



## Research Article

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## Effects of Antecedents of Primary and Secondary Education Dropouts in Bulawayo Metropolitan Schools

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**Abstract:** The study sought to explore the antecedents for primary and secondary education antecedents of dropout in Bulawayo Metropolitan region. The persistence and consistency of the school dropout issue inspired the desire to carry out such a study. Of specific interest were the continuing debates by specialists, indicating lack of consensus on the subject in question. The study explored perceptions of a wide range of participants that included the school dropouts, guardians, instructors and education authorities. It incorporated the qualitative methodology guided by the constructivist philosophy as well as a case study design due to the subjective and inductive nature of the matter. Questionnaires and interviews were used to extract information from school antecedents of dropout themselves, their parents, school authorities, teachers and Education Officers sampled purposively. The findings were that the cost of tutoring, child-headed families and attitudes and behaviour of students, were the major causes of learners dropping out of school in this area. The major impacts of the school dropout phenomenon identified included crime rate in the community, the prevalence of antecedents of dropout as well as substance and drug abuse. The recommendations included the need for Basic Education Assistance Module (Beam) payments to be regular and to include uniforms and stationery, if learners were to remain in schools.

**Keywords:** Dropout Antecedent, Primary And Secondary Education, Community, Dropout Rate.

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## INTRODUCTION

This article has attempted to discern the reasons that students have dropped out of school. The cause of a student dropping out is often termed as the antecedent of a dropout because it refers to the pivotal event which leads to dropout. This event, however, is the culmination of a much longer process of leaving school that begins long before the date that a student actually discontinues attendance. Historic scholarship on school dropout spans from as early as a 1927 monograph that labelled it “school leaving” and associated those at risk with possible mental inferiority (Fuller, 1985, p. 1). At the same time, previous researches have explained dropout causes and even catalogued antecedents of dropout scholarship from the ensuing decades in terms of content and empirical merit (Doll *et al.*, 2013). However, never before have reports of students who dropped out been compared from all the available national representative dropout studies and then analysed. Basic education plays a pivotal role in the development and social well-being of a community. The drive to eliminate illiteracy is a pillar to that development and welfare of any community. In that light, antecedents of dropout become a liability to the social-economic progression of such development. The duty of all relevant stakeholders is to promote an efficient education system that minimizes wastages (Kapur, 2018; UNESCO, 2007; & Bernard & Orodho, 2018). Literature also indicates that there is a direct link between the efficiency of the education system and the illiteracy problem. Some of the indicators of the

efficiency, and indeed the inefficiency of the system are the attendance trends, as well as the wastages (Mehta, 2013).

Dropout figures for ages 12 to 14 years also rate high in Sub-Saharan Africa with countries like Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Tanzania, Congo Republic and Rwanda topping the list. Generally, children in Sub-Saharan Africa start work early either at home or elsewhere and this tends to affect these youths’ education (Doll *et al.*, 2013). The most affected are girls because of the nature of their duties in the home. However, Inoue *et al.* (2015) go on to applaud second chance programmes that have been introduced in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Madagascar. However, the effectiveness of such programmes is debatable.

Although there is an improvement in antecedents of dropout rates, the figures are still high in countries such as Chad with 72%, Uganda with 68%, and Angola, also with 68%. In fact, two out of every three children in the Sub-Saharan countries leave school at elementary level (UNESCO, 2007). In terms of Universal Primary Education, notable progress was recorded in countries such as Burundi, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mali and Tanzania in the period 1999 to 2008. However, the situation remains critical in countries such as Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, the Congo, Niger and Nigeria (Relifeweb, 2011). According to the same report, the gender parity index was very low with the 2015 targeted projections. Three countries were on track to achieve the targets,

eight were found to be in the right direction, whilst the remaining nine were well off target.

From a Southern African regional perspective, countries are not spared in terms of the antecedents of dropout problem. South Africa dropout rates occur at Grade 10 and 11 resulting in a dropout rate of up to 60% in some instances. This implies a very low completion rate of only 40%. This is quite unfavourable when compared with global completion rates where the completion figures are quite high for Turkey, Chile, Europe and America, for instance. Furthermore, in South Africa, poorer provinces tend to have higher school dropout percentages than the wealthier ones and the reasons of dropping out are said to be cumulative and multidimensional and cannot be pinned on one (Hartnack, 2017).

Considering that these are countries yearning for development, some action is necessary if education is to be the pillar of that development process. Furthermore, according to the Relifeweb (2011), the gap between Sub-Saharan States and other regions is widening instead of decreasing. On one hand, the region's poorest countries like Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Niger and Somalia recorded participation at secondary level which is less than 20% in terms of gross enrolment levels (GERs). On the other hand, middle income countries recorded better with gross enrolment levels of above 80%. However, repetition and antecedents of dropout rates are gradually declining, too, in some lower middle-class countries (Harlow, 2003).

Zimbabwean statistics also show that, of the 316000 students who sat for STEM 'O' Level examinations in 2014, only 9.49% were enrolled at 'A' Level (STEM, 2016). That is worrisome especially for an area like Bulawayo, which has been struggling to raise students especially in Pure Sciences at this level. The world at large emphasizes the importance of education and its being a right, rather than a privilege. The United Nations (1948) states that, "Everyone, has the right to education." The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28: Paragraphs (a) to (e) also emphasize this right. In addition, Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demands equal access to education for all. That includes the girl child, vulnerable children, as well as children with disabilities.

The statements from the UN Universal Declaration of rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child emphasize that every person needs education, regardless of their status. However, in Bulawayo some children drop out of school for one reason or the other (Regional Education Indaba Report, 2012; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Statistics, 2014). On the issue of antecedents of dropout, the Convention for the Rights of the Child, Article

28(e), states that measures should be taken to, "...encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates" (p. 15). Communities, therefore, have a responsibility to ensure the accomplishment of that right in totality. In fact, the high number of Street Kids in the city gives a bad image of the area's ability to keep students in school and absorb dropouts. In terms of antecedents of dropout by gender, in Zimbabwe, some studies were specifically on the girl-child (Dakwa *et al.*, 2014; Magwa & Ngara, 2015; & Mawere, 2012). Moreover, the Reigate figures for 2016 presented later in this report show that, although there were more female dropouts than males, the figures were almost balancing.

### Statement of the problem

Generally, the school dropout has been associated with limited life opportunities as well as poor employment, leading to poverty and low social status for individuals. Dropout levels are also used as a measure of institutional progression and success. Dropouts have effects on individuals and societies (Alvarez & Pedro, 2013). The determination of school dropout phenomenon levels is very important not only to individuals but to societies at large. The purpose of the study was to establish the antecedents of primary and secondary education dropout in Bulawayo metropolitan schools

### Research questions

The questions that guided the research are:

- How are the antecedents of primary and secondary education affecting schools and communities in Bulawayo Province?
- Which school dropout preventive and recovery methods might be introduced in the area under study?

### Theoretical Framework

In this section, the study looks at theories that guided the study which are the Stress Process Mode, Tinto's Model and Pull out and Push out Theories. The theories were relevant to the situation experienced in the study area of Bulawayo Province.

## DROPOUT THEORIES

### The Stress Process Model

On one hand, the Stress Process model shows that dropping out of school is a process rather than an event. The idea was that vulnerable children experience stress even before they start school. The approach means that vulnerable children require support from the point they enter school right up to the point of graduation (Dupéré *et al.*, 2018). Briefly, it showed that the authorities advocated for early childhood education programmes for such children. The model, therefore, highlights the need for early childhood education programmes as a form of intervention that helps to reduce antecedents of dropout in the long run. In this

instance, the ECD level provides the right platform, but teachers and school authorities need to be aware of children at risk of leaving school and support them as much as possible.

One strength of the Process model was that it connected theory to practice. In this case, the model assists in identifying causes of stress to learners in a school situation and finding appropriate interventions on time. However, the idea of using theories to address practical life situations remains debatable (Bolden & Wicks, 2008). The fact remains that teachers and school authorities have an obligation to identify signs of stress early in order to nip them in the bud. The model emphasizes a long process of risky learner identification process, which is required to reduce antecedents of dropout, and such a scenario is required in the study area.

#### **Tinto's model**

On the other hand, Tinto's model, carried out at college level, states that there were interactions between antecedents of dropout causes or preventions. For instance, it states that an academic struggler might remain in school when they were good in co-curricular activities (Dupéré *et al.*, 2018). However, the authorities were quick to point out that the model did not cater for constraints such as access to financial aid. There is a need for schools to understand the interrelation between school dropout causes and prevention measures in order to provide the necessary interventions at an early stage.

#### **Pull out and Push out Theories**

According to the study, it was noted that pull out theorists believe that learners left school because of different individual and school-based factors. Through a cost-based analysis, learners were able to decide whether to remain in school or not (Brieger, 2006). Furthermore, the theorists believe that high employment opportunities in the environment actually pull students out of school. The study also noted that factors such as family responsibilities and care also played an important role in the pull-out phenomenon and female students were the most affected. However, push-out theorists tend to argue that learners did not leave school due to individual attributes, but also due to the school environment (Brieger, 2006). The school factors that they cite include the institutional structure and the policies with unfavourable policies being cited as responsible for pushing learners out of school. Generally, pull out and push out factors were said to influence girls to leave school to care for family members, whilst boys leave school due to disciplinary issues.

The antecedents of dropout theories stated above were an area of interest bearing in mind the inconclusive status of such research. Factors such as ethnicity and gender actually affected the results of such studies thus, requiring further studies. The theories were

also important in providing some of the possible antecedents of dropout drivers as well as possible interventions. In a nutshell, the theories provided the take-off that the study required in order to initiate the research process. Some of the 'why' and 'how' in the research questions were already being addressed, in a way. What was needed was to carry out a research basing on the findings elaborated in the theories above.

### **CAUSES OF LEARNER DROP OUT**

#### **The cost of schooling**

One area that was thought to be a major antecedent of dropout cause was the cost of schooling in terms of not only fees and levies payments, but also other school requirements that included stationery, uniforms, food, and other equipment. This confirms previous studies that considered cost of schooling a major driver of school dropouts (Mukudi, 2004). In the case of the study area, the demands of the updated curriculum further escalated the costs. The cost of schooling differed from place to place and from school to school and it was not easy to highlight this cost. However, the authorities agreed that the cost did not match the salaries at a time when in most Zimbabwean areas, parents are more concerned with placing food on the table rather than buy stationery for the pupils and these pupils wasted much time without writing (Kurebwa & Mabhandu, 2015). Probably, that was the situation in the study area and a research was required to establish the facts.

#### **Academic performance as a dropout cause**

Another area of contention in the available literature is that of academic performance as a cause for antecedents of dropout. Whereas, poor academic performance is regarded as one reason students withdraw from school (Rumberger, 2001), there is disagreement by other authorities. The consensus by the aforementioned authorities is that good performer's graduate, whilst low performers are at risk of falling out. However, De Witte *et al.* (2013) posit different views on that assertion by stating that some students underachieve but remain in the school with the hope of a better future after schooling. The authorities also question the credibility of some studies that they accuse of concentrating on high achieving minority sections of society to conclude on such issues. On the other hand, Kurebwa & Mabhandu (2015) postulate that no single reason could be isolated as an antecedents of dropout cause. The factors tend to interrelate and overlap, gradually leading to the learner's attrition. The issue of the unending debates on antecedents of dropout causes as well as their interrelationship (or lack of it) showed a glaring gap that was aforementioned in this study.

Doll *et al.* (2013), citing an earlier study, state that there were some similarities between males and females in the antecedent of not performing well in school. The resultant consequence was that of dropping out of school. It, therefore, meant that both sexes

dropped out of school due to poor academic performance. De Witte *et al.* (2013) argue that poor performance in school is not a single symptom, but a heterogeneous dropout antecedent that gradually leads to falling out of school. Another study carried out by Buote (2001) shows that, "There is a positive correlation between academic performance and peer relationships" (p. 48). The correlation between academic performance and peer relationships points to the fact that antecedents of dropout drivers are not stand alone, but interrelate, at some point. For example, a learner that is rejected by peers may be de-motivated and that affects learner performance. Koth *et al.* (2008) in Morgan (2014) aver that the school social environment plays a big part in the performance of the learners. They cite in particular, teacher-to-student and learner-to-learner relationships. They emphasize that learners tend to perform better where there is a caring adult, especially the teacher. Available literature shows that both sexes drop out of school, for one reason or the other, which is the cause of disagreement on the emphasis on the girl child (Hunt, 2008; & UNESCO, 2018). This study sought, therefore, to discover whether some learners in the study area dropped out of school due to poor academic performance or not. It was also the aim of this research to establish which sex was more affected in as far as poor academic performance was concerned. In finding answers to these issues, the theoretical framework guiding this study, which was the Constructivist-Grounded theory, was able to provide the right platform of creating a relationship between the researcher and the participants. The study hoped that such a relationship was ideal for patching up some of the aforementioned gaps.

Furthermore, in terms of academic performance, some authorities believe that both good and poor performers require attention. Kudakwashe & Richard (2011) in particular, argues that even gifted learners leave school, albeit that being a smaller percentage. The area of poor performance seemed to have some gaps that the study wanted to investigate. Conceptually, the Systems functions/structure model came in the way of assessing performance of education in embracing all categories of learners in the system. In other words, in terms of the systems transformation process, the ability of the education system to achieve its goals, functions and purpose (Banathy, 1992) came into focus. The study, therefore, needed to assess the ability of the teaching process in the area, to transform, develop, and at the same time keeping the learner in school until completion regardless of the child's ability.

In summary, therefore, there was no conclusive agreement on whether poor performance really caused dropping out of school. Further, if it really did, there was debate on whether it was a standalone factor, or there were other contributory factors. There was also debate on whether poor performance was a causal factor. As stated above, inconclusiveness of the matter

set the field open for further study, especially in relation to the study area.

### **Early Marriages and Child Pregnancies as Dropout Causes**

There are varying views on the issue of early marriages and child pregnancies. Becker & Niehaves (2007), using empirical research, find this to be a significant contributor of learners pulling out of school, Robinson (2007), describe the statistics as being small and insignificant. The study by Robinson, (2007)) is more recent and could be more accurate. However, statistics show that, globally, about 14 million girls get married before the age of 18 years. In the case of developing countries, 1 in 3 girls are married before they get to 18 years (PMC, 2012). Furthermore, in Zimbabwe, a study carried out by Mawere (2012) shows that 7 per cent of adults interviewed believe that educating a girl was a waste of time and money. That attitude by some parents could be very damaging to the already marginalized girl-child. It also emerged, under the topic Education for All (EFA) that one of the prime goals of policy, EFA was to bridge the gap that existed between marginalized girls and their counterparts, the boys, in terms of educational opportunities. Other platforms that support the cause of the girl-child include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Universal Primary Education (UPE), the Beijing Conference of 1995, as well as the Convention for the Right of the Child (Mhlanga & Ncube, 2003).

The policies sought to continue to address the issues of sex discrimination in education inherited before independence in 1980. However, according to Mhlanga & Ncube (2003), a challenge arose in the form of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancies. On the issue of schoolgirl pregnancies, Circular Minute P35 states that, "Where pregnancy is due to a relationship between a school girl and a male person, it is in the interest of the school, the pupil herself and the child to be born have to take leave from school." (p. 4). It further states that if the student wishes to return to school after birth, and the parents so wish, the Head of the school should facilitate the re-enrolment. In a case where the father of the infant is another student, then both the girl and the boy will be expelled for the same duration. There was a lot of debate on the issue with some participants saying that it promotes indiscipline in the school. Others, however, felt that it was fair to both the boy and the girl.

In Zimbabwe, literature on adolescent pregnancies shows that fertility rates for girls aged between 15 and 19 years were 115 out of a thousand by 2015 (MHCC, 2016). Surprisingly, cases of adolescent girl pregnancies in the country continued to rise despite Zimbabwe being one of the highest utilisers of contraceptives in the Sub-Saharan Africa (MHCC, 2016). The consequences of the adolescent pregnancies, according to the adolescent report, was dropping out of

school. In line with the high rate of adolescent pregnancies, Zimbabwe authorities came up with policies and Laws that include Marriage Act, the School Re-entry Policy, Non-Formal Education and the Sexual Offences Act (MHCC, 2016). The Non-Formal education policy in this area, targeted girl-mothers leaving school after giving birth. Interestingly too, the School Re-entry policy allowed such girls to be allowed back into the schools after giving birth; however, in a separate school to avoid stigmatisation.

The girl is granted maternity leave and, in the event, that a schoolmate impregnated her, the boy is granted paternity. Although the setup of the mother going to another school looks ideal, it becomes difficult for the child caring mother in terms of nursing the child during school hours, as the other school may be far away (MHCC, 2016). These are some of the issues that this study wishes to look into. There is also the issue of maternity leave and paternity leave. Moreover, the study will also look into the issues such as school norms, culture, ethos and values in the event that the young mother returns to the same school due to long distances between schools. Such perceptions could help pave the way for the unfortunate girl-child in the future.

The area of the girl-child was indeed an area of concern. However, since that research was not in Bulawayo, there was reason to ascertain the position in this province and especially in the sample area of Reigate and Khami districts. In terms of the theoretical framework, the Constructivist-grounded theory (Con-GT), which guided this study, again created an ideal environment and a good relationship between the researcher and the participants in contextualizing the study on whether the girl-child suffered in this community. The study area provided a fertile environment for bridging that gap.

## METHODOLOGY

Basically, there were many types of research methodologies that were at the disposal of studies depending on issues such as the purpose and the situation involved. These included quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies. This study used the qualitative methodology, which involved reasoning and describing, as well as interpreting data. Creswell (1998:15) defines a qualitative research as, "An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The study builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports details views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting". In this case, the study tries to investigate a social and human case, that of antecedents of dropout, in its natural setting, the schools and communities. The methodology has been selected for its close links with the selected theory, the Constructivist Grounded Theory as well as the case study design (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (2008) goes on to associate quality study to

terms such as, "constructivist, interpretive, feminist methodology, postmodernist, and naturalistic research". The choice of the qualitative methodology also lies in its ability to enable the study of a population with the intention of hearing the silent voices, thereby unpacking a complex phenomenon. The methodology empowers participants to share stories in the comfort of their homes, and workplaces, without being shifted to a laboratory. Whatever is captured is in the context of the natural environment and not artificial. Some complex phenomena cannot be measured statistically (Creswell, 2007; & Creswell, 2014).

The following are some of the advantages of using the qualitative research methodology:

- Open-ended questions have the ability provoke informants to provide rich information, for example, in the use of a questionnaire.
- The study is afforded room to probe for further information, for example, during an interview.
- Research is conducted in the natural setting and, therefore, data is not artificial.
- The researcher is at the scene and is deeply involved with the participants.
- It has the ability to reveal possible relationships, cause and effects.

Although useful and appropriate, the methodology has its own disadvantages. Firstly, there is researcher bias in that the researcher collects and analyses data. This weakness could be overcome by triangulating both the research methods and the informants. The second disadvantage is that collection and analysis of data is time consuming and costly (Chugh, 2004). In this case, the researcher needs to employ skills to ensure that only the necessary data is collected and avoid a lot of rhetoric. The third weakness is that a small number of participants is used making it difficult to generalize with certainty (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014).

In this study, the population consisted of all Primary and Secondary schools in the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, as well as their communities. Bulawayo Metropolitan Province consisted of five Districts, namely, Reigate, Mzilikazi, Bulawayo Central, Khami and Imbizo. Most schools were in the urban areas whilst a few were in the peri-urban area. Both the categories of schools were considered to balance both urban and rural set ups. In a nutshell, the research wished to study the school dropouts themselves, former school dropouts that were then back in schools, teachers, education authorities, parents and some community leaders. A population consisted of all persons or items of interest, whilst the sample was a portion of the people in a population (Hanlo & Larget, 2011). Chaturvedi (2015) avers by defining population as, "...including all people or items with the characteristics one wishes to understand" (p.12).

The study used non-probability sampling, with the purposive type being emphasised. However, there was a need to define the term sampling and explain its place in research. The purpose of sampling was to reduce costs, the workload that could be involved in studying the entire population, as well as the time. Phrasisombath (2009) further stated that there were five components required in order to produce a coherent study. In this study, the sample of the population consisted of Primary and Secondary schools from Reigate and Khami Districts and the institutions' catchment areas. The Bulawayo Central business area was also considered. The participants in the sample frame included communities, Heads and teachers, education officers, psychologists, social welfare officers, Child Protection Committees, SDC/SDAs, BEAM Committees, ZRP Liaison officers, the dropouts themselves, current learners, their parents, churches and the general public in the study area. Since the area of coverage was rather large, the study needed to incorporate and induct some assistants.

## FINDINGS

The study established that antecedents of dropout phenomena had individual, community as well as societal effects. The findings were in line with Kurebwa & Mabhandu (2015) who postulate that no single reason could be isolated as a school dropout cause. Also Lichfer (1962) assert that dropping out of school before the completion of a certain education course was a form of human behaviour. The factors tend to interrelate and overlap, gradually leading to the learner's attrition. The following were some of the effects that would be explained in brief as they were discussed before. Many street kids were indeed dropouts, some of whom were abandoned by their parents or they were orphaned and were living with foster parents who were mistreating them. The research has shown that antecedents of dropout tended to be rowdy and were prone to crime activities. Many prison convicts had a history of having dropped out of school. There were a lot of debates on the issue of the correlation between dropouts and imprisonment, in terms of research, but this seemed to be the case in the study area. Some antecedents of dropout in the townships of Bulawayo had been found on the wrong side of the law many a time.

The study has also established that many antecedents of dropout indulged in substance and drug abuse. The findings were similar to Mambende (2016) who posit that learners addicted to alcohol and substance abuse had the tendency to find employment so as to get money to buy more substance resulting to dropout. During the study teenager touts were approached, with the intention of interviewing them and was shocked to find that they were smoking dagga and doing it in public and in full view of the clients that they were supposed to provide good service to. All this happened at the Sixth Avenue picking point near the

robots. One wondered what leadership quality would be passed to their children.

Participants said that it was common for dropouts to be pregnant or to get married early especially where the aforementioned Church sector was concerned. However, the girl-children that were interviewed said that given a second chance they would go back to school. They were advised to enrol in NFE classes at the nearest school, even if it was for skills development under the Functional Literacy programme. They were informed of other school leavers in two primary schools in Reigate District that had attained ICT certificates through the programme. Those who dropped out could enrol under the PTCE programme and sat for their 'O' Level examinations. However, this required funds for registering the subjects and they could not be able to get funding.

The Education Officers interviewed said that there were many cases of cheap labour practices in the farming areas, where children went to work with parents in the field. The Tsetse area, in Khami District was mentioned as one of the affected places. However, the study could not get one such child for interviewing. Prostitution and promiscuity were found to have an effect on antecedents of dropout. When the girl-child dropped out for one reason or the other, they soon found the going tough and indulged in the business of prostitution. Young girls of school going age were found in beer drinking places, even if the sign read, "No under 18". It was said that they paid the bouncers to gain entrance or offered these gate-keepers free sex. There were a lot of beer drinking areas in the townships and those girls did not need to go to town to find clients. Some of the young girls found to be renting rooms with senior 'ladies' of the profession in the townships.

## CONCLUSION

The study showed that there many policies and programmes on the ground that were initiated by Government and other partners. The major programmes that were operational on the ground were The Guidance and Counselling, BEAM and the School Psychological/Special Needs Education run programmes. However, a lot still needed to be done to improve the situation on the ground. The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme also emerged but it had issues of inconsistency and limitations in terms of resources. In brief, there were Guidance and Counselling activities in schools but they needed to be more vigorous if they were to meet the demands of the day, in terms of gender disparities, discipline and sexuality education. There was evidence of government and stakeholder's coordination but that too required to be intensified. Government safety net programmes such as BEAM were in place, but the frequency of payment had to be regular and the schemes ought to cover more learners as the number of vulnerable learners was wide, and increasing due to economic pressures. Teaching and

learning support programmes such as Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP), Education Reform and Innovation (ERI), LUCEP and Nust School Enhancement Programme (NUSTSEP) were available but required financial support for them to be more effective. Second chance programmes such as Non-formal education was available but lacked financial support. This was the same case with the school feeding programme.

In a nutshell, necessary programmes to alleviate and reduce the problem of school dropouts were available, but they needed more resources for them to be more effective. Lack of adequate and proper data base by the institutions in some instances was an area of concern that required immediate attention. More commitment by all stakeholders could bare fruits and reduce the problem of antecedents of dropout.

### Recommendations

The study encouraged that the programme should be an on-going in school, but it needed to be more active and rigorous. Basic literacy, ZABEC 1, ZABEC 2 and ZABEC 3 were not existent in many cases. Functional literacy should be in existence with learners involved in skills development in areas such as Gardening, Home Décor and bakeries, to mention but a few. One school should be found to be doing well in ICT as it was working with a certain college to certificate learners. Dropouts should get an opportunity to sit for 'O' Level in PTCE programmes.

The study also encouraged Guidance and Counselling government initiative programme to be available in many schools, especially Secondary Schools and to be active in providing health education, reproductive education and career guidance. It also educated learners on child abuse and counselled those in distress and encourage orphans and vulnerable learners to be active and be concerned. The programme should be supported by a number of partners that included DREAMS, RECHABITES and others that sought to educate learners even in areas of peer education and self-reliance issues. The programme should be supported by government programme, which are Schools Psychological Services/Special Needs Education.

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