

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION



FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

**INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HIGH DROPOUT RATE
AMONG GIRL CHILDREN AT ZONA SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

A CASE OF A SELECTED HIGH SCHOOL IN MANICALAND PROVINCE

BY

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B1748369

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR A DIPLOMA IN SCIENCE EDUCATION OF BINDURA
UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

JUNE 2023

Approval Form

The undersigned certify that they have read and qualify the diploma as satisfactory and acceptable for submission to Bindura University of Science Education. The research project is entitled, "Factors Contributing to High Dropout Rate Among Girl Children at Zona Secondary School". A Case of a Selected High School in Manicaland Province".

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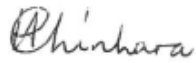
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Declaration

I, Mollin Mangena, declare that this project is my original work that has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted here have been indicated and acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements go to the renowned authors that I consulted during my research project and my supervisor Dr Chinangure F who guided me through the most difficult part of my Diploma.

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my husband Willie Dhliwayo, my father in law Mr J.W Dhliwayo and my children Joseph, Andrew and Anisha , your endless support and constant encouragement made this project a possibility.

Abstract

Dropout of girl students are influenced by many complex factors including socio-cultural, psychological and personal attitude. Because of the diversity of such factors, it seems worthwhile to investigate the factors that are contributory towards the high dropout rate among girl students. The study intends to investigate what hinders girls from sitting 'O level examination since they have equal opportunity as boys. In order to investigate information regarding the causes and effects of school dropout at a selected school in Chipinge South, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. At Zona Secondary School, a sample of 40 people—15 students, 10 teachers/head teachers, and 10 parents/guardians—participated during the piloting process. The researcher selected a descriptive survey design since it makes use of data that was gathered from the completed questionnaires, interviews and use of enrolment data. Descriptive analysis was used for assessing quantitative data obtained. Chi-Square analysis using version 21.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was done to determine the association between various parameters and dropout. The statistical analysis of results obtained from the questionnaires showed that the calculated p value (0.03) is less than 0.05 significance level, then the results were considered statistically significant. There was unanimity (100%) among responders that females were more likely than boys to drop out of school in rural regions. Pregnancy, early marriage, and traditional and religious views that believe educating girls is a waste of resources were among the many explanations provided. The majority of respondents (97.5%) said that certain parents' traditional and religious ideas were to blame for the high rate of girl dropouts from rural secondary schools. According to the open ended questionnaires, pregnancies and early marriages were the causes of half of the girl child dropouts. This study has recommended that the problem of girl child dropout can only be tackled if swift and immediate measures are put in place. These measures must include the active involvement of the group/people directly affected including the rural girl child, secondary school teachers and parents/guardians. Overall, this study is a bold step towards important and overdue cultural and educational reforms in Zimbabwe's education system

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the major concerns of educators is to identify the factors that influence students learning. Lugonzo, Chege, & Wawire, (2017) states that factors outside of the school have the strong influence on student's educational outcomes, perhaps, stronger enough to swamp the effects of variation in educational practice. This achievement of students is directly influenced by what goes on in their society. In secondary schools, students establish their identity in society, that is, they decide what they want to be. Identity formation occurs in the late teens, but before it is established, young people form strong bonds with their peers from whom they learn. Peer groups seem to be the major learning channels during this period. Peer pressure spans across both genders (Byrnes, 2015).

According to Maramura & Mago, (2017) although peer pressure has no gender differences in adulthood, women are generally under-represented in both job situation and at school. The issue of a girl-child being disadvantaged in life has gained much attention in current affairs and several organisation drawing policy makers' attention to it. In educational circles it is apparent that boys are more advantaged than girls, more so in Zimbabwe, where a girl-child access to education seems to be less as compared to that of a boy child. In the ten schools which were established by 1952, the boys 'enrolment was 473 while that of girls was only 67. This clearly indicates that from the beginning of the current educational system in Zimbabwe, the girl-child position has been secondary to that of boy-child (UNDP, 2019). According to UNICEF: Zimbabwe (2019), girls are the first to drop out of school during the social and economic crisis that many developing countries like Zimbabwe face and this causes this selection of education first offered to boys than girls. So, less girls than boys complete 'O' level because some parents prefer sending boys to school than girls because they say boys will maintain their family names.

However, there are different views by several authorities regarding gender imbalances in education. Gender codes encompasses the cluster of behaviors, attitude and emotional responses judged appropriate for one sex over another. He expressed concern over the traditional practices that take women as second citizens. Some authorities blame cultural practices that place less emphasis on female education while others attach the practices to the historical background of the country. In all this, what seems to be clear is that boys than girls eventually complete 'O' level in Zimbabwe because more girls dropout from school than boys (McLean, 2023).

1.2 Problem Statement

Dropout of girl students are influenced by many complex factors including socio-cultural, psychological and personal attitude. Because of the diversity of such factors, it seems worthwhile to investigate the factors that are contributory towards the high dropout rate among girl students. Specifically, the study intends to investigate what hinders girls from sitting 'O level examination since they have equal opportunity as boys. Focus will be on such factors as socio-cultural, stereotyping of male superiority, abuse of girls, religious practices, personal attitude, teacher's attitude, early marriages and pregnancy.

1.3 Research Objective

- 1) To discuss various factors affecting school dropouts of girl child at Zona secondary school.
- 2) To compare the school dropout rates between boys and girls at Zona Secondary School.
- 3) Determining ways to reduce school dropout rate among girls

1.4 Main Research Question

What are factors contributing to high dropout rate among girls at Zona secondary school?

Sub-questions

- 1) What are the causes of dropout among girls?
- 2) What gender the highest dropout rate at Zona Secondary School?
- 3) What are the strategies to reduce the dropout rate among girls?

1.5 Assumptions

It is assumed in this research that people consider boys and girl-child unequal and hence their treatment and considerations is in most cases different and in favour of boys. On the other hand, it is assumed that given the same opportunity girls are just as capable in achieving as boys. The researcher assumes that the society in general can be considered to change the attitudes towards gender differences and consider girls' education at secondary school level as necessary, since education is a basic right to human.

1.6 Delimitations

The study was confined to only one sampled secondary school in Chipinge District. The school was not selected because the dropout of girls at this school is the worst in the country, but because the school was convenient for the researcher who resides there.

1.7 Limitations

The researcher was limited by the constraints of being full time student. In, addition, the cost of carrying out a survey of a high magnitude was beyond the scope of this study due to limited financial resources. Lack of literature around the topic, especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe also further renders the findings of this study rather dubious. All these factors affected the quality of the finished research.

1.8 Definition of Terms

TERM	DEFINATION
Gender	The cultural exception which any particular society attaches to masculine and feminine roles
Culture	A way of life represented by rules, standards, religion, symbols and rituals of society
Society	The aggregate of people living together in more or less ordered community
Girl-Children	They are female children or daughters or students at the primary or secondary school. The female child who will be discussed in the study is of secondary school
Boy-Children	These are male children, sons or students at primary or secondary school. The boy here on question is of secondary school
‘O’ level examination	These are public tests written at the end of the four years of secondary school education course
Altitude	A settled way of thinking or feeling about something. It is also a mental position with regard to a fact or state
Dropout	Drop out can be defined as learners who leave school before completing a programme of study (McWhirter <i>et al.</i> , 2007)

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Leidner & Alavi, (2023) regarded the reviewing of existing knowledge about a subject as an essential step in the research process. He based this on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that we learn from, and build on what others have done before us. As researchers we are therefore obliged to familiarise ourselves with any publications on research completed in the field of the study before conducting a specific research. So, this chapter reviews what other writers says on the effects such as personal attitude, teachers' attitude, religion, sociological and economical influences, abuse and cultural factors.

National Center for Education Statistics, (2022) argues that a growing body of literature girls' dropout rate are higher compared to boys' in most parts of the world. The dropout rate is higher for girls in most countries. It has been observed that the enrolment in school is almost same for girls and boys, boys have a higher like hood of continuing school compared to girls. Girls overally attain less education and tend to dropout earlier as compared to boys.

However, UNESCO, (2023) says that education is a basic human right to education irrespective of colour, race, creed, sex, and ability and socio-economic. Hence girls have fundamental right

to receive education and equal treatment in the educational institutions and life opportunity. Thus when dropout rates vary by gender and if girls tend to vary by gender and if girls tend to dropout earlier compared to boys, it manifests that there are some unique factors contributing to the increase in the dropout rate particularly for girls. In the words, there are some factors which extensively contribute to an increase in girls' dropout through these factors.

2.2 Economic Factors

Potential investment for children's well-being can sometimes become gender biased. Although parents are altruistic to gender of their children, they do not invest in education equally for all. There is gender bias or pro-male bias in case of parental investment in children. In addition the preference for sons encourages them to invest for their well-being as they will take care for their parents in the future. In fact, parental gender bias investment occurs particularly when parents have limited or lower income and resources causing girls to leave school earlier than boys (Tuhase, 2016). In the case, in Zimbabwe there are more girls' dropout than boys especially in times of financial difficulties and drought spells. It is noted that more girl dropouts are from poor families and societies whose beliefs, values and norms do not consider education as a basic human right for person and social development. Moreover, the children of very poor families usually contribute to the family's income from early age. They may be involved in economic activities such as Agriculture, the herding of livestock, street vending or even begging. Girls are often called upon to look after young, elderly or sick relatives as their families are unable to afford the services of professional care (Marwere, 2018). Shretha, (2018) observes that when the situation becomes economically tight, families discriminate against girls where choices have to be made about which children will be sent to school.

2.4 Religious Influence

Amina, (2015) stated that religious beliefs contribute to the dropout of girls in secondary schools. Certain religious groups and customary laws sometimes play a major role in influencing people's attitude towards girl-children's education. A report on Gender sensitisation held in Mutare in August 1995 presented by the Ministry of Education found that marriage by arrangement was mostly practised under Pentecostal church ideologies for example Apostolic and Zionist churches.

Church elders influenced members' attitude through doctrines that they had over their daughters to church authorities for marriage. The cultural beliefs and poor education are strong tools that promote payment of homicidal cases by offering girl child to the bereaved family. This is done in attempt to appease the evil spirits of the deceased. Boys are not regarded as

suitable for such payments and are to continue with their education while the girl is denied such an opportunity. Zionists and Apostolic churches believes that formal science education which their daughters in school is the cause of deteriorating moral standards and sexual promiscuity (Kasowe, 2020).

2.5 Lack of Interest of Girl-Child

Lack of interest of girl child is caused by several factors. Among the factors being dull leads other people to laugh at such pupils and they end up developing a negative attitude. During interaction in the classroom, teacher's expectations and attitudes are communicated to pupils. Since the child's identity in relation to school and her or his academic self-perception is developed during interaction with teachers in the classroom, teachers might have a profound influence on the performance of the pupil (Gyasi *et.al*, 2022). Girls who are less able than boys in the highly valued subjects typed as masculine, may develop a negative self-concept and become demotivated. It is difficult to convince girls to take a high educational level when their immediate family does not give them support. Girls may develop fear of failure while developing within her confidence that is necessary for the trial and error learning that school requires (Mazana, Montero, & Casmir, 2018).

2.6 Cultural Influence

The cultural explanation for the inequality between man and woman acknowledge the obvious biological influences between males and females. More weight is given to role of culture in mediating biology and directing human behaviour. The inequality between man and woman arise from the higher value placed on masculinity and family and concomitantly higher rewards for activities and work labelled as masculine (Limangura, 2015). The differences in reward lead to gender inequality in society which are perpetuated in a number of ways. As children grow up, girls are burdened with house hold chores that parents relinquish in them. They emphasise that girls culturally should be prepared for future motherhood. Girls are groomed, from an early age for marriage role of being a wife, mothers and food provider for the family. On the other hand, boys are left to their work freely and have more time for their school work (Lugonzo, Chege, & Wawire, 2017).

According to Kasowe, (2020) children learn the expected ways of acting (what boys or girls should not do), the ways of dressing, the manners and attitudes considered appropriate for girls and boys within the culture in which the child is born. Parents reward and praise children for gender appropriate behaviour and teach boys and girls different types of skills. In this way, girls learn gender roles and ways of acting and thinking that are considered feminine values.

Associated with the feminine stereotypes in Zimbabwe, as in most cultures, are those of modesty submissiveness and if the behaviour conforms to these it is encouraged. Boys on the other hand, may be encouraged to be active, competitive and assertive and to strive for success outside of the domestic sphere.

Upon entering school, girls and boys bring with them the gender self-identities acquired during early socialisation. In 1993 the government of Zimbabwe carried out a programme which was funded by UNICEF and its objectives were centered on parent's attitudes towards the girl child's secondary school education. The team found out that 40% of the people think that a woman's work should only consist of house work which does not require education. Attached to this view most people thought that women should not be more educated than their husbands because they said it will create conflicts in marriages (McLean, 2023).

The programme intended to sensitise the community on the need to improve on the provision of equal education opportunities to all secondary school children. The study recommends that parents should have increased positive influence over the education of their children. It also advocates the merging parents and professionals so as to educate each other about their educational values, aspirations and practices so that a valuationally cohesive school can be developed (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

2.7 Early Pregnancy

Research has found out that the early pregnancy is related to leaving school early. Data from the United States showed an association between factors relevant to girls' school experiences and the risk of school-age pregnancy and birth among 'o' level girl children. High levels of engagement at school level were associated with postponement of pregnancy, and that girls who dropped out of school were more likely to have school-age pregnancies (Grant & Hallman, 2016).

Early pregnancy appears to be a problem especially in developing countries. It has been confirmed that the increase in girl pregnancies which led to girl's dropout from school is a threat. Some of the girls from child headed families often resort to concealing sexual favours from men for financial gain or safety issues. It has also been examined that the likelihood of school dropout and subsequent enrolment among pregnant schoolgirls. They found learners who were committed to their school and education, and experienced a sense of belonging were less likely to become pregnant while attending school (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

2.8 Peer-Group System

Peer-groups present the world outside the family and can present difficulties for the individual to resist engaging in such behaviour (which may result in compromising the social relationship), or give into peer group pressure. Peer pressure involves the strong influence that a group has on an individual, such individuals usually have a limited ability to resist pressure. Peer cluster theory suggests that young people who engage in problem behaviour have a propensity to find each other and form peer cluster groups. Such groups then normalise and encourage antisocial and problem behaviours, and are an important influence on their behaviour (Oetting & Beauvais, 2023).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the research approach and design, research area, the target population size, research instruments, data collection methods that were used, data analysis among others.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

In order to investigate information regarding the causes and effects of school dropout in Chipinge South, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The researcher selected a descriptive survey design since it makes use of data that was gathered from the completed questionnaires.

3.2 Target Population

Teachers from the chosen school, students, and people of the district's local community who were directly impacted by school dropout before sitting for 'O' level examination made up the study population. There are about 500,000 people living in the area.

3.2.1 Sampling Approach and Technique

Both random sample and purposeful sampling techniques were used in the investigation. Purposive sampling should be utilised to pick various activities in the inquiry area, according to Leidner & Alavi, (2023) in order to gather the necessary data and information. Since responders had an equal probability of being chosen, simple random sampling was used.

3.2.2 Sample Size

40 participants made up the sample size used by the researcher. This represented the remaining residents of the surrounding area. The respondents were selected based on their

status/profession, age group, and gender. The population of about 500, 000 people served as the source of this sample of 40 responders. Hertzog, (2016) argues that a sample size shouldn't be fewer than 30, since most statistical analyses require a minimum sample size of 30, it would be challenging for the researcher to conduct statistical analysis that is more complex than basic description.

3.3 Research Instruments

Both primary and secondary sources of information were used to gather the data. This investigation used a variety of data gathering techniques to thoroughly collect relevant data regarding the reasons why girls are leaving the chosen secondary school in Chipinge South. These included the following techniques; employing questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

Gilhman, (2018) explained that the questionnaire can also take one of two forms, namely: Open-ended questionnaire where participants are free to respond in any way that makes sense to them. Closed-ended questionnaires were used, in which the researcher would provide the participant one of the answers in accordance, such as yes or no. In order to compare the experiences of those who have dropped out with those who haven't, the researcher created a survey questionnaire with questions relevant to the factors that contribute to girl child secondary school dropouts and administered it to a population sample.

3.3.2 Interviews

To gain their perspectives on the factors that contributed to the dropout, interviews can be performed with females who have dropped out of school, their parents, educators, and members of the community. Open-ended questions can be used by researchers to encourage participants to offer thorough explanations and new perspectives into the problem.

3.3.3 Archival Studies

To determine patterns and trends concerning girl child secondary school dropouts, the researcher examined existing data sources such as school records. To identify places with high rates of dropout among boys and girls and to look into the contributing factors behind the dropout, the enrolment data was analysed.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

This study depends on questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and archival studies (school records) that have been carefully administered to avoid uncertainties from affecting data collection or providing inaccurate findings. The researcher used questionnaires from the staff and head teachers for collection of reliable information and open-ended questions. The space provided for the questions allowed for adequate answers. Additionally, closed-ended questions were asked.

In addition to the aforementioned quality control measures, the researcher made sure that each instrument's items were assessed for relevance.

Validity was established through using a Content Validity Index (CVI).

Where,

QR = Items indicated by quite relevant

VR = Items indicated by very relevant

K = total number of items in the questionnaire

In order to determine whether Zona secondary school and Chipinge South members could effectively generate the relevant responses needed to support the study, the reliability of the research instruments was tested in a pilot study. Prior to being distributed to the respondents, they were also given to two more university lecturers who expertise in research methods, in addition to the supervisor. The consistency and validity of the instruments were improved by this action.

3.4.1 Pilot Study

At Zona Secondary School, a sample of 40 people—15 students, 10 teachers/head teachers, and 10 parents/guardians—participated during the piloting process. In order to assess if the items would effectively retrieve the required data, the questionnaire and interview guide were tested. Pre-testing was also carried out to make sure that the instruments assessed what they were intended to measure and were clear, impartial, and straightforward for all participants to understand. In the hopes that it will be indicative of other rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe dealing with comparable educational issues, this research was conducted in the Chipinge South, specifically at Zona Secondary School.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

In order to respect and protect the participants and the research sites, the researchers observed the following ethical issues:-

- a) Protected the physical and psychological anonymity of the respondents by using pseudonyms to keep their identity anonymous. Pseudonyms were also used for the sampled secondary schools to further protect the anonymity of the respondents and their institutions.
- b) Assured the respondents of confidentiality of the information they gave.
- c) Sought the consent of the participants in order to participate in the study voluntarily.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The department of Education at Bindura University of Science Education provided a letter of support to the researcher. The researcher received an introduction letter from the faculty of education to go to the field for collection of data after the proposal was approved by the appropriate authority at the school of education. The researcher handed the letter to the Chipinge South school authorities, who then introduced her to other people who helped her create sample frames with the aid of more relevant respondents. In order to meet respondents, the researcher scheduled meetings with them. The interviews were place in staff rooms, school grounds, and parents' and other community members' houses. Along with parents and students, she also signed consent papers indicating their willingness to take part in the study. The researcher visited the schools on a predetermined day after obtaining permission from the parents to conduct interviews with the children and school officials. About 30 minutes were allotted for structured interviews. The extensive interviews lasted for almost an hour. In order to give respondents more time and flexibility, the researcher gave them a brief explanation of the aim of the surveys before handing them over to be completed at their convenience. The researcher next conducted a follow-up and gathered the completed surveys. Careful observation of respondents from the area of study was also carried out by the researcher

3.7 Data Presentation

The information from the surveys was copied, tallied, and then analysed to see how frequently different replies transpired. Evaluation was then carried out. Later, percentages were used to represent the data. Later editing and interpretation of the collected data ensured uniformity, readability, and consistency. Additionally, the findings of the interviews were coded on frequency tables, converted to percentages, and reported in this study. For the purpose of

presenting the research findings, direct quotations were required. The research aims and research questions that were previously established in Chapter 1 of this study were followed as closely as feasible in the reporting of the findings.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Based on the study's objectives, significant patterns were identified from the qualitative data that was gathered via open-ended and closed questions in the questionnaires and interviews. Text was employed to present the qualitative data. The results were presented using narrative passages. Descriptive analysis was used for assessing quantitative data obtained from questionnaires. Version 21.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. It was shown to those in attendance as a descriptive statistic. Pie charts, graphs, and tables are graphical, numerical, and tabular representations of statistics. Chi-Square analysis was done to determine the association between various parameters and dropout.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DATA PRESENTATION

Introduction

The researcher's approach and processes for data collection, analysis, and sampling were the main topics of the preceding chapter. It also emphasised on how the researcher determined the sample size, the tools utilised for data collection, and the process employed for data processing. The findings of the study's data are presented, interpreted, and discussed in this chapter. The technique described in chapter three was followed to deliver the findings, which address the study questions. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0 was used to examine tables and graphs of primary data that was gathered through questionnaires. The study's findings will be compared to those found in earlier works of literature. The chapter ends with a summary of all the points.

4.0 Results

Table 4.1: Demographics of the respondents

Occupation/ Status	Age range	Gender	
		Male	Female
Teachers/ Head Teachers	20-60	4	6
Parents/ Guardians	30-70	3	2
Students	13-25	6	9

Source: Field data, 2022

Table 4.2: Closed questionnaire item responses percentage of all respondents

FACTORS	RESPONSES (%)		
	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Uncertain
1. Child dropouts in rural secondary schools are more common among girls than boys	100	0.0	0.0
2. Girl child dropouts are a result of early marriages and pregnancy	87.5	12.5	0.0

3. Girl child dropouts are a result of socio-cultural influence.	57.5	37.5	5.0
4. Do girls fail to sit for 'O' level due to lack of fees	97.5	0.0	2.5
5. Are cultural stereotypes of male superiority the reason girls fail to sit for 'O' level	75	50.0	5.0
6. Girl child dropouts are a result of abject poverty among the rural population.	97.5	0.0	2.5
7. Girl child dropouts are a result of lack of interest of girl child	47.5	50.0	2.5
8. Is teachers attitudes towards gender of student linked to dropout issue	37.5	50.0	12.5
9. Girls dropout of school before they write 'O' level exams due to religious influence	95.0	5.0	0.0

Source: Field data, 2022

Table 4.3 Details of the Records for Dropouts between January – December 2022 at Zona Secondary School

Level	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
Form 1	0.1	0.4
Form 2	0.5	0.8
Form 3	0.4	0.9
Form 4	0.4	1.0

Source: School's register, 2022

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.2 Chi-square Analysis

Table 4.4 The Chi-Square Tests from the close-ended questionnaires

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.437 ^a	1	0.03
Likelihood Ratio	4.455	1	0.03
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.411	1	.04
N of Valid Cases	21		
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.05.			

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDING, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion of Findings

Objective One; to discuss various factors affecting school dropout of girl child

The main reason for girl child dropout at Zona secondary were poverty and economic hardships, accounted for 97.5% of the dropouts. Given these direct economic circumstances, parents cannot raise the required money for school fees, uniforms and stationary. With the economic crisis that Zimbabwe has recently experiencing, money to pay school fees and basic needs is still a serious problem. It is thus difficult for poor children to attend school and cope with school work.

Objective Two; to compare the school dropout between boys and girls at Zona Secondary

There was a consensus among respondents that school dropouts in rural areas was more common among girls than boys. Reasons given were varied, but included pregnancy, early marriage, religious and traditional beliefs that educating a girl child is a waste of resources as she will ultimately leave home for marriage. Such religious views were attributed to the Johane Marange Apostolic sect in the area.

Objective Three; to determine ways to reduce school dropout among girls.

In view of the study, there is an urgent need to seek permanent and lasting solutions that will reduce the number of girl child dropouts. In this study, the preferred solution ranked by respondents in terms of effectiveness, was to educate parents/guardians, teachers and girl child on the importance of education in the society. The enforcement of compulsory free primary and secondary education policy with needed resources provided to all poor girl children. More so, guidance and counselling programs to pupils will also help to overcome different challenges they experience.

In order to succeed at such task, teachers and parents must have kept reminded with all pedagogical new skills for reducing dropout's dropouts and instilling motivation in learners. Lastly, a people-centred approach which is the involvement of the affected population-girl child, school teachers and parents must be adopted. These three parties should be regularly

made aware through workshops initiated by government and non-governmental organisations.

5.2 Conclusion

For this research, questionnaires were administered to forty respondents were studied in order to determine the causes and impacts of girl child dropouts at Zona secondary school. The data was then tabulated to show percentages before being subjected to critical analysis and assessing the causes and impacts of girl child dropout.

The increasing girl child dropouts in Zimbabwean rural secondary schools, the researcher argued that contemporary Zimbabweans, and by extension Africans, must strive to advance positive intellectual thinking, or to positively challenge the internally and externally manipulated forces of mental and cultural values that are potentially dangerous for our collective intellectual and socio-economic life. In particular, the researcher recommended that civil education on the importance of girl child education be offered to parents, teachers and the girl child if the current situation is to be improved. Education or awareness programs can be delivered by both non-governmental organisations and the national government

This study has also revealed that although girl child dropout is an understudied subject, it is not a new and unique problem to Zimbabwe, but is common to most developing countries in Africa and beyond. It has been argued that in Zimbabwe in particular, the problem of girl child dropout is more severe in rural secondary schools than in urban schools. Traditional beliefs, socio-economic influence, the abject poverty of rural population, pregnancy, early marriage, the attitude of teachers towards girls and the lack of interest of girls were among the causes noted in the study. These remain significant obstacles to the elimination of girl child dropouts and improved quality of life for rural women in general.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has recommended that the problem of girl child dropout can only be tackled if swift and immediate measures are put in place. These measures must include the active involvement of the group/people directly affected including the rural girl child, secondary school teachers and parents/guardians. Overall, this study is a bold step towards important and overdue cultural and educational reforms in Zimbabwe's education system

Though efforts have been made by the government to educate the girl child, these efforts seem to be much more theoretical than practical. The efforts have little merit for rural women and girls as they appear to be concentrated in urban areas where there are active women's rights

and girl child networks. In the present study, the solutions ranked by respondents in terms of effectiveness, was to educate parents/guardians, teachers and the girl child on the importance of girl child education to society. The enforcement of the compulsory free primary and secondary education policy with needed resources provided to all poor girl children and an increase in education budget allocations by government was also cited as a lasting and effective solution. Such a measure however requires that the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture expand the

A people-centered approach, that is, the direct involvement of the affected population – the rural girl child, the rural school teacher and parent/guardian – must be adopted. These three parties should be regularly made aware of the importance of girl child education. Such awareness programs can be initiated by both the government and non-governmental organisations through civic education and workshops. If such initiatives are carefully executed in rural communities (particularly in rural secondary schools) with the aforementioned parties, they are likely to bring about positive results in terms of combating girl child dropouts in Zimbabwe and by extension Africa and beyond

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