbols and attributes, that are usually transmitted through the language. The learners therefore find it difficult to relate the content of the learning to their own lives and environment and this certainly stifles their interest in learning.

Studies done in Australia revealed similar divergences of the education system with the culture of the indigenous Aborigines. It was found that the curriculum at all levels of primary schools was not grounded in the daily life experiences of the indigenous students, but rather in the dominant culture's knowledge and experiences (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003: 7). Some examples of these inappropriate materials or methods were the pictures on classroom walls, textbooks, and children's literature which were all Anglocentric, with nothing portraying the Australian or Aboriginal history, culture, wildlife, or society, or any content that had some connection to the daily lives of the indigenous students (2003: 7).

In the light of the above, it is clear that the language and cultural realities of the San are largely disregarded in the school system. This scenario is equated by some scholars to the concept of "othering" practiced in the colonial education, where the western cultural knowledge was used to invalidate African realities, cultures and histories (Mafela, 2014:49). Critics such as Foucault as reflected in Mafela (2014:49) in reference to such practices, noted that "negation of people's realities is tantamount to the negation of their very own essence". This relates to the current practice in the Namibian educational system which fails to integrate the culture and languages of the San population in the curriculum. The San children are, therefore, likely to feel left out, resulting in them losing interest in school and subsequently dropping out.

(ii) Unwelcoming School Environment

The negative school environment was identified as the "biggest handicap to the San's progress in education" as it affects their self-esteem and level of participation (Le Roux, 2000:4).

Many studies blame discrimination and related negative ridicule directed towards the San students for the prevailing negative school environment. Research has shown that San children are dropping out of schools because of bullying, ridiculing, negative stereotyping, verbal and physical abuse occurring on school premises and mostly perpetrated by fellow learners and school staff (PCECT, 1999; Ninnes, 2011; Dieckmann et al., 2014). Reports by continental and international sources revealed that these types of degrading and inhumane treatment by learners from other ethnic groups contribute to a high dropout rate among the San students (Anaya 2013:16; Chigovera, 2009).

Some teachers are also cited as culprits in the discrimination and ill-treatment meted against San learners. The literature cites many examples of how teachers use myths and negative stereotyping against San learners, a practice which clearly perpetuates the ill-treatment. Some teachers have perceptions that "San don't like school and their culture is inferior to the mainstream" (Molosi, 2013:14). With this mindset, teachers believe that they have to be extra firm when dealing with San learners. The way they exercise this firmness pushes them away. This can be closely linked to the observation made by Shields (2004) as noted in (Patterson et al., 2007:6) that "educators may

unknowingly, and with the best intentions, allocate blame for poor school performance to children from minority groups based on generalisation, labels or misguided assumptions". This situation can be attributed to lack of awareness or cultural insensitivity on the part of the educators. Various studies hinted at the fact that the training of most teachers, particularly in Namibia and Botswana, does not adequately prepare them to deal with multi-cultural dynamics in a school set-up (Molosi, 2013; Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014).

The issue of corporal punishment as a cause of school dropout also emerges from the literature. Studies in the late 1990's revealed that San children did not like corporal punishment as this form of punishment was alien to their upbringing (PCETC, 1999). In support of these, studies done at schools in Southern Ghana, where caning is applied as a punitive measure, revealed that school children were opposed to corporal punishment, leading to several cases of school dropout (Ananga, 2011:38). A clear practical example of the effect of corporal punishment on the San children was clearly demonstrated when the first school was opened at !Kangwa, in Botswana. The school faced fierce resistance from parents about the beatings of learners. According to Lee, the Ju/'hoansi parents withdrew their children from school objecting to their children being forbidden to speak their own language on school grounds and to the mild corporal punishment which was a standard practice in the schools then (Lee, 2003:162).

(iii) Students' Attributes and Factors Related to Peer Influence

Rumberger (2001:6) found that the individual student's attributes such as values, attitudes and behaviours also contribute to the decision to leave school. Boys are particularly singled out as not valuing education, of becoming unruly and engaging in unwanted conducts by taking drugs, smoking, and absconding classes. According to Mapani & Mushaandja (2013:28) these practices are attributed to peer influence, mostly from boys who had dropped out of school.

Related to personal attributes are child-level factors which in most cases are not of their own making, but important determining factors in predicting school dropout. Late entrants to the school system are often prone to dropout, as the over-aged children

tend to feel ashamed of being in the same grade as their much younger classmates (Abuya *et al.*, 2013).

(iv) School Quality, Processes and Practices

Researchers found that learners who repeat grades are likely to drop out of school (Kemp, 2006:237). Repetition of grades is often due to learners' level of motivation and the quality of teaching and practices in the school system. Students' disengagement from school is seen as a major factor in the dropout of learners from school. Students' poor level of involvement in extra-curricular activities and in school functions, as well as absenteeism are considered to be critical predictors of disengagement (Kemp, 2006:237). Some academics are of the opinion that dropping out of school should not be seen as a single event in isolation but should be viewed as a long-term process in which students disengage from school, frequently beginning in early grades (Rumberger, 2001: 6; Blondal *et al.*, 2014; Hunt, 2008). Learners who are disengaged from school start feeling alienated and this affects their interest in learning and academic motivation (Blondal *et al.,* 2014:78).

The schools' quality, processes, and practices are at times influenced by structural factors linked to the availability of resources at schools. These range from inadequate teaching staff, insufficient classrooms, lack of teaching aids and equipment. The mentioned factors affect the quality of education and students' performance, resulting in students losing interest in the school. In a case study done in urban high schools, teachers expressed frustration for "not having enough time to work with students one-on-one, collaborate with each other, and meet the demands of teaching and non-teaching duties" (Patterson *et al.,* 2007:9). The extra burden on teachers through their involvement in extra-curricular activities, school functions, coaching sport codes, administrative duties is assumed to have an effect on the teachers' performances.

(v) Challenges of distance to schools

Findings from various studies refer to the long distances that San learners have to travel to reach school as a barrier that influences their attendance and school completion (PCETC, 1999; Dieckmann, 2014). Many San children were found to be

travelling long distances, ranging from 30 to 70 km's to reach their schools. Subsequently, many learners return late to school after vacations and long weekends (Dieckmann *et al.,* 2014:68). The consequent interruptions and absenteeism, affect learners' motivation and performance negatively, resulting in either failure or school dropout.

Studies done in Botswana in areas covered by the Remote Areas Dweller program revealed that the San parents disliked the fact that through this program, they had "to be separated from their children who have to attend school some 30-40 kilometres away" (Ketsitlile *et al.,* 2013: 48). According to the mentioned authors "San culture values close family ties and children are rarely separated from their parents" (2013: 48).

2.4. ADDRESSING THE SCHOOL DROPOUT CHALLENGE

The literature recommends various interventions to curtail the school dropout problem. It covers issues related to the social and economic challenges facing the San population, policy and institutional changes, making the education system responsive and creating a conducive school environment for the San children. The suggestions are elaborated below.

2.4.1. Legislative and Policy Provisions

From a global perspective, there is a call for states with indigenous populations to make adequate constitutional, legislative and policy provisions for the recognition of such groups and their unique needs and aspirations. African states are further urged to collect clear, accurate data in close consultation with the indigenous people (International Labour Organisation-ILO, 2009).

Furthermore, national governments and the civil society are also advised to institute legislative initiatives and tangible programs in education, health and justice that will improve the quality of life of the indigenous groups and similarly reduce their stereotyping (Lugaz, 2010; ILO, 2009). In an effort to address the issue of children at risk of dropout, governments are implored to design an integrated policy on indigenous education for children at risk of dropout, with an assigned budget and timelines

(Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014:544). Others call for measures of imparting teachers with skills on multi-grade teaching (Ananga, 2011).

2.4.2. Creating a Positive School Culture and Environment

Patterson *et al.*, (2007:13) appeal for schools to shift from a bureaucratic culture to a caring, collaborative culture. For this to have meaningful results, all stakeholders are urged to engage in dialogue about the mission and purpose of their schools. However, according to Patterson *et al.*, (2007:13) such a dialogue should address deeper questions such as the development, implementation, promotion and enforcement of positive, non-violent behaviour in schools.

2.4.3. Improving Relevance and Quality of Education

Many scholars (Ninnes, 2011; Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014 and others) believe that the challenge for the education sector is to avail resources and to revamp the curriculum to ensure that San languages are used as medium of instruction at junior primary school level and as subjects further on. Studies have shown that students who are taught in their mother tongue at primary level do much better than if they are taught in a foreign language (Le Roux, 1999). For all these to be realised, the Ministry of Education is implored to commit more resources to minority language teacher training and development of culturally appropriate teaching aids (Ninnes, 2011:35; Le Roux, 2000; Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014; Hays, Hopson & Le Roux, 2010).

The feasibility of reviewing the curriculum is viewed as practical and not complex as some may argue. Lee (2003:163) makes reference to a school at /Xai/xai in western Botswana, where their progressive headmaster incorporated many elements of the Ju/'hoansi culture into the curriculum. This initiative paid off, as the school received strong parental support and recorded low absenteeism. A cultural troupe of the school, known as /Gwihaba dancers, drew national attention in 1986 when they won a national competition (Lee, 2003:163). This achievement was seen as a major boost to the learners' motivation to attend school.

2.4.4. Prevention of School Dropouts and Early Intervention

In order to mitigate the disengagement of learners, the Check and Connect Program introduced in a study at middle and high schools in the USA appears to be quite

appealing. The program involves continuous monitoring and assessment of students' level of engagement and the provision of a mentor to help concerned learners to re-engage (Kemp, 2006). This program, which places emphasis on prevention, could be helpful in early detection and intervention for learners who are believed to be at risk of dropping out of school.

A related program, also credited for curbing school dropout, is a package of interventions piloted in public schools in Brazil (Graeff-Martins, Oswald, Comassetto, Kieling, Goncalves, & Rhode, 2006). The package involved a number of interventions in selected schools such as workshops for teachers to sensitise them for detecting and handling children at risk of dropout; informative letters to parents; purposeful school/parents meetings; and the modifications of the school environment. This package proved to be effective in terms of reducing the dropout rates, compared to similar schools in the neighborhood where this program was not implemented (Graeff-Martins *et al.*, 2006).

Another intervention that proved to have a high success rate is the CREATE program, implemented in Ghana (Sabates *et al.*, 2010). The program capacitates teachers to have a more pro-active approach to the problem of poor participation, and for them to work towards strengthening connections with the families. As a way of ensuring that this effort is a success, teachers "have to be prepared to work with a range of parents, including single parents, parents with special needs, low-income parents, and parents who do not speak English" (Patterson *et al.*, 2007:13).

2.4.5. Tackling Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors to School Dropout

According to Le Roux (2000), the government and stakeholders should increase poverty reduction programs for the San community. This could be achieved through micro-enterprise support for poor households (Sabates *et al.,* 2010).
Hays, Hopson & Le Roux, (2010) suggested that community empowerment programs be undertaken through alternative community-based training projects to uplift their socio-economic conditions. In addition, they advised for the adoption of a complementary capability approach of which the intent is to expand the capacities of the San to help themselves.

2.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reflected on the theoretical frameworks with emphasis on the causes of school dropout and remedial actions to resolve this challenge. In additon, the chapter highlighted the views of various scholars and academicians who studied the issue of school dropout including those who focused on indigenous populations such as the San community and others around the globe. The literature review has revealed that there are multi-pronged causes to the school dropout rate of San learners. The factors identified in the literature ranged from poor implementation of policies; school related factors; community factors; and individual attributes of learners. In the context of Namibia, poverty and the continuous rampant discrimination and stereotyping of San learners by fellow students, teachers and other school personnel are some of the most prominent causes mentioned. Some useful models such as the CREATE program from Ghana and the package of interventions piloted in Brazil offered insights on how these challenges can be tackled.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the research methodology employed in the study is discussed. The data collection tools used are then outlined before the method of analysing the data is explained.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research employed a qualitative approach, and utilised a case study design. A case study is described as an 'empirical enquiry to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Robert Yin, 2003:13 as cited in Suryani, 2008:118). Robert Stake (1995: ix) remarked that a case study "is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Suryani, 2008:118). The focus of the study was on the San community in a specific area of Namibia, namely Omaheke region. The population forming the subject of the study has a strong attachment to their culture and their way of life differs in many areas from the rest of the other groups in the country. A case study was therefore preferred to gain a deeper understanding of this population group within their own setting. The methods that are linked to case studies allow for flexibility which is more suitable for this type of community-based study. The researcher employed this method "to address the how and why questions about the real life events, using a broad variety of empirical tools" (David & Sutton, 2011:168 citing Yin 2004: xii). A case study is all about seeing something in its completeness, viewing it from different angles (Thomas, 2011:23).

The approach for this study was qualitative in nature which has the advantage of allowing the subjects to put across freely how they experience their own social realities. David & Sutton observed that with a qualitative approach the researcher shows sensitivity to those whom he or she is investigating (2011:102). This approach

was therefore preferred as it has the strength of establishing rapport with the subjects, and the ability to generate in-depth discussions which often culminate into new unexpected information. The study therefore was clearly based on the paradigm of interpretivism. The premise of this paradigm is that "knowledge is everywhere and is socially constructed" (Thomas, 2011:73). The interest was therefore more on people, the way they relate with each other, their thoughts, how they form ideas about the world and how these ideas are constructed (2011:75). In this research an exploratory, inductive approach was the norm. According to David & Sutton (2011:102) in applying this approach the researchers "attempt to be more sensitive to the priorities held by those whom they will interview or observe or whose text or artifacts they will attempt to read" (David & Sutton, 2011:102).

The explorative and descriptive case study was found to be helpful in shedding more light on the causes of the high school dropout rate of San children in Omaheke region and in generating plausible suggestions of addressing this challenge.

3.3. POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The study population consisted of San learners who dropped out from primary and secondary schools in the Omaheke region. The other groups that formed part of the target population were the parents of those San learners who dropped out of school, current San school attending learners, principals/teachers of selected schools, and resource persons in the community. The details about the population, number of schools, and learners was presented under (1.2.1.). According to Babbie & Mouton (2011:174) a study population "is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected". In this study the sample was drawn from the population mentioned above.

Sampling involves the selection of the study participants from the population referred to in the previous paragraph. The study employed a non-probability sampling design, regarded as useful in generating a sufficient sample which in many instances is adequate for research purposes (Terre Blanche, Durheim & Painter, 2006). A combination of convenience and purposive sampling methods was applied in the selection of participants. The convenience sampling mostly applied in the selection of

school dropouts and their parents was preferred on the basis of its ease of access (Matthews & Ross, 2010:154). The purposive sampling which was used in selecting resource persons had the advantage of exploring the research questions in depth. Purposive sampling is described as a process where a sample selected is considered being representative enough of a given population (Gay *et al.*, 2009). The selection of resource persons was based on the researcher's own judgment of who in the region has knowledge and experience in working with the subjects under study.

The study was limited to the Omaheke Region in the central eastern part of Namibia (see 1.2.1.) for the brief regional profile. The total number of respondents were 51. The sample for this study was grouped into the following clusters:
- ✓ Fifteen (15) San school dropout learners and their parents/guardians;
- ✓ Seven (7) school-attending San learners;
- ✓ Nine (9) educators (2 Principals, 4 life skills teachers and 3 other teachers)
- ✓ Five (5) resource persons

The study selected those school dropouts who left school over the past four years (2012-2015). This was done to ensure that the information gathered from them was a reflection of the recent happenings or occurrences in the educational and societal spheres in relation to the school dropout issue. The selection of the parents was aimed at capturing information on the school dropouts' phenomenon from the parents' perspective. This was also done in order to verify the information obtained from the children. The main reason for the selection of current learners was to obtain information, on their personal experiences in the community and at schools, which are of relevance to education. This was done in order to fill the gap on the latest developments in the school system which could not be expected from the school dropouts, given their absence from the educational domain.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1. Fieldwork
The main instruments used to collect the data for the study were face-to-face interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis. The reasons for the selection of the abovementioned instruments are elaborated below.

3.4.1.1. Interviews

The study utilised face-to-face interviews to collect data from all the participants in the study. The interviews were conducted with the school dropouts, their parents, some current school-attending San learners, and the resource persons. Interviews are known for facilitating direct communication between two people. It is helpful as it enables the interviewer to elicit information, feelings and opinions from the respondents using questions and interactive dialogue (Matthews & Ross, 2010:219). In view of the diverse nature of the target respondents, there were four sets of interview guides/protocols. Matthews & Ross described the interview guide "as an agenda for an interview with additional notes and features to aid the researcher" (2010:227). The interview guide or schedule contained pre-specified topics. This was done to ensure that during the interactions with the respondents the interview remained focused. It also allowed for the effective use of the limited interview time. The interview guide consisted of semi-structured open-ended questions. It conformed to research standards by ensuring clarity of questions, avoiding at all cost vagueness, complicated questions, leading questions, hypothetical questions and general statements.

The interview method was preferred as it is known for ensuring a high response rate compared to other methods such as questionnaires. As already indicated, the San population has a comparatively high illiteracy rate and thus it was a consideration in this study to opt for interviews. Johnson & Turner (2003) describe interviews as good for assessing attitudes and other issues of interest. It also allows the interviewer the opportunity to probe in order to gather in-depth information.

Information from the interview guides was validated by the study supervisor in relation to the content. In addition, the interview protocol was piloted for pre-testing targeting participants not selected for the actual research. This measure enabled the researcher to detect deficiencies in the clarity of questions and to pre-empt possible challenges in the interview process. Before the execution of interviews, participants were requested to give consent to participate in the study and for them to be recorded.

3.4.1.2. Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion was held with current school-attending learners at one of the schools visited. The purpose was to solicit information from the learners of their experiences with schooling as well as their perception on the causes of school dropout. Focus group discussion method is credited for its comparative advantage in terms of saving resources (e.g. time and money) and also for its ability to allow individuals a space to generate views stimulated by their interactions in a group setting (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:292). In this study the learners who participated in a focus group discussion appeared comfortable and they participated activelly in the discussion.

4.1.3. Archival Research/Document Analysis

In an effort to gain deeper insight, the researcher utilised secondary data by studying and analysing official school documents to obtain statistics and relevant information on school dropouts. In addition, reports and other official documents such as acts, policies were studied.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data collection is a futile exercise, unless it is accompanied by analysis, where data are interpreted and given meaning. Mouton (2001:108) provides a detailed description of data analysis, noting that the aim is to "understand the various constitutive elements of one's data through an inspection of the relationship between concepts, constructs or variables". Data analysis is therefore simply geared towards describing, discussing, evaluating, explaining the data that have been collected in the research project (Mathews & Ross, 2010:317). The researcher therefore has the duty of detecting patterns or trends or "manageable" themes arising from the data collected and arranging them for interpretation.

This study employed a qualitative method of analysis. The data were analysed by coding the raw data into themes and categories based on the aim and objectives of the study. Although emerging themes during the process of fieldwork are allowed for

inclusion in the analysis, in this study the main themes and categories centred on the causes of, and suggested solutions for the school dropout of San learners from the community/school context. The sub-categories used for analysing both the causes and suggested solutions focused on the individual, social, cultural, economic, education system, and school environment perspectives.

The recorded versions from the audio-tapes were transcribed. The transcripts were then properly labeled. A computer spreadsheet was created where the typed transcripts from the interviews were entered. The data were coded and arranged in the spreadsheet according to different categories, i.e. demographic data; views on the extent of school dropout; views on the causes of school dropout; suggested solutions; any additional remarks. Coding in qualitative data analysis is the "process of applying codes to chunks of text" (David & Sutton, 2011:339). This allowed for the researcher to highlight similarities and differences between large amounts of texts and in the process being able to establish linkages. All these processes were done with the sole purpose of making the data analysis manageable. Coding of the data assisted in data reduction, making it possible for analysis to focus on the relevant and essential data.

The process of thematic analysis then commenced. This type of analysis refers to a process "of segmentation, categorisation and re-linking of aspects of the data prior to final interpretation" (Grbich as cited in Matthews & Ross, 2010:373). The collected, verified, edited and analysed data were then subjected to interpretation before conclusions were drawn and summarised.
The aim of the study was to come up with new findings or to substantiate what other researchers have revealed through their studies. This study had its own uniqueness in the sense that it was more region specific and findings are thus more specific and easily translatable into action.

3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2010) ethical considerations are applicable from the time when participants are recruited, during the execution of the study to which they are subjected until the stage of releasing the results.

The ethical considerations in the study were considered to be of great importance, as the participants were drawn from a population group considered to be vulnerable and marginalised. Researching indigenous groups is not as straightforward as in the past. There is a greater political awareness among such groups. Due to historical reasons, many are quite wary and cynical about the benefit that they may derive from outside researchers (Scheyvens *et al.*, 2003). The researcher therefore took time to spell out without any ambiguity from the onset the purpose of the study, the aims and objectives to the community leaders and those who were interviewed so as not to raise any alarm or false expectations. The researcher was able to communicate freely with all the subjects in languages in which they were comfortable and fluent, i.e. Afrikaans, OtjiHerero, and English.

Terre Blanche *et al.*, (2006:69) argue that the "researchers and the research methods should be sensitive to the values, cultural traditions, and practices of the community". In the light of the aforementioned the researcher ensured that the rights and culture of the respondents were respected at all times. The researcher ensured that informed consent was obtained from all participants. Respect of the study participants was maintained at all times. Care was taken to ensure that those interviewed do not in any way suffer distress as a result of the interview. The issue of confidentiality was respected at all times. During the process of data collection the records and transcribed data were kept in a secure place. All the records from the interviews were destroyed within a reasonable period of time following the conclusion of the research project. The researcher personally ensured that the identities of the respodents are protected during the process of the study as well as in the study report.

3.7. LIMITATIONS

It is generally assumed that any research project or study has limitations. The researcher is advised to recognise the limitations he or she may face before the actual fieldwork commences, as this allows one to mitigate by adopting remedial measures. The limitations could range from the subjects forming part of the study, the environmental and socio-economic-cultural factors of the study area, the methods/instruments used in data collection as well as the data analysis tools.

In this research the main limitations were mainly administrative in nature due to the vastness of the region. One of the limitations anticipated related to the mobility of the San population. In two instances, the San learners who dropped out of school and who were scheduled for interviews ran away. The researcher later learnt that the children were under the impression that the researcher wanted to take them back to school. Remedial action taken was to identify new households and the field work continued. This was a case study and was therefore limited to one region, meaning that although findings can be helpful to a variety of stakeholders, it cannot be generalised to the country as a whole, but can be applied to cases that appear to be similar to the one studied.

3.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this Chapter the research methodology applied in the study and the rationale for the selections of the design and methods have been articulated. The study adopted a qualitative approach, utilising a case study design. The target population for the study were the San school dropouts, their parents, teachers, current San school attending learners and resource persons. A non-probability sampling design was employed in this study. The researcher used a purposive sampling approach in the selection of the participants for the study. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis. The ethical considerations were observed for the duration of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This Chapter covers the presentation of data and the interpretation or analysis of the data. The data were gathered from a total of fifty one (51) respondents who were categorised in five sets:

- ✓ Fifteen (15) San school dropout learners and their parents/guardians;
- ✓ Seven (7) school-attending San learners;
- ✓ Nine (9) educators (2 Principals, 4 life skills teachers and 3 other teachers);
- ✓ Five (5) resource persons.

The researcher was able to interview and collect data from all the above respondents on their subjective perceptions and real life experiences of the extent of the dropout among San learners; the causes of the school dropout rate of San learners and what the respondents viewed as possible solutions. A detailed interview guide was used to ask questions related to the respondent's personal circumstances and schooling experience. In addition, the researcher gathered the views of the respondents on the subject matter as community members. For example, the focus of the interview with the school dropouts was on their personal experiences as learners and the reasons for dropout, but in addition they were probed on other issues related to the subject matter e.g. awareness of other cases of school dropout. In addition, the researcher studied and analysed a variety of documents which are of relevance to the subject under discussion. An attempt was made to extract relevant issues from such documents related to the causes of school dropout and solutions.

The data obtained from the respondents were then coded, analysed and interpreted based on the key themes related to the objectives of the study. The following are the key themes on which the analysis was based:

- Extent of the school dropout rate among San learners in the Omaheke Region (i.e. not the main focus of the study but included to confirm the reality of this phenomenon in the region).

- The causes/reasons why San learners are dropping out from formal school.
- The suggested solutions for the challenge of school dropout by the respondents.

The discussion to follow is a presentation of the findings derived from the respondents. The responses are quoted verbatim as obtained from respondents without corrections made to the phrasing and usage of the language. However, to protect the identity of the respondents, the names of people or specific schools mentioned by the respondents during the interview were not included in the final transcripts. The names of the respondents that are used in the findings are fictitious in keeping with the ethical consideration of confidentiality. For the convenience of the reader to follow the presentation of the findings, a breakdown of categories of respondents and the pseudonyms attached to them are given in the section below.

4.2. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Breakdown of respondents - category of San learners who dropped out of school and their parents/guardians

	San learners who dropped out of school						Parents of San learners who dropped out of school				
	Pseud onym	Gen der	A ge	Level- Last School	Last Grade	Status	Pseudonym	Gen der	Age group	Marital Status	Occupation
1	Paul	M	12	Primary	Gr. 3	Home person	Paul's parent	F	45-50	Widow	Unemployed
2	Anna	F	20	Secondary	Gr. 9	Unemployed	Anna's parent	M	50-60	Married	Traditional leader
3	Franz	M	19	Primary	Gr. 5	Labourer	Franz's parent	M	50-55	Married	Casual labourer
4	Abel	F	14	Primary	Gr. 7	Home person	Abel's parent	M	45-50	Widower	Unemployed
5	Dina	M	15	Secondary	Gr. 8	Home person	Dina's parent	F	40-45	Single	Unemployed
6	Ruth	F	13	Primary	Gr. 5	Home person	Ruth's parent	M	50-55	Married	Casual labourer
7	Emma	F	16	Secondary	Gr. 8	Home person	Emma's parent	F	45-50	Married	Unemployed
8	Jenny	F	20	Secondary	Gr. 9	Unemployed	Jenny's guard.	F	25-30	Single	Unemployed
9	Maria	F	21	Secondary	Gr. 8	Unemployed	Maria's parent	M	55-60	Married	Casual labourer
10	Rosa	F	13	Primary	Gr. 7	Home person	Rosa's parent	F	40-45	Single	Unemployed
11	Emily	F	16	Secondary	Gr. 10	Home person	Emily's parent	M	55-60	Married	Labourer
12	John	M	20	Secondary	Gr. 9	Unemployed	John's guard.	M	60-65	Widower	Pensioner
13	Tracy	F	14	Secondary	Gr. 8	Home person	Tracy's parent	F	40-45	Married	Inst. worker
14	Eben	M	16	Secondary	Gr. 8	Home Person	Eben's parent	M	40-45	Married	Farmer
15	Rex	M	14	Primary	Gr. 6	Home Person	Rex's parent	M	35-40	Single	Labourer

The school dropouts interviewed were fifteen (15) in total (nine females and six males). The youngest participant was aged 12, while the oldest was 21 years of age. Six of the respondents dropped out of school at the primary level, while nine left school at secondary level. Five of the study participants left school whilst in Grade 8, two in Grade 7, three in Grade 9, two in Grade 5, one in Grade 3, one in Grade 6 and one in Grade 10.

The parents who were interviewed were fifteen (15) in total (nine males, and six females). The ages of the respondents ranged from 25 to 60. Eight (8) were married, three (3) were widows/widowers, while four were single. The employment status of the respondents were as follows: Six (6) were unemployed, three (3) were casual labourers, two (2) labourers, one (1) Institutional worker, one (1) old age pensioner, one (1) subsistence farmer and one (1) recognized traditional leader.

Table 2: Breakdown of respondents - category of principals/life skills teachers

Type of school/ institution/ community & details	Pseudonym of respondent	Gender	Rank/Position
Primary: Grade0-7 {Day& Hostel}	Mr. Tom	Male	L/S Teacher
	Ms. Adeline	Female	Teacher
Primary: Grade 1-7 {Day & Hostel}	Mr. Claudius	Male	L/S Teacher
Primary School {Grade 0-4} Day School	Mr. Adam	Male	L/S Teacher
Secondary: Grade 8-10 {Day and Hostel}	Ms. Else	Female	Principal
Secondary: Grade 8-10 {Day and Hostel}	Mr. Eduard	Male	Principal
Primary School Grade 1-7 (Day & Hostel)	Ms. Tekla	Female	L/S Teacher
	Ms. Ingrid	Female	Teacher
	Mr. Simon	Male	Teacher

A total of nine (9) teachers/principals from 6 different schools were interviewed, consisting of five males and four females.

Table 3: Breakdown of respondents - category of current school-attending San learners

	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Type of school	Grade
1	Magda	Female	15	Primary	Gr. 7
2	Dina	Female	15	Primary	Gr. 6
3	Imelda	Female	15	Secondary	Gr. 8
4	Elizabeth	Female	13	Primary	Gr. 7
5	Lukas	Male	15	Primary	Gr. 7
6	Angela	Female	14	Primary	Gr. 7
7	Mathew	Male	15	Primary	Gr. 7

A total of seven (7) current school-attending San leaners were interviewed (five females and two males). Their ages ranged from 13 to 15. Six of the current learners were schooling at primary schools, while one was from a secondary school.

Table 4: Breakdown of respondents - category resource persons.

	Pseudonym	Gender	Age Group	Role in community
1	Mr. Herman	Male	45-50	Works in Public Sector, education sector
2	Mr. Dan	Male	65-70	Traditional leader from one of the traditional authority of the San population in the Omaheke region
3	Ms. Alma	Female	40-45	Works in Public Sector, development sector
4	Mr. Eddy	Male	45-50	Religious leader & community volunteer
5	Ms. Sara	Female	30-35	Officer for an International organisation & attached to the public sector

Five resource persons were interviewed, three males and two females.

4.3. FINDINGS

4.3.1. Extent of the school dropout rate among San learners

This study was conducted with the prior knowledge about the high incidence of school dropout problem of San learners in Omaheke region. The facts and statistics on the extent of this problem have been adequately dealt with in the previous chapters. However, the researcher made it a point to enquire about the extent of the problem at

the various schools visited and from the resource persons interviewed. This was based on the premise that the relevance of finding out the causes and solutions would be rendered irrelevant, if no attempt is made during the fieldwork to establish whether the school dropout challenge was real or perceived.

It was found that five of the six (83%) primary/secondary schools visited, had a high dropout rate of San learners. The number of San learners who were dropping out at these schools ranged from 15 to 45 per year. Interestingly, the school that reported a low incidence of school dropout had the highest representation of San learners in the Omaheke region. From the schools visited, none reported a significant percentage of those who dropped out ever returning to school.

The respondents shared their frustrations with the dropout situation as follow:
"We have 600+ children at our school of which 180 are San. On average we are losing about 15 San children yearly due to dropout" (Mr. Claudius, a teacher at a primary school).

"the situation is so worse…that over the past four years or so the school usually start with 80 San learners in Grade 8, but will only have two (2) in Grade 12"(Mr. Eduard, a principal).

"It's a struggle….we do get quite a big number of San learners who enroll for Grade 8, but from the second to the third quarter about a third will just vanish" (Ms. Else, a principal).

"As a community leader, I am frequently contacted by schools to intervene in cases where San learners want to drop out of school. We intervene and talk to the children, but in most cases we are not succeeding. The children will in most cases just end up dropping out" (Mr. Eddy, resource person).

The comments and the figures provided by the study participants confirmed the severity of the school dropout of the San learners in Omaheke region.

4.3.2. The causes/reasons for school dropout

It is never an easy assignment to get all the facts behind the reason why learners drop out of school, because this process is compounded by many factors. The staff at the schools visited highlighted the difficulties they experience to obtain accurate facts on the reasons for school dropout.

"It's difficult to know the exact reasons since some of them just vanish, and the school sometimes does not get any reports from the parents on the reasons" (Ms. Else).

The study found that there are multiple reasons that cause San learners to drop out of school. The causes as narrated by various respondents were closely scrutinised and placed into eight categories/sub-themes based on their similarities and close association as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Themes and categories - causes of school dropout

Theme	Factor	Issues	Categories
Causes of school drop-out	Socio-economic	Inability to afford school related expenses; Lack/inadequate food at home; children forced to beg on the streets; Poor housing conditions ; Inadequate clothes & blankets	Poverty and other economic factors
		Inability to afford transport costs; children follow parents to new places of work.	Mobility of parents and distance to schools
	Socio-cultural	Early sexual relationships;co-habitation with boyfriends/men; Transgenerational sex; early pregnancies.	Early courting and teenage pregnancy
		Parents' poor contact with school; non-attendance of schools' meetings/activities; poor information flow.	Lack of parental involvement in school activities.
		Alcohol abuse; Children's neglect	Social decay and the resultant impact on children's welfare.
		-Parents' low education -Poor motivation	Ignorance of the importance of education

		Parents too lenient with children; No push for children to remain in school;	Parenting styles as contributor to dropout
	School Environment	Labelling/mistreatment/bullying of San learners at schools; Poor communication	Unreceptive school environment
			Inability to adapt to school environment (struggle with the transition from primary schools to high schools)

The table above shows that there are three main factors that affect the San learners to leave school early, namely socio-economic, socio-cultural and school environment's related factors. The discussion to follow is elaboration of these factors as narrated by the respondents as well as an analysis in line with the literature.

4.3.2.1. Socio-Economic Factors

i. Poverty and other economic factors

The study found that poverty and the poor socio-economic status of the San population contribute to school dropout among the San learners. Parents' inability to afford school related expenses, lack of, or inadequate food at home, poor housing conditions/improper shelter, inadequate clothes and blankets, and pressure on children to start working, were most of the issues presented by the respondents. The specific issues stemming from the poverty situation of the San population that gives rise to the school dropout of San learners as per the findings of the study are elaborated below.

- ***Inability of parents to afford school related expenses of their children.***
Many San learners drop out of school because their parents are unable to provide them with the basic necessities. These unmet needs include, among others, toiletries, adequate clothes, school uniforms, shoes, blankets, calculators, and additional stationery.

A parent of a school dropout and who is also a community leader said the following:

"Children have many needs, they are required to be tidy and to have clean clothes,......and if they are not in position to keep up to that due to poverty, it becomes a problem; They may not look and smell good and others will talk..." {Anna's parent}.

He continued to stress the dilemma they face as poor parents.

"It is difficult for us as parents to meet the needs of our children because we are poor. If one explains to your child that you do not have the money to buy what they need, they just feel that you don't want" (Anna's parent).

The remarks from some of the school dropouts confirmed the challenge.

"I dropped out of school for the first time in 2013. I could not remain in school with one blanket in that cold weather...... I informed my parents.......but they did not have money and they asked me to wait but I could not...so I dropped out" (Anna).

"I left school because I had no shoes.......I did not feel well when I had to go to school barefoot. I told my father but nothing came out of this. They promised that they will "zula" (struggle) for money.....but nothing happened" (Abel, male, aged 15).

A number of teachers and resource persons interviewed shared similar sentiments.

"Because of the chronic poverty situation of the San people in general......parents are not able to buy all the things that children need...such as toiletries. San learners are not comfortable, especially seeing that other children are not struggling like them" (Ms. Alma, resource person).

"Some San children are brought to the school by their parents without any toiletries.... as a result they just drop out" (Mr. Eduard, a school principal at one of the secondary schools).

Mr. Eduard acknowledged that most San parents are poor, hence, their inability to cater for all the needs of their children. *"Most of the San learners that we admit are from the impoverished communities of Blouberg and Vergenoeg and it is a reality that they live in poverty due to lack of job opportunities in those areas" (Mr. Eduard)*

The study also found that San children are missing out on some educational activities that are organized by the schools because of the costs involved. One parent of a school dropout bemoaned the exclusion of San learners from these opportunities.

"I have never seen a San learner going out with school tours like the others. Other children are taken to Swakopmund to see different things, but the San children are left out because the parents cannot afford the required financial contributions" (Rosa's parent).

- ### *Scarcity of food at household level*

The six resource persons, two teachers, and three school dropouts expressed concern about the unavailability of adequate food in many San households, especially at informal settlements. The learners that attend school from their homes (day learners) were identified by the respondents as the most affected, with some said to be going to school hungry. Some children, especially those residing in urban environments are forced to beg for food on the streets. This interferes with their schooling, as they are often absent from school.

Mr. Adam, a teacher at one of the primary schools shared his first-hand experience of the chronic poverty situation of the learners' families. He informed the researcher that he conducted home visits to more than 100 households and got a glimpse of what the learners experience in their homes.

"I found that in the majority of the households, there is no food at home. It is for this reason that some children resort to finding a living on the street" (Mr. Adam).

This finding matches the observations made in the Poverty Profile Report of the Omaheke region. According to the report "people said that hunger and inadequate supply of food at home undermined the education of poor people's children because they went begging while they were supposed to be at school. This affected their attendance and results" (NPC, 2006:49). The issue of inadequate nutrition and the negative impact on the children's education was emphasised by various studies (Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014; Spaull, 2011).

Tinto's model for student engagement contends that students who are constantly absent from school turn out to become disengaged from education and this often leads to dropout (Rumberger, 2001; Rossi & Montgomery, 1994 n.p.).

It can be concluded, based on the remarks of the respondents and what the literature says, that hunger has an effect on the San learners' school attendance and school completion.

- ***Poor housing conditions***

The study found that the housing conditions of many San households are not conducive for children's well-being and functioning. The teachers and the resource persons in particular were quite concerned about the dilapidated housing structures in which the San are living and the effect it has on the learners.

"Many of the learners that I visited sleep on the ground and because of the poor housing structures, they are exposed to all kinds of unfavourable environmental conditions" (Mr. Adam).

During the fieldwork the researcher was able to view the home circumstances and found that many houses of the school dropouts and others in the surrounding areas occupied by the San population were not in a favourable condition. They were made of weak building materials consisting of sticks, plastics, and old corrugated iron sheets. These households also lacked basic amenities, such as availability of running water and sanitation facilities. The people collect water in containers from a central water point system, located a distance from their houses. It was evident that such conditions are not suitable for children's needs. Children need a conducive home environment to be able to rest, recreate and for them to study well. The opposite often results in some opting to leave school prematurely.

Studies done in the US, the UK, Canada and Australia "have consistently found that factors related to the child's family circumstances are significantly related to the chances of school completion and early leaving" (Lamb *et al.*, 2004:24).

- ***Pressure to start working***

One resource person shared views that could be seen as separate factors on their own, but which from a closer analysis had some socio-economic undertones, thus closely linked to poverty.

"There is also the associated pressure for the San children to start working at earlier age" (Ms. Sara).

In her view, the environment in which the children grow up, coupled with the economic situation of their parents, in a way pressurise them to start working early, mostly as lowly paid farm workers. The issue of learners dropping out because of the desire to work is supported by many studies. A national longitudinal survey conducted in the United States found that approximately 15% of the young people cited economic and work-related reasons for leaving school early (Lamb et al., 2004: 12). Although the issue of dropping out of school because of the need to work did not come out from the school dropouts in this study, it is a significant issue that can be of interest to be studied separately. As noted in the literature review, a study in the neighbouring Khomas region found that the learners' desire to earn money led to their early exit from school (Mapani & Mushaandja, 2013:28).

It can be deduced from the findings as narrated above that the San children are affected by their needy conditions and as they mingle with others in the school who are well-off they get discouraged. It is evidently clear from the findings that there is a close link between poverty and school dropout of San learners. The findings corroborate the assertions made in the global or local literature and documented studies of the effect of poor households' socio-economic conditions on learners school completion. (Sabates et al., 2010:12; Branson et al., 2013:4; Hunt, 2008) have concluded that there are clear correlations between the poor socio-economic status of the households and the high incidence of school dropout. One of the prominent scholars, Rumberger, maintains that "socioeconomic status, most commonly measured by parental education and income, is a powerful predictor of school achievement and dropout behaviour" (Rumberger, 2001: 5). A study done in Australia also found that economic factors, especially the inability of parents to afford the school-related costs of their children, makes it more difficult for the indigenous children to complete school (Helme & Lamb, 2011:2).

From a national perspective, the findings are corroborated by an observation made in the UNICEF Annual Report for Namibia for 2015 where it is stated that "most children at risk of dropping out come from poor economic circumstances or remote areas, highlighting a significant source of inequity in the education system" (UNICEF, 2016:39). The poverty profile done in Omaheke region found that San parents were struggling to afford school-related expenses such as school uniforms, stationery,

additional text/exercise books, and hostel funds (NPC, 2006:48). Similarly, a report by the Omaheke Regional Council on the outreach program conducted in three constituencies, revealed that many children were not in school due to their parents' inability to afford the school-related costs (ORC, 2008:23).

From a closer look at the data, one could observe that although the absence of the necessities is a big "push-factor" in the school dropout process it is not necessarily the only core reason that drives San learners out of school. Instead, one notices a deeper hidden voice of emotional pain that the San learners endure, which seemingly triggers the final decision to quit school. This pain is caused by shame and negative remarks from others about their needs. This often leads the San learners to lose interest in school. It may therefore not be far-fetched to assert that San children may just have the desire to feel normal like all other children. According to Wotherspoon and Schissel (1998:14) students are sensitive to the problems of poverty as it affects their emotional and physical well-being.

The exclusion of San learners and perhaps other learners from poor backgrounds to partake in the educational tours as mentioned earlier, is an area of concern that emerged from the study. This issue is often overlooked if one glances through the findings of various studies. It is an issue that touches on the basic tenets of equity in education as some learners are disadvantaged by this exclusion. They lose an opportunity to get exposure to issues of academic relevance, not to mention being denied the right to recreation and excitement that usually forms part of such excursions. It can only be left to one's imagination how the excluded learners feel when their peers from well-off families are gearing up to partake in such events.

Another issue that emerged from the findings is the wearing of school uniform as a challenge to San learners' school attendance. There is no denying of the good intentions that schools have in their insistence for the wearing of school uniforms by all learners. Although there is no law that forbids any child from attending school if he or she does not wear a uniform, there is however pressure on the parents of children from poor families to buy uniforms for their children. Similarly, as noted in the poverty profile, learners from poor families want to look like the others and at times refuse to go to school if they are not provided with a school uniform (NPC, 2006:60).

The chronic poverty situation of the San population is well-known and widely documented (NPC, 2006:28; Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014; UNDP, 2007:16). The poverty profile conducted in Omaheke region revealed that the San population was even poorer than the very poor categories identified by the various participants (NPC, 2006: 42). It was found that "many hardly owned any assets or resources to sustain their livelihoods" (2006:42). The demographic data of the respondents in this study show that most parents of the school dropouts, were either unemployed, or employed as casual farm labourers. During the fieldwork the precarious poor conditions of the households of school dropouts were clearly visible. The need to address the socio-economic situation of the San is therefore of paramount importance.

ii. Mobility of parents and distance to schools

It is widely acknowledged that the San population have historically been known as nomadic due to their dependence on nature and their survival strategy in conformity with the demands of nature. However, in modern times the mobility of the San population is mostly driven by the need to find jobs, as a means of survival.

Mobility of San parents in Omaheke region was mentioned by seven respondents as contributing to the school dropout of their children. A teacher narrated the following: *"San people are mobile, some move to look for jobs in the farms...while others are taken by communal farmers to work at far-away places; The mobility affects the education of the children......as children drop out of school to be with their parents"(Mr. Tom).*

"San parents move from one place to another 'for survival as they call it' If they get a job offer they usually just go and in the process the learners go with them" (Mr. Claudius).

A concern was also expressed about the employers who offer San people employment without assisting them to make arrangements for the schooling of the children.

"Most of them are only interested in the cheap labour of the San people and for their farm work to be done and has no regard to the welfare of the family as a whole" (Mr. Claudius).

The findings are supported by other assessments done in Omaheke region. An outreach team from the Omaheke Regional Council found that San parents have a tendency of migrating from one farm to another "in search of better working conditions and this disrupts their children's education" (ORC, 2008:23).

From the above findings, it can be concluded that the economic situation renders San parents desperate for jobs. If they get job offers, they are forced to move to the places of their new employers. Given the closeness of San families, the children, especially the younger ones, are reluctant to remain behind. This often results in such children dropping out from school to follow their parents.

The case of Franz, who dropped out of school whilst in Grade 5 clearly demonstrates how the issue of mobility and distance affects San learners. According to Franz his parents were offered employment and relocated to a remote village situated about 90km's from his former school. He ended up dropping out of school because of the struggle to get transport back to school after out-weekends and holidays.
"I was always late to go back to school after holidays.......at times a week passed without a car going to that village" (Franz).

The study also found that some children end their school career at the primary level because the only available secondary schools are located far from their home areas. According to one of the respondents, Ms. Alma, the area of Eiseb Block is most affected. Research shows that access to education is hampered by long distances to schools (NPC, 2006:60; Sabates *et al.*, 2010:7). The absence of secondary schools within a reasonable distance from the settlements of poor households escalate the costs of children's education (NPC, 2006:60).

In addition, parents fear for the safety of their children "when they have to travel longer distances to school" (Sabates *et al.*, 2010:7). Studies done in the US suggest that

residential mobility (changing residences) and school mobility (changing schools) increase the risk of dropping out of high school (Rumberger, 2001:22).

In a study on the factors that lead to school dropouts in Namibia it was found that young children tend to drop out of school because of the long distances from home to school (Nekongo-Nielsen *et al.*, 2015: 105).

iii. Orphanhood and vulnerability

It was further found that orphans and vulnerable children (OVC's) from the San community particularly are hardest hit by the socio-economic deficiencies. The incapacity or death of their parents leave them at greater risk of not completing their school career.

The case of Paul and his siblings clearly illustrated how orphanhood and vulnerability compounded by other factors such as poverty and ill-health affect San children's education. Paul's parent narrated the difficulties that she experienced, leading to Paul and his brothers to drop out of school.

"I think my children left school because myself and my husband were very sick and could not really push them back to school. The living condition at home was also not good. There was no income, we struggled a lot at home" (Paul's parent).

According to Paul's parent, her husband passed away and she was diagnosed with TB shortly thereafter. She was forced to leave her children in the care of other relatives, as she had to undergo extensive treatment at a health facility in Windhoek, about 300km's from her home. The children were still out of school when she was discharged and as a single parent she was struggling to see how to get them re-enrolled in school.

In another family visited, 20 years old Jenny, dropped out of school at the age of 16, whilst she was in grade 9. According to Jenny, she was diagnosed with TB and had to undergo treatment for six months at the Hospital, about 180km's away. In the meantime, her parents passed away, leaving her and their siblings with no means of survival. The monthly state maintenance grant of N$250 that her mother used to receive on her behalf was suspended and there was no one to support her to get it re-instated.

"My elder sister had no income as well, as she was unemployed and we just relied on acquaintances for our survival...as a result, I was forced to drop out of school" (Jenny).

One resource person interviewed, revealed how orphanhood and vulnerability influence school completion.

"A high number of them are Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC's) and this worsens their socio-economic status, negatively effecting education in the process. The interventions to access San OVC's to state grants are constrained by the fact that many San parents do not have all the required national documents"
(Mr. Herman).

The findings of the struggles of the San OVC's were also noted during the outreach by the Omaheke Regional Council team. The team recorded a substantial number of San OVC's, who dropped out of school because of various reasons. Some of the challenges mentioned included difficulties of accessing national documents in order to apply for state grants, abuse of state grants by caretakers, and inability of the guardians to cover educational expenses (ORC, 2008: 29-32).

4.3.2.2. Socio-Cultural Factors

i. Lack of parental involvement in school activities

The immense importance of parental support to the success of children's education is widely recognised by many in the education sector. Parental involvement in education helps children to remain in school and to complete their educational career. Dennis Van Roekel maintains that "when schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enrol in higher level programs" (Van Roekel, 2008:1).

A number of respondents, especially teachers and resource persons, bemoaned the poor interest and involvement that San parents have in the educational career of their children. They regarded this as causing many San learners not to complete school.

"Most of them do not attend parents' meetings and miss important information" (Mr. Tom).

"If a parents' meeting is called......only 30 parents will turn up in a school of more than 1000 learners" (Mr. Adam). It was further noted that parents are mostly only visible at schools during the registration of their children or when they need a confirmation letter for state maintenance grant purposes.
"As soon as the school issues them with the letter of proof....they just vanish"
(Mr. Adam).

The school dropouts and current San learners also complained about their parents' poor involvement in schools' affairs. Jenny, a school dropout, noted that her mother only attended one event when she was at the primary school. Current learners, Getrud and Magda noted that their biological parents are not involved at all in their education. *"It's only my parents' employers who usually attend parents' meetings and other activities at school" (Getrud).*

Three respondents attributed the poor parental involvement to distances and inability of the San parents to afford transport costs. However, the data indicate that some parents who are within walking distance to the schools are also not involved. Others felt that ignorance and/or feelings of dis-empowerment are the reasons why San parents are rarely seen at school events. One of the teachers observed that San parents feel alienated from the school environment. Furthermore, he noted that the few San parents who attend school/parents' meetings complain that such events are dominated by other population groups and they do not have a voice.
"Most of the San parents feel that parents' meetings are not for them as they are not educated. Some fear coming to school to raise issues because they lack confidence in themselves"(Mr. Tom).

The above comment is in line with an observation made by the ORC outreach team. The report remarked that "the poverty level of the San remains a challenge, as it contributes to their absence at community meetings, as they regard themselves to be inferior" (ORC, 2008: 24).

A resource person interviewed cited the language barrier as one of the reasons for poor parental involvement. He noted that schools mostly communicate information in all other languages except in San languages. He was of the view that some San parents may therefore conclude *"that they do not matter"*. This assertion is supported by Dennis Van Roekel who noted that some parents do not feel comfortable to communicate with school officials, possibly due to language or cultural differences or their own past experiences with the school (Van Roekel, 2008:2).

It can be deduced from the findings of the study that many San parents in Omaheke region rarely interact with schools on matters affecting the education of their children. The data seem to imply that San children become demotivated by the poor interest of their parents in their education. Subsequently, they start to devalue the importance of education. Parental involvement, especially attendance of academic, cultural and sport events is known for exciting and motivating learners. The findings of poor parental involvement as a cause of school dropout is suppported by a study done in Namibia. Nekongo-Nielsen *et al.,* (2015:110) found that 'many parents fail to show up at school meetings or even when they are called regarding their children's behaviour and academic performance'.

The causes for the poor parental involvement is a broad subject that may require an extensive study on its own. The issues of long distances and transport costs as hindrances in the parental involvement, might be valid reasons for those located far from schools but not for those who live in the vicinity of schools. The data, nevertheless, reveal some critical issues such as feelings of disempowerment, low self-confidence, and language barrier as causes for the lack of involvement of San parents. The abovementioned issues call for innovative strategies from a variety of stakeholders.

ii. Social decay and the subsequent bearing on children's welfare

Eight respondents, including San school dropouts and some parents interviewed, expressed concern with the widespread abuse of alcohol by parents and the negative effect it has on children's well-being. The respondents noted that many San parents are mostly involved in uncontrollable drinking, usually associated with quarrels and

fighting. They maintained that this situation makes many parents unable to fulfil their parental duties of looking after their children.

Two of the respondents re-counted their experiences as follows:
"My own biological parents do not give us any financial assistance....they instead spent their money on alcohol abuse than on our needs" (Magda, a current school learner).

"A great number of the San parents have problem with alcohol abuse......they are more pre-occupied with drinking and pay little attention to their children" (Jenny, a school dropout).

"My mother had problems with alcohol abuse, and showed little support to us as children. She often misused our state maintenance grant and even the extra money that our late father used to give for our upkeep. She would always pick arguments with us whenever she drinks and this made the home environment difficult for us as children" (Jenny, a school dropout).

A teacher, Mr. Adam discovered during his home visits that at most of the households, including a sizeable number of San households, parents were not at home.
"The parents were not at home.......children were just left alone" (Mr. Adam).
Further investigations revealed that these parents were not working, but rather spend time at the drinking outlets. He described this situation as a clear indication of what he termed " *'pure parental negligence'. I pity such children, because if the parents are rarely at home.....who looks after them....and who motivates them?"(Mr. Adam)*

A community elder elaborated extensively on how parents fail in their duty to support and control their children.
"The causes of school dropout are many and diverse. But in the case of Gobabis, the lack of parental supervision and proper care is the main cause.....Some parents are just ignorant of their responsibilities concerning the care and education of their children. Most of those who neglect their duties are involved in alcohol abuse. They would wake up very early just to go and drink....and will go back home very late. It does not matter whether you are working or not it is easy to get alcohol in this area,

because it's very cheap......N$2.00 for a liter. Some even go to an extent of abusing state grants on alcohol and neglect to buy basic necessities for their children" (Mr. Eddy).

In summary, the study found that parents who are caught up in the web of substance abuse are failing to exercise proper control over their children. The habits of drinking parents, abusive family environments and lack of positive role models have been cited by many scholars as contributors to school dropout (Branson *et al.*, 2013; Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014).
The children are left at home with no support and this has a bearing on their schooling, hence the high dropout. This practice is incongruent with what Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development advocates. According to this theory, enduring emotional relationships between adolescents and their primary care-givers are of immense importance (Boon, 2008:97). This theory maintains that "such relationships promotes motivation, attentiveness, sensitivity and perseverance on the part of both parent and the child" (2008:97).

The study discovered that substance abuse is a leading driving force behind the social decay that the San population faces today. Family dysfunction is the immediate consequence, negatively affecting children's schooling. A study that examined the factors influencing African Americans' (minorities) decision to drop out of school found family and emotional stressors as problematic in learners' retention (Branson *et al.*, 2013: 4). The stressors were said to arise from substance use and abuse, poverty, lack of parental support, and low expectations from family (2013:4).

San parents were traditionally known for possessing a strong, close knit family bond, characterised by care and love for their children. However, it appears that the complexities of urban life coupled with the addictive power of substance abuse are fast eroding this important cultural value. This matches with the findings of Robert Lee who studied the Ju/'hoansi population extensively. He noted that there was a marked difference between the lifestyles that he observed in 1980, with the situation in the year 2000. He remarked that important cultural ethos such as sharing are fast declining and interpersonal conflicts are more frequent due to increase in the abuse of alcohol (Lee, 2003:91).

iii. Ignorance on the importance of education

Respondents felt that school dropout is fueled by ignorance on the part of the San parents and children on the importance of education. The following comments underscored the opinions of the parents and resource persons in this matter.

"San children and parents do not realise the importance of education" (Tracey's parent).

"The San parents have not yet recognised the importance of education......perhaps because most of them had no opportunity of attending school or getting education"(Ms. Alma, a resource person).

"The issue is more with the perception and the mind-set of the San people on what they regard as important. I think the mind-set is the biggest challenge......mostly driven by the environment in which they grow up. Most have not been exposed to the alternative life out there. For them "it's like....'why waste time with school if I can just stay here at home with my parents...and later on I can get a job here at the farm". It is the type of life that they have been exposed to. As such, San children do not see that bigger goal yet.......the significance of education is not really captured" (Ms. Sara, resource person).

A clear example of how some San parents approach issues of education came out when the interviewer asked Emily's parent as to what action they took when their daughter dropped out of school. His response was as follows:

"I'm currently busy with the fencing of this camp. As soon as I am done I will try to go to the school to talk to the teachers.........maybe I'll have money then to buy those things that the teachers are requesting...." (Emily's parent).

This response could be perceived as an illustration that Emily's parent was seemingly not shaken by the dropout of her child. His response showed no sign of urgency. At this point, Emily was already out of school for about three weeks and her school was just 30km's from the parents' village, located next to the main gravel road in the area. It can be easily interpreted that the education of this learner had to take a backseat because of a rather "flexible temporary casual job" that her father was involved in.

iv. Parenting styles as contributor to dropout

Six respondents referred to the parenting style of the San population as a factor influencing the school dropout. They described the San parents as lenient with their children, making it easy for them to quit school without thinking about possible penalties from the parents.

"San parents are not very strict with their children.......children usually get their way...with very little coercion from their parents. They are not punished when they refuse to go to school, as it happens with the other groups" (Ms. Adeline, a long serving teacher at one of the primary school).

"San parents do not really believe in persuading their children to do things that they do not want........for them it's like....if the child 'say so what can I do'" (Ms. Sara).
In her view, this lack of a push from the parents can be seen or interpreted
"that children are allowed to make choices whereas it's not the case with other population groups" (Ms. Sara).
Tracey's parent was of the view that San parents have a tendency of being slow to react to critical situations. She complained that *"We as San people have this tendency of 'wait and see'..........we do not take action when we see signs that our children are deviating......we delay and by the time we want to act, it is too late" (Tracey's parent).*

As a measure of maintaining order and discipline, the schools apply various methods of disciplining children, and according to the teachers, San children do not take kindly to some of these methods. According to Ms. Adeline *"San children are not used to be dealt with in a stricter way at home, as their parents are lenient and very protective".* Therefore in her view it becomes difficult for the children to adapt in an environment where they have to be treated differently from their home environment. According to the teachers, they are at times forced to raise their voices when dealing with the school learners, and in her view the San children are easily offended by this. The scenario discussed above seems to have played a role in the dropout of Ruth, who was in Grade 3 then. She had the following remarks about her former school:
"I left because that school is not good..... 'the teachers are shouting at us and beating us'. They just force people, and if you find it difficult to do, they beat you up" (Ruth).

It appears that San learners find the stricter more authoritarian environment at school and the firmness of the teachers different from that of their home environment. During the interviews her parents were in full agreement with their daughter that school teachers were in the wrong.

"Things are not going on well at that school......teachers are not good with children"
(Ruth's parent)

In summary, the study found that San parents' parenting style has a role to play in children becoming disengaged from school and eventually dropping out. A closer analysis of the responses seems to suggest that the parenting style of the San population lacks deterrence needed to ensure that children remain in school. This style of parenting resembles what the literature refers to as the non-authoritative parenting approach, where parents fail to guide children on developmentally appropriate expectations (Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014). The literature seems to favour the authoritative parenting style where the parents set clear guidelines while providing children with emotional support and motivation (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014:779; Rumberger, 2013:13).

It is difficult to conclude as to where the parenting styles of the San population falls in the absence of a comprehensive study. Parenting may differ from one family to another and generalisation is therefore very tricky. Some San parents might possibly possess some positive traits such as warmth and affection towards children known for authoritative parenting. On the other they may possibly not show strength in some elements such as the ability to motivate and to set clear standards. The findings on the issue of lack of appropriate parenting style as a factor in the school dropout is significant and programs can be designed to address any deficiencies in this regard.

v. Early courting and teenage pregnancy

Seven respondents (two teachers, two resource persons and four parents of school dropouts) blamed the involvement of girls in early sexual relationships and the subsequent pregnancy, as a cause why many learners tend to cut their school career short. Two of the teachers interviewed expressed their concern with the way early courting and relationships affect San learners in particular. Mr. Claudius, a life skills

teacher indicated that this practice comes with dire consequences for San learners, as in most cases it results in the end of their school career.

"San children have a tendency of dropping out, once they get involved in relationships......at our school we lost quite a number of learners because of this issue" (Mr. Claudius).

"I remember that we had a group of girls who became deviant.....by dodging school, and once they were on the school ground they were so unruly......one could even sense that they acted as if they wanted an excuse for the school to dismiss them. I later learnt that these girls were involved in relationships with some boys from a nearby peri-urban settlement" (Mr. Claudius).

A principal at a secondary school visited, had similar concerns as above.
"We have discovered from our investigation as a school, that some of those female San learners who absent themselves from school and eventually dropout, are co-habitating with young male adults back home" (Mr. Eduard).
According to Mr. Eduard, further investigations by teachers revealed a rather worrying trend. *"It came out that parents allows their children to co-habitate with boyfriends.....because of their poor socio-economic background" (Mr. Eduard).*
In their other follow-up visits during the holidays, they noted again that *"School-going girls were allowed to stay with their boyfriends".*

One of the San parents, whose daughter left school at age 15 whilst in Grade 9, blamed early courting as one of the reasons for the high dropout rate among the San girls. Tracey's parent stated that *"girls lose interest in school once they get involved with boyfriends".*
She cited the example of her own daughter who suddenly lost interest in school, as soon as she got involved in a relationship.. She informed the researcher that her daughter changed completely, started dodging school and became rebellious.
"When I confronted her about her conduct, she moved out of my house and instead started staying with my sister" (Tracey's parent).
In the end, Tracey dropped out of school and all attempts by her parent to get her back to school by involving the police proved futile.

Peer influence, coupled with alcohol use are regarded as the main reasons why teenagers, including the San youth get involved in early sexual relationships. These were some of the remarks from the respondents:

"Children are easily vulnerable to bad influence from others.......they try to imitate others and in the process risk their education" (Anna's parent).

"Young girls get involved in relationships because of peer pressure, in the end they get into some troubles and drop out of school" (Jenny).

"The children become attracted to this outside life......first experimenting with alcohol and then end up engaging in sexual activities. It becomes a struggle to get children to focus on their education 'once they get a taste of this outside life'..." (Mr. Claudius).

He made reference to three San boys, who were quite gifted but who later got involved in smoking, drinking and dodging. All attempts made to keep them in school failed, and they eventually dropped out of school.

"These children were good in almost all fields ranging from academic performance, arts, and sports to such an extent that the school had big plans for their future. You know San children have a tendency of influencing each other and usually, if one of them drops out then others will follow suit"(Mr. Claudius).

Anna's parent shared similar views on the relationship between alcohol use and sexual activities.

"It becomes very problematic to keep them in school, especially when they start experimenting with alcohol and drugs. In the midst of alcohol use....they get involved in sexual activities..........and for the girls, older men start exploiting them and subsequently they lose interest in school and end up dropping out" (Anna's parent).

Another resource person, Ms. Alma noted the same concern of how early courting and relationships destroy the future of many San children.

"In most situations one notices that the moment they start relationships the interest in education diminishes. It appears that there is a thin line between relationships and marriage...because the moment the girl has a boyfriend she drops out to stay with the partner" (Ms. Alma).

Three of the respondents blamed this on the preference of the San youth to be close to their partners. Ms. Alma believes that this trend is rooted in their culture.

"In general, San couples are attached and stay close to each other........usually if one of the partner have to go somewhere the whole family goes too" (Ms. Alma).

"San children are socialised in this culture of non-separation from partners, they would leave school to stay close to their partners" (Ms. Alma).

Another problem which cannot be easily separated from early sexual relationships is teenage pregnancy. Six respondents attributed the non-completion of school by San learners to pregnancies. The worrying trend noted from the findings is that primary school learners are not spared from the incidence of teenage motherhood. Some of the comments from the respondents were as follows:

"I know of three learners from our school who dropped out. The two girls dropped out because of pregnancy. They were involved with bad friends from outside, started using alcohol.....and 'I think it's when they got involved with the boys who made them pregnant'..." (Getrud, a current school learner).

Gertrud's fellow learner, Magda had this to say *"I know of one girl......she was in Grade 6, about 12 years of age and was very clever.......she dropped out of school this year after she became pregnant. She got involved with boyfriends and started sneaking out of the hostel with her friends, which led to the pregnancy" (Magda).*

The secondary schools in the region are the most affected by the teenage pregnancy incidences. Anna who dropped out whilst she was a Grade 9 learner knew a couple of her peers who left school because of pregnancy. She shared her experience as follows:

"I know of two other cousins of mine who dropped out of school....they were also at the same secondary school where I was schooling. We were about the same age. They just left school when they realised that they were pregnant....; One of them recently gave birth and the other one is pregnant and stays at home"(Anna).

The researcher posed a follow-up question, which was not part of the interview guide as to whether girls are aware of the Ministry of Education's pregnancy policy that allows pregnant girls to continue with their education. The response from Anna

revealed some issues that can be considered as a challenge in the implementation of this policy.

"I think most of the girls are aware of the policy that if you get pregnant you can still continue with your schooling. I think that most girls rather opt to quit school out of shame. The teachers especially the female ones, have a tendency of ridiculing those school girls who becomes pregnant. They are always questioning 'why are you girls getting involved in sexual activities while you are in school'..." (Anna).

This view is supported by the conclusions contained in the UNICEF Namibia Annual Report for 2015. The report states that "the effect of teenage pregnancy seems to be particularly pervasive and puts girls at a substantial risk of dropping out due to strong (cultural) prejudice against pregnant girls continuing schooling" (UNICEF, 2015: 38).

In short, the study found that engagement in relationships and sexual activities in many instances interrupts the school career of San children. The complexities are related to the San teenagers' desire to be closer to their partners, causing them to lose interest in school activities. The situation is exacerbated by the general acceptance of co-habitation practice even for school attending children, which from the observation of some respondents is condoned by the San parents and the general community. Trans-generational sexual relationships were mentioned by some respondents, as trapping female teenagers in a web of relationships with older males for economic reasons. The outcome is usually unplanned early pregnancy. This can be equated to transactional sexual relationships, which according to studies done among the urban poor in Nairobi are incompatible with school attendance (Abuya *et al.*, 2013: 757).

The possible explanation for the co-habitation relationships and the subsequent pregnancies could be linked to many socio-cultural issues mentioned in the literature. The literature review clearly demonstrated that early marriages and "marriage by capture" are encouraged within the San population (Dieckmann *et al.*, 2014; Lee, 1984:79). This could be the possible explanation why parents condone co-habitation relationships for school girls as the findings revealed.The handling of female initiation where girls are introduced as women following the rituals (Schapera, 1930; Guenther, 1986), could also possibly be the reason for early courting and subsequent pregnancies of young San learners.

4.3.2.3. School environment related factors

i. Inability to handle transition from primary to secondary schools.

It is a fact that change is always perceived with mixed feelings, with excitement on the one hand and fear on the other hand. This study found that San learners have difficulties in dealing with the process of change. The transition to secondary schools particularly was found to be the most troubling for San learners. The study found that a number of San students who passed Grade 7 at primary school dropped out of school because they could not cope with the new environment at the secondary schools.

According to Mr. Herman *"The San children finds it difficult to cope with the change of the environment when they proceed from primary to secondary schools......San learners are disappearing between the two phases" (Mr. Herman).*

Mr. Herman indicated that about 3 years ago, he carried out an assessment of the magnitude of the dropout rate among San learners covering some clusters in the region. In relating his findings, Mr. Herman noted that *"85% of San children from these clusters dropped out already in their first year at the secondary schools" (Mr. Herman).*

Three teachers raised a concern that a number of San learners who passed from their school and transferred to secondary schools ended up dropping out.
"Some of them drop out already in their first year at the secondary school.....and in most cases they never return to school again" (Ms. Ingrid).

"The moment they go to high school, they end up dropping out of school....a lot of them are dropping out there" (Ms. Tekla).

In recognising this challenge, the teachers at one of the primary schools visited indicated that they have introduced a sponsorship program to cover school related expenses to some of their San learners who proceed to high schools. However from their follow-up not much improvement has been noted.

"Even after they have been sponsored......the next moment you will hear that those children are not attending school anymore" (Ms. Tekla).

These teachers are of the view that San learners drop out at secondary schools because *"no one is looking out for them at high schools, now that they are far from their parents and the people they have become so much used to" (Ms. Ingrid).*

According to the teachers, the distance to the new schools makes it difficult for San learners to visit their parents during out-weekends. Ms. Ingrid who grew up among the San observed that *"San people in general likes to be close to each other".* In her view the San children are not coping with these long spells of separation from their parents. Another teacher had similar views.

"San children have adapted to their culture of always being close to their family.......children are therefore fond of being close to their parents" (Ms. Adeline).

A principal at a secondary school also noted the same concern, singling out those learners who originate from rural primary schools. Ms. Else narrated her observation as follows: *"It's maybe because of the pressure that comes with integration of San learners with learners from other population groups. They find the new environment at this school completely different, a mixed school where there are so many population groups" (Ms. Else).* She suspects that the San learners feel threatened and out of place at their new school. *"Maybe because at their previous schools they were in big numbers....and now here they find themselves in a small minority. They are not really blending with others......that's why if one of them goes the others usually follows" (Ms. Else).*

Ms. Sara, a resource person, claimed that the difficulty of the San learners to adapt in a new environment can be ascribed to what she termed *"an element of social inclination".* She explained that San children get so used to their own environment because they are rarely exposed to alternative settings during their upbringing.

"Can you imagine a child coming from Donkerbos primary school (a remote settlement in the Otjombinde constituency, Omaheke region) and suddenly finding himself/herself in Gobabis town where he/she is expected to learn new things with very little support system.........far from his/her family and acquaintances...?(Ms. Sara).

She gave an example that children from other population groups who reside in rural areas are at times sent to their relatives in towns during the school holidays and vice versa. In her view, this kind of exposure helps children to integrate and cope easily when they experience change in their lives.

Another resource person, Ms. Alma concurred. According to Ms. Alma *"The San children find it difficult to mix with children from other population groups" (Ms. Alma).* In her opinion this problem has its roots in the general society's way of life and the living arrangements.

"San people especially in villages and farms, where the majority resides, have their own separate dwellings, usually located behind the homesteads of the other groups. It is for this reason that when San children mix with others in the school environment they tend to find it difficult to cope, since others have their own way of doing things" (Ms. Alma).

Another parent expressed his disappointment as follows:

"My child passed very well at Gqaina School, but he dropped out during his first year at the Secondary School in Gobabis last year; this year we took him back, but again he just attended for three month and came back home, complaining that the school is not good...." (Eben's parent). He attributed this problem to the inability of their children to cope in a multi-cultural set-up. *"Our children get so much used to their group, such that once they meet others they experience fear or what.....I can't really describe" (Eben's parent).*

From the analysis of the data it can be reasoned that a multitude of factors give rise to the inability of San learners to handle transition from primary to secondary schools. Some of them, due to their socio-economic situation had no opportunities to see towns, and entering a secondary school becomes the first time for them. As they are trying to settle in a new, strange, bigger place they are confronted by many challenges. At the secondary schools they meet a variety of ethnic groups whom they have never met before, and with whom they are now expected to integrate. Given that in most secondary schools they are in a tiny minority compared to other groups, they feel socially excluded. Furthermore they find the environment at secondary schools hostile in contrast with their home environment and in some instances their experiences at primary schools. This is exacerbated by the fact that most of the secondary schools

are located far from the localities where the San population resides, rendering them unable to resort to any support for protection and emotional backing that their parents or acquaintances would have accorded them.

ii. Unreceptive school environment

The environment at the school plays an important role and is one of the key determinants of the likelihood of the child remaining or dropping out of school. The investigation revealed a number of factors within the schools' settings that are considered as causes to the high dropout of San learners. The findings are categorised into four sub-headings.

a. Mistreatment and bullying of San learners in schools.

The study found that acts of labelling and bullying of San learners are widespread in schools. The following remarks by school dropouts clearly illustrate the existence of such practices.

"I left school because the treatment was not good at all.......the people at the school were saying bad words to us" (Rosa).

"The other learners always call us 'Ukuruha'..." (Imelda) ['Ukuruha' is a reference to "Bushmen/San" in one of the local vernaculars, but more in a demeaning/belittling way].

"I and my friend were enrolled at the high school this year, but we dropped out because we did not like the school......we were bullied by other learners at that school" (Dina).

Furthermore, some respondents reported that the practice of bullying at some schools were in the form of physical abuse. A male dropout learner narrated his experience as follows:

"The older children were mistreating and beating us......they will go to an extent of forcing your head into the bathroom water basin, full of water........." (Eben).

"This year my parents took me back to the same school but the situation was just the same.......mistreatment and beatings.....as a result I and another boy from our place dropped out of school again in March this year" (Eben).

Eben's parent was of the view that the beatings mentioned above is a continuation of an old practice of welcoming newcomers to schools, commonly referred to as "treatment of recruits". He felt that on many occasions this practice is abused by the older children, resulting in the dropout of some learners, as was the case with his son.

A principal at one of the secondary schools, recalled that there was a time when they experienced such a problem at one of the annual school gatherings. The teachers innocently asked learners to give an indication of their population group.
"We noticed that when it came to the San to raise their hands the other learners started laughing loudly.We realised then, that there was a problem and we tackled that issue on the spot" (Ms. Else).

One of the resource persons confirmed that San learners face discriminatory remarks from their peers at school. From his own experience as a San person, this practice is an everyday occurrence in the community.
"I seriously do not understand why people in our country always like calling people by their tribe..."In my view it's better to call the person by his name......if you do not know his name, at least call him/her by the title Mr./Ms......or brother/sister etc." (Mr. Eddy).

Another resource person, shared similar views.
"I have to admit that despite all the efforts to discourage these practices, the labelling and name calling of San learners is still taking place in some schools" (Mr. Herman).

The teachers and school staff were also implicated in the practice of labeling and mistreatment of San learners. Some respondents shared how some teachers and school staff were at fault:
"I left school because I could not bear with the negative attitudes and remarks from the teachers at our school. They always questioned why I dropped out of school the other year, only to come back again" (Anna).
Anna cited a remark from one teacher who questioned her in a hostile way as follows:
"Why are you San children always quitting school and then come back? ....why don't you rather not just go home, stay and drink 'tombo' with your parents" (Anna)["tombo" is a traditional alcoholic home-brewed drink].

The above scenario points to an apparent defect in the schools' system of handling those learners who "drop in" or those who decide to return to school (Sabates *et al.,* 2011).

Some parents also raised up concerns about the treatment of San learners by school personnel.

"San children are always called names and this could be the reason why they do not feel good at school. The learners from other population groups also copy this type of behaviour from the school staff by treating the San learners with disrespect" (Rosa's *parent, who at one stage worked as a volunteer caretaker at the hostel).*

She further recalled an incident that she witnessed at the school when a staff member uttered the following words: "*You San kids like absconding.......we want to give you a chance to upgrade yourself......but you are just eating and running away from school" (Rosa's parent).*

She claimed that they raised up these concerns with the school authorities but they were seemingly not taken seriously.

"There is a tendency at this school of taking serious matters jokingly. If one raises a concern, some of those who have to act will just start to tease you, in a way known as "ouramue or orombe" [the terms in inverted commas refer to a traditional mannerism of teasing your cousin for fun, by one of the local population groups].

Two of the resource persons interviewed concurred with the abovementioned views, but their main concern was the inferiority complex of the San population. In their opinion, this situation makes San learners vulnerable to be abused by others.

"The inferiority complex has been ingrained in their minds for so many years.......such that when they encounter others, they sink into submissiveness. The San children's self-esteem is tainted *because of what the society has made them to believe........for them it's like others deserve to be in front....and we have to wait" (Ms. Sara).*

Another resource person was of the view that the attitude and practices of abuse of San learners stems from the general societal set-up where San people are regarded as "*'backward and less important people'. The other children copy this type of attitudes from their home and take it to the school grounds"(Ms. Alma).*

Related to the abovementioned, two other respondents expressed their concern regarding the trend of some members of the San population switching to other languages and even adopting new names and surnames.

"Some of them become 'Namas' once they go to towns, they would rather communicate in that language instead of their own"(Ms. Ingrid).

"I am also against a common practice of indirect 'colonisation' of San people where they are given names and surnames of other ethnic groups" (Mr. Claudius).

In summary, the findings revealed that San learners are subjected to constant labelling, mistreatment and bullying at schools. About 75% of the school dropouts interviewed mentioned the above as real challenges in schools and contributing to school dropout. Most of the respondents consider bullying as a leading cause that pushes San learners to drop out. This challenge was recognised and confirmed in studies conducted in South Australian high schools where peer harassment was noted as a serious problem for at-risk students (Lamb *et al.*, 2004: 31). It was found that learners who are bullied have considerably lower levels of self-esteem, and that this contributes to underachievement and early school leaving (Lamb *et al.*, 2004: 31).

This study found that in some schools, teachers make themselves guilty of such offences. This creates a situation where San learners develop mistrust in the school system as a whole. Abuya *et al.*, (2013: 53) refer to some teachers as a source of discouragement to learners with their practice of humiliation of learners in front of others. Although most schools boast of having codes of conduct that discourage discrimination and negative vibes in their schools, it appears that such practices continue unabated. This could be either due to poor enforcement or lenient punishment being meted against perpetrators.

The findings clearly show that labelling and mistreatment of San learners stem from the bigger societal practices and learners just copy this. The abuse of the San population over the years has rendered them powerless and as a result they tend to retreat in defeat when their rights are violated. The San children seemingly imitate this disposition of submissiveness of their parents.

b. Poor communication

Effective communication is critical in promoting sound relationships between stakeholders in education. The study found issues of concern in the way some educators communicate with their learners. A number of specific cases emanating from the study seemed to point to the issue of deficient or poor communication. The reasons that led to the dropout of Jenny clearly illustrate this challenge. The said learner narrated that the teachers were not very supportive when she returned to school after a long absence due to ill-health. She was particularly offended when a teacher accused her of not communicating her absence.

"I felt hurt because it was not true, because I informed the teachers when I went to Gobabis for treatment" (Jenny).

She felt that the remarks from the teacher added to her already stressful situation, and coupled with other reasons contributed to her decision to drop out of school.

Another learner shared that she was hurt when a teacher made a false accusation against her. *"I had a clash with my teacher who accused me of being involved in relationships with boys while it was not true" (Getrud).*

This learner did not drop out of school then, but given the vulnerability of the San learners, that situation could have easily provoked her to leave school.

A learner and her friend at a secondary school dropped out of school after an announcement was made in class that they should buy calculators and additional stationeries.

"The teachers were not good with us......they demanded that we should buy things like calculators and other stationeries, but we did not have money" (Dina).

In this scenario, many questions remain unanswered i.e. how did the teacher communicate this message? How was the tone? Were the learners told that they could approach the teachers if they have problems in this regard? Or was it just assumed that they knew?. It is obvious that if no sensitivity is shown in the communication method, children may not have the courage to request for special consideration, and some would just opt to drop out.

The learners and their parents are however not completely innocent in this aspect of poor communication. The findings revealed that there were many instances of parents failing to follow up issues related to their learners with the schools. Furthermore, many San learners are seemingly not keen to approach and to lay complaints with the principals.

4.3.3. Suggested solutions for the school dropout problem.

The study participants were asked during the interviews to propose possible suggestions to the dropout problem from their own viewpoints. A number of suggestions were made and are presented in table 5 below, followed by a discussion in the subsequent sub-headings.

Table 6: Themes and categories: respondents' suggestions on solutions to school dropout.

Theme	Factor	Issues	Categories
Suggested Solutions	School Environment	-Effective communication -Orientation on transition from primary to secondary schools	Creating a conducive learning and teaching environment for San learners
		-Schools near communities	Establishment of schools to cater for the special needs of the San learners.
	Socio-cultural	Need for community education via [meetings; radio; etc.]	Sensitisation on importance of education
		Promotion of positive self-esteem	Building resilience among San learners
	Socio-economic	Allowances for San learners; IGP's; Provision of transport to and from schools; Involvement of employers.	Programs to address poverty and socio-economic challenges

All the respondents considered education as very important. Although most of those who dropped out did not express plans of returning to school, they nevertheless expressed their regret for not completing their school career. Three respondents had the following to say:

"Education is important…..I regret because those who finish school live nice lives and are able to support themselves" (Anna, a dropout learner)

"It is also easy to get jobs when you are educated…and your living condition improves"(Jenny).

"Education is important, because it enables the children to take care of themselves when they are adults and they in turn support their younger siblings" (Anna's parent).

The respondents were asked their views on what they regarded as the solution to the problem of school dropout of San learners. They made several suggestions to counteract this challenge which are grouped into five key sub-categories, as elaborated below.

i. Creating a conducive learning and teaching environment for San learners

A substantial number of respondents felt that there is a need to transform schools, in order to create a friendly environment for San learners. The emphasis was on the need for a school environment where learners enjoy education, free from bullying, labelling, discrimination, and mistreatment.

a. Training of teachers

The respondents were of the view that teachers and other staff members at schools and hostels should be properly trained on the culture of all their learners, including the San learners. They felt that the training will help in broadening understanding of the cultural diversity of learners.

Respondents had strong feelings that teachers should show increased understanding of their learners and communicate more effectively with them. Many respondents felt that if teachers make time to interact in a non-threatening way with the children, then the learners, especially the San, will be open and comfortable. This will make it easy for them to confide in their teachers, instead of dropping out. The following sentiments clearly demonstrate the need for transformation in the teacher-learner relations.

"Teachers should have time to listen to learners and they must show understanding especially those at secondary schools, where I experienced this problem" (Jenny, a school dropout).

"Teachers should know the background of their learners that they are teaching. During the time that the children are at school......teachers should make special effort to show them love, affection......for the children to feel that there are people out there who care......rather than facing the same fate that some are exposed to at home" (Mr. Adam).

b. Recruitment of more San teachers and other school personnel
The second angle of suggestions implored on the need to create an environment where San learners can identify themselves with the school. A significant number of respondents proposed for the training and deployment of more San teachers. In their view the presence of more San teachers will ensure that there are people within the school that learners can relate to and they could also serve as role models for them.
"San teachers must be appointed on lower requirements and rather be supported with in-service training" (Mr. Herman).

A teacher shared that their school appointed two San parents, first as volunteers and later on as full-time Institutional workers. In his view this step had positive results, because they observed increased motivation among San learners.
"We gave these two staff members a task of influencing San learners to remain in school. I think our strategy has contributed to a decline in the number of San learners dropping out from school" (Mr. Claudius).

c. Review of the curriculum
Four out of the nine teachers felt that the curriculum should be revised to cater for the teaching of San languages as a way of making education relevant and exciting for the San learners.
"More teachers should be trained in the teaching of Ju/'hoansi and other main dialects of the San people. They should be deployed at various schools where San learners are found, to ensure that these languages are taught broadly" (Mr. Simon).

The early use of mother tongue in education is supported by many academicians who believe that it builds the learners' confidence in their linguistic heritage. Curriculum is seen as an important instrument in engaging the youth in education (Lamb *et al.*, 2004: 53). Many scholars support the review of curriculum to meet the needs of the indigenous populations. It is argued that "if learning is contextualized, culturally relevant, and authentic, students will become more engaged in their education" (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003:21).

d. Address bullying/mistreatment of San learners at schools

More than half of the respondents called for measures to be taken at school level to curb incidences of bullying and verbal abuse of San learners by their peers at schools. *"Schools must stop learners from bullying others. The practice of 'treatment for new learners' at schools must be stopped because some older children abuse it to hurt the new comers". (Eben, a school dropout)*

"The school management must educate children on how to respect one another" (Mr. Eddy, a community activist).

"If they experience bullying they must report to the teachers or to the principal" (Angela, current learner).

In addition, four respondents proposed that dedicated people, in the form of counsellors, be employed at school level to attend to the emotional problems of children. This suggestion ties in with findings from studies that have identified counselling as one of the effective strategies to prevent learners from dropping out of school (Kemp, 2006: 246).

e. Address challenges with transition from primary to secondary school

The respondents had some proposals that they thought could better address this problem. One of the recommendations from some teachers and resource persons is that special orientation be arranged to prepare San learners for the transition. A principal at one of the secondary schools indicated that they have a tradition of arranging a special welcoming gathering for new learners at the beginning of each year. However she is of the view that there is room for improvement, and feels that a new platform should be created to focus primarily on the issue of the struggles that San children face when they enter secondary schools.

ii. Establishment of schools to cater for the special needs of the San learners

A number of respondents proposed the construction of schools in the traditional San areas. The respondents maintained, that if more schools are built in close proximity to areas occupied by more San people the obstacles of distance, lack of transport, and poor contact of parents with schools will be addressed.

"The government should consider building a high school in the surrounding where more San are residing. It should be located in areas closer to their settlements" (Ms. Tekla, a teacher).

Five respondents (two parents, a resource person and two teachers) shared the same view as above, but felt that the only way to make San children feel at ease is to ensure a substantial representation of San learners at the proposed schools. Three other respondents had a slightly different position on the location of such schools. They felt that schools must not be located near the children's familiar environment. Two parents of school dropouts were more concerned about the exposure of learners to negative influences in town and suggested that new schools rather be located outside urban centers. *"If schools are built outside.......it will help the learners to focus and concentrate on their education free from bad influence" (Anna's parent).*

A teacher who is based at a day-school proposed for the construction of a hostel outside the town to cater for learners from poor and unstable homes. He added that arrangements can be made by the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to transport learners from school to the hostel during the weekdays.

"The children from this poverty stricken families can be placed in those types of hostels, where they can be properly fed and supervised by adults such as matrons" (Mr. Adam).

iii. Sensitisation on importance of education

Most of those interviewed, called for aggressive sensitisation campaigns to raise awareness among the San parents and learners on the importance of education. The respondents advised that such campaigns should cover issues such as parental

involvement in education, good parenting practices, and social ills that cause the children to drop out.

"Community meetings must be held with the parents to discuss the importance of education" (Mr. Dan).

"The Ministries of Gender Equality & Child Welfare and that of Education should join hands to conduct community awareness campaigns on the importance of education and how they can support their children" (Mr. Adam).

"San community should organise themselves and motivate their children; everyone should be supported, all should feel equal" (Maria, a dropout learner).

Nine respondents stressed the need for role models to give motivational talks to the parents and learners. It was felt that prominent San people who have changed their lives with the aid of education can be used to motivate parents and learners. Others advised that peers and other San youth should be used to influence fellow learners. In addition, Mr. Herman was of the view that a multitude of platforms such as radio stations, television, and social media should be utilised to raise awareness.

A teacher at one of the primary schools observed that the issue of dropout cannot be tackled effectively without the involvement of the San parents. *"It is only through their full involvement that we can get to the bottom of this problem and address the root causes" (Mr. Tom).* He was of the view that meetings should be held with the San parents in their own environment to inform them about the school activities, the role of parents in education and to enable them to air their views.

iv. Building resilience among San learners

Resilience is defined as a term used to describe "a set of qualities that foster a process of successful adaptation and transformation despite risk and adversity" (Benard, 1995 as cited in Strand & Peacock, 2002: 2). Resilience enables people to withstand or to easily recover from difficult situations. Some respondents felt that a durable solution to the challenges of stereotyping, labelling, and discrimination of the San learners is by strengthening their coping capacities. They argued that if San children are empowered psychologically, they will withstand the pressure that comes with their mistreatment by others. Some of the remarks from the respondents were as follow:

"There is a need for a concerted effort in terms of changing the mind-set of the San people including the children.....;They need to understand that they are equal and important like all the other people and that they have rights too; the mentality that San people are just good to be farm labourers needs to end" (Ms. Sara, a resource person).

"Special campaigns should be conducted to encourage the San people to be proud of whom they are, to love their culture and language and to boost their self-pride....this will help them to withstand the stereotypes they are exposed to" (Mr. Claudius, a teacher).

A parent of a school dropout shared similar views, indicating that exposure of San children to others at an early age will assist in building their confidence. *"Children should be prepared from early age to integrate and get used to others" (Rex's parent).*

v. Programs to address poverty and socio-economic challenges

Four respondents advocated for steps to ensure that San learners are provided with basic necessities to prevent them from dropping out of school because of unmet needs i.e. toiletries, stationeries, mattresses, blankets, and linens. The government was fingered as the responsible organ in this regard. However, others called for a multi-sectoral effort.

"Stakeholders in education and the business community should come together and create a fund to support San learners with toiletries" (Mr. Eduard).

"The parents and the government must give assistance to San learners in terms of their basic needs" (Abel).

Three of the respondents, while acknowledging the need for provision of basic necessities to the San learners, felt that more resources and efforts should be channeled to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the San people.

"The San people should be assisted at all levels and the assistance should not be selective or focus in certain areas only. It's good to provide them with food, blankets and so on but what they need is total emancipation to make them sustainable in the long run" (Mr. Claudius).

They believed that once the economic status of the San households improves, the needs of the school-attending children will be met, enhancing school retention in the process. The following were proposed by the respodents as possible remedies to address poverty of the San population.

- ✓ Provision of adequate resources to develop the planned and on-going livelihood support projects of the San people i.e. the development of the San villages, strengthening of income generating projects and other programs.
- ✓ Relaxation of job requirements for San people in all sectors.
- ✓ Training of San people in vocational/technical fields to enhance their chances of employment and self-help.
- ✓ Development of infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunication services, sanitation, adequate shelter, schools, and health facilities in under-developed areas that are inhabited by San people such as Eiseb.

One respondent felt that all these can only be achieved, provided that there is strong commitment from all stakeholders.

"We need to apply a notion of positive discrimination if we want to solve the problems afflicting the San community" (Mr. Claudius).

The above line of argument is supported by Chebane who favours 'positive discrimination' in asserting the recognition of the cultural and ethnic identity of the marginalised population (Chebane, 2010: 94). In his view such an approach will aid constructive engagements on development policies with such communities (2010:94).

It was further proposed that an after-school center should be established in Epako, Gobabis, to support children from poverty-stricken households.

"This center can provide meals, assist learners with homework, provide opportunities to study, recreational activities and other constructive events to keep them busy and motivated" (Mr. Adam).

Finally, a call was made by one teacher for Government to engage the employers in the commercial farms and communal areas to address the educational challenges of children of their San employees. One respondent rounded off his inputs by expressing a strong need for immediate action.

"There is a need for something to be done to the poor children from realising their dreams. If they are left like that there is no future" (Mr. Adam).

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter primarily dealt with the presentation of the research findings and the interpretation. The research findings revealed that there are various factors that cause San children to drop out of school. These include among others poverty, teenage pregnancies, difficulty in transitioning from primary to secondary schools, bullying and mistreatment of San learners at schools. The respondents proposed a number of measures to counter-act the challenges identified. These include poverty allevation programs, training of teachers in multi-cultural teaching, review of the curriculum to address the needs of San learners, and interventions to create a conducive atmosphere for San learners in schools. In the next chapter, the conclusions of the study will be discussed followed by recommendations for implementation.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSION FROM THE LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

It can be concluded, based on the literature review and the findings that school dropout is a global concern with many adverse social and economic repercussions, affecting not only the individual dropout and his/her immediate family, but also extending to the society at large. The costs of school dropout are immeasurable, ranging from lost opportunity value in terms of the resources invested in education to the negative consequences it perpetuates such as under-development, continuous cycle of poverty, and other associated social ills.

The study has achieved its main objectives. It was able to establish the reasons why San children drop out of school in Omaheke region by obtaining the views of the respondents who represent a variety of stakeholders, including those directly affected being the San children. The study was further able to elicit the views of the study participants on what they consider to be the most important steps that can be taken to curb school dropout. The latter conform to the widely recognised approach of involving the affected groups in determining solutions to their own problem. This is in contrast with the top-down approach where the affected groups are considered as mere recipients of services, an approach that has been shown to produce disastrous results. The findings of the study revealed three broad factors that give rise to the high school dropout of San learners. These are socio-economic-, socio-cultural-, and school-related factors.

The study found that the poor socio-economic status of the San population, with their chronic poverty situation at the forefront, has a direct bearing on the children's school attendance and completion. The socio-economic factors identified range from inability of parents to afford school related costs, scarcity of food facing many San households, the deplorable housing conditions coupled with lack of access to basic amenities, and the mobility of the parents resulting from desperation to find jobs. The hardships become unbearable, especially for the adolescents who in addition are battling to cope

with challenges that come with their developmental stage. San children are exposed to stressful situations in a competitive school environment that many of their peers from other population groups do not have to go through. All these harm their emotional well-being and morale, forcing them to consider the "now", consequently retreating to their familiar non-competitive environment.

It was also determined that the daily struggles that San learners go through drives some to fend for a living on the streets, especially those in towns while rural ones succumb to the hardships, opting to abandon schooling, usually followed by a living as lowly paid casual labourers. A significant finding connected to the parents' inability to cover school-related costs, and an aspect which usually is overlooked, relates to the exclusion of San learners, and presumably other learners from poor backgrounds, to partake in school activities such as educational tours. This exclusion needs to be taken seriously as it compromises the commitment towards equity in education.

The study found that San orphans and vulnerable children are at a higher risk of dropping out because of the poor social support network within their immediate environment. It was clear that this group requires special interventions to ensure that they access state grants and are provided with moral and material support for them to remain in school. The findings of the socio-economic effect on the school completion of San learners are a pointer to a need for urgent short- and long-term interventions. Failure to address the poverty situation means that the dropout will continue unabated.

The study further established that socio-cultural factors have a role to play in the San learners' dropout challenge. Most of the socio-cultural related causes to the school dropout points to the role of the parents, ranging from poor involvement of San parents in their education, ignorance of the importance of education, defects in the non-authoritative parenting style, and the social decay characterised by the widespread abuse of alcohol. The abovementioned compromise the parents' ability to fulfil their duties of care, motivation, control and support that are critical in the dropout process.

Early courting and teenage pregnancies were also mentioned as key drivers of early school leaving. It appears from the study that the interplay of socio-economic factors and cultural practices make the San girl child susceptible to early sexual relationships

and the resultant teenage parenthood. The presence of the pregnancy policy that allows pregnant learners to continue attending school was also found not to be adequate, as it is challenged by stereotypical attitudes of some educators and other issues related to self-blame and guilt associated with teenage pregnancies and parenthood. Judging from these findings and looking at what emerged from the literature regarding some intricacies linked to the practices of female initiation and early marriages, there is a need for serious engagements between various stakeholders to tackle such issues.

Furthermore, the study found that there are various school-related factors that have a bearing on the school dropout of San learners. The San learners tend to find the environment at the school hostile and unwelcoming. The issues of bullying by fellow learners, ridicule and name-calling by their peers from other population groups and some school staff make schooling an unpleasant experience for the San learners. A worrying trend noted from the study is that bullying at times involves physical beatings, a gross violation of a child's right. In most instances not all San learners have the courage to report such incidents and they rather opt to leave school. Also, coming to the fore, and related to the unreceptive school environment, was the issue of San learners being unable to handle transition from primary to secondary schools. Many gifted San learners' educational careers end at this stage because of the inability to negotiate this hurdle.

The most disturbing aspect is the ethnic/racial connotations linked to the mistreatment of San learners in schools. This raises some serious concerns as to why these practices still continue to prevail 26 years after the independence of Namibia. It is worrying to learn the continuous occurrence of such practices in a free, democratic and all-inclusive dispensation where equality and respect of human rights are supposed to be entrenched in all spheres of society. The government of the Republic of Namibia and other stakeholders are on record for promoting national unity and respect for human rights. However, it seems that more need to be done to ensure that the noble provisions contained in the Namibian constitution and all other legislative frameworks geared towards promoting a culture of non-discrimination and respect for human rights are internalised by all in the society. It can be concluded from the above analysis that there is a need for an intervention from a national perspective, perhaps

in terms of a national dialogue where clear action plans could be devised to discourage negative stereotyping and associated ills. School dropout impacts negatively on national development, therefore, a call for a national response to address the root causes thereof, especially in areas were the prevalence is high is of utmost importance. This phenomenon, therefore, should be treated with the same vigour as is the case with other national development challenges.

The overarching challenge fueling the high rate of school dropout of the San learners stems from their low social standing in society, partly because of their poor socio-economic status but also due to what can be perceived as intentional and unintentional victimisation by others in society. It is therefore crucial that any solution to the high rate of school dropout addresses issues that can uplift the San's livelihood as well as tackling the prevailing societal bias and stereotyping.

As to the measures that need to be taken to address the school dropout problem, the study participants proposed a number of solutions. The suggestions range from interventions to create a conducive environment in the schools by among others addressing bullying and mistreatment of San learners, establishment of schools to cater for the needs of San learners, building resilience among San learners and poverty reduction programs.

The findings as enumerated above clearly indicate that there are various community and school related factors contributing to school dropout of San learners in Omaheke Region. School dropout affects all in the society, therefore, it cannot be seen as the domain of the education sector alone, but all stakeholders have to put their shoulders to the wheel. It is only if all take ownership and drive the process that progress can be made to significantly minimise the school dropout of San learners and in the process safeguard the future of the Namibian child, including the San child specifically. Addressing school dropout of San learners will ultimately benefit the society at large in terms of the contribution that skilled and knowledgeable youth can make to the socio-economic development of the country. The recommendations to counter-act the problem of school dropout of San learners are enumerated below.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the empirical findings enumerated above and in keeping with the lessons learnt from the literature, the following recommendations are proposed to minimise the school dropout rate of San learners. The suggestions are based on the roles that various stakeholders can play in the prevention, and in alleviating the school dropout problems.

5.2.1. Role of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

Creating a conducive environment at schools for the San learners.
- The Ministry should in collaboration with other stakeholders, including parents and learners devise clear policies and directives to address issues related to stereotyping, discrimination, and bullying in schools. A monitoring mechanism should be incorporated by various circuit school inspectors to ensure that the directives are implemented.
- The issues of the negative impact of stereotyping, discrimination, and bullying should be included in the curriculum.
- A memo should be issued to regulate welcoming ceremonies, functions or practices in schools.
- Develop mechanisms for learners to alert school authorities of incidences of abuse, and mistreatment without the fear of being targeted.
- Institute severe punishment for perpetrators of verbal abuse, discrimination and maltreatment.
- School mission statements and values should include pronouncements on anti-bullying, and anti-discrimination.
- Establish school dropout prevention programs focusing on early identification of children at risk, prompt counselling services, home visits and involvement of parents in liaison with social workers, religious leaders and other community based practitioners.
- Full-time counsellors should be recruited and deployed at schools targeting those with a high number of children at risk of dropout.

Improve relevance and quality of teaching.

- The Ministry should consider abolishing the payment of hostel fees for all vulnerable children to avert a situation where San parents have to request for exemption.

- The school curriculum should be reviewed in close liaison with the San population to address the following:

✓ The teaching of San languages as a medium of instruction for Grade 1 to 4 at primary schools that accommodate a significant number of San learners.

✓ Incorporation of appropriate teaching aids and features in textbooks that reflect the role of the San population in history, positive issues of the San way of life and culture, knowledge of wildlife, traditional ornaments and other characteristic aspects that children can identify with.

✓ To incorporate both San traditional knowledge and current community issues.

- To train teachers in San languages (special incentives can be given to ensure that the program gets off the ground).

- Training of teachers in multi-cultural teaching and effective communication strategies.

- Establish San cultural clubs in schools and in communities and avail adequate resources to ensure that San culture is promoted.

- To incorporate vocational competencies and other technical components that can appraise the value of education in the community.

Contribute to improving access of San children to education.

- Ensure access of San children to early childhood development programs.

- Construction of secondary schools in underserved areas were a significant number of the San population resides to ensure that San children continue with their secondary education closer to where their parents are located.

- Investigate the feasibility of establishing mobile schools or other innovative educational interventions in the region to address the issue of seasonal migration and long distances to schools.

- Extend the current school feeding program to include at least one nutritious afternoon meal for needy learners.

Motivation of San learners and parents on importance of education

- The Ministry should initiate a program to acknowledge and reward best performing San learners.
- Establish a special fund in close liaison with other stakeholders that will assist the San learners and other children from poor households to participate in educational excursions.
- Initiate a program to motivate the school dropouts of school-going age to return to school.
- Conduct an aggressive campaign in collaboration with other stakeholders aimed at enticing the San population (targeting the parents and over-aged school dropouts) to partake in the literacy program so that they are equiped with adequate numeracy and literacy skills.
- Inclusion of San parents in the school boards and other parent-schools' forums.
- Ensure that school board meetings are participatory and the voices of parents from all socio-economic backgrounds including the San are heard.

5.2.2. Role of the San Development Program (Department of Marginalized Communities), Office of the Vice-President.

- Initiate a national dialogue involving all stakeholders to strategise on how best to address practices of discrimination and negative stereotyping being meted out against San population or any other population group.
- Strengthen the livelihood projects of the San under the San Development Program (SDP) to address poverty and other socio-economic conditions by:
  - ✓ Involving the poor in Income Generating Projects (IGP's).
  - ✓ Availing facilities, credit, training and equipment to small-scale IGP's.
- Streamlining the operations of the San Development Progam to ensure that all San learners benefit from the monthly allowances.
- Strengthen the ongoing program of transporting San learners to and from schools during holidays by involving all stakeholders i.e. line ministries and NGO's in this venture.

5.2.3. Role of other Government line ministries and civil society organisations.

- Initiate and arrange ongoing focus group discussion platforms, focusing on self-development sessions (addressing self-awareness and self-esteem issues). The intention should be to boost the San learners' self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience and coping abilities.

- Establish in close cooperation with other stakeholders, after school centres in major settlements to offer services to vulnerable children including the San learners, i.e. assistance with home-work, extra classes, sports, arts, culture and nutrition.

- Conduct regular interactive sessions, using visual aids and user friendly educational materials to sensitise the San population on the following:
  - ✓ The negative effect of alcohol abuse; the value of education and responsibilities of various stakeholders; effective parenting, and
  - ✓ The effects of early sexual relationships and teenage pregnancies including the school pregnancy policy and issues that hinder the implementation of some provisions in this policy.

- Expand the San language radio station based in Tsumkwe by opening a satellite station in the Omaheke Region to ensure accessibility. This radio station should introduce special programs to sensitise the San population on the importance of education.

- Conduct interactive sessions with employers in communal villages and commercial farms to strategise on addressing the school dropout challenge of the San children. These sessions can focus on issues such as:
  - ✓ Awareness of the negative effect of child labour.
  - ✓ Role of employers in assisting their employees in the education of the children.

- Arrange and conduct motivational talks at schools targeting smaller groups to allow for constructive engagement and self-expression.

- Initiate a housing improvement program in the informal settlements by sourcing donations of durable building materials.

- Provide regular outreach services to issue identification documents; to register OVC's; and to attend to social problems affecting the San population.

- Enforce the provision of the Liquor Act to control drinking outlets.

- Extend the scope of the current Health Extension Workers of the Ministry of Health and Social Services and volunteers attached to NGO's to include responsibilities of promoting and encouraging school attendance of San learners.
- Engage San traditional leaders and key opinion leaders on the practices of early marriages, female initiation, and cohabitation in an effort to find common ground in the interest of the San children.

5.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The discussion in this chapter centred on the conclusions arising from the empirical findings of the study. This was followed by recommendations for action that the various stakeholders can undertake to address the factors linked to the school dropout of San learners in the Omaheke Region.

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Annexure A: Map of the Omaheke region

Annexure B [Participant consent form]

Research Title: *An investigation into the causes and solutions for the high dropout rate among the San children in formal schools - a case study of the Omaheke Region in Namibia.*

Researcher: Augustinus Tjikuzu
Postal Address: Private Bag 2099, Gobabis
Residential Address: Omuramba Trading Flats, No. 9, Gobabis
Contact Number: 0812699182
==

Explanation of the purpose of the research to the participant

Dear Participant,

You have been selected to participate in this study. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of school dropout among San learners in formal schools. The results will be used to help all stakeholders to come up with solutions to this problem. This is expected to minimize the dropout rate of San learners from school and to ensure that more of them their school career for the betterment of their lives and that of their parents.

- ❖ Please take note that your participation in this study is voluntary. There is no remuneration or any form of payment attached to this. You are also at liberty to withdraw from this study at any given time if you do not feel comfortable to continue. There will no harm or consequences for you.
- ❖ You are hereby assured that the information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and your identity will be protected.
- ❖ Please be informed that the information you provide will be recorded. If you so wish, a copy of the record or the transcripts will be made available to you on request.
- ❖ I wish to guarantee you that there are no risks involved in you participating in this study.
- ❖ Should you have any queries or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact the researcher at the contact numbers and the postal address provided above.

By signing this consent form you certify that you understand the contents of the document and agree of your own free will to participate in the study.

Participants' Signature.................................Date..........................

Researchers' Signature................................Date...........................

Annexure C. Authorization letter from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to conduct the study in schools.

OMAHEKE REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

Tel: 062-562465
Fax: 062-564210
E-mail: peckasempa@gmail.com

Private Bag 2004
Gobabis
Namibia

Enquiries: Mr. V.L Makgone
File No: SP

15 April 2015

To: Mr. A. Tjikuzu
        Private Bag 2099
        Gobabis

Dear Mr. Tjikuzu,

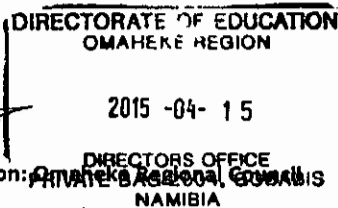**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY IN SCHOOLS**

1. Your letter dated 07 April 2015 concerning the above-mentioned subject has reference.

2. The Directorate of Education hereby grants permission to you to conduct the study in the mentioned schools. The Directorate is also prepared to avail relevant documents and statistics for your research.

3. Liaise with the various Principals to arrange for suitable dates and times that do not interfere with the school programme.

Wish you all the success in your endeavours.

Yours in Education,

Mr. Pecka Semba
Director of Education: Omaheka Regional Council

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
OMAHEKE REGION

2015 -04- 1 5

DIRECTORS OFFICE
PRIVATE BAG 2004, GOBABIS
NAMIBIA

15/04/2015
Date

1

All official correspondence should be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer

Annexure D - Interview guide for school principals/life skills teachers

Section A: Background data
- Would you share with me more information about yourself, in relation to your professional qualifications, and years of experience as a teacher, and/or as a Principal?
- Would you please kindly share with me information about your school and more specifically on the number of all learners, number of San learners, number of teachers, relationship between school staff and learners/San and how the school operates in terms of its mandate?

Section B: Extent of school dropout problem
- Please share the statistics on school dropout of San learners at your school, and if possible the segregation of the numbers in terms of gender, age group, grades, area where they are coming from etc.?
- Please share the statistics on school dropout of non-San learners?

Section C: Causes of school dropout of San learners.
- From your assessment as head of this school, would you please share the reasons (from the community & school context) contributing to San learners dropping out of school?

Section D: Existing interventions to prevent school dropout or to ensure retention of San learners
- Does your school have any programs in place to address school dropout of learners in general and San learners in particular?
- If there are any programs, would you please share the success or challenges experienced?
- What measures are taken for learners at risk of dropping out?

Section D: Suggested solutions on prevention of school dropout
- Would you please elaborate on possible solutions or strategies that can be employed to prevent school dropout of San learners or to facilitate retention of San learners in School?

Annexure E: Interview guide for San learners who dropped out from school

Section A: Background data
- Would you please tell me more about yourself, date of birth, growing up, schooling history and the last school and grade you attended?
- Please share with me about the status of your parents when you were schooling, in terms of residence, marital status, and employment.
- How would you describe the relationship between you and your parents when you were in school?
- Tell me more about the current status of your parents/guardians in terms of their residence, marital status, employment and your relationship with them at present?

Section B: Causes of school dropout
- Can you please share the reasons why you dropped out of school?
- What aspects in the history of your school career did you like most?
- What aspects in the history of your school career did you dislike?
- How was your relationship with fellow learners when you were in school?
- How would you describe your relationship with the teachers and other school staff members during your school career?
- What challenges did you face at home, at school and in the society when you were attending school?
- In which activities were you involved in during your school career?
- Are you aware of any other learners who dropped out of school; and what would you say were the main reasons?

Section C: Current status of the learner
- What happened with you after you left school?

Section D: Solutions/ strategies on how to prevent school dropout
- What do you think could have been done differently (either by yourself, your parents, the community or the school) to prevent you from dropping out?

Section D: Future outlook
- Do you think education is important? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- Are you willing to go back to school? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Annexure F: Interview guide for parents/guardians of San learners who dropped out of school

Section A: Background data
- Would you please tell me more about yourself? (Date/year of birth, growing up, schooling history, employment history).
- Tell me more about your situation at the time when your child dropped out of school? (i.e. residence, marital status, and employment).
- Please tell me more about the other family members in your household?

Section B: Causes of school dropout of their child
- Would you please share the reasons why your child dropped out of school?
- How would you describe the relationship with your child before he dropped out of school?
- How was your involvement in school activities when your child was still at school?
- What attempts did you make to prevent your child from dropping out of school?
- Since your child left school, what attempts did you make for him/her to go back to school?
- What difficulties or challenges did you experience when your child was at school?

Section C: Solutions/Strategies on how to address school dropout of learners from the San community
- What do you think are the possible solutions or strategies to prevent children from dropping out of school?

Section D: Views on education
- Do you think education is important to your child? Give reasons?
- Are you willing to take your child back to school? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Annexure G: Interview guide for current San school-attending children

Section A: Background data

- Would you please tell me more about yourself, date of birth, growing up, schooling history and the current school and grade?
- Tell me more about the current status of your parents/guardians in terms of where they are now residing, marital status, employment, income level and your relationship with them at present?

Section B: The learner's current experiences in school

- How do you find your school experience?
- What good things do you like most about school?
- In which activities are you are involved at school?
- What are the challenges or difficulties do you currently experience in your life as learner?
- How would you describe the relationship between teachers and learners at your school?

Section C: Causes of school dropout of San learners

- Do you know of any San learner(s) who dropped out of school? If yes, can you possibly tell me the reasons why the learner(s) dropped out of school?
- In your view what is causing San learners from dropping out of school?

Section D: Solutions/strategies on school dropout prevention for San learners

What are some of the things which can be done to ensure that San learners perform well in school and complete their education?

Annexure H: Interview guide for the resource persons

Section A: Background data
- Would you share with me more information about yourself, as well as information on your position and your work experience in the community?

Section B: Extent of school dropout
- In your view what is the extent of school dropout among San learners?

Section C: Causes of school dropout of San learners
- Would you please share the causes or reasons why many San learners drop out of school or fail to complete their school career?

Section F: Existing interventions to prevent school dropout of San learners or retain learners
- What are some of the interventions that exist in the region to prevent the drop-out of San learners? How you rate the success of such programs or interventions?

Section G: Solutions on how to prevent school dropout among San learners or strategies to retain them in school
- Would you please share some of the interventions, measures or strategies that can be employed to ensure that San learners attend school continuously and complete their school careers?

Annexure I: Editor's confirmation letter

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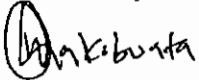Windhoek
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To whom it may concern

My name is William Chakabwata and I serve as a facilitator at Midlands State University for the past six years. My mandate includes supervising research and facilitating a number of courses in curriculum studies. I hold a master of Education Degree in Curriculum and Arts Education. I would like to certify that I read and edited the thesis '*An investigation into the causes and solutions for the high dropout rate among the San children in formal schools - a case study of the Omaheke Region in Namibia*,' by Augustinus Tjikuzu, a student at the University of the Free State, pursuing a Master's degree in Development Studies, Student Number 2003101793 in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

I would like to point out that although comments were made to change the documents in some sections, the final product remains the work of Augustinus Tjikuzu.
If there is any need to confirm the editing of this work, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above e mail or cell number.

Yours faithfully,

William Chakabwata