FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DROPOUT RATE INPRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE TEYATEYANENG REGION, LESOTHO

by

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DECLARATION

I, Mamothebesoane Mookho Ntelele Mohlouoa, declare that the contents of this dissertation represent my original work and I have not previously in its entirety or in part, submitted it to any university for a degree.

Signature ..... Date .....

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ABSTRACT

The government of Lesotho and the parent expect all learners to attend school daily to receive the best education so that they can have a bright future. Education prepares the learner for life; if the learner drops out, he/she will struggle to succeed in life. The ever-increasing rate of primary school dropouts in Lesotho is of great concern as it has negatively impacted on education in the area. The education system as well as the Basotho community has over the years been affected in various ways. For example, school dropouts become liabilities to the community as they are not able to contribute maximally to nation building. In most cases the dropouts engage in anti-social criminal activities. They also cause educational wastage in the form of resources. For these reasons, it was of paramount importance to determine the reasons for dropouts and establish the possible solutions to this national problem.

This study has examined factors influencing learners to dropout. It employed a qualitative research design, using focus group interviews and field notes to succeed in investigating the causal factors of learner dropouts. Purposive sampling was used for the research because it was convenient for the research in terms of time. By using purposive sampling, the researcher was able to include participants according to the relevant criteria based on the emerging research question: What are the factors influencing learner dropout? The main objective was to identify the factors influencing primary school learner dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho.

The focus group interviews were made up of one principal and five educators from each of the three primary schools which are located in Teyateyaneng in the Berea district of Lesotho. This type of sampling was used because the researcher wanted rich information from participants regarding the reasons for learners dropping out of school.

It has emerged from the empirical findings of the study that learner dropout is inter alia caused by school and home related factors. The study revealed that some learners dropped out of school because they were orphans, while others dropped out of school after being absent for a number of weeks. Mainstream classrooms were also found to encourage dropping out because educators are not fully trained to address problems that learners with disabilities bring to the classrooms. Lack of parental involvement was found to drive learners away from schools and into the streets. Due to poor financial situations learners leave school and are forced into child labour to better their families 'living conditions. Student educators were found to be a factor because they lack the necessary skills in developing learners. Other learners decided to stop schooling totally after repeating a grade.

Due to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS many learners are taken out of school to take care of their ill relatives. Some learners drop out of school after being abused and neglected. Due to the high unemployment rate and poverty in Lesotho, many learners quit school to support their families. All the above causes for learners dropping out of school have been discussed in detail in chapter four.

These factors are complex issues, which should be handled by trained people. As learners spend a great ideal of time in their school environments, the educators play an integral part in alleviating the learners' social problems. It is essential that learners with social problems seek professional help at an early stage. Educators are obliged to help these learners although they are not necessarily equipped to give the required assistance. Suggestions and recommendations are mentioned to alleviate the situation. The study recommends that primary school learners should be encouraged to complete their primary level education. The Ministry of Education and Training should develop policy guidelines on inclusive education, facilitate legislation on compulsory basic education, improve teaching and learning conditions in all schools, abolish child labour, create employment opportunities for parents to prevent child labour, regulate traditional circumcision and solicit parental support. All the above suggestions hoped to be solutions to the problems of learner dropouts as discussed in detail in chapter two.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ECOL - Examination Council of Lesotho

FPL - Free Primary Education

HIV/AIDS - Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ILO - International Labour Organisations

MDG - Millennium Development Goal

MOET - Ministry Of Education and Training

MTR - Mid Term Review

NER - Net Enrolment Rate

PRS - Poverty Reduction Strategy

PSLE - Primary School Leaving Examination

SEN - Special Educational Needs

UNESCO - United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

WHO - World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Most fathers in Lesotho are part of the migrant labour force, meaning they spend long periods of time in the South African mines and the mothers have to be more responsible than usual. (Lekhanya 2008) stated thatwith so many of the community's members out of country, this tension has lasting effects on the academic progress of Lesotho's learners. Consequently, the place of the children in the society often becomes confusing and they develop negative attitudes towards formal learning. The absence of fathers is part of the problem behind both the high dropout rate in Lesotho's schools and the relatively small number of learners who study further than primary school level (Lekhanya 2008).

The primary care of children is offered by the immediate family and if they fail to take care of the children, the extended family can act as care givers. In these institutions neglect normally leads to children dropping out of schoolto wander around in the streets. The informal arrangement of foster care within families also proved to be no longer suitable for a number of reasons such as the high rate of child abuse in these informal foster care arrangements, which further leads to learners dropping out of school and living in the streets (Sebatane 2009).

According to UNICEF (2007:5), infoster care arrangements it is easy for learners to drop out of school and prefer living in the streets because of being abused by relatives. Orphaned learners get hired out by relatives as domestic workers or herd boys for cheap labour. They get physically, emotionally or even sexually abused or exploited. Sometimes they do not get equal opportunities to attend school because they have to perform certain chores for the families who are taking care of them. Hence life in the streets seems attractive as opposed to that of abuse and torture in the homes they live in. According to WHO and UNAIDS (2007:16), the vast majority of learners in Lesotho are faced with various problems such as abuse, rape, disability, child labour and child molestation. Traditional beliefs such as boys herding cattle and education being considered unimportant for girls, contributes greatly towards their absence at school or dropping out of school before completion.

However, according to the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (2009:28), Learners went to school either half a year or abandoned it totally. Formal education had not been considered important for boys; they had to go to initiation schools and to the mines in South Africa as they grew older. Parents did not see the importance of formal education as an answer to poverty and other social problems. In order to understand the whole study that has been introduced above, the explanation of the main problem is done in detail below.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Dropouts are learners who leave school without completing a given standard in a given school year. Statistics indicate a high dropout rate in Lesotho schools (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008).

The Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL 2012:2) stated the dropouts as follows:

Table 1.2 Dropouts for the period 2007-2012

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total registered	44 070	44 194	43 008	43 544	42 635	41 460
Total sat in exam	42 512	41 837	41 397	41 869	40 752	39 661
Dropouts	7 558	2 357	1 611	1 675	1 883	1 799

According to the mid-term review (MTR) of the Lesotho School Feeding Programme as cited in Sebatane (2009), Lesotho still has a long way to go before achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education and gender equality. The MTR stated thata combination of poverty, starvation, insecurity and orphanhood challenges most children's potential to be educated in Lesotho now more than ever before. However, records from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) (2008), even with free primary education (FPE) published in 2000, poor households often cannot afford to send their children to school. Due to the increasing impoverishment, girls are frequently being removed from school to care for their siblings while their parents look for work.

Many orphans drop out of school simplyto look for a means to survive. The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in Lesotho (Ministry of Education and Training 2007:8) indicated that the education system faces challenges. Enrolment is lower in mountainous areas while poverty is greater and schools are less accessible. For those learners who do enrol at school, onaverage walking to school takes over an hour and learners arrive at school already hungry and attend classes irregularly which results in increased dropout rates.

Lesotho's goal of a proposed increase in the net enrolment rate (NER) at the primary school level from 60% in 2005 to 85% in 2009 was not yet attainable. In 2010, the NER decreased slightly to 83% while repetition and dropout rates still remain very high. The UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2010:29) showsa dropout rate of 43.1% in 2006. In addition, recent reviews of the education sector by the World Bank as cited in Lekhanya (2008) revealed that 15% of primary school-aged children still remain outside the formal schooling system.

The government made primary education compulsory from 2008 in order to minimise dropouts and to improve school completion. According to the statement made in 2007 from the government of Lesotho delivered by their former Minister of Education, Mrs Mamphono Khaketla, the biggest challenges currently facing Lesotho are the repetition rates, especially in the early primary years. There is a low transition rate because some boys will come to school but, once they get a little older, they move to South Africa to work in the mines. Girls tend to drop out because they must take care of their younger siblings, their parents are HIV positive or they get married at an early age (UNESCO: 2010:29).

According to Lekhanya (2008:68), Lesotho's former Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili, and the UNICEF (2007) representative in Lesotho, Ahmed Magan, agreed that the official dropout rate is about 6% and the net completion rate at primary level is 62.8%. In their discussion, they further stated that most of the learners complain about the costs associated with education while others cited lack of transportation to schools as a hindrance. There has also been an increase in the number of boys enrolling in the traditional circumcision schools. After returning, they rarely continue their education, partly because they are culturally viewed as men and also because they are often indebted to the circumcision schools and forced to work to repay their debt. The former chief education officer, Thuto Ntsekhe Mokhehle, in his report stated that the Ministry of Education and Training is aware that some circumcision schools discourage learners from furthering their education; instead they offer boys culture awareness that the formal education system cannot provide. The minister found that many parents support the tradition of sending all male learners to circumcision schools.

According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2008:5), repeaters and dropouts represent wastage in the educational system. Cohort survival represents a life span of a group of learners as they enter primary school in the same year.

The survival of learners was observed throughout their primary school level. The net cohort survival rate decreased 5.5% from 2007 to 2008 after which an improvement of 1.8% was observed in 2009. Nevertheless, the collapse of 1.6% was observed in 2010.

1.3 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

According to Lekhanya (2008:18), dropout rates among learners limit the capacity of the national growth equivalent to its maximum potential. The generational effects of high dropout rates have more consequences than those for an individual and present day society. Children raised by parents who are illiterate are in turn more likely to drop out of school, thus this continues to the next generation the adverse effects associated with learners dropping out of school.

According to Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone and Maphokwane (2011), the characteristics of dropout learners are as follows: excessive absenteeism, repeat grades frequently, violent behaviour, poor work performance and many of them are poor and vulnerable. I identified these characteristics in most of the learners in my community. It is very important to carry out this study for several reasons due to the advent of the free primary education policy in Lesotho. For one, it is expected that from grades 1-7 every learner should be in school by now; unfortunately, this is not the case. Learners are seen roaming the streets of Teyateyaneng. The other reason is that measures put in place to curb all factors that block learners' attendance in schools will be exposed.This study will also highlight the significance of addressing the consequences of dropping out of school.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Nyabanyaba as cited in Lekhanya (2008:23) says that the most significant initiative in Lesotho's education system in recent years is the introduction of free primary education (FPE). FPE was introduced in 2000 and has seen a larger than usual group of learners dropping out of schools due to the fact that adults and over-age learners left school after acquiring some basic reading and writing skills (Education Statistics Bulletin 2011). Although Lesotho spends more money than most countries on education, unfortunately that doesn't get them any further than other countries in terms of educational returns due to the high rates of dropouts.

Lekhesa (2007:9) states that primary education is one of the most important interventions because it empowers learners who would otherwise be engaged as child workers or be socially marginalised such as street kids. Most importantly, it helps by creating a new generation that is functionally literate and numerate. Findings from this study can contribute towards the design of strategies that can decrease the dropout rate of learners. Those strategies will encourage learners to complete primary school and to provide important information regarding the factors causing primary school learners to dropout in order to find solutions.

This study aimed to uncover information regarding influential factors and produce results which can be analysed and hopefully educate everyone involved such as learners, parents, educators, peers and education policy makers as to the importance of education and encouraging children to stay in school.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

MacMilan and Schumacher (2010:73) state that literature review is done to establish the important links between existing knowledge and the research problem being investigated, which enhances significance and provides helpful information about methodology that can be incorporated into a new study. Sebatane (2009) also maintains that a literature review is important because it sharpens and deepens the theoretical foundation of the research. In every country education is believed to be a key to success, especially in these modern days; without it one can barely survive. Education helps people to become useful members of the society in which they live. Primary education lays the foundation for further studies. Based on the above facts, one would agree that learners who drop out of school compromise their future.They cannot function effectively compared to other educated members of society. Cases of learners who dropped out are found all over the world, although the focus of this literature review will only be on Lesotho. The main aim is to identify the factors that contribute towards primary school dropout rates in Lesotho. These factors are as follows:

1.5.1 Disability and special educational needs

Sebatane (2009) considers disability as one of the contributing factors to primary school dropout. They stated that the lack of initial access to school for learners with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN) means most of them are able to dropout of school.

The role of educators is important because appropriate teaching and learning methods would enhance the learning potential of many learners with SEN, but many educators do not receive the necessary training and nor do they know how to identify types of learning difficulties. According to the Education Statistics Bulletin (2011:21), learners with SEN or disabilities amounted to 20490 (5.3%) out of 388681 learners who were enrolled in 2010. In Lesotho by 2011 learners with some form of disability amounted to 20636 which were 5.4% of the 385437 learners who were enrolled. That means learners are at risk of dropping out of school due to exclusion and lack of appropriate support from their educators and parents. The school environment also contributes towards dropouts due to the lack of appropriate facilities for learners with disabilities such as school toilets or play grounds which are accessible for the learners in wheelchairs.

Furthermore, UNESCO (2011:346) stated that some schools in Lesotho are situated so far away that travelling to and from school everyday is difficult and tiring for the disabled learners and consequently they dropout of school. As for the educators, their working conditions are hardly ideal or productive for teaching and learning as classes are overcrowded, under staffed and the equipment is often inadequate or not operational.

The Examination Council of Lesotho's (ECOL) (2012) primary school leaving examination pass list of 2012, studied grade retention over a period of time from 2007-2012 and noticed a slight decrease in the percentage of failures over the years. In 2007, 7176 (16.9%) learners failed, in 2008, 5705 (13.6%) learners failed, in 2009, 5815 (14%) learners failed, in 2010, 5235 (12.5%) learners failed, in 2011, 5197 (12.8%) failed their exams and in 2012, 5076 (12.8%) learners failedbut not all of them repeated grade 7 as most of them dropped out from school before obtaining their primary school leaving certificate.

Regarding the evaluation of free primary education in Lesotho, the Ministry of Education and Training (2008:69) stated that educators are sometimes ill-equipped and/or do not possess the necessary skills required when teaching children with physical or mental disabilities. Learners come from different socio-economic backgrounds and their ages vary considerably in similar grades. Consequently, some learners tend to struggle more or have difficulty coping with the work load or the school environment than others in their grade, resulting in learners dropping out. They also feel uncomfortable amongst their peers even in the face of the measures to include them.

The Ministry of Education and Training (2008:18) in their final report on education policies, programmes and legislation in Lesotho relating to disadvantaged learners and learners with disabilities, stated that only small proportions of learners with severe disabilities are attending the special schools that can support them according to their specialised learning needs. There are only four schools in the country that may provide special education to the severely disabled learners. Those schools are St. Bernadette Primary, Motsekuoa Primary, Mount Royal Primary and Seleso Primary School. It is clear that the majority of disabled learners are not receiving specialised education resulting in them dropping out of school.

1.5.2 Grade repetition

According to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) as cited in Lekhanya (2008), another reason why learners do not finish primary school is because they fail the year. Sometimes learners have problems with certain subjects, especially Mathematics and English which are the core subjects, and as a consequence they fail the whole course. Some learners mentioned they could not keep up with the course work while others said they missed too many days and could not catch up. Learners who have repeated their grades state that poor performance in examinations; parental decisions and absenteeism are responsible for their repetition. In 2008, more than one out of five learners repeated their grade.

The rate of grade retention has increased gradually over the past few years from 19.2% in 2004, 19.7% in 2005-2006 and 20.9% in 2007. MDG as cited in Lekhanya (2008) further stated that grade repetition is highest in the early grades. In 2007, 84 083 learners repeated a course. High grade repetition rates naturally influence the rates of dropouts. Continuous grade retention discourages learners and results in dropouts. According to the Education Statistics Bulletin (2011:27-28), the repeaters constituted about 19% (74 833) of the total enrolment (385457) of learners in 2011. Analysis of the ecological zones disclosed that lowlands and mountainous regions had a higher number of grade retention whilst foothills and the Senqu River Valley area had the least amount of grade retention. That means the high rate of dropouts in primary schools occur mostly in the lowlands and mountainous regions of Lesotho. The Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL) (2012), on its primary school leaving examination 2012 pass list, reported the repeaters over the period of 2007-2012 as follows: in 2007, 7, 176 (16.9%) learners failed (Education Statistics Bulletin, 2011:28).

1.5.3 Orphanhood

The Ministry of Education and Training (2007:69) final report of consultancy on education policies, programmes and legislation in Lesotho relating to disadvantaged learners stated that the disastrous AIDS pandemic has increased the problems for special education in Lesotho in two ways. Firstly, it has increased the number of learners who may be regarded as having special educational needs, in that orphans are vulnerable to emotional and behavioural problems. Secondly, the rise in the number of orphans requiring social and financial support has preoccupied authorities and may be absorbing resources from which the disabled might otherwise benefit. Of learners who are double orphans, the most statistical returns for 2006 show 30513 at the primary level. The estimated numbers of learners who have lost either one or both parents are much larger; they were reported in the MOET joint review of September 2007 as 141792 at the primary level.

The Education Statistics Bulletin (2010:22) revealed that the number of orphans has been fluctuating over the years although there has been a minor decline in enrolment of orphans between 2008 and 2011. That means most orphans dropout of schools while others do not enrol in school at all after the death of their parents. According to the Ministry of Education and Training's (2008:67) evaluation of free primary education in Lesotho, the growing number of paternal orphans makes it difficult for the country's education system to reach its goal of education for all. The surviving parent, who is usually central to learner's education, is forced to look for work to support her family, resulting in children being taken care of either by their grand parents or other relatives. Those caregivers are not always able to monitor schooling and may not prioritise the learner's education as would natural parents. Eventually these learners who experience frequent interruptions dropout of school in order to seek employment to help maintain families.

Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone and Maphokwane (2011:19) explain that, with the multitude of problems experienced by orphaned children, it is quite clear that their rights to survival, life and development are being violated. The situation of these learners does not conform to society's standard of what is acceptable under prevailing cultural norms for this particular age group. Cultural practices such as early marriages violate their rights and make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection and tend to interrupt their access to education. School dropouts are increasing, as many more parents die as a result of HIV/AIDS. When this happens, learners are left to fend for themselves and take on the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings.

Learners in these situations may become over whelmed by their new roles and duties. Finally, they quit school because they cannot deal with the conflicting roles as a learner and a house keeper at the same time.

1.5.4 Child maltreatment in the family

The family system is considered as a place of safety, sustenance and care. It is equally true that most child maltreatment occurs within the child's own family and parents are the perpetrators in approximately 80% of the substantiated cases, with mothers being the most likely perpetrators in physical abuse and neglect cases, and fathers being the most likely in sexual abuse cases (UNICEF, 2007:69).

Perrin (2007:93) maintains that the physically abused learners exhibit lower intellectual and cognitive functioning comparedto learners with average intellectual and cognitive functioningon general intellectual measures. They also experience problems in specific measures of verbal facilities, memory, dissociation, verbal language, communication ability, problem-solving skills and perceptual motor skills. Academic performance is another area of substantiated difficulty in physically abused learners. Compared with non-abused learners, victims of physical abuse display poor school performance and adjustment. These abused learners also receive more special education services; score lower on reading and mathematics tests; exhibit more learning disabilities and are more likely to repeat a grade. A learner may thus feel obliged to drop out of school (Perrin 2007:93).

1.5.5 Poverty and unemployment

There are other reasons for learners not attending school despite the removal of barriers to schooling which are as comprehensive as they are complex. There is no doubt that there are increasing socio-economic pressures that include growing poverty and unemployment. There were reports of herd boys still being denied access to education despite the removal of fees, and girls being hired as domestic workers due to poverty in the households (Ministry of Education and Training 2008).The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2011:43) estimated that 21.3% of learners between the ages of 10 and 14 in Lesotho are working, boys as herders and girls as domestic workers.

1.5.6 Health problems

Pridmore (2007:38) explains those long term effects of health and nutritional status of younger learners, the implications of school enrolment; droppingout and school achievement may negatively influence learners. School-aged learners who suffer from lack of protein, energy, malnutrition, hunger or lack of certain micro nutrients in their diets do not have the same potential for learning as healthy, nourished learners. According to Perrin (2007) these disadvanaged learners attend school less frequently, are more likely to repeat grades, dropout early, fail to learn adequately due to poor levels of attention and display little motivation and poor cognitive function.

1.5.7 Lack of support

According to UNESCO (2011:340), other factors perpetuating high rates of school dropouts include lack of parental support, rejection/neglect by one or both parents. Possible reasons for the rejection or neglect may be that the mother was not ready or willing to assume theresponsibility of parenthood. A foster child or adopted child who is not a blood relative may also be rejected. Such a disturbance in relations definitely poses a threat in the form of anxiety in the learner and stunts his psychological development. UNESCO (2011:346) further stated that it is the parents' responsibility to care for their children and guide them in their schoolwork otherwise learners are likely to lose their love of school. Children who have been orphaned because they lost a caregiver to HIV/AIDS are prone to stigmatisation and discrimination and also lack the resources needed to meet their educational needs. Without the care, support and guidance of caregivers, learners who venture into education end up dropping out of school.

Many parents choose to take their children, especially boys, out of school in order to herd animals. Girls are taken out of school to cook for the initiates (makoloane) for the whole year. This adds to the increasing number of dropouts (The Ministry of Education and Training, 2008:70).

1.5.8 Introducing free primary education

The Ministry of Education and Training (2008:69-70) explained that introducing free primary education without full planning for its requirements resulted in its quality being compromised.

There is a lack of adequately trained educators. Most educators are unqualified to teach.This situation affects learners' performances especially at the grade 7 level. Educators do not have housing facilities which means they have to walk long distances to and from school. Indeed free education has attracted many learners, some of whom cannot afford school uniforms and some are too old for the grade level. Many of these learners do not have the resilience to with stand the discomfort of feeling out of place or being mocked by their peers. Therefore, descriptions of learners who regularly miss school and eventually drop out include those who feel uncomfortable amongst peers even in the face of the measures to include them.

The educational materials such as stationary, including the learner's books, arrived late with the result that the quality of materials was severely compromised. The delays in the delivery of teaching and learning materials, the poor quality of some of the stationary, as well as declining conditions as a result of overcrowding were the main reasons for school dropout (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70). Free primary education has lowered the value of education so that learners change schools without any regard for what they could lose by doing so. Learners do not attend school regularly as they are free to go to any school of their choice. Educators are clearly frustrated by this situation and feel helpless at dealing with the increasing occurrence of the transfers (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

1.5.9 Poor quality education

According to UNESCO (2011:87-89), poor quality of primary education in Lesotho is a matter of concern and has multiple causes. The unfavourable learning environment is strongly related to severe overcrowding, especially in the lower primary grades. This situation is, in turn, caused by severe shortages of educators, classrooms and high repetition rates. While, on average, primary school educators handled 48 learners in the 1980s, this has risen to a ratio of 1:55 which is significantly higher than the 1:40 fixed by the MOE to provide a manageable learning environment. The actual educator-learner ratio is even higher than 1:55 in grades 1-3, where rates of wastage (dropout and repetition) are highest and where the least qualified educators tend to be assigned. The situation is even worse with regard to the learner-classroom ratio; with the average number of learners sharing a classroom exceeding 67. If the 860 church halls serving as classrooms are excluded, the learners-classroom ratio increases to over 100:1 (Ministry of Educaion and Training 2008:68).

The problem remains particularly acute in lower primary grades, where several hundred learners commonly receive instruction from 2 or more educators in a single room, leading to problems of concentration and discipline. Overcrowding is also connected with high rates of repetition, with about 22% of learners being held back each year which negatively influences learners to dropout (UNESCO, 2011:88).

UNESCO Institution for Statistics (2007:87) stated that in addition to overcrowding, primary education suffers from problems of educator quality associated with the absence of regular in-service training opportunities for educators, poor supervision by frequently inexperienced principals, inadequate inspection support and a high proportion of about 20% of uncertified educators. Shortages of furniture and learning materials are another major constraint. According to a recent MOE survey, 43% of primary school learners have no furniture, while many others have chairs or benches, but no desks upon which to write. These factors together with overcrowding and school wastages have seriously undermined the internal efficiency of primary education in Lesotho. At present, it requires an average of 14 years of investment for each learner completing the seven year primary cycle (UNESCO 2011:88).
There is poor attention to ensuring that learners attend school regularly and receive good education once in school. Formal education continues to exist in conflict with valued cultural activities such as initiation schools in some areas. Initiation schools interfere with the smooth learning of the learners (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

1.5.10 Poor conditions and infrastructure

According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2008:69-70) regarding the evaluation of free primary education in Lesotho, there are situations in which infrastructure and conditions are quite poor but that is all that learners have. There are several schools in very remote areas where the conditions are extremely poor. Learners would have to skip school in order to go and fetch food supplies. In such schools there are also regular interruptions because of the poor infrastructure. Some days there is no teaching and learning as learners would be applying dung to the floor. Most Friday's schooling is suspended in order to apply dung to the floors and walls of the classrooms. Many learners skip school to avoid the chores. The schools there have no chalk boards and no chairs, and the classroom conditions are very poor. Some schools are so remote that many learners have to cross rivers to get there. These poor conditions result in high levels of disruptions and declining quality, and eventually learner's dropout of school (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to have an in-depth understanding of the field of inquiry the following key concepts will now be clarified:

1.6.1 Dropouts

Dropouts are learners who temporarily or permanently stop attending school before completing an education cycle, for example, ordinary level or advanced level. Lekhesa (2007:8) view dropout's as those learners who leave school before the final year of the educational cycle in which they are enrolled, which could be the primary, ordinary or advanced level or even college or university levels. Dropout statistics can be used to monitor the success of schools and identify learners needing special attention. In addition, statistics would provide an overall indication of the success of the educational system. In this study, dropouts are described as learners who have dropped out for reasons other than promotion, transfer, completion of school,and death, including those who dropped out because of excessive absence from school (Lekhesa 2007:8).

1.6.2 School

A school is an institution designed for the teaching and learning of students or learners under the direction of educators. Most countries have systems of formal education which are commonly compulsory. In these systems, learners progress through a series of schools.The names for these schools vary by country but generally include primary school for young learners and secondary school for teenagers who have completed primary education (Longman Contemporary English Dictionary as cited in Lekhesa 2007:11). There are non-governmental schools called 'private schools'. Private schools may be required when the government schools do not supply adequate or special education. Private schools can be religious, such as Christian schools, have a higher standard of education or seek to foster other personal achievements. Schools for adults include institutions of corporate training, military education and business schools. In home schooling and online schools, teaching and learning take place outside of a traditional school building (Longman Contemporary English Dictionary as cited in Lekhesa 2007:11).

1.6.3 Primary school

Lekhanya (2008:15) stated that primary school is an institution in which children receive the first stage of compulsory education known as primary or elementary education. Learners normally attend primary school from around the age of 6 until the age of 12 or 13. In some places primary schooling has been divided into lower and higher primary schools. In this study, primary school is referred to as the compulsory education offered to learners aged 6 to 12 or 13 and it starts with grade 1 to 7. When learners have graduated in grade 7, a certificate is given and that learner is considered to be one who has completed primary school Lekhanya (2008:15).

1.6.4 Primary school education

Primary school education is inclusive of grades. It is considered the building blocks of a learner's educational future. The first part of it is in the lower grades. The main emphasis of primary education is to establish a strong academic foundation. If a learner has not benefited from quality instruction in most of these grades, he/she will struggle throughout middle and high school. Primary schools often have after-school programs to reinforce skills and provide tutoring for learners who are behind their classmates Sebatane (2009). The goal of primary education is to identify learners who are at risk academically and behaviourally and address their problems before they progress into the upper grades. Primary schools tend to have smaller classes and have more staff who are trained to notice learning problems and help learners overcome them. The importance is that it sets the tone for the learners' perceptions of their abilities, which will remain with them throughout school and life. It is the place where learners can be positively or negatively influenced about the desire and motivation for learning. According to Sebatane (2009), the major goals of primary education are achieving basic literacy and numeracy amongst all learners, as well as establishing foundations in all areas Sebatane (2009).

In this study, primary education refers to education provided in schools where the learners will stay in steadily advancing classes until they complete it and move to secondary or high school. Learners are usually placed in grades with one educator who will be primarily responsible for their education and welfare for that year. This educator may be assisted to varying degrees by a specialist educator in a certain subject area, often music or physical education.

The continuity with a single educator and the opportunity to build up a close relationship with the class is a notable feature of the primary school educationLekhanya (2008:16).

1.6.5 Educator

According to Lekhesa (2007:13) an educator is a person who provides education for learners and students (adults). The role of the educator is often formal and ongoing, carried out at a school or other place of formal education. In many countries, a person who wishes to become an educator must first obtain specific professional qualifications or credentials from a college or university. Educators may use lesson plans to facilitate learningby providing a course of study which is called 'the curriculum'. An educator's role may vary among cultures. Educators may provide instruction in literacy, numeracy, vocational training, the arts, religion, civics, community roles or life skills. An educator who facilitates education for an individual may also be described as 'a personal tutor' or, largely historically, 'a governess'. In some education systems, educators may have responsibility for learners' discipline (Lekhesa 2007). In education, educators facilitate learning, often in a school, anacademy or perhaps in another environment such as outdoors (Lekhesa 2007:13).

1.7 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following theories are going to be discussed in detail because they are related to dropouts and have many implications for the learner's education:

1.7.1 The psychological theories

In an attempt to analysehe relationship between motivation and behaviour, Lepheana, Thamae, Mokone and Maphokwane (2011:18) outlined the five basic needs of human beings in the form of a pyramid divided into the psychological and physiological needs. The psychological needs include the need for affection, belonging and achievement Lekhanya (2008). Among the physiological needs are food, water, sleep, rest and activity. This theory has implications for education because if food is not available at home, learners cannot adjust to the school environment. The results are that the hungry learners cannot cope with schoolwork and in most cases they end up dropping out of school.

Every child needs to be loved, to belong to the group and to achieve goals. Some educators use authoritative leadership styles in the class, where learners have little to say. As a result, learners feel they are not loved and lack interest in attending school.

1.7.2 Learning theory

Lekhesa (2007:21) assumes that a learner learns what he is capable of learningthat is the concept of readiness. Piaget also assumes that intellectual development goes through four main stages: the sensory motor stage occurs when the child explores the environment using his senses, the pre-operational stage is when the child acquires language but has no operational thinking, the concrete operational stage is when the child thinks about abstract ideas accompanied by concrete material, and the formal operational stage is when the child is now able to think in an abstract manner and solve abstract problems.
Lekhesa (2007:21), the implication that this theory has is that learners learn what they are cognitively capable of learning. The four stages of cognitive development may overlap. Some children are sent to school on the basis of age not readiness. Such children are under aged in terms of cognitive development. They are not ready for formal education. When they come to school, they cannot cope with school work and end up dropping out of school.

1.7.3 Sociological theory on deviance and dropouts

Lekhesa (2007:22), deviance means departure from expected norms and values of society. It also means breaking the rules set by the society. Deviance means deviation from normal acceptable behaviour in a particular situation or society, Lekhesa (2007:22). The general causes of deviance leading to school dropoutsare compulsory attendance, frustration, peer group pressure, personal problems and lack of interest in the educator.

- ***Compulsory attendance***

  Some learners attend school through no desire of their own. They may have been forcibly sent to school by their parents or guardians against their will. Subsequently, the results of compulsory attendance include, amongst others, passive attitudes (meaning these children are at school physically but without actively responding, active resentment (these children hate schooling), and hostility towards the school environment (meaning that they dislike the school environment) (Lekhesa 2007:23).

- ***Frustration***

  The curriculum structure demands an attraction of interest of the learners. An irrelevant curriculum may spark frustration in some learners or the curriculum can be linked to school standards and long term goals beyond the comprehension and ability of the learners. Some may not see the subjects or course as having any significance for their personal development, or they may see it as forcing them into a pattern which has no relevance to their preferred lifestyle. Frustration is fertile ground for deviance and aggressive attitudes in school (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007:29).

- ***Peer group pressure***

  Peer group pressure can spark a negative attitude towards schoolwork, which can lead to dropping out (Lekhanya 2008).

- ***Personal problems***

  Personal problems such ashealthand social and economic stressors can cause resentment and difficulty coping with the demands of the school (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007:29).

- ***Lack of confidence in the educator***

  Learner's confidence has to be earned. Confidence will vanish when an educator fails to meet the expectations of the class. Lack of interest in a subject and poor lesson preparations can easily be noticed by learners. This weakens confidence in the educator and will spark deviant behaviour which in turn may lead to expulsion or dropout, Lekhesa (2007:24).

This study is based on the sociological theory of deviance and dropouts.According to Lepheana, Thamae, Mokone & Maphakwane (2011:24), sociology is the study of society as a whole, including certain elements of society such as the family unit, religion and the evolution of social structures. Sociologists collect various data such as demographic statistics or personal observations and determine general explanations of social phenomena. These explanations are called sociological theories and are highly important both in social studies and in everyday life.

The main focus of the study was to find and eliminate the factors contributing to primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. Therefore, sociological theory on deviance and dropouts was used to increase the study's trustworthiness and eliminate research bias through its symmetrical principles. Sociology is the study of society, its structure, dynamics and impact on human behaviour (Lepheana, Thamae, Mokone & Maphokwane 2011:24).

This study is based on this theory because it is about problems or controversies that directly or indirectly affect people of a society in relation to theirmoral values.

1.8 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In relation to the problem described above, the main aims of the study are as follows:

- Investigate the causes of primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho.
- Identify strategies to reduce primary school dropouts in the Teyateyaneng region.

1.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Arising from the results of the statement of the problem, the literature review and the aims of the research, the main research question is:

- Which factors influence primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho?

The sub-question is:

- What are the remedies for reducing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho?

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a way of looking at the world, a particular way of thinking about the world. It can also be referred to as grammar of thinking, theoretical framework, theoretical assumptions, a form of discourses, a meta-theory or a form of rationality (Le Roux 2009: 15). MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:5-6), assert that methodology is sometimes called research methods which are approaches to designing studies and collecting information. The design of a research study begins with the selection of a topic and a paradigm. A paradigm is essentially a world view, a whole framework of beliefs, values and methods within which researchers work. This study was conducted within theinterpretative paradigm.

1.10.2 Research design

The interpretive paradigm was used to conduct this study to contextualise it with a qualitative approach. This means that the research paradigm backs up the research design of the study. A qualitative approach is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants, asks broad or general questions, collects data consisting largely of words or texts from the participants, and describes, analyses and conducts an inquiry in a subjective manner (Creswell 2008:46). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320) claim that qualitative research is an accepted methodology for many important questions and makes significant contributions to both theory and practice.

Qualitative designs can vary significantly depending on the theoretical framework, philosophy, assumptions about the nature of knowledge and field of study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:459) explain qualitative as a type of research that refers to an in-depth study using face to face or observation techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings. In qualitative research numerous forms of data are collected and examined from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multi-faceted situation (Tsomo, 2012:50).

1.10.3 Philosophical paradigm

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) tate that research design is the procedure for conducting the study, including when, from whomand under what conditions the data will be obtained. Lekhesa (2007) describes research design as a blue print which acts as a detailed research plan, structure and strategy of investigation in order to answer the research question. Phenomenology design was used to conduct this study. Phenomenology design is commonly used in a variety of fields, namely: education, psychology, sociology and nursing (Rodolo 2008).

Chadzuka (2008), says that phenomenology is a philosophical method of inquiring which involves the systematic investigation of consciousness brought to the study of the social world. Springer (2010:19) stated that phenomenology is based on subjective experience. The researcher's goal tends to be holistic. It attempts to provide a comprehensive description of experiences and meanings that people construct from their interaction with other people and things in their environment.

Phenomenology studies the purpose and goal of people's experiences. This method offers advantages because it accepts that each person is unique and has his or her own reality. It also studies the nature of human beings and their unique feelings and interpretations of life experiences. Phenomenology allows the researcher to gain access to an individual's life-worlds, which is their world experience.In this study phenomenological principle will be applied mostly in the interviews. Participants will be interviewed in groups as a means to gain optimal understanding of their views and experiences regarding the dropout phenomena.

1.10.4 Population

A population can be described as all possible elements that can be included in the research. It can be people or TV programmes or curricula or anything that is investigated as the focus of the research project Chadzuka (2008). MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:129), affirm that a population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to the specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research. This group is also referred to as the target population or universe. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:461 & 489) stated that participants are identified by describing the population of interest and how the probability sample will be drawn from the population. They further explain a population as a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be generalised. In addition, a population is a collection of objects, events or peoples with the same characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying.

The population, who are respondents in this study, are the principals of the three primary schools and educators in Teyateyaneng region, Lesotho, in Berea district. The first school which is referred to as school A is a church school, the second school is agovernment school and is referred to as school B and the last school is a private school referred to as school C.The population for this study was chosen and some participants were used as the sample in the study.

1.10.5 Sampling

MacMillan & Schumacher (2010:129 & 490), describes sampling as a group of individuals from whom data is collected, often representative of a specific population. The sample can be selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the population or can simply refer to the group of subjects from which data is collected.

A few participants were selected and used as the sampling in the study. From each school, oneprincipal was selected and five educators. That means the sampleconsisted ofatotal of three principals and 15 educators, which makes up 18 participants.

These participants were chosen for various reasons, including the following: the principals were hoped to have all the information needed through school records regarding the dropouts. Educators were expected to provide rich information because they deal directly with these learners. A sample could be part of a population which can be involved in the study to represent the whole population (Chadzuka: 2008:05). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:326), contend that qualitative sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from small samples. The sample is chosen because it is likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena which the researcher is investigating. Purposive sampling was employed in this phenomenological qualitative research study to provide the researcher with a sample from whom to obtain the information about factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. Rodolo (2008) stated that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher to understand the research question.

1.10.6 Methods of data collection

MacMillan & Schumacher (2010:486), proclaim that data means the results obtained by the research from which interpretations and conclusions are drawn. The focus group interviews provided reliable data on dropouts. The researcher was the interviewer and maintaineda neutral stance during the interaction with the participants. In this study, information-rich participants were used for data collection. According to Berg (2009), the focus group interviews help in reaching the parts that other methods cannot reach, revealing dimensions of understanding that often remain untapped by more conventional data collection techniques (Nachmais & Nachmais 2008). Interviewing is often done to offer contextual data on settings, interactions or individuals (Denscombe 2007:88).

1.10.7 Data analysis

‘Data’ means information about a sample and ‘collection’ means gathering information. Raw data cannot provide the required answers to the research questions, unless it is organised into meaningful patterns.

McMillan & Schumacher (2010:367), declare that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. In this studythe collected data was structured by using open codes and developing themes and categories to address the main question of the study, and how these phenomena can be solved. The repetitions in the themes across participants were taken as shared understandings (Bell 2010:211).

The researcher analysed the data collected and the data was transcribed in detail in order to allow for optimal understanding of participants' views and experiences after which it was coded because coding reduces information in ways that facilitate interpretations of the findings (Wilson 2009:104).

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Rubin and Babbie (2007:107) define trustworthiness as the degree of consistency in measurement. Trustworthiness in this research was established by comparing whether there is an agreement between the participants' views and experiences. The results of this study are genuine and can be generalised to other primary schools in Lesotho. The instruments used to collect data were focus group interviews and the results were judged based on the following qualities:

- Transferability refers to the degree at which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings.
- Dependability is concerned with whether the same results would be obtained if one could observe the same thing twice.
- The credibility refers to the criteria involved in establishing whether the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research.
- Conformability refers to the degree to which the results can be confirmed or corroborated by others (Mqulwana 2010:61).
- Authenticity refers to the extent to which the researchers fairly and faithfully show a range of different realities (Bray 2007).

The interviewer as a moderator guided the interview, stimulated conversation and probed for answers that covered topics listed in the interview guide. The researcher work from a topic guide or a semi-structured questionnaire and used listening techniques that aimed to draw out rich, comprehensive responses.

This study was genuine because the researcher read the existing theories on dropouts which helped her to decide on the topic. The research was conducted based on ethical considerations, meaning the rights to privacy and confidentiality were considered but, most importantly, the problem was researchable and information on reasons and solutions for dropouts was gathered.

1.12 LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the Berea district in Lesotho; therefore, the other nine districts were excluded from the study. The study was conducted with the participants from one district as including other districts would inccur more costs and require more time than anticipated. Due to the limited research conducted on Lesotho primary schools, some of the literature that was consulted for the purpose of this study reported mainly on international findings. Due to the limited scope of the research, the emotional difficulties experienced by learners who dropouts were not included in the study.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the participants and allowed them to ask questions before conducting the study.The researcher informed the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and those who did not wish to participate were free to decline the invitation. The participants signed a consent form agreeing to participate voluntarily in the study. The researcher informed the participants that all the information that they disclosed would remain confidential and anonymous, and names would not be mentioned in the study.

1.14 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The structure of the study has been summarised below:

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one serves as an introduction and provides a brief theoretical background followed by a problem statement, an explanation of the objectives and questions of the research study.

It also contains a brief motivation for and the significanceof the study, the research design and the methodology employed during the research process as well as the definitions of the key terminology used in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two is concerned with the theoretical framework of the research study. The concept of dropouts is discussed in order to provide an understanding of the impact of it on pupils. There is also a focus on specific solutions that could be used to address this problem.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three contains an explanation of the research design and the methodology utilised to conduct this study. Procedures relating to the collection, recording and analysis of the data are discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four analysises and discusses the results in accordance with the objectives of the study. A summary of the entire research is presented and the results are discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

In chapter five, a synthesis of the literature research is included to enable the researcher to determine whether the results of the literature study correspond with the findings. Conclusions, implications of the study, its limitations are also discussed.

1.15 CONCLUSION

In the conclusion to study, the background of Lesotho education and the level of education recently have been provided. The preliminary literature review has been created to collect the relevant data about the factors influencing dropouts in Lesotho primary schools and further studies are recommended to find remedies which would benefit everyone in the field of education in Lesotho, especially learners in primary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

SCHOOL DROPOUT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Learners are attending primary in greater numbers than ever before but,at the same time, dropout are increasing leading to low levels of primary school completion rates. Primary school dropouts in Lesotho are heavy burdens to bear and as a result Teyateyaneng is not an exceptional area because it has experienced an increase in its rate of dropouts. Dropping out of school means that learners leave school prematurely without completing the final grade of the level in which they once entered.

This study provides an in-depth review of the literature and brings together a range of different literature regarding dropouts and analyses the issues involved in dropping out from school. The study also focuses on the theoretical framework related to dropping out. The concept of ‘dropouts‘is discussed to provide an understanding of its impact on learners as individuals and in general. The study also focuses on specific solutions that could be used to address this problem.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF A SCHOOL DROPOUT

Chadzuka (2008:20) views children who disengage from school as those learners who leave school before the final year of the educational cycle in which they are enrolled, which could be primary, ordinary or advanced level or even college or university levels. Dropout most commonly refers to a learner leaving school before the official exit-grade level, Tsomo (2012:12). According to Tsomo (2012:13), a child who disengages from school can be defined as a learner who exits the education system before completing the programme for which he or she was registered. This definition could embrace students at all levels of the education system whether primary, secondary or tertiary. However, a classification difficulty arises when learners leave one institution and move to another location. The argument by Tsomo (2012:13) is that, if a learner soon continues his or her education else where, he or she cannot be reasonably classified as a child who disengages from school.

If a learner exits the formal education system at a particular level without completing the programme designed for that level, he or she can be classified as a dropout. According to the Education Statistics Bulletin (2011:84), Lesotho's dropout rates by year and grades were as follows:

Table 2.2 Dropout rates by year and grades

Efficiency Rates	Year	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
	2003	11.5	4.1	4.1	9.8	8.1	4.7	0	6.0
	2004	8	3.5	4.2	6.8	9.1	5.9	1.8	5.6
DROPOUTS	2005	9.3	2	3.8	6.3	7.1	6.6	7.2	6.0
	2006	11.8	6.5	7.2	8.7	10.1	6.9	1.8	6.0
	2007	16.3	4.4	3.0	8.9	12.4	10.9	4.6	8.6
	2008	15.6	5.8	3.5	8.9	11.4	10.4	2.6	8.3

2.2.1 The charecteristics of learners who dropout of school

According to Kavetuna (2007:3) argues dropping out is preceded by indicators of withdrawal or unsuccessful school experiences that often begin in primary school. Overt indicators of disengagement are generally accompanied by feelings of alienation, a poor sense of belonging and a general dislike of school. Those children at risk can be identified by the following characteristics:

- They are usually two years older than their age group.
- They have poor attendance at school.
- They read below their mental age.
- They resist the educator's and principal's authority.
- They have little or no interest in school work.
- They do not follow what other learners do.
- They benefit from automatic promotion (The Ministry of Education and Training, 2008:12).

2.2.2 The implications for dropouts

Chadzuka (2008:20) further stated that the implications for dropouts are that they cause educational wastage in a number of ways, namely:

- The money which is invested by the state is under-utilised.

- Materials and resources are not put into use, which is un-economic.
- The dropout cannot attain a full educational capacity.
- Consequently, the dropout cannot maximally contribute to the country's economic building.
- As a result, the dropout becomes a liability to the country.
- The dropouts reduce opportunities for other children who could have better utilised those resources.

As a result of substantial rates of dropout and non-completion of primary school, many children are leaving school without acquiring the most basic skills. Their brief schooling experience consists frequently of limited learning opportunities and as a result many children are registered in schools but fail to attend, participate and learn.They are enrolled for several years but fail to progress and dropout from school Predimore (2007). Failure to complete a basic cycle of primary school not only limits future opportunities for children but also represents a significant drain on the limited resources that the country has for the provision of primary education. Children dropping out of school without completing primary school education remain key constraints for achieving success Predimore**, (**2007**)**. The consequences of dropping out of school are costly. Children who dropout of school experience higher levels of unemployment and receive lower earnings than their peers. Children who dropout of school are more likely to become dependent on welfare, engage in illegal activities, experience health and affective problems. Dropping out of school creates a negative momentum for youth in a society during difficult economic periods. Such momentum may foster even higher dropout rates in the future. Dropping out of school is widely recognised as a negative life event which is often followed by further problems **(**Predimore**,** 2007**).**

2.3 THEORIES RELATED TO DROPOUTS

The following theories are related to dropouts and have a lot of implications for learners' education.

2.3.1 Language theory

According to Chadzuka **(**2008**:**18**-**19**),** in the theory of functions language is part of our social behaviour and is used to express our attitudes.

The assumption is that there are several functions of language such as the instrumental model/function of language where language is used as a means of getting things done, the regulatory function is used to control or regulate one's behaviour and the personal model is equated to Piaget's egocentric speech where language is used to talk to one self.
Language plays a directing role; the Heuristic model is used as a means of investigating reality while the imaginative function or model is used for creativity and imagination as itinvolves make-believe or fantasising. The representational function of language is used to convey a message, instruction and direction. Finally, the interactional model or function of language is used for social interaction with family members, neighbours and peers **(**Chadzuka 2008**:**18**-**19). Since language is the most important tool for effective communication, it means that those learners with language difficulties will find it difficult to interact with peers and to adjust to school work. Such learners can become part of the dropout statistics (Chadzuka 2008:18-19).

2.3.2 The IQ theory

- ***The slow learners***

  Learners with an IQ of 75-85 are not considered retardeded, but may have trouble in mastering learning tasks. Many learners dropout because school work presents immense problems for them. However, many are able to finish school and function reasonably well in life Ministry of Education and Training (2008).

- ***Educable mentally disturbed***

  Learners with an IQ of 50-75 are physically normal but cannot function well in class. They are concidered potential children who disengage from school and rarely stay in school beyond grade 6. In adult life they are employed as unskilled or semi-skilled workers (Ministry of Education and Training 2008).

- ***Trainable mentally disturbed***

  Such learners have an IQ of 25-50 and function at a level approximately ¼ to ½ that of physical disability. These learners are potential dropouts. Although they are usually educable and trainable, they can be identified very early and placed in special centres; most of these learners require lifelong care and supervision (Ministry of Education and Training 2008).

- ***Profoundly intellectually disabled***

  Learners with an IQ of 25 are completely dependent but they are found in a regular classroom (Ministry of Education and Training 2008).

- ***Pedagogical hints to help learners who are slow***

  The Ministry of Education and Training (2008) suggests the following to help slow learners in the school:

  - Give slow learners more time than a normal child in subject matter being taught.
  - Deliver the matter one step at a time.
  - Break down the matter to be taught into the smallest possible elements.
  - These learners need successful and structural opportunities to progress at learning task.
  - Always praise them when they have accomplished any given task. Individualised instruction is best for them.
  - They perform better when their teachers exhibit compassion and praise.
  - They are unresponsive to teachers who cristise, ridicule and doubt them.
  - They find it difficult to generalise and transfer information from a lesson to another situation which is going from the abstract to the concrete.
  - Present the learning matter in a variety of ways.

2.3.3 The psychological theories

In an attempt to analyse the relationship between motivation and behaviour, **(**Lepheana**,** Thamae**,** Mokone **&** Maphokwane2011**)** outlined the two basic needs of human beings in a pyramid. They are the psychological and physiological needs. The psychological needs include the need for affection, belonging and achievement. Among the physiological needs are the food, water, sleep, rest and activity. This theory has implications for education because if food is not available at home, children cannot cope with school work and in most cases they end up dropping out of school (Lepheana, Thamae, Mokone & Maphokwane 2011:18).

Every child needs to be loved, to belong to the group and to achieve goals. Some educators use authoritative leadership styles in the class, where learners have little to say. As a result, learners feel that they are not loved and lack interest in attending school. The use of ineffective teaching and learning methods, by some teachers can causes learners to drop out of school, particularly the slow learners who cannot easily move along with others (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007:27-28).

2.3.4 Learning theory

Piaget in Lekhesa **(**2007**:**21**),** in his cognitive theory, assumes that a learner learns what he is capable of learning - that is the concept of readiness. Piaget also assumes that intellectual development goes through four main stages. The sensory motor stage is where the child explores the environment using his senses. The pre-operational stage is where the child thinks about abstract ideas accompanied by concrete material. The formal operational stage, in which the child is now able to think in an abstract manner and solve abstract problems. According to Lekhesa **(**2007**:**21**),** the implication that this theory has is that learners learn what they are cognitively capable of learning. The four stages of cognitive development may overlap. Some learners are sent to school on the basis of age not readiness. Such learners are under-aged in terms of cognitive development. They are not ready for formal education. When they come to school, they cannot cope with school work and end up dropping out of school.

2.3.5 Sociological theory on deviance and dropouts

Deviance means departure from expected norms and values of society. It also means breaking the rules set by the society **(**Chadzuka 2008). Deviance means deviation from normal acceptable behaviour in a particular situation or society (Lekhesa 2007:22) outlined the following general causes of deviance leading to school dropouts. They are compulsory attendance, frustration, peer group pressure, personal problems and lack of interest in the educator.

- **Compulsory attendance**

  Some learners attend school through no desire of their own. They may have been sent to school by their parents or guardians but against their will. Subsequently, the results of compulsory attendance include, amongst others, passive attitudes, meaning these learners are at school physically but their hearts are out;

active resentment, meaning these learners hate schooling; hostility, meaning they are hostile to the school environment, i.e. they dislike the school environment **(**Chadzuka 2008**).**

- **Frustration**

  Curriculum structure demands an attraction of interest of the learners. An irrelevant curriculum may spark frustration in some students if the curriculum is linked to school standards and long term goals far beyond the comprehension and ability of the learners. Some may not see the subjects or course as having any significance for their personal development. Some may see it as forcing them into a pattern which has no relevance to their preferred life style. Frustration is a fertile ground for deviance and an aggressive attitude in school (Minister of Education and Training, 2007:29).

- **Peer group pressure**

  Peer group pressure can spark a negative attitude toward school work which can lead to dropping out **(**Chadzuka 2008**)**.

- **Personal problems**

  Personal problems like health problems and social problems can cause resentment and reflection to the demands of the school (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007:29)

- **Lack of confidence in the educator**

  Learners' confidence has to be earned. Confidence will vanish where an educator fails to meet the expectations of the class. Lack of interest in a subject and poor lesson preparation can easily be noticed by learners. This weakens confidence in the teacher and will spark deviant behaviour which in turn may lead to expulsion or dropout (Chadzuka 2008).

This study is based on the sociological theory on deviance and dropouts because according to Lepheana, Thamae, Mokone & Maphokoane (2011:24) maintains that sociology is the study of society as a whole, and of certain elements of the society such as the family unit, religion and education. Sociologists collect various data such as demographic statistics or personal observations and determine general explanations of social phenomena.

These explanations are called sociological theories and are highly important both in social studies and everyday life. The main focus of the study is to find and eliminate the factors contributing to dropouts in Teyateyaneng primary schools, Lesotho. Therefore, sociological theory on deviance and dropouts is hoped to increase the study's validity and eliminate research bias through its symmetry principal. Sociology is the study of society, its structure, dynamics and impact on human behaviour. This study is based on this theory because it is about social issues such as problems or controversies that directly or indirectly affect people of a society in relation to moral values (Lepheana, Thamae, Mokone & Maphokoane 2011:24).

Lepheana, Thamae, Mokone and Maphokoane (2011:26), maintain that there is a proposed distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are the intended functions of a phenomenon in a social system. Latent functions are the unintended functions of a phenomenon in a social system. An example of manifest and latent functions is education. The manifest purpose of public education is to increase the knowledge and abilities of the citizens to prepare them to contribute to the workforce. A latent function of the public education system is the development of a hierarchy of the learned. The most learned are often also the most affluent. Thus, while education's manifest function is to empower all individuals to contribute to the workforce and society, it also limits some people by creating boundaries of entry into occupation.

2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNER DROPOUT

This section explains factors influencing learner dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho.

2.4.1 Disability and special educational needs

Sebatane (2009) consider the disability of learners as one of the contributing factors to dropout. They stated that the lack of initial access for learners with special educational needs (SEN) means most of them are able to drop out of school. The role of the educator is important because appropriate teaching methods could enhance the learning potential of many learners with SEN. Many educators do not gain the appropriate training nor do they in some cases know how to identify forms of learning difficulties.

According to the Education Statistics Bulletin (2010:21), pupils with SEN or disabilities amounted to 20490 (5.3%) out of 388681 learners who were enrolled in 2010. In 2011 learners with some form of disability amounted to 20636 which are 5.4% of 385437 learners who were enrolled in 2011.

The Education Statistics Bulletin (2011:21) stated that gender comparison disclosed that boys with special educational needs topped girls in all the grades. The number of males with special educational needs or disabilities was also dominant in most types of special needs such as learning difficulty, physical disability and visual impairment while the number of females took the lead in hearing impairments, as shown in the table below which shows registered primary schools' enrolment of learners with special educational needs/disabilities-2011.

Table 2.4.1 Registered primary schools' enrolment of learners with special educational needs/disabilities

Type	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Hearing impairment	150	129	173	146	220	193	243	248
Learning difficulties	938	564	972	557	1061	619	1129	686
Other	198	97	173	87	167	55	152	90
Physical handicap	214	166	115	86	96	84	108	87
Visual impairment	249	182	296	193	293	216	332	287
Total	**1749**	**1138**	**1729**	**1071**	**1837**	**1167**	**1964**	**1398**

Type	Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Hearing impairment	246	231	199	256	181	261	2876
Learning difficulties	852	622	710	577	578	477	10342
Other	156	100	162	112	99	74	1724
Physical handicap	81	66	57	64	69	61	1354
Visual impairment	371	347	396	444	350	384	4340
Total	**1706**	**1366**	**1524**	**1453**	**1277**	**1257**	**20636**

That means these learners are at risk of dropping out of school due to exclusion and lack of appropriate support from the teachers and their peers. The school environment also contributes to push disabled learners from schools in such a way that the surroundings do not accommodate them. For example, the school toilets or playgrounds are not made easy for the learners on wheelchairs to be able to use them (Education Statistics Bulletin 2010:21).

Furthermore, UNESCO (2011:346) stated that some schools are so far away that the twice daily routine is uncertain, difficult and tiring for the disabled learners to complete their primary schooling in Lesotho. Working conditions too are hardly ideal for teaching and learning; classes are overcrowded and the equipment and staff are inadequate. The Ministry of Education and Training (2008:69), on the evaluation of free primary education in Lesotho, stated that educators have been caught in the situation without adequate skills to cope with the disabled learners. The wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds and wide age ranges of makes it hard for these children to cope with the school environment and that makes most of them dropout from schools. They also feel uncomfortable amongst their peers even in the face of the measures to include them.

The Ministry of Education and Training (2007:18), in the final report of consultation on education policies, programmes and legislation in Lesotho relating to disadvantaged children and children with disabilities, stated that only a small proportion of learners with severe disabilities are attending the special schools that can support them according to their needs. There are only four schools in the country that provide special education to the severely disabled learners. Those schools are St. Bernadette, Motsekuoa, Mount Royal and Seleso primary schools. It is clear that the great majority of severely disabled learners are not receiving the interventions that are necessary for their effective access to primary education which makes them dropout of schools.

2.4.2 Repetition

According to Examination Counsel of Lesotho (ECOL) (2012:3), the performance of learners by subjects over the period of 2007-2012 has been stated in the table below:

Table 2.4.2 Performance of learners by subjects over the period of 2007-2012

Subjects	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Fail
English	16,631	9,773	7,064	5, 042	3, 020	1, 018	42,548
Sesotho	24,802	12,817	1,712	10, 610	8, 408	6, 206	63,655
Mathematics	9,406	9,294	10,497	11, 974	12, 749	7, 214	61134
Science	5,595	7,748	15,769	13, 697	6, 973	8, 379	57,261
Social Studies	13,868	8,849	10,329	9, 923	4, 932	8, 011	55,612

The above information on the table stated that learners could not catch up. The learners who have repeated say that poor performance in examinations, parental decisions and absenteeism are responsible for their repetition. The Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL) (2012:4), is of the opinion that the performance patterns of learners over the period 2007-2012 have been stated in the table below:

Table 2.4.2.1 Performance patterns of learners over the period 2007-2012

Class	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1st class	5,998 (14.1%)	7,461 (17.8%)	6,664 (16.1%)	5,954 (14.2%)	6,920 (17%)	5,286 (13.3%)
2nd class	10.048 (23.6%)	9,663 (23.1%)	10,762 (26%)	9,877 (23.6%)	11,107 (27.3%)	9,489 (23.0%)
3rd class	19,290 (45.4%)	19,008 (45.4%)	18,156 (43.9%)	20,803 (49.7%)	17,528 (43%)	19,810 (49.9%)
Total pass	35,336 (83.1%)	36,132 (86.4%)	35,582 (86%)	36,634 (87.5%)	35,555 (87.2%)	35,585 (87.2%)
Fail	7,176 (16.9%)	5,705 (13.6%)	5,815 (14%)	5,235 (12.5%)	5,197 (12.7%)	5,076 (12.8%)

In 2008 it is stated that more than one out of five learners repeated a class. The repetition rate has slightly grown over the last few years. MDG further stated that repetition is highest in the early grades. The repeaters become discouraged and decide to stop schooling totally.

The Education Statistics Bulletin (2010:27-28), further claims the repeaters constituted about 19% (74833) of total enrolment (385457) in 2011. Analysis of the ecological zones disclosed that lowlands and mountains had a high number of repeaters whilst foothills and Senqu River Valley had the least number of repeaters. That means the high rates of dropout are mostly in the lowlands and mountains of Lesotho primary schools. In the other places dropouts are low. The table below explained further the repeaters in registered primary schools by districts in 2010:

Table 2.4.2.2 Repeaters in registered primary schools by districts in 2010

DISTRICT	FOOTHILLS			LOWLANDS		
	M	F	TOTAL	M	F	TOTAL
Butha–Buthe	1153	682	1835	1103	531	1634
Leribe	1597	883	2480	4068	2396	6464
Berea	2140	1377	3517	3193	1779	4972
Maseru	1752	1295	3047	5967	3927	9894
Mafeteng	1573	1021	2594	3121	1821	4942
Mohale'sHoek	993	678	1671	1719	1110	2829
Quthing	607	416	1023	71	31	102
Qacha'sNek	55	38	93	0	0	0
Mokhotlong	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thaba-Tseka	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**9870**	**6390**	**16260**	**19242**	**11595**	**30837**

DISTRICT	MOUNTAINS			SENQU RIVER VALLELY		
	M	F	TOTAL	M	F	Total
Butha–Buthe	620	452	1072	33	13	46
Leribe	890	663	1553	0	0	0
Berea	30	27	57	21	17	38
Maseru	1005	826	1831	11	6	17
Mafeteng	494	408	902	0	0	0
Mohale'sHoek	1328	1318	2646	281	209	490
Quthing	1748	1411	3159	445	340	785
Qacha'sNek	1851	1298	3149	204	157	361
Mokhotlong	3443	2637	6080	131	108	239
Thaba-Tseka	4072	3298	7370	535	367	902
TOTAL	**1548**	**12338**	**27819**	**1661**	**1217**	**2878**

Education Statistics Bulletin (2010:35) further stated the problem of repetition in Lesotho as follows:

Table 2.4.2.3 Problem of repetition in Lesotho

Efficiency Rates	Year	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
	2003	24	22.8	18.9	17.1	11.6	11.4	11.9	16.8
	2004	28.4	23.9	21.1	19.9	15.3	13.4	12.7	19.2
	2005	28.1	24.5	21	21.1	17.6	13.3	12.6	19.7
REPETITION	2006	27.6	22.6	20.4	20.1	17.3	12.9	11.8	19.7
	2007	28.4	24.1	21.9	21.3	17.6	13.8	14.0	20.1
	2008	24.7	21.5	20.6	20.0	16.3	13.3	13.0	18.5

2.4.3 Orphanhood

The Ministry of Education and Training (2007:69), states that in the final report of consultancy on educational policies, programmes and legislation in Lesotho relating to disadvantaged children, stated that the disastrous AIDS pandemic has increased the problems for special education in Lesotho in two ways. Firstly, it has increased the number of learners who may be regarded as having special educational needs in that orphans are vulnerable to emotional and behavioural disorders. Secondly, the rise in the number of orphans requiring social and financial support has preoccupied authorities and may be absorbing resources from which the disabled might otherwise benefit of learners who are double orphans, the most statistical returns for 2006 show 30,513 at the primary level.The estimated number of learners who have lost either one or both parents are much larger. It was reported in the MOET joint review of September 2007 as 141792 at the primary level.

The Education Statistics Bulletin (2010:22) denotes that the number of paternal orphans was dominant representing 56% whereas the percentage of complete and maternal orphans followed with 24 and 20% respectively.The trend is similar for the previous years. The table below also displays that the number of male orphans exceeded that of females from grade 1 to grade 4 whilst the number of female orphans exceeded that of males in the other grades.The table below illustrates the lower enrolment of orphans in the lower grades and higher enrolment of orphans in the upper grades.

Table 2.4.3 Enrolment of orphans in registered primary schools by type of orphanhood, Grades1 – 7,and gender for 2011

Orphan Type	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Double	1225	914	1515	1189	1987	1565	2338	2006
Maternal	1496	1229	1637	1277	1740	1490	2000	1742
Paternal	4692	3715	4750	3953	5154	4251	5515	4779
Total	**7413**	**5858**	**7902**	**6419**	**8881**	**7306**	9853	8527

Orphan Type	Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Double	2435	2432	2355	2627	2312	3055
Maternal	1879	1891	1705	1854	1447	1901
Paternal	4885	4953	4387	5058	4087	5136
Total	**9199**	**9276**	**8447**	**9539**	**7846**	**10092**

Total	Percent
27955	24
23288	20
65315	56
116558	100

This created a great challenge to Lesotho primary education because these learners dropout from schools due to different reasons including hunger, lack of parental support, health problems and financial support especially related to school needs.The EducationStatistics Bulletin (2010:22) stated that the number of orphans has been fluctuating over the years though there has been a miner decline in enrolment of orphans from 2008-2011. That means most of them dropout from schools while others do not enrol at school at all after the death of their parents.

According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2008:677) maintains that on the evaluation of free primary education in Lesotho, the growing number of paternal orphans makes it difficult for Lesotho education to reach its maximum potential goal of education for all.

The remaining parents, especially mothers, who are central to learners' education, are forced to look for work and thus more and more learners end up in the care of grandparents and relatives. Those care givers are not always able to monitor schooling and may not prioritise the learners' education as would natural parents. Eventually these learners who experience frequent interruptions dropout of school in order to head households and sometimes seek employment to maintain families. Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone and Maphokoane (2011:19), explained that with the multitudes of problems experienced by orphaned children, it is quite clear that their rights to survival, life and development are being violated. The situation of these learners does not confirm to the society's standard of what is acceptable under prevailing cultural norms for this particular age group.

Practices such as early marriages violate their rights and make them more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection and also tend to interrupt their access to education. School dropouts are increasing as more and more parents die as a result of HIV/AIDS. When this happens, learners are left to fend for themselves and older ones take on the responsibility of caring for the young ones. Learners in these situations become overwhelmed with the new roles and duties. Finally, they quit school because they cannot deal with the role conflict of acting as a learner and a house keeper or manager at the same time (Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone and Maphohoane 2011:19).

2.4.4 Child maltreatment in the family

It is true that family is the safe place of sustenance and care. It is equally true that most child maltreatment occurs within families. Parents are the perpetrators in approximately 80% of the submitted cases, with mothers the most likely perpetrators of physical abuse and neglect cases and fathers the most likely of sexual abuse cases (UNICEF, 2007:69). The physically abused learners exhibit lower intellectual and cognitive functioning relative to comparitive groups of learners on general intellectual measures. They also experience problems in specific measures of verbal facilities, memory, dissociation, verbal language, communication ability, problem solving skills and perceptual motor skills. Academic performance is another area of substantiated difficulty in physically abused learners. Compared with non-abused learners, victims of child physical abuse display poor school achievement and adjustment. They also receive more special education services; score lower on reading and mathematics tests, exhibit more learning disabilities and are more likely to repeat a grade. As a result, a learner may feel obliged to drop out of school (Pridmore 2007).

2.4.5 Poverty and unemployment

The other reasons for learners not attending school despite the removal of barriers to schooling are as comprehensive as they are complex. There is no doubt that there are increasing socio-economic pressures that include growing poverty and unemployment. There were reports of herd boys still being denied access to education despite the removal of fees and girls being hired as domestic workers due to poverty in the households. Mothers who are central to learners' education are forced to look for work and thus more and more learners end up in the care of grandparents and relatives who are not always able to monitor schooling and may not prioritise the learners' education as would natural parents. Eventually, learners who experience interruptions dropout of school in order to head households and sometimes seek employment to maintain families (Ministry of Education and Training, 2008:67).

Due to the high rate of unemployment and poverty in Lesotho, most learners quit school to maintain their families. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2011:43), estimated that 21.3% of learners between the ages of 10 and 14 in Lesotho are working, boys as herdboys and girls as domestic workers.

2.4.6 Health problems

Pridmore (2007:38) explained the negative effects of health and nutritional status of younger learners and their implications for school enrolment, dropout and school achievement on learners. He further explained that school aged learners who suffer from protein deficiency, malnutrition, and hunger or who lack of certain micronutrients in their diet, do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well nourished learners. These learners attend school less frequently, are more likely to repeat grades, dropout early and fail to learn adequately due to poor levels of attention. They also have low motivation and poor cognitive function.

2.4.7 Lack of support

According to UNESCO (2011:340), another factor perpetuating high rates of school dropouts include lack of parental support. Rejection by one of the parents or both is yet another serious form of neglect as the learner is made to feel excluded and rejected. Possible reasons may be that the mother was not ready and willing to assume responsibility of parenthood.

A foster child or adopted child not bound by ties of blood may sometimes also be rejected by care givers or relatives. Such a disturbance in relations definitely poses a threat in the form of anxiety to the learner and stunts his psychological development.

UNESCO (2011:346) further stated that it is parental responsibility to care for their learners and guide them in their school work. If not, learners are likely to lose the love for school. Coming straight to the issue of HIV/AIDS orphans, they are not prone to stigmatisation and discrimination but also lack the resources needed to meet their educational costs. Without care, support and guide of parents, learners who venture into education end up dropping out of school. Many parents choose to take their learners, especially boys, out of school in order to herd animals and to attend the initiation school. Girls are then taken out of school in order to cook for the initiates (makoloane). This adds to the increasing number of dropouts (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

2.4.8 Introducing free primary education

The Ministry of Education and Training (2008:69-70), on the evaluation of free primary education (FPE), stated FPE as the cause of the high rate of dropouts in Lesotho primary schools. Introducing FPE without full planning for its requirements, quality has been compromised. There is lack of adequately trained educators. Most educators are unqualified to teach in the school system. This situation affects learners' performance especially at the grade 7 level. Educators do not have a housing facility and this means they have to walk long distances to come to school. Indeed, FPE has attracted many learners, some of whom cannot afford school uniform and some of whom are rather too old for their level. Many of these learners do not have the resilience to withstand the discomfort of looking odd and the mocking looks of their peers. Therefore, descriptions of learners who regularly miss school and eventually drop out include those who feel uncomfortable amongst peers even in the face of the measures to include them. The educational materials like stationary including the learner's books arrived late with the result that quality was severely compromised. The delays in the delivery of teaching materials, some of which were described as poor quality, as well as declining conditions as a result of overcrowding, were the main reason (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

FPE has lowered the value of education so that learners come and go and change schools without any regard for what they would lose by so doing. Learners are not regular in attendance as they are free to go to any school of their choice. Educators are clearly frustrated by this situation and feel helpless at dealing with the increasing occurrence of transfers (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

2.4.9 Poor quality education

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics report (2007:87-89), argues that the poor quality of primary education in Lesotho is a matter of concern and has multiple causes. The unfavourable learning environment is strongly related to severe overcrowding, especially in the lower primary standards. This situation is, in turn, caused by severe shortages of educators, classrooms and high repetition rates. While on average primary school educators handled 48 learners in the 1980s, that ratio has now risen to 55, significantly higher than the 1:40 fixed by the MOET to provide a manageable learning environment. The actual educator-learner ratio is even higher than 1:55 in standards 1-3, where rates of waste (dropout and repetition) are highest and where the least qualified educators tend to be assigned.

The output of trained educators from the Lesotho College of Education (LEC) has not been able to keep up with the increasing need for qualified educators. Gender disparities are also observed within primary school teaching personnel. In 2003, nearly 4 out of every educator were females.The Education Sector Strategic Plan in Lekhesa (2007) provided the table below which indicates the shortages of qualified educators in Lesotho and indicates the educators in primary schools by qualification and gender.

Table 2.4.9 Educators in primary schools by qualification and sex

Year	Degree		Diploma		certificate		Unqualified	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1999	253	1549	854	3760	523	1286	1630	6569
2000	240	1571	807	3744	653	1563	1700	6878
2001	239	1578	824	3917	683	1521	1746	7016
2002	229	1517	828	3892	746	1696	1803	7105
2003	229	1514	783	3733	924	2111	1936	7358
Totals	1190	7729	4096	19046	3529	8177	8815	34926

The situation is even worse with regard to the learner-classroom ratio, with the average number of learners sharing a classroom exceeding 67. If the 860 church halls serving as classrooms are excluded, the learners-classroom ratio increases to over 100:1. The problem is, once again, particularly acute in lower primary schools, where several hundred learners commonly receive instruction from two or more educators in a single room, leading to problems of concentration and discipline. Overcrowding is also connected with high rates of repetition, with about 22% of learners being held back each year and that encourages dropouts of learners (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2011:88).

In addition to overcrowding, primary education suffers from problems of educator quality associated with the absence of regular in-service training opportunities for educators, poor supervision by frequently inexperienced head teachers; inadequate inspection support and still high proportions of about 20% of uncertified educators.Shortages of furniture and learning materials are another major constraint. According to a recent MOET survey, 43% of primary school learners have no furniture, while many others have chairs or benches, but no desks upon which to write. These factors together with overcrowding and school wastage have seriously undermined the internal efficiency of primary education in Lesotho, so that at present it requires an average of 14 years of investment for each learner to complete the seven year primary cycle (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011:88).

There is poor attention to ensuring that learners attend regularly and receive a good education once in school. Formal education continues to exist in tension with valued cultural activities such as initiation school in some areas. Initiation schools interfere with the smooth learning of the learners (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

2.4.10 Poor condition and infrastructure

The Ministry of Education and Training (2008:67-70) signifies that on the evaluation of free primary education in Lesotho, there are also those situations in which infrastructure and conditions are quite poor and all that learners have. There are several schools in very remote areas where the conditions are extremely poor. Learners would have to skip school in order to go and fetch food supplies. In such schools there are also regular interruptions because of the poor infrastructure. On some days, there is no teaching and learning as learners would be applying dung to the floor. On most Fridays schooling is suspended in order to apply dung to the floors and walls. Many learners skip that day to avoid the chores. In other schools, there are virtually no chalk boards and no chairs; the classroom conditions are so very poor that the roll has declined. In other schools there is simply no option within kilometres and many learners have to cross rivers to get to school. These poor conditions result in high levels of disruption and declining quality and eventually learners drop out of school (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:70).

2.5 SOLUTIONS THAT COULD BE USED TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM

This section explains what can be done to reduce, control or prevent the problem of learners dropping out of primary schools in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho.

2.5.1 Policy development and reform

2.5.1.1 Develop policy guidelines on inclusive education

The governmentshould develop policy guidelines on inclusive education, focusing on how best to integrate learners with special needs, indigenous language minorities and religious minorities. The guidelines could serve as the point of reference for all interventions in the school system (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:49).

2.5.1.2 Development of policy on repetition and progression

Considering the opportunity costs that are borne by the government resulting from the high repetition rates, MOET should develop, disseminate and enforce a policy on repetition and progression in all public basic schools. The issues that should be addressed should include the designing of approaches on improving the transition rate from lower to upper basic education (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:49).

2.5.2 Free and compulsory quality basic education on equitable basis

2.5.2.1 Expand the free primary education programme to universal education

The MOET has undertaken to progressively assume financial responsibility for books, stationary, maintenance and utility costs at the primary level, a responsibility that was assumed in 2000. Under FPE, participating schools shall not charge school fees for those standards whose non-educator costs were being supported by the MOET. In addition, the ministry will continue with school feeding for as many learners as resources may allow, prioritising the most vulnerable learners, particularly OVCs. The additional support from the government would arrive in the form of goods, services and professional support. The FPE policy shall be reviewed every two years to ensure that it is responsive to evolving socioeconomic and demographic realities of Lesotho as well as the resource conditions at the disposal of the Government and its main stakeholders in education services provision at this level (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:50).

2.5.2.2 Construct additional classrooms/schools

In order for the Government to meet the quantitative challenges of FPE, it should provide resources for the construction of more basic schools and the expansion of classrooms in already existing schools.

Furthermore, the government should renovate existing classrooms in existing schools with priority being given to remote areas and the densely populated districts. In addition, special attention should be given to the construction of schools for children with special needs. A policy framework should be developed for a unified and continuous basic education system that provides opportunities for learners with special needs and otherwise disadvantaged learners (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:50).

2.5.2.3 Community campaigns on education for all (EFA)

The government should continue to popularise primary education through advocacy for free and compulsory primary education through the medium of public campaigns and publications. Through the community and campaigns, the government hopes to enlist the vulnerable community and civil society involvement in advocacy for basic education by encouraging parents to permit their children to take advantage of educational opportunities opened for them (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:50).

2.5.2.4 Legislation on compulsory basic education

In order to persuade families to recognise basic education as a fundamental right of all children and to assist in its enforcement, the ministry should facilitate the legislative backing of this policy through the enactment of a law that will make at least primary education compulsory. Through this law, the government would be better equipped to mobilise communities to ensure that all school-going age children are enrolled and retained in schools (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:50).

2.5.2.5 Beyond free primary education: towards free and compulsory education

The commitment of the Lesotho government to introduce legislation to make primary education compulsory has received overwhelming support among the various stakeholders, and this bodes well for ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete, free and compulsory education of good quality. There is a strong view, however, that before the proposal for compulsory education is passed into law all identified barriers to participation in free education should be addressed as a matter of urgency. Besides enhancing understanding of FPE, which is currently an impediment to provision, the practice of using unqualified educators and the slow progress of the distance education programme are some of the obstacles towards achieving good quality FPE.

Failure to address these impediments, it is felt, will make the achievement of MDG difficult, if not impossible, not with standing the legislation that will have been passed (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008:75).

2.5.2.6 Make education attractive

Most of the respondents concur that education has to be enticing to the learners.The latter have to want to attend school without being forced to do so. They suggest that learners need to be sensitised to the importance of education and that an environment has to be created to enable them to share their views. Of importance is the creation of a learning environment in which educators recognise the intrinsic worth of all learners in the classroom through a child-centred and inclusive curriculum. From a learner development perspective, children need to feel safe, secure and cared for. It is for this reason that the parents propose that school fencing be provided and security be stepped up. As part of caring, they indicate that the learners should be supervised, both in class and on the school grounds. Many stakeholders are in agreement that the creation of child-friendly schools should be the ultimate goal in enticing the children to come to school and to remain there until they complete their primary education. The educators have to understand that they are in school for the learners and they are expected to act in the best interests of the learners (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008).

This observation is endorsed by the African Ministers of Education by suggesting the strengthening of the possibilities of incorporating care and support in schools as part of the essential services provided for learners (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:98). (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:98) calls on the educators to exploit learners' potential to negotiate, interpret and reproduce social meaning instead of suppressing it through their inappropriate teaching and learning strategies and the overuse of punishment. It is recommended that educators' pastoral care and counselling roles should be emphasised in order to create child-friendly schools. To this end in-service education on the role of educators as counsellors should be conducted and schools should be encouraged to designate a school counsellor to attend to the most sensitive issues of learners. The government should support long-term training of school counsellors.

2.5.3 Improve teaching and learning conditions in all schools

2.5.3.1 Provision of learning materials

The government should provide additional resources to meet the expanding demand for relevant teaching and learning materials so as to secure quality basic education. The involvement of other stakeholders in education services provision should be sought (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:51).

2.5.3.2 Increasing teaching positions

The government should explore the best ways to create additional teaching positions to cater for increased enrolments and to fill the places caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The training of more educators and the facilitation of training opportunities to untrained/unqualified educators should form the main approach to meeting the rising demand for educators (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:51).

2.5.3.3 Improve the quality of educators

It is worth returning to the issue of the quality of educators.A recurring concern of the stakeholders in particular is the educators' inadequacy in working with learners with special needs. The educators themselves acknowledge that they have not been adequately prepared to work with learners who have different types of disability, the one group that is particularly marginalised in the school system. They claim that the generic course that the Lesotho College of Education is offering does not seem to provide them with enough confidence to handle the different types of disability they encounter in schools. They also claim that the in-service education they receive is not adequate and this affects their efforts to deliver quality education (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008). It is, therefore, not surprising that for many disabled learners school attendance is an unsatisfying experience, leaving them despondent about their own capabilities and disillusioned about the place of education in their lives (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:97).

According to Ministry of Education and Training (2008:97), further indicates that because free primary education has opened up access to diverse sets of learners, the school system has to put in place mechanisms for accommodating all the learners.

It is recommended that a nation-wide educator development initiative on inclusive education, with emphasis on accommodating diversity in the classroom, as well as understanding learners holistically, be embarked on. Continuous support has to be provided to educators as they refine their repertoires in response to unusual circumstances, what Schon refers to as ‘surprises’.

2.5.3.4 Development and enforcement of policy on continuous assessment

In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the Ministry should develop and implement a policy of continuous assessment of learners in all public schools during the Strategic Plan period. This would ensure that weak learners who need additional professional attention are identified early and support is extended in a more focused manner. This will also reduce repetition rates (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:51).

2.5.4 Provide a secure, healthy school environment

2.5.4.1 Facilitation of secure, healthy and environmentally hospitable school conditions

Mindful of the current conditions in the average school in the country, the government should strive to achieve secure, healthy and environmentally hospitable conditions in places of learning. In this regard, a series of activities should be embarked upon with the involvement of the learners themselves, educators, the community and other stakeholders. These activities should include the development and implementation of a school health programme in all public schools; the provision of amenities in schools such as safe drinking water, kitchens, offices and toilets; and the development of a national schools’ policy on sports (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008). The Ministry should coordinate more closely with the other relevant bodies that specialise in given fields so that professional advice and expertise is extended to the Ministry. This will make learners enjoy school and find it as a place for both fun and learning (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:51).

2.5.4.2 Infusing awareness of HIV and AIDS in aspects of school life

It is Government's plan to make schools centres for sexual and reproductive health education, including aspects of HIV/AIDs and both care and prevention interventions should particularly be targeting the most severely affected age groups in the school system (currently 6-19 olds) and the most infected sex group (females). Educators should also be targeted so as to minimise the adverse impact on education service delivery of the currently very high educator attrition rates due to HIV/AIDS (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008).

The Ministry should also design an effective system of attending to the health and emotional needs of the surging number of infected and affected educators and learners through, inter alia, the facilitation of cost-effective and manageable care and counselling facilities/services (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008:51). The Ministry should periodically cost the implications of the high prevalence levels of HIV/AIDS among education personnel and design appropriate response mechanisms with regard to, but not limited to how best to fill the human resource gaps. During the Strategic Plan period, the Ministry should also incorporate HIV/AIDS in the school curriculum and conduct/commission studies on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the basic education sub sector (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2009:51).

2.5.4.3 Address the needs of orphans and vulnerable learners

Poverty is uppermost among the recurring and significant barriers to access to education as identified by all the stakeholders. It is the contention of the stakeholders that the majority of the children who are not in school are those who are marginalized by different difficult circumstances, most of whom are orphans and vulnerable learners. There is no question that the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its attendant socio-economic consequences have increased the vulnerability of very poor families and children (UNICEF, 2007). It has given rise to the unprecedented number of OVCs in Lesotho, estimated at 180000 in 2005, 30% of whom are estimated to be out of school (UNICEF, 2007). The education sector faces the serious challenge of bringing these learners into school and retaining them in the system. This state of affairs, if not mediated, has the potential of undermining the efforts of achieving the Millennium Development Goals of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008:95).

There is urgent need to fast-track the multi-sectoral collaborative response to HIV/AIDS pandemic and ensure that the implementation of free and compulsory education becomes an integral part of sectoral child and social welfare programming. Provision of a life skills curriculum should be applauded for its potential to promote resilience to life's challenges among the children, thus ensuring their stay in school. To further strengthen learners' coping, all primary school teachers need to be able to provide psychosocial care and support to the learners in order to reinforce the life skills curriculum (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:96).

2.5.4.4 Abolish child labour

According to Weiner in the Ministry of Education and Training (2008:95-96) on the evaluation of free primary education in Lesotho, another group of learners who are not participating in schooling is one that is involved in employment, the majority of whom are herd boys or domestic workers. There is a call from some stakeholders for the elimination of child labour if universal primary education is to be attained. The two are interrelated challenges; one cannot be achieved without the other. To this end, they recommend anti-child labour legislation. From a human rights perspective, child labour robs children of their childhood, while compulsory education of good quality plays a preventive as well as a protective role for children (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), 2008). The suggestion by several respondents that the Lesotho government should provide jobs to enable parents to take care of their children's basic needs is supported by the observation that the introduction of compulsory education in the industrialised countries of the West took place within a context of other favourable changes, such as child labour legislation and a rise in adult male wages. In the Lesotho scenario both the Child Protection and Welfare Bill and the Action Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (APEC) that are spearheaded by the Department of Labour in the Ministry of Labour and Employment will go a long way to facilitate the realisation of compulsory education in Lesotho. Other stakeholders are, however, of the view that alternative forms of schooling should be explored because poor households cannot do without the labour of their children. They recommend evening classes for those who cannot attend during the day (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008:96).

2.5.4.5 Create employment opportunities

Recognised by many stakeholders is the paucity of employment opportunities for school leavers.

As indicated above, the stakeholders prize relevant education for its ability to empower the people to transform their lives, that is, the ability of education to take them out of the trap of poverty. Indeed, compulsory education as a right can be justified on the grounds that it paves the way for the future welfare of the individual child and of society at large. It is recommended that free education should extend to the secondary level to enable the learners to participate more fully in the social, economic and political transformation of their lives as well as the life of the country (Ministry of Education and Training 2008). The government is also urged to create a facilitative environment for job provisioning or job creation to ensure that the learners participate in the job market after completion of their studies (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:96).

2.5.4.6 Regulate traditional circumcision

It is the view of many stakeholders that the practice of circumcision (lebollo) interferes with school attendance as some children dropout of school to attend these circumcision schools. The practice is most common in the rural areas where the level of literacy is already lower than that of urban areas and where the poorest of the society reside.The concern is that, left unregulated, the gaps in literacy and poverty between the urban and rural households will widen, with dire consequences for the achievement of MDGs (Ministry of Education and Training (2008). It is recommended that circumcision (lebollo) be regulated and that the legal age for it be fixed at 18 years (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008:96).

2.5.4.7 Solicit parental support

A dominant view for enforcing free and compulsory education is that of enlisting the cooperation of parents as it is their responsibility to ensure that their children attend school. Also emphasised is closer parent-educator co-operation which otherwise seems to have waned since the introduction of FPE. Mutual respect and trust need to be re-fostered between the two parties for the promotion of learners' learning and welfare. The significance of community participation as a strategy to minimize the difficulties that usually arise when change is introduced within an education system should not be under-estimated. As we move towards the implementation of free and compulsory education, parents should realize that they are the major stakeholder that is being compelled (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008).

It is recommended that consultations with communities be undertaken in order to engage them on free and compulsory education to ensure that they understand their obligations and responsibilities towards their children's education (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) 2008:98).

2.6 CONCLUSION

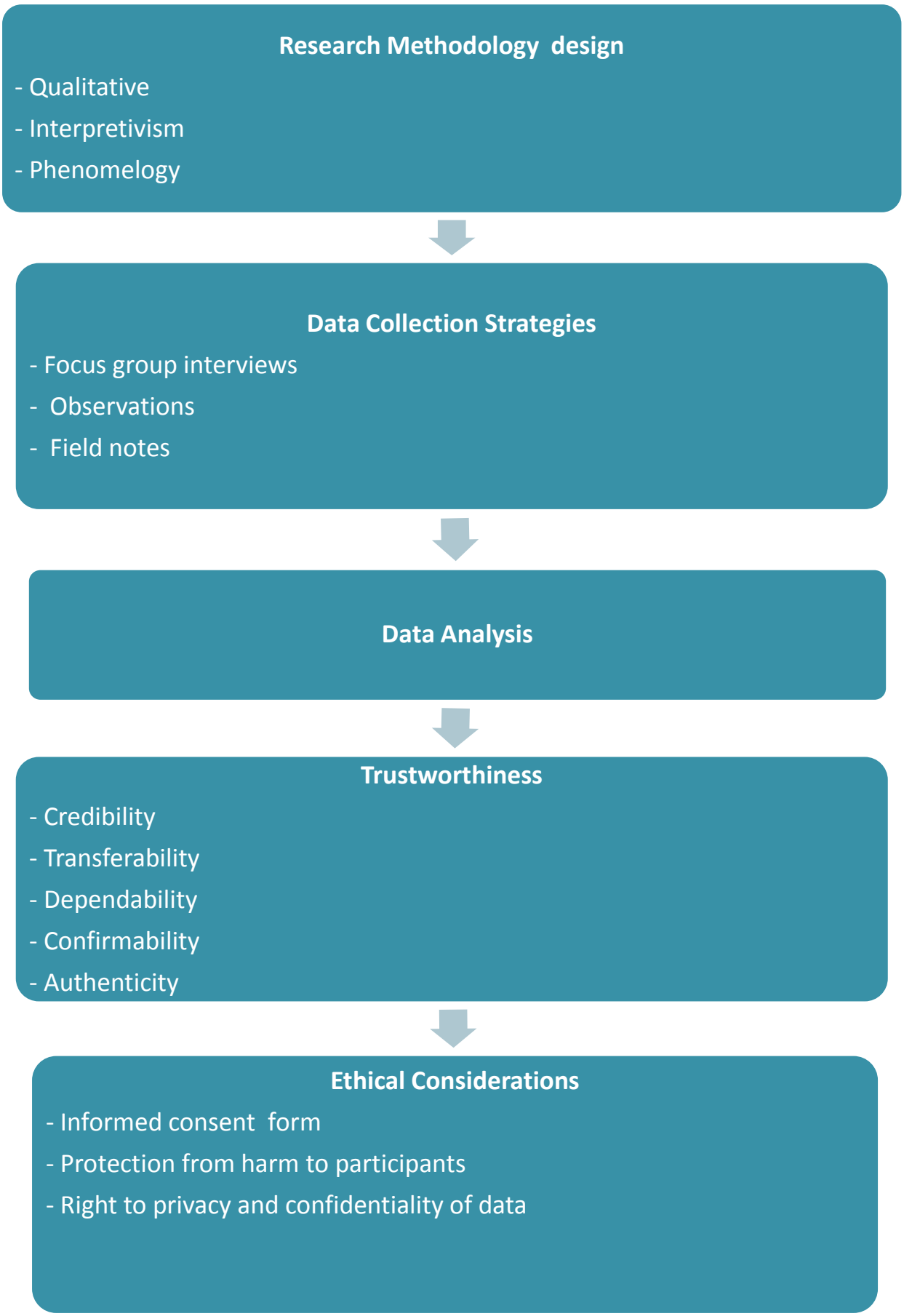
Prevention of learners from dropping out of school is a difficult task and it needs a multi-disciplinary prevention and intervention strategy to address it effectively. Early identification of learners, who are at risk of dropping out of school, is important to ensure appropriate support and intervention. The social factors that lead to dropout need to be addressed in the context in which the learner is experiencing it

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was concerned with the theoretical framework in respect of the ensuring research study. The methodology of the study is presented in this chapter and it covers the following: This chapter gives anin-depth explanation of the research methodology and the approach and design utilised to conduct this study. The procedures relating to the data collection instruments and the reasons for using them are described, as well as data collection, analysis and validity, reliability and research ethics. The study was based within a qualitative research method. This research method was used to conduct this study because it helped the researcher gain important information regarding the factors that influence the dropout rates of learners in order to find solutions. The research methodological outline for this study is as follows:


Research Methodology design
- Qualitative
- Interpretivism
- Phenomelogy
Data Collection Strategies
- Focus group interviews
- Observations
- Field notes
Data Analysis
Trustworthiness
- Credibility
- Transferability
- Dependability
- Confirmability
- Authenticity
Ethical Considerations
- Informed consent form
- Protection from harm to participants
- Right to privacy and confidentiality of data

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:5-6), state that methodology is sometimes called 'research method which are approaches to designing studies and collecting information. Chadzuka (2008) state that methodology refers to the rules and procedures of research work and focuses on how we gain knowledge about the world. Methodology implies the science or method of arranging in due order (Tsomo 2012:51). Rodolo (2008:15) defines research methodology as a study of a research process in all its broadness and complexity. This process includes the various methods and techniques that are employed, the rationale that underlines the use of such methods, the limitations of each technique, the role of assumptions and presumptions in selecting methods and techniques, the influence of methodological preference of the type of data analysis employed and the subsequent interpretation of findings.

To address the research questions of this study, I opted for a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants, asks broad and general questions, collects data consisting largely of words or text from the participants, and describes, analyses and conducts an enquiry in a subjective biased manner (Creswell 2008:46).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320), qualitative research is an accepted methodology for many important questions, with significant contributions to both theory and practice. The qualitative approach can vary significantly depending on the theoretical framework, philosophy, assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the field of study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:459) explain qualitative research as a type of research that refers to an in-depth study using face to face or observation techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320), qualitative research begins with assumptions, a world view, and the possible use of a theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a nature setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. In qualitative research, numerous forms of data is collected and examine from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multi-faceted situation. It is through this research approach that I have attempted to understand specifically how educators and principals view the problem of learners dropping out of school and how they think the problem can be controlled

(Tsomo, 2012:50). Using this approach helped me understand the problem of dropping out from primary school by learners with the aid of the opinions of the participants. As the results indicated, I explored in depth the factors influencing the learner dropout rate in Teyateyaneng primary schools, Lesotho. I conducted focus group interview in three different primary schools of Teyateyaneng chosen for this study. These interviews were done to gain the contextual understanding of what the educators and principals think as they are the professionals who deal directly with learners.

3.2.1 Characteristics of qualitative research

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:321), indicate that the characteristics of qualitative research are as follows:

- **Natural settings:** study of behaviour as it occurs or occurred naturally.
- **Context sensitivity:** considerations of situational factors.
- **Direct data collection:** researcher collects data directly from the source.
- **Rich narrative description:** detailed narratives that provide in-depth understanding of behaviour.
- **Process orientation:** focus on why and how behaviour occurs.
- **Inductive data analysis:** generalisations are induced from synthesizing gathered information.
- **Participant perspective:** focus on participants' understanding, descriptions, labels and meanings.
- **Emergent design:** the design evolves and changes as the study takes place.
- **Complexity of understanding and explanation:** understandings and explanations are complex with multiple perspectives.

The above characteristics proved that qualitative research is almost all about the narrative, not numbers. According to Tsomo (2012:51), the qualitative research method gives the researcher an opportunity to seek and discover the meaning that learners attach to their behaviour of dropping out at school. It is also a relevant approach to respond to the questions of this study. Qualitative researchers welcome, or at least manage, bias. They acknowledge the subjectivity they and all human researchers inherently bring to their studies. They seek to be up close and personal with their human subjects, called informants, for their data and interpretation.

3.2.2 Philosophical paradigm

Phenomenology was identified as an appropriate philosophical paradigm for this study. Phenomenology is commonly used in a variety of fields, namely: education, psychology, sociology and nursing, Rodolo (2008).

Phenomenology is a philosophical method of inquiry which involves the systematic investigation of consciousness brought to the study of the social world Chadzuka (2008). Springer (2010:19) stated that phenomenology is based on subjective experience. The researcher's goal tends to be holistic. It attempts to provide a comprehensive description of experiences and meanings that people construct from their interaction with other people and things in their environment. Phenomenology studies the purpose and goal of people's experiences. This method offers advantages because it accepts that each person is unique and has his or her own reality. It also studies the nature of human beings and their unique feelings and interpretations of life experiences. Phenomenology allows the researcher to gain access to individuals' life-worlds, i.e. their world experience.

The basis of phenomenology is that there are multiple ways of interpreting the same experience and that the meaning of the experience for each participant is what constitutes reality. The researcher needs to suspend or bracket any preconceived ideas about the phenomenon to elicit and better understand the meanings given by the participants. The research problem for a phenomenological study is focused on what is essential for elucidating the meaning of the event, episode or interaction. It also focused on understanding the participant's voice (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:346). Costley (2010:87) stated that the phenomenological approach is powerful in that it can be used for understanding subjective experience. It provides insights into people's experience, motivations and actions.

In this study, phenomenological principles were applied mostly in the focus group interviews. Principals and educators as participants in the study were interviwed in three different primary schools in Teyateyaneng. Participants were interviewed as a means to gain optimal understanding of their views and experiences regarding the dropout phenomena.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design describes the procedure for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained (Schumacher 2010). This study explores the factors influencing learner dropout rate in Teyateyaneng primary schools, Lesotho. The study analyses the opinions that the participating educators and principals have of it. I conducted a focus group interview with participants in three primary schools of

Teyateyaneng because a focus group interview is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Lekhesa 2008).

As discussed earlier, my study is influenced by the theoretical ideas of the other theoris. Thus I was interested in hearing and then voicing the opinions that the educators and principals have of the factors influencing the learner dropout rate in Teyateyaneng. The main aim of this study was to develop an understanding of what causes primary school learners to dropout of school and what can be done to encourage learners to complete their primary schooling.

3.4 Sampling

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:129 & 490), describe a sample as a group of individuals from whom data is collected often representative of a specific population. The sample can be selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the population or it can simply refer to the group of subjects from which data is collected. The sources of information used by qualitative researchers include individuals, groups, documents, reports and sites. Regardless of the form of the data, purposive sampling is used. Qualitative sampling is selecting information-rich cases for in-depth (McMillan and Schumacher 2010:325). Qualitative sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from small samples. It requires that information be obtained about variations amongst the sub-units before the sample is chosen. The researcher then searches for information-rich key informants, groups, places or events to study. The sample is chosen because the participants are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena that the researcher is investigating (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:326).

Purposive sampling was employed in this phenomenological qualitative research study to provide the researcher with a sample from whom to obtain the information about factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. According to Creswell (2008), purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases for in-depth study and is used to ensure certain types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes are included in the study. Creswell (2008:183) stated that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants who will best help the researcher to understand the research question.

Based on the above discussion, the target population in this study was purposively chosen from the large number of the population, meaning few participants were selected and used as the sample for the study. For this study, I needed participants who had experienced the problem of losing learners by dropping out of school. I purposefully selected schools which had experienced the problem of learner dropout from school. When constructing the sample, I considered first and foremost the purpose of the study. From each school, a principal was selected and five educators. That means sampling constituted a total of three principals and fifteeneducators, which made eighteen participants. The participants were chosen for various reasons, including the following: principals had all the information regarding dropouts from the school records as they are the ones who run the schools; educators had all the information about the patterns the dropout learners had, meaning the signs and characteristics learners at risk show through their behaviour in the classrooms. I interviewed the participants several times over a three months period of data collection. I also conducted several follow-up telephone interviews to solve some of the issues that emerged during the analysis of the data. I also considered the availability of the informants. The informants in this study were relatively easy to identify and locate.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

This section describes the data collection strategies and methods employed in the study.

3.5.1 Focus group interviews

The data in this study was collected to address the research questions of the study. The data was collected through focus group interviews. According to Nachmais and Nachmais (2008), a focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. A focus group interview is further described as a form of interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data. A focus group is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Lekhanya 2008).

The advantages of group interviews are described as follows:

- They are socially oriented research procedures.

- The format allows the moderator to probe and the flexibility to explore anticipated issues.
- Has high face validity.
- Relatively low-cost.
- Relatively fast results.
- Unlike structured interviews, increasing the sample size requires minimal time and resource investment.
- Particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way (Nachmais & Nachmais 2008).

Researchers choose focus group interviews because group processes can help to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in one on one interview. They will also help researchers to tap into the many different forms of communication that people use in day to day interactions, including jokes, anecdotes, teasing and arguing. Focus groups gain deeper access than other methods, revealing dimensions of understanding that often remain un tapped by more conventional data collection techniques, Lekhesa (2008). To collect data I visited each of the three primary schools and conducted a focus group interview in each school. The field work for the study was done between October and December 2013. During this time, at least three visits were made to each of the three schools and a group of five educators and one principal were interviewed.

3.5.2 Field notes

Field notes are the primary type of data. The ethnographer takes notes of observations and experiences and later develops them into detailed, formal field notes (Lekhesa 2007:82). Field notes also involve interpretation and are part of the analysis rather than the data collection (Densecombe 2007:88). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) Pitney and Parker (2009), field notes are taken throughout the observations and are focused on what is seen.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367), qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. In qualitative studies there is usually a great amount of data to be analysed, summarised and interpreted.

Pages of field notes or interview transcripts must be critically examined and synthesised. Analysis is an ongoing part of the study. Data collection and analysis are interwoven, influencing one another. Qualitative researchers synthesize and make meaning from the data, starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns.

Lekhanya (2008:94) describe qualitative data analysis as being primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns among these categories and that data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process that is integrated into all phases of qualitative research.Tsomo (2012:99) explains data analysis as a technique for gathering and analysing the content of the text. It also refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated.

Lekhesa (2007:86), describes that qualitative analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting in order to provide explanations for the single phenomenon which is being studied. The first step in qualitative data analysis is to organise, arrange and prepare data systematically. This step requires that data be typed and classified into themes and categories (Creswell 2009:186). Once this step has been completed the researcher could read and re-read the data in order to gain a through overview of the information at hand.

During the reading and re-reading the researcher inserted field notes and made use of colour codes by highlighting selected and corresponding aspects in specific colours. The process of coding then follows. In this study, the analysis was done continuously during the data collection process as the researcher several times went through the interview scripts or notes. After reading the data (transcripts) several times in order to understand and make sense of it, coding then commenced. After coding the transcribed data, the themes relevant to the study were clustered and categorised. Coding is often described as the process of organising data into chunks or segments; similarities, differences and unique findings are identified and categorised in order to develop themes and categories (Creswell, 2009:187).

Open-codes were clustered in groups with regard to similar topics and brought together to single out major topics or more frequent topics as well as sub-topics or less frequent or important topics.The steps taken thus far were valuable in the sense that the arrangement of material belonging together was completed and reviewed to determine whether the collected data would correlate with the research questions to be answered. In many studies such categories are referred to as codes. From the results the relevant findings, conclusions and recommendations could be formulated.

Data was analysed for material that would address the codes on topics that could be expected and was based on literature and common sense (Rodolo 2008).

According to Rodolo (2008), the phenomenological data analysis process includes the following:

- Bracketing the researcher's own experiences in order to take a fresh approach to the data.
- Becoming generally familiar with the data by reading the transcripts.
- Identifying significant statements which illustrate the participants' experience of the phenomena, and developing clusters of meaning or themes from the statements.
- Writing a textual description of what the participants experienced and a structural description describing how they experienced it, then writing about the essence, a composite description of the phenomenon based on the common experiences of the participants Creswell (2009).

Jakura (2009:75) explains that analysis focuses upon identifying recurrent themes across transcripts. Recurrent themes are similar and consistent ideas, thoughts, images and accounts shared. Being phenomenological, the emphasis in the analysis was on the essence and structures of the phenomenon, that is, the experience.The process of analysing data helped the researcher to make adjustments and test emerging concepts, themes and categories against the subsequent data. It also enabled the researcher to build a coherent interpretation of the data that was collected and it provided an opportunity for the researcher to generate insight into the data.

Based on the above discussions, in this study, the researcher analysed data collected through focus group interviews and field notes. In this research, data was transcribed in detail in order to allow for optimal understanding of participants' views and experiences after which it was coded because coding reduces information in ways that facilitate interpretations of the findings.

Themes can be discovered or uncovered (Wilson 2009:104). Bell (2010:211) stated that after the formation of themes, data gathered from various sources will be recorded, categorised and interpreted. Data collected was structured to address the main question of the study, which was which factors influence learner dropout rates in Teyateyaneng primary schools, Lesotho, including how these phenomena can be addressed. Data produced was analysed which involved identifying common themes that emerged.

The codes from the text were compared and consolidated. Repetitions in the codes across participants were taken as shared understandings.

3.6.1 Trustworthiness

Rubin and Babbie (2007:101) define trustworthiness as the degree of consistency in measurement. Trustworthiness in this research was established by comparing whether there is an agreement between the participants views and experiences. According to Mqulwana (2010:61), to judge qualitative research it must have the following qualities: transferability, dependability, credibility and conformability. Creswell (2009:191) stated that trustworthiness in qualitative studies is based on determining whether the findings are accurate. Creswell (2009:539) confirmed that there are five criteria for developing trustworthiness of the qualitative research, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and authenticity.

3.6.1.1 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalising. Here in, the researcher has enhanced transferability by describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research Mqulwana (2010:61). Tsomo (2012), clear details of data collection and analysis must be provided so that the researcher can evaluate the applicability of the study to other settings. The researcher has provided clear details of data collection and analysis in this study.

3.6.1.2 Dependability

Mqulwana (2010:61) says that dependability is concerned with whether the same results would be obtained if one could observe the same thing twice.

The idea of dependability emphasises the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. The researcher is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study. Tsomo (2012) stated that dependability refers to the stability of data overtime and conditions.

3.6.1.3 Credibility

The credibility criteria involve establishing that the results of the qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the researchMqulwana (2010:61). The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participants' point of view. Only they can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. According to Creswell (2009:191), the use of rich and thick description will transport the readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences. Lekhesa (2007) explain that for the research findings to be credible, a detailed description of the setting and all the steps taken should be provided.

In this study, the researcher has provided a detailed description of the setting and all components of the population in this study. The steps taken are also discussed. Furthermore, Rubin and Babbie (2007:103) define credibility as the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration.

3.6.1.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. There are the numbers of strategies for enhancing conformability. The researcher can document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. The researcher can actively search for and describe negative instances that contradict prior observations. After a study one can conduct a data audit that examines the data collection and analysis procedures and make judgements about the potential for bias or distortion (Mqulwana 2010:62). This criterion refers to the objectivity, accuracy, relevance and meaning of data as information provided by the participants (Polit & Beck 2008:539).

Wilson (2009) explains that, for conformability to be guaranteed, the final reports should be sent to the participants to verify whether the findings mirror what they had offered as information. This step was taken to stay away from subjectivity that may include biased analysis, motivation and perception on the part of the researcher Bray (2007:539).

3.6.1.5 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the extent to which the researchers fairly and faithfully show a range of different realities (Bray 2007). To ensure authenticity of the study, negative information that runs counter to the themes and the tone of the participants was offered (Creswell 2009:192). In this study, all information that ran counter to the themes was presented in as realistic a way as possible.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Jegede (2009:80), specifies that standard ethical principles that govern the treatment of human participants served as the basis for the methodological approach in this study. Participants should be guaranteed a clear explanation of the purpose of the research and a clear choice as to whether they want to participate based on a full knowledge and understanding of what is involved (Bray 2007:447).

The ethical measures adhered to as guiding principles throughout the study were as follows:

3.7.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Principals and educators were used in the research. According to Springer (2010:93), participants should be allowed to either give or withhold consent to participate without coercion. Springer (2010:95) states that, participants should be assured that participation is voluntarily and that refusal to participate or withdraw from the study will not result in any form of penalty. In addition, caring and fairness in the form of open discussions and negotiations with the research participants can promote fairness in the research process. This empowers participants in the research and encourages free choice of participation. Participants were provided with sufficient information about the study to allow them to decide for or against participation. The participants were informed that they had a choice to participate in the research voluntarily or to decline as they were not being forced to participate unwillingly. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from participating in the research should they so desire.

3.7.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality of participants were guaranteed during the interview. The researcher kept the notes from participants strictly confidential. Since the research deals with human beings, the names, identity of the participants and the research sites were not revealed in the report findings. Codes were used to conceal the names of participants, for example they were addressed as participants from school A and participants from school B or from school C. The use of codes was done to ensure that any person who reads the research report will be unable to link the responses to particular participants. This was done to ensure that personal details of participants remained anonymous.

3.8 BRACKETING

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) indicated that typically there is a search for essential or invariant structure in the meanings given by the participants. The researcher needs to suspend or “bracket” any preconceived ideas about the phenomenon to elicit and better understand the meanings given by the participants. While with Husserlian phenomenology objects are regarded as real, knowledge of the essential structures of objects is only possible by the bracketing of all assumptions about the existence of an external world (Denscombe 2007). Bracketing enables researchers to bracket off or set aside their own understandings in order to see phenomena for what they really are. Bracketing thus supposedly protects interpretation from the self-interest of the researcher (Jegede 2009).

In this study, the researcher set aside her own understanding in order to find the factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. Bracketing in this study entailed asking the participants to set aside their experiences about the factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Teyateyaneng and to share their reflections on its value (Lekhanya 2008).

3.9 BRACKETING AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION

Lekhesa (2007) stated that phenomenological reduction points to a suspension or bracketing out in the sense that it regards no position as taken either for or against the researcher’s own positions. It also involves not allowing the researcher’s meanings and interpretations or theoretical concepts to enter the unique world of the participant.

Phenomenological reduction allows the researcher to gain access to the roots of human experience and the sphere of primitive evidence. Primitive evidence forms the foundation for the possibility that natural evidence can still be present in the natural experiences and thoughts of man, but without its becoming thematic. By using the method of reduction, the researcher gains access to the area of pure phenomena in their original revelation (Le Roux 2009).

3.10 REFLEXIVITY

The researcher must be reflexive in order to bracket because activities require time to reflect an environment of support and reflective skill (Dowling as cited in Denscombe 2007). Reflexivity allows us to be more fully open to data through our lives and to identify how our lives and interests are participating in what we have come to understand.

Jegede (2009) define reflexivity as the capacity of any system of significance to turn back upon itself to make itself its own object by referring to itself. Reflexivity involves the realisation of what they are studying (Lekhanya 2008). Reflexivity provides self-awareness including awareness of how one has participated in developing a particular understanding in the research process Lekhesa (2007).

3.11 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Before the research began, she obtained permission to carry out research from the Education Officer of the Berea district, Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. Permission was granted to conduct the research in three primary schools in the Teyateyaneng region.

3.12 CONCLUSION

A qualitative approach has been used in this study by the researcher in the process of investigating factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. The reason for using a qualitative approach is that it is probably the most reliable method, provided it is properly conducted so that the researcher does not influence participants to elicit a desired reply. Sampling for this study was complied with and educators and principals of each school were chosen in order to elicit the ideas of all stakeholders in the education system. During the interview process, anonymity and confidentiality were complied with as per the ethical consideration requirements.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three discussed the research design and methodology of this study. This chapter explores the findings and discusses the factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Berea district, Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. In this chapter the factors influencing learner dropout were obtained from analysis of three focus groups and field notes which were fully explained in chapter three. Only educators who are dealing with the dropout learners were interviewed as they are the ones experiencing the problem of learners leaving school without completing the course.

The data collected was analysed and synthesised in order to develop efficiency in the presentation of findings. The findings were then analysed using categories that emerged during the focus group interviews. Data was transcribed and coded and, from this various themes emerged. The general presentation and analysis of the findings is thus based on the major themes identified. As was indicated in chapter three, the three schools that took part in the focus group interviews were purposefully selected in that they are schools with a very small roll in the region because of the high number of dropouts of learners in their schools. Although these schools experience high learner dropout rates, each school has its own unique context and character. The uniqueness of each school is captured in the description of each school.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Understanding other people requires understanding the interpretations which they give of what they are doing (Le Roux 2009:16). The following table represents the description of participants.

Table 4.2 Descriptions of participants

INSTITUTIONS	TYPE OF SCHOOL	SUBJECT AREAS	LOCATION	GENDER	RACE	AGE-GROUP
SCHOOL A	Registered as a government primary school	All primary school subjects	Ha Ntjabane Teyateyaneng	Males and females	Black	Six to eighteen
SCHOOL B	Registered as a private primary school	All primary school subjects	Ha Ratsiu Teyateyaneng	Males and females	Back and white	Six to fifteen
SCHOOL C	Registered as a community primary school	All primary school subjects	Ha Mokhothu Teyateyaneng	Males and females	Black	Six to fifteen

SCHOOL A

This school is situated on the outskirts of Teyateyaneng in a small village called Ntjabane. Learners in this school are from other villages surrounding Ntjabane. The school operates from grades1 to 7 and is the mainstream primary school. The learners' ages range from 6 to 18. The school caters for normal and the disabled learners. The learners are placed in this school through their parents' choice. All learners are day scholars; there is no boarding in this school. This is a government school; that is why it is situated on the outskirts, so that it meets all learners from other villages halfway, and learners do not have to walk long distances. In this school, all learners' mother tongue is Sesotho but the language of teaching and learning is English. Some of the learners in this school are disabled. There are no special programmes for disabled learners with learning difficulties.

SCHOOL B

School B is an independent primary school situated in Ha Ratsiu, Teyateyaneng, and learners are from surrounding villages and other nearby districts of Lesotho. The school runs from grades1 to 7. Learners' ages range from 6 to 15. All the learners in this school are placed there by their parents. There is a boarding school for learners whose parent wants them to stay at school and for the learners from other districts of Lesotho. The school and its boarding are under the ownership of the school and it is registered as a private primary school. The school offers all primary school subjects and it is a mainstream primary school.

SCHOOL C

This school is an independent community primary school situated at Ha Mokhothu in Teyateyaneng. Learners in this school are from the surrounding villages. The school operates from grades 1 to 7. Learners' ages range from 6 to 15 and learners have been referred to this school by their parents. Some learners are disabled in this school. The school offers subjects that are taught in the other mainstream primary schools. The school falls partially under the government because, in most cases, the government sponsors the school.

All three schools are registered with the Department of Education. School B varies from schools A and C in that this school has a boarding school but all of the schools offer subjects that are taught by mainstreaming primary schools. The following section is about the research findings.

4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Although the interview methods have advantages and disadvantages, it enables the interviewer to follow up on incomplete or unclear responses by asking additional probing questions (Tsomo 2012). Focus group interviews were used to collect data on factors influencing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng. The following themes emerged:

Table 4.3 Open-codes emerged from the focus group interviews

OPEN-CODES	SUB-CODES	CODES
Orphanhood	Death of parents	Caring for siblings, heading families and providing family income
Absenteeism	Poor attendance	Got discouraged, feelings of disconnectedness, boredom, state of being orphans, have difficult financial, health or family situation
Mainstream classrooms	Learners with special educational needs and able learners	Lack of extra adults in the class, lack of paraprofessionals, lack of special learning materials or resources and not trained educators
Lack of parental involvement	Lack of parent-educator interaction or relationship	Unsupportive community, more instances of violent behaviour, poor attendance and higher rates of suspension, lower grades, test scores, low motivation, poor or low self esteem.

Child labour	Poverty	Poor school condition, family financial situation and unemployment.
Student educators	Unqualified educators	Drive away learners, lack guidance, have low quality work, not committed, lack classroom management skills.
Repetition	Poor performance	Learners being over-aged, learners progressat a slower rate from grade to grade and learners become shy
HIV/AIDS pandemic	High death rate and poverty	Forced to work, learners struggling at school, lack of parental support and caring for siblings
Child abuse and neglect	Warning signals	Poor performance, low grades, suspensions, more grade repetitions, disciplinary referrals, obsessions with violent behaviour, bringing weapons to school and lack of interest
Poverty	Low educational level of parents unemployment	Low educational levels of parents, homelessness, it is challenging to place poor learners in classrooms, do not complete assignments, study for tests, can't concentrate or focus and are unable to interact with peers and adults.

4.4 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Table 4.4 Key for interpreting findings from the focus group interviews

Key of abbreviations
P : participants
P 1-6 Focus group 1
P 7-12: Focus group 2
P 13-18: Focus group 3
For example, P1 will refer to participant 1

The different themes that emerged from this data were used to gain an understanding of the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. The data from the focus group interviews was first analysed and the relevant themes were identified. Some of the themes that emerged were confirmed through field notes. At a certain point data became saturated and there was no need to continue interviewing participants as answers were being repeated.

Field notes were also used as a method of data gathering, where the researcher takes notes of observations and experiences and later develops them into detailed, formal field notes (Lekhesa, 2007:82). The researcher takes field notes throughout the observations and focuses on what is seen (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Pitney & Parker 2009). The following themes emerged from the focus group interviews, and field notes. The themes that emerged not only addressed the research questions outlined in chapter one, but also provided information on the home-related situations from which the dropout learners are coming.

The factors influencing learner dropout in primary schools varied. The themes that emerged from focus group interviews are discussed in the following sections and are complemented by observations.

4.5 ORPHANHOOD

Most of the participants indicated that they had many orphans in their schools, most of which dropped out because of the status of being orphans: *"I had learners who were double orphans in my grade. They lack many things related to school, for example: uniform,shoes and most of the time comes to school untidy, does not do their homeworks, does not actively participate in class activities and end up dropping out of school"* (participant 11).The Ministry of Education and Training (2007:69) stated that the rise in the number of orphans requiring social and financial support has preoccupied authorities and may be absorbing resources from which the disabled might otherwise benefit of learners who are double orphans. Participants stated that these learners need to quit school to take care of their siblings after their parents' death. Participants 6 explained that *"normally the older child stepsup and assumes a parental role by being head of the family in different ways such as working as domestic workers for girls, being housekeepers or, the worst, by being sex workers*". Boys became herd boys, sold on streets and later flew to the South African mines. The Statistics Department as cited in Sebatane (2009) stated that the number of orphans has been fluctuating over the years. There has been a miner decline in enrolment of orphans from 2008-2011. That means most of them dropped out from schools while others did not enrol at school at all after the death of their parents.

4.6 ABSENTEEISM

The majority of the participants from all the three focus groups indicated that many learners dropout of school after being absent for some couple of weeks. According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2008), it is educator's responsibilities to make education attractive to learners by creating a learning environment, in which they recognise the intrinsic worth of all learners in the classroom through a child-centred and inclusive curriculum because

children need to feel safe, secure and cared for. That will reduce the problem of learner absenteeism. The participant 13 said that "learners *fell behind their school work, got discouraged and ended up quitting school. Dear God, most learners with poor attendance are orphans who have no one to monitor or offer support with their school work at home and that learners skip school to escape the boredom or cope with depression"* (participant 15). The participants 4 indicated that *"learners with chronic absenteeism stay away from class due to feelings of disconnectedness and inadequacy, andhave more difficulty forming relationships and participating in school activities. These learners feel disconnected from academics and believed that the lessons are not relevant to their lives*". The following quote was similar to the responses from the other six participants: "*Most learners who dropped out in my grade were disconnected. They were bored; never volunteer to do any activity through out the lesson or to answer any question. When I asked them to participate in any activity, they looked sad and cry sometimes because they were absent most of the time. They fell behind their classmates and lack confident to do anything in their presence"* (Participant 16). The participant 6 stated that "*disconnected learners lack accountability which can lead to behavioural issues and poor academic achievement many learners with excessive absences were dealing with difficult financial, health or family situations*".

The participant 11 indicated that *"the excessive absenteeism of educators also made learners dropout from school because it affected the learners by weakening the school's ability to function".* The participant 18 explained that *"educators who are frequently absent are not able to bond with learners and as a result learners are more likely to disregard lessons and take school less seriously*". "*Excessive absenteeism of both educators and learners creates gaps in the learners' education. The lesson plans are designed to prepare learners for the next lesson and if the learner is not present they will be left behind*" (participant 17).

Participant 15 stated that,*"due to frequent absences, learners forget the previous lessons which results in academic insecurity and they stop putting in the effort to achieve high grades. The excessive absence of educators disrupts learners and learners with attendance problems do not receive the extra attention needed because they are less able to join a strong network of other educators*". "*Chronic absenteeism often results in the learners getting expelled because these learners are less likely to be aware of the attendance policy*.*Continued loss of instruction among learners with high absenteeism are primary characteristics of learners who dropout of school*" (participant 2). Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone and Maphokwane (2011) explained that most of the children in the country live with the caregivers.

Those caregivers are not always able to monitor schooling and may not prioritise the learner's education as would the biological parents, that is why there is a huge problem of learners being absent from school several times.

4.7 MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

The participant 3 found that "l*earners with or without special educational needs being placed in the same school contributed to the main factors of learner dropouts*". The school environment becomes inaccessible for disabled learners resulting in them dropping out. (Education Statistics Bulletin 2011:21). The participant 12 further indicated that *"learners with disability often require extra adults in the room but there are no paraprofessionals trained to attend to these learners' needs such as toileting, behavioural or learning needs".* The participant 13 further agreed on the following statement: *"Lacking the paraprofessionals in the classrooms to help me as an educator contribute a lot to my learners with special educational needs to dropout of school. While I am busy with the lesson, there was no one to take care of them because they need special attention*". Participant 7 explained that, "*schools are not able to afford brail or talking tapes that aid learners in reading. The educators are not trained to address problems that learners with disabilities bring to the classroom, and do not have the necessary specialised training to address the special needs of learners". "Educators are not capable of managing the classroom time so that the special needs learners are given the time they need to succeed academically while managing the time with other learners as well"* (participant 9).

The Ministry of Education and Training (2008:69) stated that educators have been caught in the situation without adequate skills to cope with the disabled learners. The participant 10 stated that "*the mainstream classrooms are not appropriate for learners with disabilities because other learners do not know how to deal with their differences; rather they resort to ridiculing or outright ostracism of a learner whom they perceive as not like them*". "Learners with disabilities found themselves in a situation where they are always the final choice for teams of games in physical educational class" (participant 14). Participant 12 explained that *"the learners with disability are frequently overlooked in the academic system*". *"Ja, I think the inability to perform academically at the normal rate has caused anxiety and stress among these learners"* (participant 4). According to participant 7, "*educators often do not provide the support and extra time that these learners need because they are not trained*". "*I am not trained as the special educational educator. I tried to my best but failed to address their special needs and they felt neglected and decided to dropout of school"* (participant 18). The participant 8 further stated that "*learners experience fear of embarrassment or standing out, which creates stress and sometimes might be detrimental to a learner*".

The participant 14 further stated that "*negative social interactions elicit unfavourable behaviours that learners are not able to control due to their disabilities. Learners with learning disabilities are often emotional, displaying immature behaviour".*

4.8 LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Lekhesa (2007:46) stated that it is parental responsibility to care for their children and guide them in their school work. If not children are likely to lose the love for school. The participant 10 believed that "*the amount that a parent is involved in a child's life is certainly related to how likely a learner is to dropout*". The participant 11 said that *"we have discovered that an engaged parent notices the red flags such as failing marks or poor attendance from a learner. Parents who are too busy with work or their own lives are less likely to notice these problems*". *"Unfortunately we deal with the community which is not cooperative. Parents always give excuses when asked to come to school to discuss everything concerning their children. Most of these parents are of learners who are not doing well in the class. That encourages learners to dropout of school because no one at home feel interested to their academic work"* (Participant 7). According to the participant 8 "*the important intervention opportunities are missed and the learner continues down a path that leads to dropping out*". Participant 5 agreed that *"parents have significant impacts on learners' learning and development processes. The quality of parent-educator interaction has predicted improvement in learners' behaviour and achievement. The learners are found to be more engaged with school activities when their parents participated more frequently in school functions".*

Consultations with communities should be undertaken in order to engage them on free and compulsory education to ensure that they understand their obligations and responsibilities towards their children's education. In that way parents will realize that they are the major stakeholders that are being compelled (Ministry of Education and Training 2008) "*Lack of parental involvement is the biggest problem facing my school. We are dealing with the community which is not supportive"* (participant 9). Participant 4 learned from experience that *"many learners in the school do not have supportive parents. One day (one) of the parents told me that he is not an educator. I must stop calling him about his child work. He said that I choose to be an educator; therefore I must stop wasting his time and do my job*.*These learners always have lower grades, test scores, poor and low self esteem, higher rates of suspension and have more instances of violent behaviour which are all the major factors associated with dropping out from school*" (participant 4).

4.9 CHILD LABOUR

Another group of learners who are not participating in schooling is one that involved in employment. The majority of whom are herd boys or domestic workers. From a human rights perspective, child labour robs children of their childhood (Ministry of Education and Training 2008). "*There is a problem of child labour in my school which promotes learner dropout in the school. In many cases in my school we discovered that when a learner dropped out of school, it is not necessarily because of the irresponsible parenting, but it is due to the family financial situation"* (Participant 15). Participant 9 further explained that *"when learners leave school, they become potential workers. In fact, many learners have to work to go to school; otherwise they could not afford the tuition and other fees as associated with attendance*". Participant 17 indicated that "*some learners in the school have to acquire an education through the support of the working siblings. The learners work and often abandon school to better their family's condition and to ensure the survival of their family and themselves*". Participant 15 indicated that "*schooling problems also contribute to child labour, whether due to the inaccessibility of schools or the lack of quality education that spurs parents to enter their children in more profitable pursuits. The low quality education often makes attendance a waste of time for the learners. As a result, parents find no use in sending their children to school when they could be home learning a skill and supplementing the family income*". Participant 16 further indicated that "*the poor conditions in their school contributed a lot to learners dropping out of school to do child labour*". The poor conditions result in high levels of disruption and declining quality and eventually learner's dropout of school (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:10).

4.10 STUDENT EDUCATORS

The participant 14 indicated that student "*educators contributed a lot to learners dropping out as these educators ostracise the learners because they lack guidance, are not committed to ensuring that all learners achieve their full educational potential and do not establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with learners. The work of student educators is poor most of the time as observed by the principals and by the other educators.They do not understand a range of teaching, learning and behaviour, lack classroom management strategies, does not know how to follow the assessment requirements and arrangements for the subjects*". Lekhesa (2007:22) outlined that lack of interest by educators is considered as the general causes of deviance leading to school dropouts. Learners' confidence has to be earned; failure to earn their confidence may lead to expulsion or dropout.

The participant 17 stated that *"the student educators are ill-prepared, do not set and assess homework, fail to establish a purposeful, safe learning environment which complies with current legal requirements and, mostly, they fail to manage learners' behaviour constructively by establishing and maintaining a clear and positive framework for discipline*". Educators have to understand that they are in school for the learners and they are expected to act in the best interest of the learners (Lekhesa 2007). One of the participants acknowledged that *"My student educator confess at the end of the year thatshe was supposed to learn from me how to handle the entire class. Instead I always leave her with the class the whole day, especially during the pay days. During my arbsence she made many mistakes which push some already vulnerable learners to dropout instead of supporting them.I am ashamed to say all these but also have learned from my mistakes and do not want other educators to do the same"* (Participant 9). The participant 5 stressed that *"mistakes of student educator's result in failing to promote learners' self control, independence and cooperation through developing their social, emotional and behavioural skills, butfound to be the main cause of learner dropout".* The participant 18 indicated that "*there are many parents' cases at the principals' offices whereby they appeal to the school to take care of these problem and that most of parents complained that they do not like the student educators to teach their children*". *Participant 16 clarified that "it is the country's policy of education that the student educators have to practice teaching in the registered schools of their choice in their second year. Parents threaten to take their children to the schools where the student educators are not allowed or let them to stay home*".

4.11 REPETITION

Examination Council of Lesotho (Ecol) (2012:4), specifies that in 2008, more than one out of five learners repeated a class. The repeaters become discouraged and decide to stop schooling totally. The majority of participants indicated that repetition is a strong predictor of dropout and that there is a strong correlation between repetition and dropout. When a learner is held back due to low grades, it puts him at a higher risk of dropping out. *"Poor academic performance in my school is generally linked to dropout rates. Many learners are tending to move in a slow rate from one grade to the next till they are left behind by their classmates. Then, they become discouraged and decide to dropout of school*" (Participant11). The participant 2 indicated that *"I have learned from experienced that repetition is the greatest factor contributing to a learner being overage. When learners discover that they are older than their classmates, they become shy and decide to quit school*".

4.12 HIV AND AIDS PANDEMIC

UNICEF (2007), point out that there is no question that the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its attendant socio-economic consequences have increased the vulnerability of very poor families and children. The participant 6 stated that "*most of the learners are growing up in a world with HIV/AIDS which affects a lot of learners in the school; it causes a lot of pain and trauma in the lives of learners who are struggling to do well at school but in most cases decide to quit school. Many learners are regularly taken out of school because of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS to take care of their ill parents, siblings or relatives*". The other participant agreed that *"It is very painful to talk about HIV and AIDS because most of learners in different grades are forced to work to replace lost income due to the death of a parent. As the school, we feel sorry for these learners to dropout of school due to this disease but had nothing to do"* (Participant 8). UNICEF (2007) clarify that it has given rise to the unprecedented number of OVCs in Lesotho, estimated at 18 0000 in 2005, 30% of whom are estimated to be out of school. One of the participants sadly explains that *"Since HIV is often transmitted to sexual partners; learners are more likely to lose both parents to AIDS. I am afraid because in my grade there are three learners who are HIV positive. Two of them are living with their grandmother who is too old to take care of them. I am trying my best to support them because I do not want to lose them like others"* (Participant 13). In the absence of capable adult caretakers, older learners, usually girls, take on the responsibility for the survival of younger siblings and are forced to quit schooling. Since the care that older siblings can provide for younger ones is likely to be inadequate, other sibling'sdropout of school. Lepheane, Thamae, Mokoena and Maphokoane (2011:19), explained that school dropouts are increasing as more parents die as a result of HIV/AIDS. When this happens, learners are left to fend for themselves and their younger siblings.

4.13 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The abused and neglected learners receive more special education services; score lower on reading and mathematics tests, exhibit more learning disabilities and are more likely to repeat a grade. As a result a child may feel obliged to dropout of school (Lekhesa, 2007:39). "*Neglected learners did perform poorly compared to their non-maltreated counterparts, as the neglected learners had lower grades and had more suspensions, more disciplinary referrals and more grade repetitions*" (Participant 15). Participant 1 testified that as the principal in the school*," I experience a huge challenge of learners dropping out of school due to child abuse and neglect. When making follow-up, in many cases it was found that those learners were staying with their relatives who were physically abusing them*".

"*Ee, abused and neglected learners showed many warning signs before dropping out of school. The signs include a sudden lack of interest, obsessions with violent games, depression, mood swings, writing that shows despair and isolation, lack of anger management skills, talking about death or bringing weapons to school. The learners therefore decided to quit school and escape to the streets where there is freedom"* (Participant 12).

4.14 POVERTY

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2011:43), estimated that 21.3% of children between the ages of 10 and 14 in Lesotho are working, boys as herdboys and girls as domestic workers, because, due to high rate of unemployment and poverty in Lesotho, most children quit school to maintain their families. Poverty is considered by the majority of the participants as a major at risk factor. Some of the factors related to poverty that may place a learner at risk for academic failure are being very young, low educational level of or single parents, unemployment, abuse, neglect and homelessness. Poor learners do not complete assignments, do not study for tests or do not come to school prepared to learn because of poverty related circumstances in the home environment. Poor learners are unable to concentrate or focus. They are unwilling or unable to interact with peers and adults in school in an effective manner. Participant 4 stressed that *"most of our learner's dropout because of poverty. They come to school with empty stomachs and were always tired in the class during lessons. Theylack almost everything related to school because their parents cannot afford them. They always missed the educational trips and felt uncomfortable when others discuss the trip in the class and decided to dropout of school*".

"*Jo, poor learners have difficulty in making friends. They behave in a hostile manner or are totally withdrawn due to past attempts at making friends. They also come to school with no records from their previous schools and it is difficult for schools to track down these private records. Educators have no clue as to what these learners have been taught. It is challenging for schools to place poor learners in classrooms and get the additional services they may need. Even if the placement is successful, they likely move again within the school year or quit school completely"* (Participant 10). The Ministry of Education and Training (2008) stated that there are increasing socio-economic pressures that include growing poverty and unemployment. There were reports of children still being denied access to education despite the removal of fees due to poverty in the households.

4.15 DISCUSSION

Whilst trying to understand the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho, theorists, researchers and educators together acknowledged the causes or reasons why learners have to drop out of school and find the definition of learners who are classified as dropouts. According to Tsomo (2012:13), dropouts can be defined as a learner who exits the education system before completing the programme for which he or she was registered. Lekhesa (2007:3) stated that a dropout is preceded by indicators of withdrawal or unsuccessful school experiences that often begin in primary school. Failure to complete a basic cycle of primary school not only limits future opportunities for children but also represents a significant drain on the limited resources that countries have for the provision of primary education. Learners dropping out without completing primary school remain a key constraint for achieving every thing in life (Lekhesa, 2007:4).

This study examines the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. The participants indicated that the majority of these learners dropping out of school are orphans; therefore, the older learners need to quit school to take care of their siblings after their parents' death (Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone & Maphokoane 2011:19).

Lepheane, Thamae, Mokone and Maphokoane (2011:19), evaluates that absenteeism is also considered one of the main factors because learners loose interest to their school work, get discouraged and end up quitting school. The participant 13 indicated that *"due to absenteeism, learners feel disconnected from academics and believed that the lessons are not relevant to their lives*". Mainstreaming in primary school is amongst factors influencing learners to dropout in primary schools because a learner with and without special educational needs is placed and learns in the same school. Educators are not trained to address problems associated withlearners with disabilities; educatorsdo not have the necessary specialised training to address the needs of learners with special needs (Ministry of Education and Training 2008:69). Educators often do not provide the support and extra time that the disabled learners need because they are not trained.

Poverty is also considered as one of the main factors which contribute to learner dropouts because poor learners do not enjoy school; instead, they become shy and bored (Lekhesa, 2007:26). Parents have significant impact on learners' learning and development processes. Lekhesa (2007:40) further proclaims that another factor perpetuating high rates of school dropouts include lack of parental support. Quality of parent-educator interaction has predicted improvement in learner's behaviour and achievement. An engaged parent notices the red flags leading to learner dropout and may intervene immediately.

Because of low or insufficient family income or a family's financial situation, learners have to leave school and become potential workers in order to support their sibling's education and maintain the family income. The Ministry of Education and Training (2008:69-70) indicated that there are some schools in which infrastructure and the conditions are quite poor. According to the participant 6, "*poor school condition also contributes as the main factor that promotes school dropout and encourages child labour. Learners feel bored to learn in poorly conditioned school and decide to quit*".

Student educators are ill prepared, do not set or assess homework, and do not establish a purposeful and safe learning environment which complies with current legal requirements. Repetition is also a strong predictor of dropouts and there is a strong correlation between repetition and dropping out. As a result, learners become over-aged and when they discover that they are older than their classmates they become shy and decide to quit school (Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2011:28). Most learners are growing up in a world with HIV/AIDS which affects a lot of learners in the primary schools. Most learners have lost both parents to AIDS. According to Lekhanya (2008), older learners, usually girls, take on responsibility for the survival of their younger siblings and are forced to quit schooling. Since the care that older siblings can provide for younger ones is likely to be inadequate, other siblings also drop out of school (Lekhanya 2008). Abused and neglected learners perform worse than their non-maltreated counterparts and decide to quit school and escape to the streets where there is freedom. Lekhanya (2008) adds to what the participants say by stating that a learner may feel obliged to drop out of school.

4.16 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the findings and discussions on the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. It is clear that the empirical findings prove that primary school principals and educators are experiencing learner dropouts due to school related and home related problems affecting learners. The researcher believes that all three schools are aware of the problem and are trying their best to decrease the number of learner dropouts. The researcher hopes that with a proper structure in place, more leaners can be easily prevented from dropping out of school and they would be able to get support when needed.

It emerged from the empirical findings that learner dropouts in this region are caused by school related problems such as student educators, repetition, absenteeism and mainstream classes and also home related problems such as orphanhood, poverty,lack of parental involvement, child labour, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, child abuse and neglect. These factors

are complex issues which should be handled by skilled people. It is essential that learners with problems must at an early stage get professional help. Based on the research findings and discussions in this chapter, the limitations, implications and the conclusions of the study will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study the background to and the level of Lesotho's education have been described. The study was conducted to discover the factors influencing primary school dropouts in Lesotho and to find the remedies which will benefit everyone in the field of education in Lesotho, especially learners in primary schools. The literature review in chapter two explained the causes of learner dropouts from schools and provided a better understanding of the phenomenon in Lesotho. The concept of 'dropout' was discussed in order to provide a better understanding of its impact on an individual, a community and the whole country.

The previous chapter focused on the interpretation of data that was collected through focus group interviews, field notes and observations. It contained an analysis and a discussion of the results in accordance with the objectives and the research questions stated in chapter one of the study. The research results were also discussed. This chapter gives a brief account of what was carried out in the study by summarising the main findings of the study and seeks to draw together the main themes that have been explored through the key research questions in chapter one. It also presents the implications of the findings and lists some recommendations. Finally, it gives some suggestions for future study. Against this background, I believe that the aim of the study has been fulfilled.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In this study, chapter one served as an introduction and provided a brief theoretical background, a problem statement, and the aims and the objectives of the study.The research questions, research design, methodology, population and sampling together with the significant concepts of the study were also outlined. The main focus of the study was factors influencing learner dropout in Lesotho primary schools. The literature proved that the causal factors were school and home related. The definitions for key terminology used in this study to provide an in-depth understanding of the field of inquiry were also provided. The rights to privacy and confidentiality were considered as well as the ethical considerations.

In chapter two a literature review was provided to bring together a range of different literature on dropouts and looked at the issues involved in dropping out from school. Chapter two also focused on the theoretical framework related to dropouts.

The concept of ‘dropouts’ was discussed to provide an understanding of its impact on primary school learners as individuals and in general the focus was on the specific solutions that could be used to address the problem, as it was stated that early identification of learners who are at risk of dropping out of school is important to ensure appropriate support and intervention and that the social factors that lead to dropping out need to be addressed in the context in which the learner is experiencing them.

Chapter three gave an in-depth account of the research design and the methodology utilised to conduct this study. Procedures relating to the collection, recording and analysis of the data were discussed. Data collection strategies were discussed in detail, followed by an account on how data was collected, analysed and interpreted. The research methodology was diagrammatically presented in figure 3.1 followed by the discussion on the philosophical and interpretive paradigm. The paradigm was used to understand how other people acquire understanding the interpretations which they give of what they are doing. For the interpretive paradigm, the objects of interpretation are human beings who can act and react. The clarification was given of how trustworthiness and credibility of the study were ensured as well as the ethical guidelines that gave direction to the study.

Chapter four contained an analysis and a discussion of the results in accordance with the objectives of the study. A summary of the entire research was presented and the results were discussed in-depth. The description of each school participated in the study was specified and the results were analysed by thematic interpretation. The discussion of data collected through focus group interviews, field notes and observations was linked to investigate the factors encouraging primary school dropouts from Teyateyaneng, Lesotho and in an attempt to discover solutions to the problem.

In this final chapter concluding remarks are made as the final analysis. This chapter provides a summary of the study, followed by an exploration of the research questions. Recommendations are made on the basis of the research findings, as discussed in the literature review in chapter one and chapter two. These recommendations were done with the aim of finding the solutions to the problem. The constraints which happened to be the limitations to the study are also provided.

5.3 EXPLORATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The three research questions are now examined using the codes that emerged from the data collected. These codes did not only address the research questions stated in chapter one, but also provided information on the experiences and views of the principals and educators who are dealing with the problem of losing learners as a results of the dropout problem.

5.3.1 Exploration of the main research question with the sub-sections

What factors influence primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho?

The factors influencing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho, varied. They proved to be school related and home related. Of particular value with reference to the interviews is that participants perceived orphanhood as the other cause. They indicated that there were many orphans in their schools most of whom dropped out because of the state of being orphans. These learners need to quit school to take care of their siblings after their parents' death. The total number of orphans which was provided by the participants from schools was 144.

The majority of participants from each of the schools with reference to the focus group interviews reported that absenteeism is also a main cause. These educators indicated that many learners dropout of school after being absent for some weeks. They said that the learners fell behind their school work, got discouraged and ended up quitting school. Most participants but not the majority indicated that the excessive absenteeism of educators also made learners dropout from school because it affected their learning academic work and hurt learner's chances by weakening the schools' ability to function. Excessive absences of both educators and learners create gaps in the learners' education. Continued loss of instruction or poor academic achievement among learners with high absenteeism are typical characteristics of learners who later dropout of school.

Most educators from both schools indicated that they found mainstreaming whereby learners with and without special educational needs are placed and learn in the same school as another main factor of the learners dropping out. Educators stated that they are not capable of managing the classroom time so that the special needs learners are given the time they need to succeed academically while managing the time with other learners as well.

Poverty was considered by the majority of educators from all three schools as a major at risk factor. These educators claimed that poor learners do not complete assignments, do not study for tests or do not come to school prepared to learn because of poverty related circumstances in the home environment. The participants from the schools agreed that poor learners come to school with no records from their previous schools and it is difficult for schools to track the records down.

Most educators said that they have discovered that an engaged parent notices the red flags such as failing marks or poor attendance from a learner. According to these educators, the important intervention opportunities are missed by the busy and the ignorant parents and the learner continues down a path that leads to dropping out. The majority of participants from each of the focus groups agreed that parental involvement is the biggest problem facing their schools because they are dealing with an unsupportive community. The educators indicated that the learners with unsupportive parents always have lower grades, lower test scores, poor school attendance, low motivation, poor and low self esteem, higher rates of suspension and have more instances of violent behaviour, which are all the major factors of dropping out from school.

A few participants from the focus group interviews indicated that there is a problem of child labour in their schools which promote learner dropouts. Other educators found out that many learners have to work to go to school; otherwise they could not afford the tuition and other fees as associated with attendance. Some learners in the school have to acquire an education through support from their working siblings. Most educators from the interviews indicated that schooling problems also contribute to child labour. They indicated that the poor conditions in their schools contributed a lot in learners dropping out of school to engage in child labour.

A few participants from each of the focus groups of each school indicated that student educators contributed a lot to learner dropout in their schools. They said that these educators ostracise the learners from schools into the streets because they lack guidance, are not committed to ensuring that all learners can achieve their full educational potential and do not establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive relationships with learners. These results in failing to promote learners' self-control, independence and co-operation through developing their social, emotional and behavioural skills.These were found to be many of the contributing factors of learners dropping out in these schools.

The majority of the educators from the schools indicated that repetition is a strong predictor of dropout and that there is a strong correlation between repetition and dropout. These educators stated that when a learner is held back due to low grades, it puts him at a higherrisk of dropping out. They agreed that poor academic performance is generally linked to dropout rates in their schools. Learners who have to repeat specific classes also face higher dropout risks.

A few participants in the interviews indicated that many learners are regularly taken out of school because of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS to take care of the ill parents, siblings or relatives. Learners are also forced to work to replace lost income due to the death of a parent. In the absence of capable adult caretakers, older learners, usually girls, take on responsibility for the survival of their younger siblings and are forced to quit schooling.

5.3.2 Exploration of the second research question

Which behaviour patterns doprimary school dropouts have in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho?
Of particular value in reference to the majority of the participants from each school's focus group interviews, they stated that those learners at risk of dropping out from school have a uniform pattern. They can be identified by the following characteristics:
They are usually two years older than their age group. They read below their mental age. They resist intensely the educators' and principal's authority. They have little or no interest in school work. They do not do what other learners do and they benefit from automatic promotion. Most of the educators from each focus group indicated that neglected learners perform more poorly than their non-maltreated counterparts, had lower grades and more suspensions, more disciplinary referrals and more grade repetitions. The learners, therefore, decided to quit school and escape to the streets where there is freedom. The majority of these learners who are at risk of dropping out happen to be in the state of being orphans. They had poor school attendance and some of them have special educational needs and come from poor families who cannot afford the learners' school related needs. Most learners are brought up by illiterate parents and that situation makes them not want to be involved in their children's education and school work others left school due to child labour. These learners had to work in order to generate family income and most of them are the victims of HIV/AIDS. Their parents died due to the pandemic and they had to take care of their younger siblings. In most cases they are found to be maltreated by people who were supposed to be their supporters.

5.3.3 Exploration of the third research question

What are the remedies for reducing primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho?
The solutions that could be used to address this problem are found to be as follows:
A few participants from school C indicated that the principals, educators and the chief, together with the community members, can help orphans by asking for donations which can be used to provide facilities and education services to orphans. A few participants from the interviews stated that the presence of school nurses may lead to fewer absences; nurse practitioners in school based health centres can facilitate a healthier population resulting in improved attendance. These participants stressed that educators must be instructed to have their picture taken each day with learners and be paid only when the cameras recorded them present.

The majority of educators of each school indicated that educators must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs, so that all learners will be able to reach their maximum learning potential. Most of the educators from each school suggested that educators need to be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom.

The participants from each school, in their focus group interviews, stated that positive parental involvement can be the main solution for the dropout problem in their schools. Most of the educators from each focus group in all schools stated that child labour can be eliminated through the Education for All campaign because keeping learners in school is the best way to keep them away from work. A few participants from each focus group interview indicated that the student educators should punish learners in accordance with the school code of conduct for learners and should always approach the qualified educators for advice and support regarding interventions and how to handle specific learner needs.

The majority of the educators from all three schools stated that strategies to reduce repetition in schools include preventing repetition by addressing learning gaps during the school year. The majority of educators from each of the focus group discussions indicated that AIDS awareness programmes should be established in schools to address the factual reality of the matter. Most of the educators stated that it must be the role of all the educators to identify report and prevent child abuse and neglect because they have a close and consistent contact with learners.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Recommendation one

Throughout the focus group discussions educators described not being well trained to deal with the learners with special educational needs in the mainstream schools. It is therefore crucial that in order to reduce the dropouts of learners in primary schools, educators must be trained to be provided with the necessary skills that will assist them to support all learners regardless of their special educational needs.

5.4.2 Recommendation two

From my informal conversations with educators, I realised that the educators needed to work very hard to build positive relationships with their learners in order to gain their trust so that learners may feel free to discuss any issue with their educators. I think this will make it easier to identify the red flags for the learners at risk of dropping out of school. These educators must also have healthy, positive relationships with parents so that they will work collaboratively in building the future generations of the country.

5.4.3 Recommendation three

The focus group discussion suggested that strengthening the country policies by the governmentregarding child labour, through the promotion of compulsory education, free and quality education for all must be the major tool. They further indicated that educators in their unions must be well equipped on how to intervene to reduce the number of learners who drop out of school.

5.4.4 Recommendation four

I realised that, although Lesotho claimed that inclusive education is being practised in the country, from what I have learned in this study there is no such thing happening. Lesotho still practices an integration system whereby learners are integrated in the same classrooms with different learning needs and with an environment that caters only for the mainstream learners and with educators lacking skills to meet the needs of the learners with barriers to learning.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

On the basis of the experience gathered in this study, a number of recommendations can be suggested concerning future research in this field.

- Replication and possible enlargement of the study to incorporate parents and learners who have dropped out of school would be highly appreciative. A comparative study could be conducted between private schools, government schools and church schools.
- A future study could be undertaken on dropouts in secondary schools, in rural and urban areas in Lesotho. This would give an opportunity to compare the situation of secondary schools and primary schools.
- Finally, a study on dropouts in other countries in the SADC region would help to compare the dropout situation in different countries.

5.6 THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

A qualitative research design was used to investigate the causes of primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho. The design was also used to examine the behaviour patterns of primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho, and to identify strategies to reduce primary school dropouts in Teyateyaneng, Lesotho.

Given the explanatory nature of this study, a qualitative research design was purposefully chosen with a small sample. Purposeful sampling was conducted to ensure that the selected participants were homogenous and would be able to meet the necessary research requirements. The study focused on a specific population, namely principals and educators in selected schools and for this reason care should be exercised in generalising the findings to other context. However, the findings are sufficient to make meaningfully recommendations to the Department on education.

The study was limited to only three primary schools in the Teyateyaneng region in Berea district in order to save costs. The participants per school were only the principal and five educators interviewed and there were no learners and the parents to represents their opinions about this phenomenon.

In terms of the challenges faced during the fieldwork, the lack of up to date records at schools presented specific constraints. One of the principals was uncooperative and did not completely answer all the questions.

If all the questions were completely answered, the study could have produced genuine findings that could be generalised to the whole Berea district.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has discussed factors that contribute to dropout rates of learners in the selected three primary schools at Teyateyaneng region in the Berea district of Lesotho. The analysis of the empirical research findings made reference to the theories espoused in the literature review. This study has established that various factors do indeed contribute to dropout rates of learners. Those factors included disability and special educational needs, repetition, orphanhood, child maltreatment in the family, poverty, unemployment, health problems, lack of parental support, introducing free primary education, poor quality education, poor condition and infrastructure. It has been revealed that these are not solely attributed to the school's environment but to learners' living condition in their homes.

The phenomenon of learners dropping out of school affects the government, individuals, societies and the labour market. The effect of dropping out does not only have financial implications but also social implications. Dropping out of school poses challenges on an individual regarding self sufficiency, self esteem and the ability to make educational choices.

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APPENDIX A

PROOF OF REGISTRATION

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STUDENT

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2013-03-18

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:
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WEIGHT LANG. EXAM.DATE CENTRE(PLACE)
Study units registered without formal exams:
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You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

Your study material is available on www.my.unisa.ac.za, as no printed matter will be made available for the research proposal module.

CREDIT BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 2346.00-

Yours faithfully,

Prof M Mosimege
Registrar

APPENDIX B

THE LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONTACT THE STUDY - UNISA university of south africa

The Department of Inclusive Education
University of South Africa
18 March 2013

To:
The Lesotho Department of Education
The Berea District
Lesotho

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is *Tlale LDN*, a research supervisor to Mrs Mamothebesoane Mohlouoa. I wish to confirm that Mrs Mohlouoa is a registered Master of Education (Med) student with the University of South Africa (UNISA). Her student number is 48702439. As a requirement for graduation, she is supposed to conduct a school based research which forms an integral component for the completion of her MEd qualification. She has therefore submitted a proposal which has been approved to demonstrate her intentions to fulfil this requirement by conducting research in Berea District.

In her proposed study she plans to explore this topic: **FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNER TROPOUT RATES IN TEYATEYANENG REGION PRIMARY SCHOOLS, LESOTHO.** In this study she is planning to work with three primary schools falling in Berea District.
On behalf of the University, I wish to submit this request to the Department of Education in Lesotho to assist Mrs Mohlouoa to conduct this study by granting her the permission to use the schools for data collection. We hope the Berea district of Education will be able to contribute positively in assisting the University of South Africa to help Mrs Mohlouoa to complete her research.

We thank your office in advance

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APPENDIX C

RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA college of education

Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

M Mohlouoa [48702439]

for M Ed study entitled

Factors influencing learners dropout rate in Tayateyaneng district primary schools, Lesotho

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue.

Prof CS le Roux
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za
Reference number: 2013 October/48702439/CSLR

1 October 2013

APPENDIX D

THE LETTER FROM THE RESEARCHER TO THE PRINCIPALS

Teyateyaneng Primary School
PO Box 827
Teyateyaneng 200
LESOTHO

22 May 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I am a student at the University of South Africa. At present, I am conducting research in the structured Masters' degree. To fulfil the requirements for the degree, I need to conduct a research study about **FACTORS INFLUENCING DROPOUT RATES IN TEYATEYANENG PRIMARY SCHOOLS; LESOTHO.**This means that I have to do research in some schools, including yours, which will require the cooperation of the principal and educators. I would be prepared to share the requirements for my research study with you and, if you would like me to, I will give you the feedback and we will share the results.

Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal. It is valuable to me as an educator to be able to take responsibility for my own professional development and to contribute to the education of learners in Lesotho primary schools by finding the factors causing learners to dropout from schools so that we can find the solutions to control this problem.

You are welcome to contact my supervisor, Dr LDN Tlale, on +2712 477 2197 in the Inclusive Education Department of Unisa if you would like more information. You can also contact the researcher on 28501221 or on 59894299.

Yours faithfully,

Mamothebesoane Mohlouoa
UNISA student number: 48702439

APPENDIX E

THE INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR THE EDUCATORS

THE INFORMED CONSENT FOR THE EDUCATORS IN THE SCHOOL WHO THE RESEARCHER IS INVITING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY TITLED:

FACTORS INFLUENCING DROPOUT RATES IN TEYATEYANENG DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS, LESOTHO

Dear Educator,

This informed consent form has two parts:

- The informed sheet: to share the information about the study with you.
- Certificate of consent: for signatures if you chose to participate.

I am Mamothebesoane Mohlouoa who is working as an educator at Ntjabane Government Primary School. I am doing a research study about the title mentioned above. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this researchbefore you decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. This consent letter may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me.

There are many dropout learners in this region. I want to find the factors influencing learners to dropout from schools, and the remedies for this phenomenon. I believe that you can help by telling me what you know about those factors, how you identify learners at risk of dropping out of school and how they can be helped to prevent this problem from happening. This research will involve your participation in a focus group interview that will take about one and half hours. You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experiences as an educator can contribute much to my understanding and knowledge about factors influencing learner dropout rates in Teyateyaneng primary schools, Lesotho. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or any work related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

I am asking you to help me learn more about factors influencing the learner dropout rate in your school. I am asking you to help me learn more about factors influencing the learner dropout rate in your school. I am inviting you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be asked to take part in focus group interview discussion which does not involve questions which may be sensitive or potentially cause embarrassment.

You are kindly asked to take part in a discussion with five other educators with similar experiences. This discussion will be guided by me, making sure that you are comfortable. I will ask you questions about the already mentioned topic in your school and give you time to share your knowledge.The questions will be about the causal factors of the problem in your school, how they are recognised and what you and other people do to stop it. These are the examples of the types of questions I will ask. I will not ask you to share personal beliefs, practices or stories and you do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing. The discussion will take place at your school and no one else but the people who take part in the discussion and me will be present during this discussion. The entire discussion will be tape recorded, but no one will be identified by name on the tape. The information recorded is confidential. There is no risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance; however, you do not have to take part in the discussion if you feel the questions are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

There will be no direct benefit to you but your participation will be useful to the other learners who are not yet dropouts, and the community and the whole of society will benefit a lot as a result of finding an answer to the research question. You will not be provided with any incentives to take part in the research. That will look like bribing but your participation will be voluntarily and the researcher will be the one spending financially by travelling to you for sessions. Nothing that you tell the researcher will be shared with anybody and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge gained from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant will receive a summary of the results and then the results will be published so that other interested people may learn from the research.

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so. You may stop participating in the discussion at any time that you wish. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the discussion to review your remarks and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Please read and complete the information below if you agree to participate in this research: I....., have been invited to participate in research about

FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNER DROPOUT RATES IN TEYATEYANENG PRIMARY SCHOOLS, LESOTHO.

I have read the foregoing information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Signature :.....

Date :.....

STATEMENT BY THE RESEARCHER

I....., have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands what is to be done.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature :.....

Date :.....

APPENDIX F

THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS AND THE PRINCIPALS

1. What is the roll of your grade? Is it the same as it was at the beginning of the year?
2. How can you describe the impact of FPE in your grade? Justify your answer.
3. How is learners' attendance in your grade?
4. How involved are parents in the learners' academic work? Are they cooperative? Explain in detail.
5. How can you describe your learners' performance in general?
6. How is the condition on which you are working, in relation to quality education and everything related to teaching and learning process?
7. What type of learners do you have in your grade? Are you able to provide them with support according to their different needs that will help them reach their maximum potential?
8. Do you have learners identified as at risk of dropping out in your grade? If yes, how did you identify them?
9. Do your learners normally meet the demands or requirements of the grade in relation to their teaching and learning process?
10. Generally, how do your learners' environmental backgrounds affect their teaching and learning process?
11. What can you say about the well being of your learners?
12. Are there any behavioural pattern shown by the dropout learners in your grade before they dropout of school?
13. Do you often hold meetings with your learners and their parents to discuss these phenomena and its consequences?
14. What do you think is the cause of this problem in your grade?
15. What is your advice to other educators who are experiencing the same problem of learner dropout as yours in their grades, if they are there?
16. Which factors do you think can de-motivate learners academically?
17. As an educator, what measures did you take to control these phenomena in your grade?
18. Are there any other stakeholders working collaboratively with you, as an educator, to control the problem by reducing the factors influencing the dropout rate in your school? If yes, how do they help?
19. What remedies can you suggest to reduce this problem of dropping out of learners from school?As an experienced educator generally, what do you think can be done in Teyateyaneng primary schools to reduce this problem of learners dropping out of school?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS DATA

This appendix contains the transcripts of a focus group interviews conducted with participants from three chosen primary schools that participate in this research. Names of people have been changed to protect confidentiality of the interviewee. Firstly, I prefaced the interview by briefing the participants about the purpose of the interview, defining the situation for the interview (confidentiality), what I am doing for my research and that I was interested in talking with them as the participants in my study. Then I introduce myself (full names and proffesion) and ask if the participants have any questions before the interview. The following abbreviations were used as the key during the interviews:

P: participant

P1: participant 1

P2: participant 2, etc

P1-6: focus group 1

P7-12: focus group 2

P13-18: focus group 3

Q: question

Q1: question1

Q2: question 2, etc

Interview transcripts in school A started with the greetings and briefing the participants. The set up for the interview was in the principal's office. It was in the afternoon and the first session was agreed to last not more than an hour (Started at 14:20).

Q1: What is the roll in your grades? Is it the same as at the beginning of the year? I am giving you all the chance to answer, in turns of course.

P1: At the moment I have 44 learners and it is not the same as the beginning of the year, others dropped out.

P2: Mine also dropped, 3 girls are no longer with us.

P3: In my grade 2 boys took a transfer and go to the other school because of their parents who got the transfers, so I cannot say they dropped.

P4: No, my roll is not the same. I had twin brothers whom their parents die from car accident, how painful (seems emotional) I wonder where are they, a relative took them and we lost contacts.

P5: Ja, my two big boys went to initiation and had to pay the owner by looking after his animals because they cannot affort the fees.

P6: Mine is the same, thanks Lord how blessed is me. But when we makes follow ups as the school, we find out that all the learners who dropout are orphans as the older child steps up and assumes a parental role by being the head of the family in different ways such as working as domestic workers for girls, house keepers or the worst by being sex workers. Boys become herd boys, sells on streets and later flew to the South African mines.

Q2: How can you describe the impact of FPE in your grade? Justify.

P1; Jo, I find it too challenging because my learners are over grouded.

P2: It is too much to deal with large class on your own.

P3: FPE affect us negatively, we do not have enough classes, books or desk but we have a lot of learners.

P4: Our hands are full, if we were paid according to the number of learners one is teaching, we would be very rich. I am not happy with FPE at all.

P5: FPE is something we do appreciate the government for implementing, but according to me it was not well planned because teachers are few and learners are more.

P6: Well mmmm... I can say it has a very bad negative impact, learners do not get quality education, they are over grouded in classes, me I say it is not good at all. That is why some parents prefer to take their children to the private schools where the number of learners in the grade will not exceed 50.

Q3: How is the learners' attendance in your grade?

P1: Hell... very poor, the habit of being most of the time absent results in staying away from class, shows strange behaviours like the other boy in my grade who stays away from the class, seems to feel disconnectedness and inadequacy. Such learners have difficulty in

forming relationships and do not participate in school activities because they are always absent and they fell behind every thing.

P2: In this school absenteeism is like the chronic desease. There are some learners with chronic absenteeism which often get expelled because they are less likely to be aware of the attendance policy.

P3: The way it is bad, I think it makes learners feel disconnected from academics and beliefs that lessons are not relavant to their lives after being absent.

P4: Ausi, you have to understand that this absenteeism is real. You know it makes learners feel disconnected and lack accountability which can lead to behavioural issues and poor academic achievement.

P5: In my grade, I have many learners with excessive absences whom I later discovered that they were dealing with difficult financial, health and family situations.

P6: In my grade is not that much, I canot say it is a problem except that I realised that educators too has chronic absenteeism in this school which often results in pushing learners to dropout from school because it affected learners by weakening the schools ability to function.

Q4: How involved are parents in the learners' academic work? Are they cooperative? Explain in detail.

P1: They are not involved at all. You know this is very sad because parents have significant impacts on learners learning and development processes. In my grade, it's me and my learners only.

P2: Few parents in my grade are involved and through their cooperation I realise that the quality of parent-educator interaction has predicted improvement in learner's behaviour and achievement.

P3: In my side, they are involved and also cooperative although there are some who are not involved, but they are few. Eee, I think the fact that I come from nearby and that they are my neighbours helps me because we often talk and discuss their children's work.

P4: I am sorry to tell you that one day one of the parents told me that he is not an educator; therefore I must stop calling him about his child work. He said that I choose to be an educator and I must stop waisting his time and do my job.

P5: I just feel so blessed because I am dealing with the so cooperative parents who are very involved in their children's work. Yes it's not all of them and it does not worry me because majority are involved.

P6: In my grade most of the parents are not involved and that makes my work as an educator very difficult because learners sometimes use parents as excuses to their mistakes.

Q5: How can you describe your learners' performance in general?

P1: They are trying but generally it is not good because of many things like being absent several times. Many failed.

P2: They are average and I still think if their parents were involved, no learner would have fail because I have learned from experience that repetition is the greatest factor contributing to a learner being overage and belief me it is not easy to teach the learner who thinks is old.

P3: It is true that they are not performing well which results in failing the grade. We all know that when learners discover that they are older than their classmates, they become shy and decided to quit school.

P4: It is not as good as expected; most of them fail and get discouraged. Others even dropped out of school after failing the grade.

P5: They are performing well and working hard.

P6: These kids are trying their best and so far I am very happy with their performance.

Q6: How are the conditions in which you are working in relation to quality education and everything related to the teaching and learning process?

P1: Well, I am not complaining about the condition on which I am working because as you can see, we have classrooms even if they are not enough because in other schools, the lessons are held under the trees.

P2: It is ok except that the classes are not enough as our learners are overgrouded.

P3: I am not satisfied at all because we are the school which had huge roll but still need many important things like hall to held meetings with parents or the library.

P4: I am not complaining about my school.

P5: My condition hardern by the learners who seems poor. They are not enjoying school those learners. They also make my condition very difficult because I feel emotional most of the time.

P6: According to me the condition is very bad, we do not even have electricity, and we even turned the classroom the other class due to shortage of the classrooms. The toilets too are not in a good condition.

Q7: What type of learners do you have in your grade? Are you able to provide them with support according to their different needs that will help them reach their maximum potential?

P1: I have learners with different needs. Some are disabled and I am not able to provide them with the care they need because I am not trained as special educational educator, but I want to be trained so that I can help these learners like others.

P2: I have two disabled learners in my grade and its not easy for both os us because learners with or without special educational needs being placed in the same school contributed as the main factor of learner dropout due to school environment which becomes inaccessible for disabled learners.

P3: It is true, as you can see our environment are not child friendly but we have learners with special educational needs and it is not easy at all because we are not able to support them according to their different educational needs, we feel sory for them shame.

P4: Ja, I think the inability to perfom academically at the normal rate has caused anxiety and stress among these learners as we are not able to cater for their special educational needs.

P5: I have some learners with special educational needs in my grade. I have realised that they require extra adults in the room but there are no paraprofessionals trained to attend to these learners needs such as toileting, behavioural or learning needs.

P6: I have able and disabled learners and that makes teaching and learning process becomes difficult because even their parents seem not to worry. I am saying these because when you asked parent to help them they always had excuses.

The first interview session, end with question 7 due to the agreed time. It ended at 15:15.

The second interview session started with the greetings and got straight to the point. It started with question 8. It started at 14:15.

Q8: Do you have learners identified as at risk of dropping out in your grade? If yes, how did you identify them?

P1: Most of my learners live with their relatives and that situation; I consider it as the huge challenge of learners dropping out of school due to child abuse and neglect. They stay with their relatives who were physically abusing them. I just help by offering counselling nothing much.

P2: The one who their parents are not involved are the one I consider at risk of dropping out of school. I dry to contact with their parents but failed.

P3: I consider learners who are orphaned as at risk of dropping out of school. They lack many important things in relation to school and that discouraged them. I told the principal about their situation but the school do not have much to do because these orphans are many.

P4: I consider the poor learners as the one at risk of dropping out. It is difficult to assist these learners because they are many and most of the time the elder one had to quit school in order to help parents to care for others.

P5: I think the disabled learners are the ones in my grade and the only help I can offer is to advice the learner and the parent to take the learner to the school which can cater for the learner special needs.

P6: I consider the learners who are HIV positive as the ones at risk because most of them are orphans and live with their relative who does not care if they get their medication or not. They also miss school regularly report to be sick. I can only help by encouraging them to take their medication.

Q9: Do your learners normally meet the demants or requirements of the grade in relation to the teaching and learning process?

P1: No, not always because most of them are poor. If you ask the parent to buy something for the learner or just an educational trip, they do not affort due to poverty circumstances.

P2: No, my learners come from poor families and sometimes they become discouraged to learn because they have many needs, even the school uniform.

P3: Not at all and I consider poverty as the major risk factor of dropping out of school. Being very young, low educational level or single parents, unemployment, abuse, neglect and

homelessness makes learners fail to meet the demants of the grade. Because of empty stomachs, they are always tired in the class during lessons.

P4: No, they are needy because of being poor; they do not complete assignments, do not study for tests or do not come to school prepared to learn due to poverty related circumstances in the home environment. For example they come to school with empty stomach. They lack almost everything related to school because their parents cannot afford them.

P5: No, because of poverty they are unable to concentrate or focus.They always missed the educational trips and felt uncomfortable when others discuss the trip in the class and decided to dropout of school.

P6: No, oh they look so missarable and are unwilling or unable to interact with peers and adults in school in an effective manner.The cannot affort many things.

Q10: Generally, how does your learners' environmental background affect their teaching and learning process?

P1: It affects them negatively. Most of them look like abused and neglected children and results in dropping out of school.

P2: It affects them badly,

P3: They are not bad in my grade, I gues they are fine even at home.

P4: I think the lack of parental involvement also contribute negatively in learners learning and teaching process.

P5: It does affect them negatively. Learners are growing up in a world with HIV/AIDS and it affects a lot of them. It causes a lot of pain and trauma in the lives of learners who are struggling to do well at school but in most cases they decided to quit school.

P6: Most of my learners are affected negatively by their environmental background. For example, most of them are orphans. In most cases the elder child steps up and assumes a parental role by being head of the family like working as domestic workers for girls and boys as herdboys.

Q11: What can you say about the well being of your learners?

P1: In my grade, they are healthy but others are disabled and that brings a huge challenge because they are placed in the same school as able learners.

P2: They are well but the disabled ones bring a big challenge because they require extra adults in the room but are no such a thing in our school.

P3: They are well although I have others who are most of the time absent due to sickness but they are few.

P4: They are well, I am not complaining.

P5; although few are HIV positive, I cannot say they are not well because they are on treatment and they seems fine.

P6: Some of them are not well some are well but life keeps on going.

Q12: Are there any behavioural patterns shown by the dropout learners in your grade before dropping out of school?

P1: Yes, they are most of the time absent from school and have more difficulty in forming relationships they always have signs of abuse and neglect.

P2: Yes, they used to repeat the grades several times and get discouraged.

P3: They have a ttendancy of repeating the grade and results in dropping out.

P4: They do not complete assignments, do not study for tests and do not come to school prepared to learn, after a while they dropout of school. They are disconnected and lack accountability which lead to behavioural issues and poor academic achievement.

P5: Yes, they are most of the time absent from school and results in being behind their classmates, they have financial, health and family situation which is bad.

P6: They are always absent from school. They have what we called an excessive absenteeism.

Q13: Do you often hold meetings with your learners and their parents to discuss these phenomena and their consequences?

P1: No, the parents are not cooperatve at all, I only talks with learners in the class.

P2: No, I was discouraged by poor attendance of parents in the other meeting; they were only few of them.

P3: Yes, but not that much because of poverty some parents are having piece jobs during the week.

P4: No, parents in this community are not cooperative.

P5: Yes, they just asked to be informed in time.

P6: No, they are not cooperative. I tried last time but it failed.

Q14: What do you think is the cause of this problem of learner dropping out of school in your grade?

P1: Eee, I think it is caused by the shortage of the special educational educators, as learners with special educational needs feel neglected and the non caring parents for that matter.

P2: I can say educators lacking skills to assist learners with special educational needs are the main source.

P3: I consider us educators as the main source because it is like we are not doing enough to accept the poor learners as they are with whatever they brings to the classroom.

P4: I blame parents in this issue because most of them are not cooperative, so even the problem that can be sorted out became hard without the involvement of the parent.

P5: This poor country is not funding schools enough so that the poor and orphaned learners can be taken care of by the school. So I am saying I blame the ministry in the country.

P6: According to me the student educators are the source. Today's children are not like us, in our time we really understand the responsibility of us as educators, but these ones now adays seems like enjoying the status of being called teachers. They are not committed to their work at all.

The second interview session ended with question 14 due to the agreed time. It ended at 15:10.

The third interview session started with question 15 at 14:00 and it started with the greetings.

Q15: What is your advice to other educators who are experiencing the same problem of learner dropping out as yours in their grades, if they are there?

P1: They must be patient and dry to understand every learner according to their different needs.

P2: I can say as hard as it is, they must always involve parents regarding the learners work. I think it will be easy that way as it says it takes the whole community to raise a child.

P3: They must talk with the management in the school about the issue of the roll of learners in each grade to avoid overgrouded, which I think it promotes repetition and demotivate learners to learn.

P4: Raise as much funds as they can and use whatever they will get to support the needy, poor, orphaned learners, in that way child labour will be controlled.

P5: Other educators must encourage school management to hire professionals counsallors, what is offered by educators to the abused and neglected learners seems not enough because they still dropout.

P6: I think they must work collaboratively with the nearby departments of health to assist the learners with HIV and AIDS positive and with the learners caring for their relatives who are positive.

Q16: Which factors do you think can demotivate learners academically?

P1: The state of being orphans, absenteeism of learners and this mainstreaming thing are the main factors according to me.

P2: I am saying they are many but poverty, abuse and neglect are too much.

P3: Poor school condition and poverty are the main cause of child labour, if those two can be controlled, child labour cannot occure.

P4: Student educators, together with repetition of learners are the main factor.

P5: HIV and AIDS pandemic and being orphans are the big factors.

P6: Mainstreaming, repetition, poverty and child abuse and neglect.

Q17: As an educator, what measures did you take to control these phenomena?

P1: Not much except to offer counselling to learners who seems to need it.

P2: Try to work collaboratively with parents but it seems like not enough at all.

P3: Offer support to learners who need it and help them.

P4: Asks the management of the school to ask for the funds wherever and support the most vulnerable learners.

P5: Try to befriend the most vulnerable learners so that it will be easy for them to open up.

P6: Encourage other educators to teach life skills subject more often because it will help learners to deal with every challenge life brought.

Q18: Are there any other stakeholders working collaboratively with you as an educator to control the problem by reducing the factors influencing the dropout rate in your school? If yes how do they help?

P1: Yes, some times in a while, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches sometimes come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P2: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches sometimes come to spread the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P3: Ofcause, some times police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches sometimes come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P4: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches sometimes come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P5: Yes in a while, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the nearby district hospital also talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P6: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk

with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

Q19: What remedies can you suggest to reduce this problem of dropping out of learners from school?

P1: I think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom. That can reduce child labour.

P2: Mmm, Education for All Campaign will be the best because keeping learners in school can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom.

P3: Sure, Education for All Campaign will be the best for this problem that can keep learners away from streets to eliminate poverty. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom.

P4: Mmm, Education for All Campaign will be the best because keeping learners in schools can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom.

P5: Education for All Campaign will be the best according to me because keeping learners in schools can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom.

P6: Education for All Campaign can be used to fulfil the government vision of implementing FPE. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom. Not

ignoring the fact that student educator's should be taught to punish learners in accordance with the school code of conduct for learners.

Q20: As an educator, generally, what do you think can be done in Teyateyaneng primary schools to reduce this problem of learner dropping out of school?

P1: I think preventing repetition by addressing learning gaps during the school year, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign. Student educators should always approach the qualified educators for advice and support regarding intervention and how to handle specific learner needs.

P2: To address learning gaps during the school year, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign. I also think positive parental involvement is the main solution to eliminate child labour.

P3: Educators must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign. I also think positive parental involvement can be the solution to eliminate child labour.

P4: Educators need to be ready for the culture of the life of poverty and be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE. I also think positive parental involvement can be the solution to eliminate child labour.

P5: The presence of school nurses may lead to few or less absences, nurse practitioners in school based health centers can fascilitate a healthier population resulting in good and improved attendance.Educators need to be ready for the culture of the life of poverty and be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE.

P6: Educators must be instructed to have their picture taken each day with learners and be paid only when the cameras recorded them present. The presence of school nurses may lead to few or less absences, nurse practitioners in school based health centers can fascilitate a healthier population resulting in good and improved attendance.Educators need to be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE.

This was the end of the third interview session in school A.

Interview transcrips in school B started with the greetings and briefing of the participants. The venue for the interview was in the other educator's classroom. It was in the afternoon and the first session was agreed to last not more than an hour (Started at 14:00).

Q1: What is the roll of your grade? Is it the same as it was at the beginning of the year?

P7: No, some learners dropped out during the year. I had 30 learners but now they are 27.

P8: No, few learners dropped out during the year. I had 28 learners but now they are 26.

P9: No, few learners dropped out during the year. I had 28 learners but now theyare 26.

P10: No, few learners dropped out this year. I have 28 learners but they were 30.

P11: No, some of them dropped out this year. They were 30 at the beginning and 2 dropped.

P12: No, 1 of them dropped out this year. I had 30 at the beginning.

Q2: How can you describe the impact of FPE in your grade? Justify your answer.

P7: Not much because we are the private school where learners pay the school fees.

P8: Not bad because we are the private school where learners pay the school fees.

P9: Not bad because we are the private school where learners pay the school fees. We only decrease the school fees just a little.

P10: Not bad because we are the private school where learners pay the school fees. We only decrease the school fees just a little and that increase our roll.

P11: Posatively as we are the private school where learners pay the school fees. We only decrease the school fees just a little bit and that increase our roll because some parents bring their children here.

P12: According to me FPE affects us negatively and I am afraid that I am not seing the problem between our private school and the government school.

Q3: How is the learners' attendance in your grade?

P7: It is not good, few learners have chronic absenteeism and they stay away from class because they feel disconnectedness and inadequacy.

P8: It is bad, few learners have chronic absenteeism and they stay away from class because they feel disconnectedness and inadequacy. These learners have more difficulty in forming relationship and participating in school activity.

P9: It not only about learners, even some educators are frequently absent and they fail to bond with learners and as a result learners are more likely to disregard lessons and take school less seriously.

P10: There is excessive absenteeism of both educators and learners creates gaps in the learner's education.

P11: It is poor and affects teaching and learning process because lesson plans are designed to prepare learners for the next lesson and if the learner is not present they will be left behind.

P12: It is very bad, some learners have chronic absenteeism and they feel disconnected from academics and believed that the lessons are not relavant to their lives.

Q4: How involved are parents in the learners' academic work? Are they cooperative? Explain in detail.

P7: Unfortunately, we are dealing with the community which is not cooperative. Parents always give excuses when asked to come to school to discuss every thing concerning their children. Most of them are of learners who are not doing well in the class. That encourages learners to dropout of school because no one at home feel interested in ttheir academic work.P8: Most of the parents are not involved and that is bad because the amount that a parent is involved in a child's life is certainly related to how likely a learner is to dropout.

P9: It is poor we are dealing with the community which is not supportive.

P10: It is poor because these parents do not know that the amount that a parent is involved in a child's life is certainly related to how likely a learner is to dropout.

P11: It is not good at all. It is pity because an an engaged parent notices the red flags such as failing marks or poor attendance from a learner.

P12: These parents do not care, it is bad because intervention opportunities are missed and the learner continues down a path that leads to dropping out.

Q5: How can you describe your learners' performance in general?

P7: Their performance is poor. I have learned from experience that repetition is the greatest factor contributing to a learner being overage.

P8: It not that bad.

P9: It is not good, they are most of the time repeting the grade which is bad because when learners discover thatthey are older than their classmates, they become shy and decided to quit school.

P10: I am not complaining.

P11: It is not good. Poor academic performance in my school is generally linked to dropout rates. Many learners are tending to move in a slow rate from one grade to the next till they are left behind by their classmates. Then they become discouraged and decide to dropout of school.

P12: They are drying their best although some fail.

Q6: How are the conditionsin which you are working in relation to quality education and everything related to the teaching and learning process?

P7: The fact that we have the classrooms, I cannot say it is bad.

P8: We have the classrooms; I cannot say it is bad.

P9: We have the classrooms; I cannot say it is bad because teaching and learning is able to flow.

P10: According to me it is very bad because our furniture like desks is old.

P11: According to me it is very bad because our premises are very old.

P12: We are working in a bad and uninspiring situation with old every thing around us.

Q7: What type of learners do you have in your grade? Are you able to provide them with support according to their different needs that will help them reach their maximum potential?

P7: They are different and lacking paraprofessionals in the classrooms to help me contribute a lot to my learners with special educational needs to dropout.

P8: They are the ones with and without the special educational needs whom are difficult to deal with because while busy with the lesson, there is no one to take care of the one with special needs.

P9: They are the mix, ones with and without the special educational needs whom are difficult to deal with because I am not trained to address problems that disabled learners bring to the classroom.

P10: They are different and lacking paraprofessionals in the classrooms to help me contribute a lot to my learners with special educational needs to dropout as an educator, I am not capable of managing the classroom time so that the special needs learners are given the attention they need.

P11: I have the mix of able and disable and disable learners and the mainstream classrooms are not appropriate for disabled learners because other learners do not know how to deal with their differences, rather they resort to ridiculing or outright ostracism of a learner whom they perceive as not like them.

P12: I also have mix and the disabled found themselves in a situation where they are always the final choice for teams of games in physical educational class.

This is the end of the first interview session in school B. It ended with question 7 due to the agreed time. It ended at 15:00.

The second session started with the greetings and question 8 follows. It started at 14:00.

Q8: Do you have learners identified as at risk of dropping out in your grade? If yes, how did you identify them?

P7: Yes, they are the ones who are frequently absent from school. They take school less seriously.

P8: Yes, I consider those who are abused and neglect. I found out that they stay with their relatives who were physically abusing them.

P9: Yes, I consider those with special educational needs because educators are not trained to address their needs.

P10: Yes, they those with excessive absenteeism because it creates gaps in their education and they are behind their classmates.

P11: Yes, they are double orphans, they were very needy, lack things like uniforms, shoes and most of the time comes to school untidy, does not do their homeworks, does not actively participate in class activities and end up dropping out of school.

P12: Yes, I consider those who are abused and neglect. They suddenly lack interest, are obsessed with violent games,depressed, mood swings, writing that shows despair and isolation, lack anger management skills, talking about death and bringing weapons to school.

Q9: Do your learners normally meet the demands or requirements of the grade in relation to the teaching and learning process?

P7: No, not always. Most of them are poor and come to school with empty stomach, are always tired in the classroom and lack almost everything related to school because their parents cannot afford them.

P8: Not all of them, I can say they are trying their best.

P9: Not always. Most of them are poor and always missed the educational trips and felt uncomfortable when others discuss the trip in the class and decided to dropout of school.

P10: No. Most of them are poor and they have difficulty in making friends. They behave in a hostile manner or are totally withdrawn due to past attempts of making friends.

P11: Not at all. Most of them are poor and they also come to school without the records from their previous schools and it is difficult for schools to track down their records and leaves educators with no clue as to what extend they have been taught.P12: Not at all. But I am not complaining, it is not that bad.

Q10: Generally, how does your learners' environmental background affect the teaching and learning process?

P7: It affects them negatively. Many of them are regularly taken out of school because of the high prevelance of HIV/AIDS to care for their parents, siblings or relatives.

P8: Negatively. Many of them are regularly taken out of school because of the high prevelance of HIV/AIDS to care for their parents, siblings or relatives. Others are also positive themselves.

P9: Their parents are not cooperative and that is bad because an engaged parents notices the red flags such as failing marks or poor attendance from a learner.

P10: They are coming from poor families and many of them have to work to go to school otherwise they could not afford the tution and other fees as associated with attendance.

P11: Their parents are not cooperative and that is bad because an important intervention opportunities are missed and the learner continues down path that leads to dropping out.

P12: Others are abused and neglected and that affects them negatively.

Q11: What can you say about the well being of your learners?

P7: Well they are healthy but others are disabled and make it difficult for both educators and learners as there are no professionals in the classroom to help me as an educator.

P8: Well they are well but others are disabled and make it difficult for learners because while busy with the lesson, there is no one to take care of them because they need special attention.

P9: Well they are not that bad expect that others are disabled and make it difficult for educators because they are not trained to address problems that disabled learners bring to the classroom.

P10: They are healthy but few are not well.

P11: They are not positively healthy but I am not complaining.

P12: They are fine although few of them are disabled but cannot say they are not well.

Q12: Are there any behavioural pattern shown by the dropout learnersin your grade before they dropout of school?

P7: Yes, after learners repeating the grade, they discover that they are older than their classmates, become shy and decided to quit school.

P8: Yes, Many of them were abused and neglected by their relatives who physically abuse them and they always had bruises.

P9: Yes, after repeating the grade, they discover that they are older than their classmates, become shy and decided to quit school after falling behind their classmates.

P10: Yes they first seem to be disconnected.

P11: Yes, due to poor academic performance, many learners are tending to move in a slow rate from one grade to the next till they are left behind their classmates. Then they become discouraged and decided to dropout of school.

P12: Yes, Many of them were abused and neglected by their relatives who physically abusing them. They suddenly lack interest, are obsessed with violent games, depressed, moodswings, writing that shows despair and isolation, lack of anger management skills, talking about death or bringing weapons to shool.

Q13: Do you often hold meetings with your learners and their parents to discuss these phenomena and their consequences?

P7: No, unfortunately we are dealing with the community which is not cooperative. Parents always give excuses when asked to come to school.

P8: No, Parents always give excuses when asked to come to school not aware that the amount that a parent is involved in a childs life is certainly related to how likely a learner is to dropout.

P9: No, it is unfortunate that we are dealing with the community which is not supportive.

P10: No, we are dealing with the community which is not supportive and because of that, I discovered that an engaged parent notices the red flags such as failing marks or poor attendance from a learner.

P11: No, these parents do not care; they are too busy with the work or their own lives and are less likely involved in their childrens learning.

P12: Only with the learners because their parents are busy while their children continues down a path that leads to dropping out.

Q14: What do you think is the cause of this problem in your grade?

P7: I think it is caused by this mainstreaming thing it is not appropriate for learners with disabilities because other learners do not know how to deal with their differences.

P8: I think poverty is the main cause. Poor learners lack almost every thing related to school because their parents cannot afford them. It makes teaching and learning difficult.

P9: It is caused by parents who are too busy with their work or their own lives and less likely to notice the problems in their learner's education.

P10: It is caused by absenteeism of both educators and learners which creates gaps in the learner's education.

P11: I think it is caused by mainstreaming. It is not appropriate for learners with disabilities because of school environment which becomes inaccessible for disabled learners.

P12: I think it is caused by mainstreaming because educators are not capable of managing the classroom as they are not trained to address problems that disabled learners bring to the classroom.

This is the end of the second interview session in school B. It ended with question 14 due to the agreed time. It ended at 15:00.

The third session started with the greetings and question 15 followed. It started at 14:00.

Q15: What is your advice to other educators who are experiencing the same problem of learners' dropout as yoursin their grades, if they are there?

P7: They must be patient and dry their best to understand every learner according to their different educational needs.

P8: I think they must always involve parents regarding their childrens work.

P9: They must accept reasonable number of learners in each grade to avoid overgrouded, which I think promotes repetition.

P10: Encourage the principal or management of the school to raise as much funds as they can and use them to support the needy, poor, orphaned learners in that way child labour can be avoided.

P11: Advice the management in the school to hire professional counsallors, what is offered by educators to the abused and neglected learners seems not enough because they still dropout.

P12: I think they must seriously concider learners with HIV/AIDS by working collaboratively with all the stakeholders to assist the learners with HIV and AIDS positive and with the learners caring for their relatives who are positive.

Q16: Which factors do you think can demotivate learners academically?

P7: I think factors like being orphans, absenteeism of learners and mainstreaming are the main ones according to me. P8: I am concidering poverty, abuse and neglect as the main factors.P9: Poverty on learners and poor school condition are the main factors which cause child labour.

P10: Student educators, together with repetition of learners are the main factor.

P11: HIV and AIDS pandemic caused many orphans and I concider it as the big factor.

P12: In my school, mainstreaming, repetition, poverty and child abuse and neglect are thought to be the main factors.

Q17: As an educator, what measures did you take to control these phenomena in your grade?

P7: Encourage other educators to teach life skills as a subject on its own because it will help learners to deal with every challenge life brought posatively.

P8: Try to win and befriend the most vulnerable learners so that they will trust us as educators.

P9: Help the management of the school to raise the funds as much as possible and support the most vulnerable learners with those funds.

P10: Offer counselling and support to learners who need it and help them accept themselves as they are.

P11: Berg the parents and try to win their trust so that it will be easy to work collaboratively with them.

P12: Nothing except to offer counselling to learners who seems to be ar risk.

Q18: Are there any other stakeholders working collaboratively with you as an educator to control the problem by reducing the factors influencing the dropout rate in your school?If yes, how do they help?

P7: Yes, some times police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS and how to live with the virus, priests sometimes come to preach the word of God and the social workers do identify the most at risk learners that can be helped by the government.

P8: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves from abusers, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different nearby villages come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P9: Yebo, some times in a while police in the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses too come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS and other pandemic diseases, priests from the different churches also come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P10: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches sometimes come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P11: Definatetly, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves criminals, nurses also talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P12: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

Q19: What remedies can you suggest to reduce this problem of dropping out of learners from school?

P7: I think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom to reduce child labour.

P8: Education for All Campaign can be used to fulfil the government vision of implementing FPE. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be ready and aware of the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom. Not ignoring the fact that student educator's should be taught to punish learners in accordance with the school code of conduct for learners.

P9: Education for All Campaign will be the best according to me because keeping learners in schools can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and the parents be enforced to work collaboratively with educators for the benefit of the learners.

P10: Mmm, Education for All Campaign will be the best because keeping learners in schools can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and identify,prevent and

report child abuse and neglect because they are the ones with a close relationship with learners.

P11: Sure, Education for All Campaign will be the best for this problem in order to keep learners away from streets to eliminate poverty. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty.

P12: Mmm, Education for All Campaign will be the best because keeping learners in school can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs.

Q20: As an educator, generally what do you think can be done in Teyateyaneng primary schools to reduce this problem of learners dropping out of school?

P7: To work collaboratively with parents in order to address learning gaps during the school year, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign.

P8: I think repetition must be controlled by addressing learning gaps during the school year, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign. Student educators must always approach the qualified educators for advice and support regarding intervention and how to handle specific learner needs.

P9: Educators must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign. I also think positive parental involvement can be the solution to eliminate child labour.

P10: Educators need to accept poor learners as they are and be ready for the culture of the life of poverty and be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE. I also think positive parental involvement can be the solution to eliminate child labour.

P11: The presence of school professionals can be useful in reducing school dropout and lead to few or less absences, nurse practitioners in school based health centers can fascilitate a healthier population resulting in good and improved attendance.Educators need to be ready for the culture of the life of poverty and be well trained in order to support all

learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE.

P12: Educators must be instructed to have their picture taken each day with learners and be paid only when the cameras recorded them present. The presence of school nurses may lead to few or less absences, nurse practitioners in school based health centers can fascilitate a healthier population resulting in good and improved attendance. Educators need to be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE.

That is how the third interview session for school B ended. It ended at 14:30.

Interview transcripts in school C, started with the greetings and the briefing of the participants. The set up for the interview was in the principal's office. It was in the afternoon and the first session was agreed to last for an hour (Started at 13:30).

Q1: What is the roll of your grade? Is it the same as at the beginning of the year?

P13: I have 34 learners and it is not the same as the beginning of the year, others dropped out.

P14: Yes it is the same as the beginig of the year.

P15: No, my two big boys went to initiation school; their parents are friends and decided to take them at the same time.

P16: No, my roll is not the same. I had 38 learners but now they are 35.

P17: In my grade 3 learners dropped.

P18: It is not the same, 1 girl left for initiation school.

Q2: How can you describe the impact of FPE in your grade?

P13: It is too much to deal with large class on your own.

P14: I can say it has a very bad negative impact; parents no longer care for their childrens education because they do not pay the fees anymore.

P15: FPE is the good thing the government ever made because every child is able to attend school wether one is poor or rich.

P16: I am not happy with FPE at all; it brought us older learners who are difficult to manage in the classroom.

P17: FPE affect us negatively because we used to use the money for school fees to keep the school flowing, but now it is very difficult I can tell.

P18: I find it too challenging because my learners are older than the grade and they difficult to control.

Q3: How is the learners' attendance in your grade?

P13: It is very poor. It makes learners fell behind their school work, got discouraged and ended up dropping out of school.

P14: It is bad because learners who are most of the times absent forget the previous lessons which results in academic insecurity and they stop putting in the effort to achieve high grades.

P15: I have learners with poor attendance whom I found out that they are orphans who have no one to monitor or offer support with their school work at home and they skip school to escape the boredom or cope with depression.

P16: It is poor because it makes learners disconnected. They become bored, never volunteer to do any activity through out the lesson or to answer any question.

P17: In this school, I am waried about the absenteeism of educators than of learners because it disrupts learners as learners do not receive the extra attention needed and are less able to make learners join a strong network of other educators.

P18: It is bad and makes learners fell behind their classmates and lack confident to do anything in others presence.

Q4: How involved are parents in the learners' academic work? Are they cooperative? Explain in detail.

P13: Parents are not involved at all and it bad because learners are more engage with school activities when their parents participate more frequently in school functions.

P14: They are not involved and that results in their learners having lower grades, tests cores and poor low self esteem.

P15: Parents are not involved and results in their childrens having high rates of suspension.

P16: Because of non-involvement of parents, learners have more instances of violent behaviour which is all the major factor associated with dropping out from school.

P17: They are not involved at all. They always have excuses.

P18: I think they do not care because they are illiterate due to poverty circumstances.

Q5: How can you describe your learners' performance in general?

P13: It is good; we always have competitions with other schools.

P14: Their performance is well.

P15: They are trying their best although few sometimes fail.

P16: They seem to be competent and that makes them do well.

P17: Some but not most fail but I cannot complain because it is not that bad.

P18: It is not good at all, they are not performing well.

Q6: How are the conditionsin which you are working in relation to quality education and everything related to the teaching and learning process?

P13: Eee, I am not complaining about the condition on which I am working, we have classrooms even if they are not in good condition because you know in other schools the lessons are held under the trees.

P14: According to me the condition is very bad; we do not even have electricity. The toilets too are not in a good condition.

P15: It is not good we do not even have security fence.

P16: I am not complaining about my school it is fine compared to many school around us.

P17: I am not satisfied with it because as you can see some of the windoors are brocken, some doors are not locked and in winter and when it is rainny we feel uncomfortable.

P18: It is ok except that the classes are old and need renovation here and there.

Q7: What type of learners do you have in your grade? Are you able to provide them with support according to their different needs that will help them reach their maximum potential?

P13: No, I frequently overlooked disabled learners because I do not have skill to help them reach their maximum level.

P14: Among my learners some are disabled, eish, the negative social interactions elicit unfavourable behaviours that learners are not able to control due to their disabilities. They are often emotional and display immature behaviour.

P15: Ihave very poor learners among my learners, thet are lonely find it hard to make friends and behave in a hostile manner.

P16: I have poor learners who I find it hard to teach because they come to school with no records from their previous schools, so doubt if they are supposed to be in this grade.

P17: They are the able and disabled learners and the disabled ones are suffering because I am not trained to help them.

P18: They are mixed, some are disabled and I am not trained as the special educational educator. I tried my best but failed to address their special needs and they felt neglected and decited to dropout.

This is the end of the first interview session in school C due to the agreed duration of time at that day. It ended with question 7 at 14:30.

The second interview session started with question 8 after the greetings. It started at 13:30.

Q8: Do you have learners identified as at risk of dropping out in your grade? If yes, how did you identify them?

P13: The one whom their parents are not involved are the one I consider at risk of dropping out of school. I dry to contact their parents hoping that they will come around but failed.

P14: I consider the learners who are HIV positive as the ones at risk because most of them are orphans and live with their relative who does not care if they get their medication or not. They also miss school regularly report to be sick. I only help by encouraging them to take their medication.

P15: I think the disabled learners are the ones at risk in my grade and the only help I offer is to advice them and their parents to take them to the school which can cater for the learners special needs.

P16: I consider the poor learners as the one at risk of dropping out. It is difficult to assist these learners because they are many and most of the time the elder one had to quit school in order to help parents to care for others.

P17: I consider learners who are orphaned as at risk of dropping out of school. They lack many important things in relation to school and that discouraged them. I approach the management about their situation but the school do not have much to do because these orphans are many.

P18: Some of my learners live with their relatives who abuse and neglect them. I just help by offering counselling nothing much.

Q9: Do your learners normally meet the demands or requirements of the grade in relation to the teaching and learning process?

P13: No, Most of them are poor and come to school with empty stomach, are always tired in the classroom and lack almost everything related to school because their parents cannot afford them.

P14: Not all of them.

P15: Not always. Most of them are poor and always missed the educational trips and felt uncomfortable when others discuss the trip in the class and decided to dropout of school.

P16: No. Most of them are poor and they have difficulty in making friends. They behave in a hostile manner or are totally withdrawn due to past attempts of making friends.

P17: No. Most of them are poor and they also come to school without the records from their previous schools and it is difficult for schools to track down their records and leaves educators with no clue as to what extend they have been taught.

P18: Most of them are poor and they come to school without the records from their previous schools and it is difficult for schools to track down their records and leaves educators with no clue as to what extend they have been taught.

Q10: Generally, how do your learners' environmental backgrounds affect the teaching and learning process?

P13: It affects them negatively. Many of them are frequently taken out of school because of the high prevelance of HIV/AIDS to care for their parents, siblings or relatives.

P14: Negatively. Most of them are taken out of school because of the HIV/AIDS to care for their relatives. Others are also positive themselves.

P15: Their parents are not cooperative and that is bad because an engaged parents notices the red flags such as failing marks or poor attendance from a learner.

P16: They are coming from poor families and many of them have to work to go to school otherwise they will not afford even the school uniform.

P17: Their parents are not cooperative and that is bad because an important intervention opportunities are missed and the learner continues down path that leads to dropping out.

P18: Others are abused and neglected by their relatives and that affects them negatively.

Q11: What can you say about the well being of your learners?

P13: Well they are healthy and also disabled and make it difficult for both educators and learners as there are no professionals in the classroom to help me as an educator.

P14: Well they are well although others are disabled it is difficult because while busy with the lesson, there is no one to take care of them because they need special attention.

P15: They are not hundred percent positive but I am not worried.

P16: They are healthy but few are not well.

P17: Well they are not that bad expect that others are disabled and it is difficult for educators because they are not trained to address problems that disabled learners bring to the classroom.

P18: I can say they are they are well because even the ones with HIV/AIDS are on treatment.

Q12: Are there any behavioural patterns shown by the dropout learners in your grade before they dropout of school?

P13: Yes, Many of them were poor. They came to school with empty stomachs and were always tired in the class during the lessons.

P14: Yes, after being absent for a while, they forget the previous lessons which results in academic insecurity and they stop putting in the effort to achieve high grades.

P15: Yes, Many of them were abused and neglected by their relatives who physically abuse them and they always had bruises.

P16: Yes they first seem to be disconnected, bored, never volunteer to do any activity through out the lasson or to answer any question in the class.

P17: Yes, some of them were poor. They have difficulty in making friends. They behave in a hostile manner or are totally withdrawn due to past attempts of making friends.

P18: Yes, they first fall behind their classmates and lack confident to do any activity in their classmate's presence.

Q13: Do you often hold meetings with your learners and their parents to discuss these phenomena and their consequences?

P13: No, unfortunately we are dealing with the community which is not cooperative. Parents always give excuses when asked to come to school.

P14: No, Parents always give excuses when asked to come to school not aware that the amount that a parent is involved in a childs life is certainly related to how likely a learner is to dropout.

P15: No, it is unfortunate that we are dealing with the community which is not supportive, they are not aware that learners get higher rates of suspension when parents are not involved.

P16: No, we are dealing with the community which is not supportive and because of that, I discovered that a child of not engaged parent have more instances of violet behaviour which are all the major factors associated wirh dropping out from school.

P17: No, these parents do not care wether their children succed or fail.

P18: Only with the learners because their parents are busy while their children continues down a path that leads to dropping out.

Q14: What do you think is the cause of this problem in your grade?

P13: It is caused by parents who are too busy with their own lives and less likely to notice the problems in their learner's education.

P14: I think it is caused by poverty. Poor learners lack almost every thing related to school because their parents cannot afford them. It makes teaching and learning difficult.

P15: It is caused by absenteeism of both educators and learners which creates gaps in the learner's education.

P16: I think it is caused by mainstreaming. It is not appropriate for learners with disabilities because of school environment which becomes inaccessible for disabled learners. P17:I think it is caused by mainstreaming because educators are not capable of managing the classroom as they are not trained to address problems that disabled learners bring to the classroom.

P18: I think it is caused by this mainstreaming thing it is not appropriate for learners with disabilities because other learners do not know how to deal with their differences.

This is the end of the second session in school C. It ended with question 14 due to the agreed time. It ended at 14:30.

The third interview session started with question 15 after the greetings. It started at 13:30.

Q15: What is your advice to other educators who are experiencing the same problem of learner dropout as yours in their grades if they are there?

P13: They must dry their best to understand every learner according to their different educational needs.

P14: I think they must dry harder to involve parents regarding their childrens work.

P15: They must learn to understand and accept every learner with his or her learning style.

P16: I think they must seriously concider learners with HIV/AIDS by working collaboratively with all the stakeholders to assist the learners with HIV and AIDS positive and with the learners caring for their relatives who are positive.

P17: Advice the management in the school to hire professional counsallors, what is offered by educators to the abused and neglected learners seems not enough because they still dropout.

P18: Encourage the parents not to choose work but do any which comes handy and think of their childrens future when taking any decision.

Q16: Which factors do you think can demotivate learners academically?

P13: According to me I think factors like being orphans, absenteeism of learners and mainstreaming are the serious cause. P14: In my school, mainstreaming, poverty and child abuse and neglect are thought to be the main factors.

P15: I thinkmainstreaming, poverty and child abuse and neglect are thought to be the main factors.

P16: HIV and AIDS pandemic caused many orphans and I concider it as the big factors.

P17: Absenteeism of educators, together with learners is the main factor.

P18: Poverty on learners and poor school condition are the main factors which cause child labour.

Q17: As an educator, what measures did you take to control these phenomena in your grade?

P13: I teach life skills as a subject on its own because it helpS learners to deal with every challenge life brought posatively.

P14: Offer counselling to learners who seems to be at risk.

P15: Try to win the parents trust so that it will be easy to work collaboratively with them.

P16: Offer counselling and support to learners who seem to need it.

P17: Helps to raise the funds as much as possible to support the needy learners.

P18: I befriend the most vulnerable learners so that they will trust us as educators.

Q18: Are there any other stakeholders working collaboratively with you as an educator to control the problem by reducing the factors influencing the dropout rate in your school? If yes, how do they help?

P13: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests sometimes come to preach the word of God and the social workers to identify the most at risk learners that can be helped by the government.

P14: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P15: Definatetly, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves criminals, nurses also talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P16: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses from the hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different churches sometimes come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P17: Definately, some times in a while police in the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves, nurses too come to talk with

learners about HIV and AIDS and other pandemic diseases, priests from the different churches also come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

P18: Yes, police from the child protection unity department comes to discuss ways in which children can protect themselves from abusers, nurses from the nearby district hospital also come to talk with learners about HIV and AIDS, priests from the different nearby villages come to preach the word of God and even the social workers do identify learners that can be helped by the government.

Q19: What remedies can you suggest to reduce this problem of dropping out of learners from school?

P13: Eish, Education for All Campaign will be the best because keeping learners in school can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs.P14: Education for All Campaign will be the best for this problem in order to keep learners away from streets to eliminate poverty. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty.P15: Education for All Campaign will be the best because keeping learners in schools can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and identify, prevent and report child abuse and neglect because they are the ones with a close relationship with learners.

P16: Education for All Campaign will be the best according to me because keeping learners in schools can eliminate child labour. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and the parents be enforced to work collaboratively with educators for the benefit of the learners.P17: Education for All Campaign can be used to fulfil the government vision of implementing FPE. I also think every educator must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be ready and aware of the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom. Not ignoring the fact that student educator's should be taught to punish learners in accordance with the school code of conduct for learners.P18: I think every educators must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs and be tuned into the culture of the life of poverty and be sensitive to the array of needs that poor learners bring to the classroom to reduce child labour. There must also be educational act which

force parents to work collaboratively with educators and there must be some consequences if they fail to do so.

Q20: As an educator generally, what do you think can be done in Teyaneng primary schools to reduce this problem of learners dropping out of school?

P13: Educators must be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign. I also think positive parental involvement can be the solution to eliminate child labour.

P14: The presence of school professionals can be useful in reducing school dropout and lead to few or less absences, nurse practitioners in school based health centers can fascilitate a healthier population resulting in good and improved attendance.Educators need to be ready for the culture of the life of poverty and be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE.

P15: I think the principals, educators and the chief together with the community members can help orphans by asking for donations which can be used to provide facilities and education services to orphans.

P16: Educators must be instructed to have their picture taken each day with learners and be paid only when the cameras recorded them present.Educators need to be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE.

P17: Educators need to accept poor learners as they are and be ready for the culture of the life of poverty and be well trained in order to support all learners according to their special educational needs so that they reach their maximum potential in learning, and by implementing education for all campaign to promote FPE. I also think positive parental involvement can be the solution to eliminate child labour.

P18: To work collaboratively with parents in order to address learning gaps during the school year, practicing AIDS awareness Campaign in schools and by implementing education for all campaign. Student educators must always approach the qualified educators for advice and support regarding intervention and how to handle specific learner needs.

This is the end of the interview sessions with the three schools chosen in this study.