

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO PROBLEMS WHICH THE GIRL
CHILD FACES WHEN SHE DROPS OUT OF SCHOOL: A
CASE STUDY OF GUTU DISTRICT GONA CLUSTER**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF EDUCATION IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR A DIPLOMA IN ADULT EDUCATION**

GWERU, ZIMBABWE

DECLARATION

I Amos Ncube do hereby affirm that, this dissertation is the result of my own independent study and records, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgements, references and acknowledged sources in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part of fulfilment for the requirements of a diploma to any other university or college.

.....

Student

.....

date

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This dissertation could not have been completed without the great support that I have received from so many people over the years during my study time.

I would like to thank my supervisor for the guidance, advice, support and encouragement that allowed me to pursue this research project in partial fulfilment of my studies for an Under Graduate Diploma in Adult Education.

To my family and friends. You have encouraged my academic interests and spent time without me when I was committed to my studies. God will bless you all.

To my fellow students. I thank you for your inputs, ideas and contributions

ABSTRACT

The girl child is still facing serious challenges after dropping out of school. To gain an insight on the problem, the study sought to investigate the problems faced by the girl child after dropping out of school. In carrying out the study, the problems faced by the girl child, implications after dropping out, policies in place for retention girls in school, as well as the possible solutions were explored. From the review of literature on school dropout in relation to the girl child, Maslow's theory of motivation formed the basis of the literature review. Maslow (1943) postulated that human beings have intrinsic needs that need to be fulfilled in order for the person to realize the next need in the hierarchy of needs. If the needs are not met a person might device other means to meet those needs. In the context of this study, the needs of the girl child were assumed not to have been met if she prematurely dropped out of school. The theoretical and conceptual framework outlined the factors that lead to school dropouts and the implications emanating therefrom. Literature on girl child dropout showed that reasons and problems faced by the girls differed internationally, regionally and nationally. The study adopted the qualitative approach that used both the questionnaire and the interview to collect the information from the respondents. This study found out that a cumulative total of 156 children dropped out of school between the period years 2015 – 2016. Of the 156 children, 93 are girls. The study also showed that girls who drop out of school exhibited low self-esteem. The reasons for dropping out of school were among others, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and cultural factors such as 'Kuzvarira', betrothal. From the study results, it was shown that school dropout impacted negatively on the girl child's personal development. The results showed that the education sector is not adequately funded, and national policies on the retention of the girl child are not fully implemented. The other pertinent result was that the limited social safety nets were grossly abused to the detriment of the girl child.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS.....Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

B.E.A.M.....Basic Assistance Module.

F.A.W.E.....Forum for African Women Educationists.

H.I.V.....Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

UNESCO.....United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

UNICEF.....United Nations Children’s Education Fund.

CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction.

School drop-out rates for girl children continues to be a cause for concern. Although government put in place education policies to keep female children in school, dropout rates for the girl child remain significant. Consequently female children do not complete the education cycle are not equipped with the requisite knowledge. According to UNICEF (2012) despite its importance, strategies designed to improve retention and progression in school has received relatively little attention. Children dropping out of school without completing the education cycle remain a key constraint in Zimbabwe. This study sought to investigate the problems encountered by girl children if they drop out of school. The background of the study and statement of the problem shall be highlighted. The significance of the proposed study, delimitation and limitations of the study shall also be highlighted in this chapter and a summary shall also be outlined.

1.1 Background to the Study

Bridgeland et al (2006) asserts that whilst studies have focused on issues for both females and males, drop-out patterns differ with sex of the pupils. Of concern have been disparities for the dropout rates between boys and girls. For example, if a girl falls pregnant whilst at school, she is excluded from school. If the pregnancy involves a boy child the boy is allowed to remain in school whilst the girl child is out of school. Although there are many factors which contribute to the rise in drop-outs for both sexes, the implications invariably lead to a rise in drop-out of girl children.

Brown (2004) defines dropouts as those pupils 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 level. Mawere (2012) further defines dropout as a pupil who ceases to attend school either temporarily or permanently, before completing the given educational cycle without the school's consent. This study used dropout to mean to leaving school without finishing the

prescribed education process and not having the required permission to do so.

Patrick (2008) states that worldwide the drop-out challenge is at alarming levels. According to Zombwe, Vira and Jeremia, (2011), the right to education is covered in global treaties for example, the UN Convention of the Rights for the Child. Zombwe, Vira and Jeremia, (2011) further states that Sub-Saharan countries enacted policies that show the commitments to female children's education in accordance with the global and regional treaties. Some of these policies include the African Charter on Human and People's Rights 1986, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Conference of African Ministries for Education. In Zimbabwe, the government has enacted a number of policies aimed at retaining the girl child in school. The most prominent education policy is the Better Education Assistance Module (BEAM) that pays for school children who cannot afford to pay school fees. The Zimbabwean government also ratified the Convention of the Right of the Child that states that education is a right to every child, and universal primary should be free. UNICEF and Save the Children also have school assistance programmes that complement the government's BEAM policy. These policies have not been fully implemented to the benefit of the girl child. Bridgeland et al, (2006) contends that despite the existence of elaborate education policies, girls' school enrolment is low, and the female pupil drop-out is significant. The elaborate policies are, by and large, not being fully implemented.

The drop-out rate is significant among female students. Fawe (2006) showed that in Matebeleland South female at junior secondary constituted 45 per cent of attendance and this declined to 36 per cent at senior secondary school. Chadzuka (2008) stated that girl child drop-outs in Mutare showed a higher increase at 59 per cent in comparison to boys drop-outs at 51 per cent. Bridgeland et al (2006) echoes that in spite of the fact that labour opportunities require skills above secondary education, the female student's experiences and piecemeal response to the experiences normally end up in girls dropping out of school. On the other hand Holmes (2003) also showed that females lesser academic acquisition and prematurely leave school in comparison to male students.

However Holmes (2003) in this regard says that, if drop-out vary by sex with a greater percentage for female students, therefore, the skewed variance shows peculiar factors related to female school drop-out. Holcamp (2009) argues that some peculiar factors lead to differential school output that resultantly increase the drop-out of female students. Mawere (2012) adds that little attention has been given to evaluating the causal factors of female drop-out and their effects especially in rural areas, yet the female pupil drop-out is a significant challenge which dramatically impact on socio- economic development in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

The basic assistance module (BEAM) programme in Zimbabwe, for example, has failed to retrain disadvantaged children in school due to underfunding. Other social and school factors still contribute to drop out rates. This, therefore, calls for in-depth analysis on the causal factors that lead to the significant dropout rates.

.1.2 Statement of the Problem

Evidence showed that many children especially girls are denied access to education which is a basic human right, and girls are still less likely to enrol and remain in school. With the introduction of the universal primary and free education in most countries including Zimbabwe, all school going children are expected to enrol and complete the education cycle. According to UNESCO (2006), hundreds of thousands of school going children especially girls are not in school. According to Mawere (2012) although Zimbabwe is a developing country with a high literacy rate, the girl child dropout rate, especially in rural schools, remains high. Existing literature pertaining to school dropout rates has mainly focused on factors that lead to girl children dropping out of school without going into the a deeper understanding of the problems faced by the girl child after she drops out of school. It is thus, important to study these problems faced by the girl child after she drops out of school. The proposed study therefore, seeks to investigate the challenges faced by the girl child in particular after she drops out of school.

1.3 Research Questions.

This study sought to answer the following questions.

- a) What are the problems faced by the girl child when she drops out of school.
- b) What is the impact of the girl child school drop-out?
- c) What policies are in place to address the challenge of school drop-out rates in relation to the girl child?
- d) What are the possible solutions to retain the girl child in school?

1.4 Significance of the Study.

1.4.1 To the Girl Child.

This study will help the girl to be retained in school through identification of shortcomings in education policies, and proffering solutions to the effects of school drop-out.

1.4.2 To the Researcher.

The study is a critical component in the partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Diploma in Adult Education. After completion of this study, the researcher will be awarded with a Diploma in Adult Education. This study will also enable the researcher to gain knowledge to link theoretical and practical aspects of the working environment.

1.4.3 To the University.

The study will benefit other students to understand the girl child drop-out phenomenon. The research results will contribute to the body of knowledge in education policies, and will be valuable to other researchers.

1.4.4 To the State.

The findings of the study will benefit the country through recommendations for policy formulation pertaining to the retention of the girl child in school with a view to contributing to national development. The study results are also expected to assist the government in putting

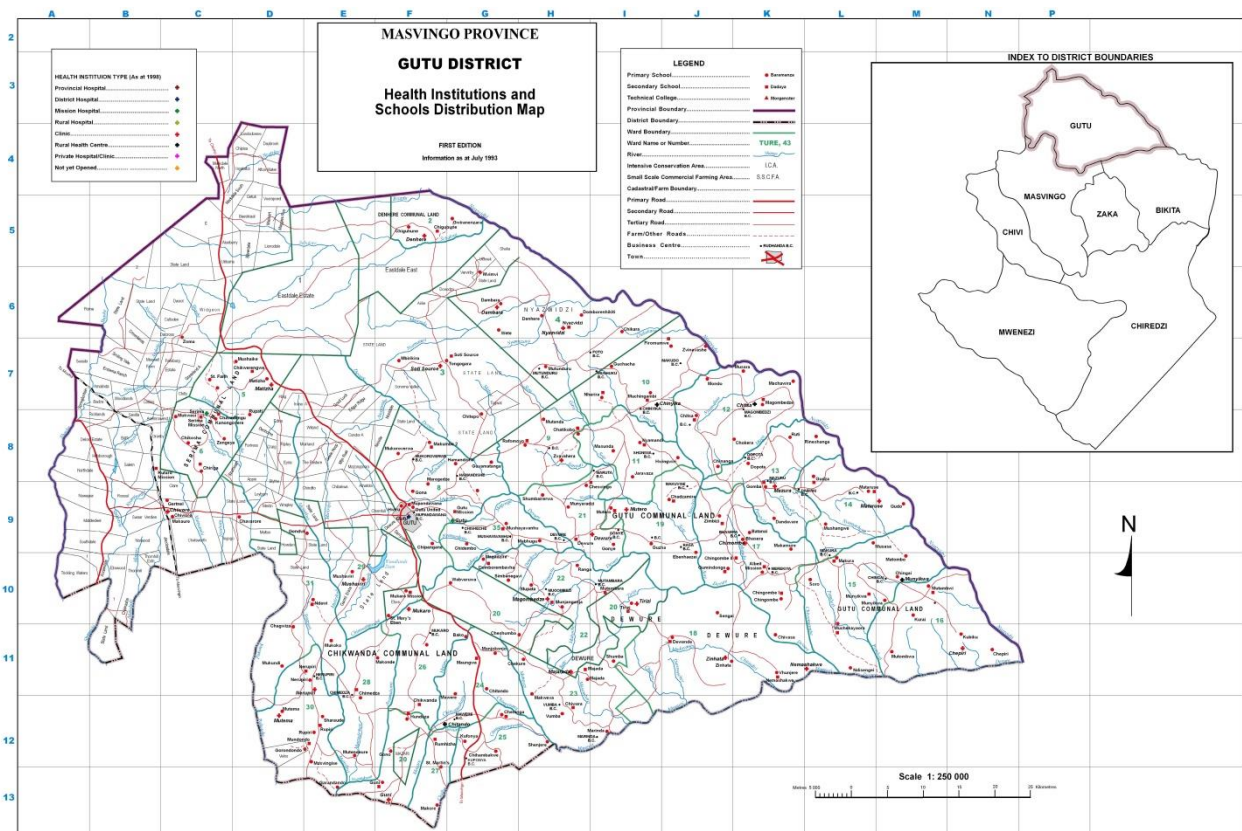
strategies in place that will ensure smooth integration of girl children into mainstream society as they reach adulthood.

1.4.5 To the Family and the Community.

The community will benefit through an empowered girl child who will be retained in school. The girl child who is retained in school will develop intellectually, morally and physically thereby being able to make significant contribution to community development as well as national development. Families will benefit from a girl child who will be economically independent. The girl child will be able to contribute to family income at household level.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The research was conducted in Gutu District, Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe (See map below). The study was carried out in the Gona Cluster of Gutu District



Gutu is the third largest district in Masvingo Province, southern Zimbabwe, after Chiredzi and Mwenezi. The main source of livelihoods for people in Gutu rural communities is subsistence farming, horticulture,

menial farm jobs, and poultry, brewing and selling traditional beer. The district stretches over an area 7159 square kilometres and is has a total population of 203 533 (as of 2012 Census) giving a population density of 28.4%. 41% of the population (83 499) are children under the age of 15 (ZIMSTATS, 2012).

The research was carried out from May 2016 to November 2016.

1.6 Limitations of the Study.

The study shall use the qualitative methodology that is, by and large, an interpretive method. This makes generalisation of the research findings problematic. Due to the political polarisation obtaining in the country, eliciting objective responses from informants may be a challenge.

The study used the questionnaire with school drop outs in the Gona Cluster of Gutu district. However, with the ethical considerations involved in dealing with children the researcher had challenges in enlisting the children for the study.

1.6.1 Consent to Participate in the Study.

As Cashmore (2006) points it, a protectionist stance denies children their right to express their views on issues that affect them. Researchers are at times required to seek consent from a range of adults in children's lives and negotiate what Hood et al (1996) terms a "hierarchy of gatekeeping" before being allowed to enlist the children to take part in a study. Adults must essentially give consent on behalf of children. In this study, the hierarchy of gatekeeping includes the parents and guardians of the children, University Ethical clearance, and clearance from Ministry of Education and Department of Social Services.

1.6.2 Time Factor.

The researcher also used the quantitative method that involved use of the questionnaire. This is time consuming, and requires a huge financial outlay. This potentially affects the representativeness of the sample that is enlisted and, therefore, the validity of the findings of the study.

1.7 Summary.

In this chapter the research problem has been discussed. The background of the study, and problem statement were highlighted. The research questions, significance of the study, and the delimitations of the study were outlined in this chapter. The aims and objectives of the study were also highlighted, as well as the potential limitations of the study and a chapter summary was also drawn.

CHAPTER TWO.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.0. Introduction.

This chapter provides a literature review of the study. The global, Sub-Saharan African and the Zimbabwean contexts are reviewed, with the drop-out rates of the girl child as the main focus. Although this review is drawn from the global perspectives, the leading views were drawn from the Zimbabwean context, as applicable to this research study. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided the study are discussed. The factors that lead to school dropouts are also discussed, as well as the challenges the girl child faces after dropping out of school and in the end a summary shall be drawn.

2.1 Theoretical Framework.

Borrowing from Cunningham (2008) Maslow's hierarchy of needs informs this study. Within his model there are five sets of needs or goals namely; physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation. The basic tenet of Maslow (1943)'s theory is that thwarting or threatening basic human goals is seen as a psychological threat which can harm the individual's ability to function. If needs are not met negative outcomes will emerge. This is the basis for undertaking this study. In investigating the problems faced by the girl child, cognisance is taken on the deprivation of the basic needs of children in having a fulfilling life.

2.1.1 Physiological Needs

Cunningham (2008) states that physiological sustenance is viewed as the most basic human motivator. According to Maslow physiological needs are the most demanding of satisfaction and include biological drives such as food, water, and good sleep.

2.1.2 Safety Needs

According to Cunningham (2008) if the physiological needs are met the individual concerned will be faced with safety needs. Safety needs refer to the need for being secure and protected. In the context of school

drop-out, if the safety need is not met, the girl child is vulnerable to various challenges in life including early marriage and prostitution.

2.1.3 Belonging and Love Needs

They refer to the need to be loved and accepted by other people. Girl children are prone to be neglected if they drop out of school leading to anti-social behaviour such as teenage pregnancies, exclusion and low self-esteem.

2.1.4 Esteem Needs

According to Maslow (1943), esteem needs are the need to have respect, confidence and admiration of others. Boys and teachers at school lack respect for girls' sexual maturation which creates problem of self-esteem for girls. Magwa (2006) points out that as a result girls become less confident even in academic circles leading to girl children eventually dropping out of school. Cunningham (2008) points out that people who have satisfied their esteem needs tend to be highly productive and well adjusted. Gendered practice of giving value to a boy child by educating him in place of a girl child when there is a financial strain in the family makes girl child lose self-esteem. Due to poverty some girl learners may fail to get sanitary provisions during menstruation and will avoid going to school for fear of mockery associated with spoiling oneself resulting in them losing confidence.

2.1.5 Self actualisation

It refers to the need to become all that one is capable of being to develop one's fullest potential. In Maslow's theory there are critical ramifications for girl child school drop-out. A huge number of girls are not accorded their right to schooling. There are many obstacles that make girls quit school thereby shattering their dreams to realise their full potential. Dekeza-Tsomo (2012) argues that motivation energises learners to achieve their goals. Safety needs are especially prominent during early years. In a situation that girl learners encounter molestation and their safety needs thwarted this leads to school drop-out, and the child's psychosocial functioning is damaged. Parents failing to pay cost of school resources might result in girls facing peer pressure and be discouraged from attending school. If girls' needs are not met they drop

out of school failing to reach their potential. Consequently they fail to self- actualise.

2.2 Conceptual Framework.

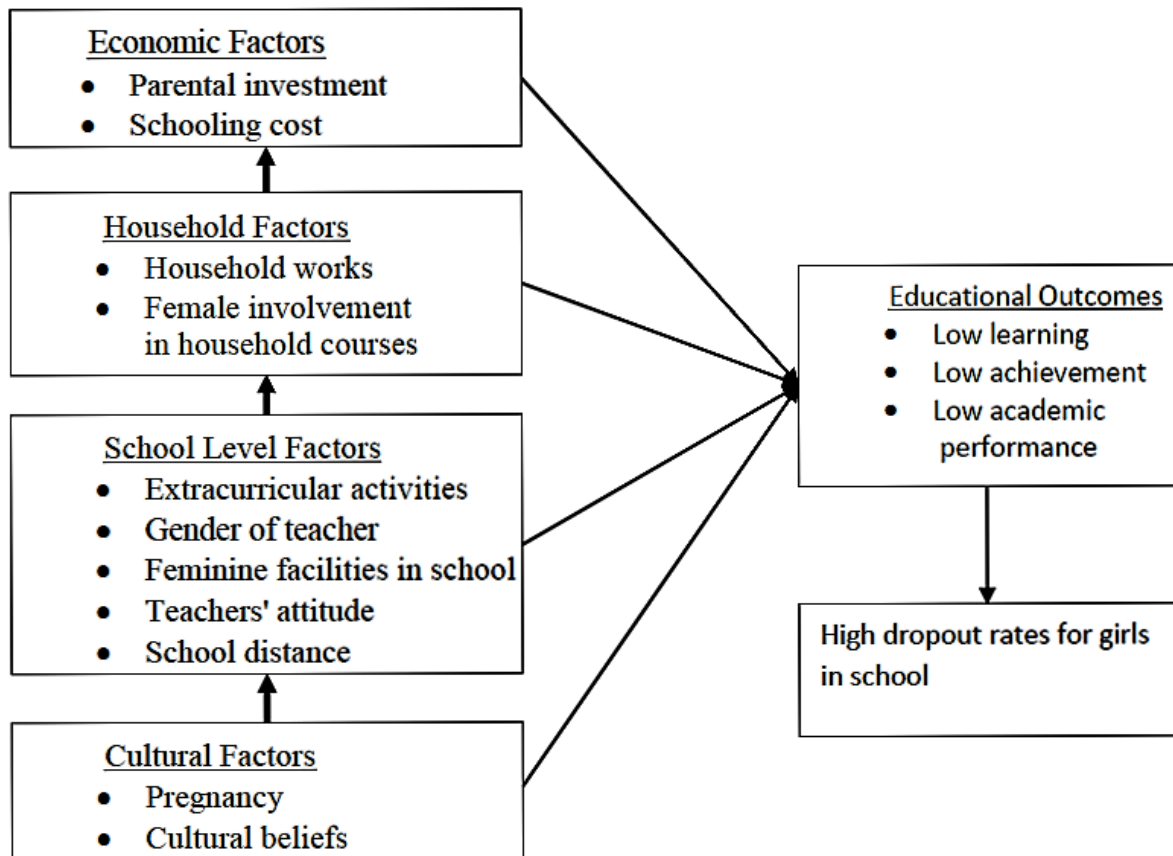


FIGURE 1 (Factors that Lead to School Drop-out Outcomes of Female Pupils. Adapted from Shahidul, and Zehadul-Karim, 2015)

The progress of a community can be measured by investigating issues which extend school inequities inherent in the community they live in. A review of literature revealed that globally female pupil drop-outs are greater in comparison to males. For example, UNESCO (2013), stated that in comparison with male students, the rate of drop-out for girls is greater in forty nine nations. Holcamp (2009) argues that some social and cultural factors have far-reaching implications on female student drop-outs. Figure 1 above outlines that certain factors produce lead to negative schooling outcomes that resultantly increase the drop-out

rate for female students. With reference to the conceptual framework, the thrust of this study was to identify the factors that led to the rise in the drop-outs, particularly among female students in Zimbabwe with particular emphasis on the Gona Cluster in Gutu District. According to Shahidul and Zehadul-Karim (2015) Drop-out rates are a composition of several factors.

2.2.1 Economic Factors

2.2.1.1 Parental Investment

According to Shahidul and Zehadul-Karim (2015) support of female children is skewed in terms of gender. Kingdon, (2005) postulates that there is gender imbalance in relation to support to female students by parents. In resource poor family settings, boys are given preferential treatment in the allocation of household income.

2.2.1.2 Schooling Costs

Evidence shows that education expenses particularly school fees, are a critical factor for drop-outs. Education expenses were associated with the sex of the pupil since families were usually reluctant to pay tuition costs of their girl children. Parents usually prefer to withdraw the girl child in preference of the boy child.

2.2.2 Household Level Factors

2.2.2.1 Household Work

Shahidul and Zehadul-Karim (2015) observed that female students usually start doing household chores at an earlier age than males. According to Pong et al (2003) Female headed households have a greater burden of caring for the family, and the consequent result is the dropping out of school of the girls in the household.

2.2.3 School Level Factors

Study evidence shows that school level factors had an effect on the retention of children in school. A study by Jacqueline et al. (2013) showed that an estimated 76 per cent of boys pupils were not constrained in taking part in any non-academic activities compared to only 48 per cent for females. According to Hewett (2010) in Senegal

taking part in sport by Moslem women is socially and culturally prohibited.

2.2.3.2 Female Teachers in School

Studies have examined the impact of female teachers on the educational achievement of girls. Solotaroff (2006) found out that in Afghanistan, lack of female teachers is a hindrance to female students' participation and enrolment in schools. He further stated that in Pakistan, female pupils drop out prematurely due to lack of female teachers in schools. In these communities, families prematurely stopped their girl children's education due to unavailability of female teachers in schools. Carrel (2010) unveils evidence which shows that, the availability of female teachers in schools led to positive educational outcomes for the girl child.

2.2.3.3 Absenteeism

Studies show that inconsistent attendance was a causal factor for school drop-out.. Manacorda (2011) states that female students were at a higher risk of school absence, and drop-out. In Ethiopia, Ngales (2006) found out that girl children absconded from school during menstrual periods and consistent absence led them to drop out from school.

2.2.3.4 Feminine Facilities in Schools

Female pupils' privacy at schools was a factor which forced them to drop out from schools. UNICEF (2006) observed that in Africa, the lack of basic sanitation causes decreased enrolment of girls in secondary schools, and girls spend more time in schools when sanitation facilities are adequate.

2.2.3.5 Teachers' Attitude

Colclough et al. (2000) found out that in Ethiopia, teachers in school viewed male pupils more positively than female pupils because they usually expected the female students to leave school early.

2.2.3.6 School Distance

Distance to school was a critical factor of school dropout for female students. Juneja (2002) observed that if school distance is considered

too far from home, young girls tend to drop out more due to the vulnerability of girl children to sexual harassment. Parents are afraid of the safety of their girl children if they have to travel long distances to school. School distance is a hindrance to girls' education in many countries in Africa. Ainsworth et al. (2006) found out that short distances to school were a positive motivating factor to female pupils.

2.2.4 Cultural Factors

2.2.4.1 Early Marriage

In the African context early marriage is a great contributing factor to high school drop-out among girl children. Holcamp (2010) found out that drop-out rate was higher for female pupils because parents considered female students' education as of no use since they left their own family when they got married. In an Afghan study, Mansory (2008) also found out that early marriage was a leading causal factor for school drop-out of female pupils.

2.2.4.2 Pregnancy

Shahidul and Zehadul-Karim (2015) concluded that teenage pregnancy in most African societies is a critical cause of school dropout for female students. The national policies that exclude the girl child from school also have a lasting effect on the drop-out rate among girls.

2.2.4.3 Cultural Beliefs

Cultural beliefs have a bearing on the outcome of school attendance. According to Save the Children (2006) cultural norms and values hinders female students' schooling. Atayi (2009) observed that in SSA families viewed female students' role to be confined in the private sphere and did not require schooling, since their role was in carrying out household chores.

2.3. Causes of the Girl Child School Dropout in Zimbabwe: An Overview

2.3.1. Poverty and Gendered Social Practices

In a study in Masvingo by Magwa and Ngara (2015) found out that 77.5% of the respondents were of the view that girls drop out of school

more often than boys, compared to only 22.5% who thought this is not the situation. Magwa and Ngara (2015) also found out that poverty and gendered social practices were central factors that hinder girls' access to education. In the Gutu district study, Mawere (2012) found out that the main reasons for girl child dropout were poverty and economic hardships which accounted for 80% of the dropouts. The poor socio-economic status of girls imposed great constraints upon girls' continuation with their education. Parents were unable to pay for the fees and other school resources like uniforms, and girls bore the brunt of withdrawal from school. In the Masvingo study by Magwa and Ngara, (2015) results indicated that when in a financial strain, parents opt to withdraw the girl child from education and further the education of the boy child.

As a result of poverty some girls lacked adequate sanitation. Evidence from Magwa and Ngara (2015) shows that adolescent girls who menstruate may miss out school for a week, the girls miss school as they try to grapple with problems arising from lack of protective clothing and sanitary towels or pads. In a situation where a girl is menstruating amid poor environment a girl may decide to miss school and will eventually dropout.

2.3.2 Early marriage, and Socio-Cultural Factors.

According to Magwa and Ngara (2015) early marriage is prevalent in Zimbabwean communities. Findings from the Masvingo study revealed that early marriage is a contributing factor to girl child dropping out of school at secondary level. Early marriage was as a result of poor socio-economic background and also due to some religious customs. Early marriage is a socio-cultural factor that hinders a girl child's access to school. Stewart (2004) argues that religious beliefs also affect girl's retention in school. In Zimbabwe most girl children of the apostolic faith religion sect are married as soon as they reach puberty and drop out as a result. Mawere (2012) found out that some rural parents still believe that educating a girl child is a waste of resources as she will ultimately leave home for marriage and the benefits of educating her are enjoyed by someone else.

2.3.3 Teenage Pregnancy.

Teenage pregnancy is a social problem that results in the pregnant teenager dropping out of school. Magwa and Ngara (2015) found out that pregnancy is a common cause of many girl children dropping out of school as revealed by the Masvingo study. These findings are also noted by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education where 122 girls dropped out of school in Beitbridge as a result of pregnancies with 65% of them below the age of 16. Sabates, et al (2010) argues that teenage pregnancy is a factor that explains the higher risk for school dropout for girls.

2.4 Similarities, Differences and Gaps.

The obtaining girl child drop-out phenomenon is similar to that obtaining internationally and regionally. According to UNESCO, (2010) for example, around 15 to 20 per cent of Roma children in Bulgaria and 30 per cent in Romania do not continue in school post Grade 4 in primary school. UNESCO (2010) further state that in Guatemala poor indigenous girls a higher likelihood to drop out than non-poor indigenous girls.

Studies in India Rani, (2011) found that financial challenges, lack of interest in schooling,, lack of education facilities, lack of quality education, imposition of parents' choices upon adolescents, lack of privacy, and facilities for female students in school and security reasons as reasons cited for school drop-out. In Pakistan, Mohsin et al (2005) found out that the weak schooling system, non-availability of qualified teachers, and parent- teacher relationship as the major causes of drop-outs.

The differences are derived from the USA, in which Bridgeland et al (2006) cited elitist factors such as classes not interesting, spending a lot of time with those not interested in school, absolute freedom to do what children felt like doing, and failure in school. The difference is, by and large, the context in which the dropout occurs.

This research builds on the existing literature to examine the effects of the girl child drop-out to the child, family, communities and the nation at large. Several qualitative and quantitative studies were undertaken in Zimbabwe. Prominent studies were carried out by Magwa and Ngara,

Mandina, and Mawere (2012). As highlighted in this chapter studies have focused on the factors leading to increased drop-out rates among girls and boys, and inadequate information is available on the problems the girl child faces after dropping out of school. This is a significant gap that needs to be further explored.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the evidence from current studies on the girl child drop-out phenomenon. A theoretical and conceptual framework has been discussed. The global and Sub-Saharan perspectives were discussed in the conceptual framework. The Zimbabwean perspective and the Gutu perspective were also discussed. The factors that lead to girl children dropping out of school were discussed and a chapter summary.

CHAPTER THREE.

Research Methodology.

3.0 Introduction.

This chapter focused on the research methodology that was employed in the study. The study was carried out in Gutu district in the Gona Cluster. This chapter gave a detailed description of how the research was undertaken. Major areas covered included research design, study population, sources of data and collection procedures, sampling, research instruments used, data analysis and presentation. The study sought to describe the problems faced by girl children in Zimbabwe who drop out of school, the challenges that they face, their needs, and possible suggestions to ease those problems and a chapter summary in the end.

3.1 Research Methodology

Cresswell (2003) defines research as a carefully planned investigation of social phenomena in order to gain more understanding of the identified problem. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) say that the methodology sets out systematic stages, methods and processes that are followed in carrying the research. It is aimed at availing a background and justification to the research design. The research used the case study methodology focusing on the Gona Cluster of primary and secondary school. The quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to gain an insight into the perceptions and feelings of school heads, community leaders and girl children who were out of school on causes of girl child school dropouts.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), research methodology is the process of following the steps, procedures and strategies for eliciting information and analysing the data in a research investigation.

Qualitative studies aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. Hossain (2011) asserts that qualitative researchers study people in their natural settings, to identify how their experiences and behaviours are shaped by the contexts of their lives such as the social, economic, cultural and physical contexts.

3.2 Research Design

Kothari (2008) defines a research design is a process for collecting information and analysis of data in a way which combined relevance to the research purpose with utility in the process. The research adopted the qualitative interpretive approach. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) the qualitative approach allows the researcher to gain understanding of this social phenomenon from participants' perspectives in their natural setting.

Kothari, (2008) states that research design helps in the methodological collection and analysis of data from the respondents. Within the qualitative approach the study adopted a case study research design. Punch (2000) defines a case study as a field of inquiry that investigates a specific area in order to gain access to the real life context where the problem is clearly visible, and it is an intensive in-depth study of a specific individual, group or institution in a specific context, . The case study design was used because the researcher wanted to have a clear understanding of the problems the girl child faces after she drops out of school

The mixed method uses the triangulation approach. Cresswell (2003) states that triangulation is a mixed approach in which the researcher uses procedures of inquiry that involve collecting numerical data as well as text information in order to provide a holistic view of the issue under investigation. Sapsford (2007) posits that triangulation is used in order to counteract the limitations posed by either the qualitative and quantitative approaches. In essence, triangulation is used in to complement the two research methods so that results obtained would be holistic to enable reliability, and validity of data.

3.3 Population

Population is defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) as the total sum of all research units. Population may also be referred to as a collection of individuals, and objects with observable characteristics that the researcher makes inferences as Donald and Pamela (2003) explains. The population in this study is the total number of the children out of school which adds up to an estimate of 769 children of secondary school going age.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is a systematic process on how respondents to be selected in a study are obtained. Cresswell (2008) states that a sample is the representative unit of the population from where study results are drawn. This study adopted a purposive sampling technique.

3.5 Sampling Frame

Borrowing from Cresswell (2008) sampling frame as all items in any field of inquiry that constitute the total population in a specific locality to be studied says Kothari (2008). The sampling frame of the study was selected from school drop outs in the Gona Cluster catchment area, of the target population which adds up to 769 children of school going age. Of the 769 children 426 are girls. The sample size drawn from the target population was 50 respondents. The Gona Clusters has 8 schools. 2 Guidance and Counselling Teachers were selected from the 8 schools as key informants who assisted in identifying the research subjects. 2 Officials in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 3 school Heads, 2 community leaders and 20 girl drop-outs of secondary school age completed the sampling size.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure.

Dawson (2002) defines data collection as a process that involves getting consent from the participants and their express willingness to provide required information. Data was collected through the questionnaire and interviews with key informants. Robinson (2002) further defines data collection as a systematic collection of information relating to a particular research problem. Robinson (2002) contends that if information is elicited haphazardly, it will be a challenge to answer the research questions in a comprehensive manner.

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments.

Data collection instruments according to Christensen and James (2008) are the choices of a tool and instrument that depends mainly on the attributes of the subject, research topic, data and expected results. Data was collected through the questionnaire and in-depth interviews with key informants.

3.6.1.1 The Questionnaire.

Fowler (2002) defines a questionnaire as a list of questions which respondents are asked to answer. For the purpose of this study, open-ended and fixed questions were used to elicit information of the effect of school drop-out on the girl child. Fowler (2002) further posits that structured questions are precise and effective and avoid asking irrelevant questions and the categorised responses make data analysis easier, for this reason the researcher chose to use the questionnaire in this study. Questionnaires were administered to the sampled girl children out of school.

3.6.1.2 Interviews.

According to Christensen and James, (2008) an interview involves dialogue between the researcher and respondent. The researcher used face to face open-ended interviews with key informants. The interview was an important data collection tool in that it assisted the respondents to give an insight and meaning to the research objectives and questions. Interviews are used to complement the data collection from questionnaires.

3.7 Sources of data.

There are basically two sources of data that the researcher used, that is secondary and primary data.

3.7.1 Secondary data.

In Saunders (2007) these are sources that have already been collected for other purposes but relevant input to the research secondary data included published reports such as libraries, journals, internet, strategic plans and annual reports.

3.7.2 Primary data.

These are original sources of data from respondents. According to Remenyi (2009) primary data is data collected from original sources and not already published sources. The source of primary data involved collecting data from respondents with the consent from respondents.

3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis.

This involved the interpretation and presentation of findings obtained from the research study. Primary data collected through questionnaires and interviews was analysed in line with each research question.

Thematic approach was used in analysing data. White (2005), states that thematic approach is a strategy that uses themes towards creating an active, interesting and meaningful patterns for easier analysis. The findings from the questionnaire were presented in form of descriptive basic statistics.

Data from the questionnaires was entered into Excel for analysis. From the quantitative approach tables and graphs were used to present the information.

3.9 Ethical considerations.

Cohen, (2004) defines ethics as a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of research subjects. This study was mainly concerned with ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymity, consent, and independence.

Dawson (2002) noted that each study faced an ethical question.

3.9.1 Confidentiality and Anonymity.

The dilemma of ethics becomes more apparent in studies including children, more so when it concerns investigating factors that directly impact on their lives. According to Cohen (2004) respondents may misinterpret the researcher's intentions as that of intrusion into private lives of children. In this study, the respondents were assured of both confidentiality and anonymity. Interviews were carried out in private rooms and no names were written on the questionnaires to ensure anonymity.

3.9.2 Consent.

Christensen and James (2008) posit that consent is a critical component of the e research undertaking in that it gives credibility to the results of the study. Studies involving children require dispensing consent from their parents and caregivers. To deal with this ethical problem, the researcher sought the permission to carry out research by seeking approval from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for

permission before undertaking the study. The study participants comprise children aged below 18 years. Consent from respondents was dispensed before interviewing the respondents.

3.9.3 Independence.

The researcher took cognisance of the independence of the respondents. Respondents were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and no harm could be done on them if they chose not to take part in the study. Cohen (2004) contends that respondent should voluntarily participate in a study without fear of harm for not taking part.

3.10 Summary

This section outlined the study methodology and design that was used to elicit information, procedure, analyses and presentation data from participants drawn from the research. The sampling method was discussed, as well as the data collection tools used in the study. The ethical considerations were also discussed and a summary was drawn.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter presented the results of the research that was carried out in Gutu district Gona cluster. The data from the study was presented in the form of bar graphs, histograms, pie charts and tables. A qualitative analysis of data was also given in this chapter and in the end a summary of the research results was given.

4.1 Table 1 Response Rate

N = 25

Respondent	Target	Actual	%
Girl Child	20	17	85
Community Leaders	2	2	100
School Heads	3	3	100
Total	25		

Of the targeted respondents 85% of the girl children were reached. The community leaders and school heads had a 100% response rate. This was consistent with Bryman and Bell (2003) who pointed out that a range of response rate of 30 – 94 per cent was rated acceptable.

4.2 Demographics

Table 2 Girl Child Age Distribution

Respondent	Age Range	Male	Female	Total	%
Girl Child	13-15	-	11	11	64.7
	16-18	-	6	6	35.3
Total			17	17	100

As shown in table 2 the majority (64.7 percent) of the girl child dropout fall within the age group of 13-15 years. This confirmed that the girl children were dropping out without completing the secondary school education cycle.

Table 3 Community leaders

N = 3

		Gender	
Respondent	Age Range	Male	Female
Ward Councillor/Village Head	18-30	0	0
	31-40	1	0
	41-49	1	0
	50+	0	0
Total		2	0

Table 3 above showed that community leaders were males in the age range 31- 49 years.

Table 4. School Heads

N = 3

Respondent	Age Range	Gender		Level of Education		
		Male	Female	Degree	Diploma	Certificate
School Head	18-30	0	0	0	0	0
	31-40	0	0	0	0	0
	41-49	2	0	2	1	0
	50+	1	0	0	0	0
Total		3	0	2	1	0

Table 4 above showed that all the 3 respondents were males in the age range of 41-50 years. 2 of the respondents had degrees as the highest level of education, and the other one had a Diploma. These respondents were knowledgeable about educational issues, and were experienced in education administration. This gave credence to the research finding since the researcher elicited information from the practicing respondents.

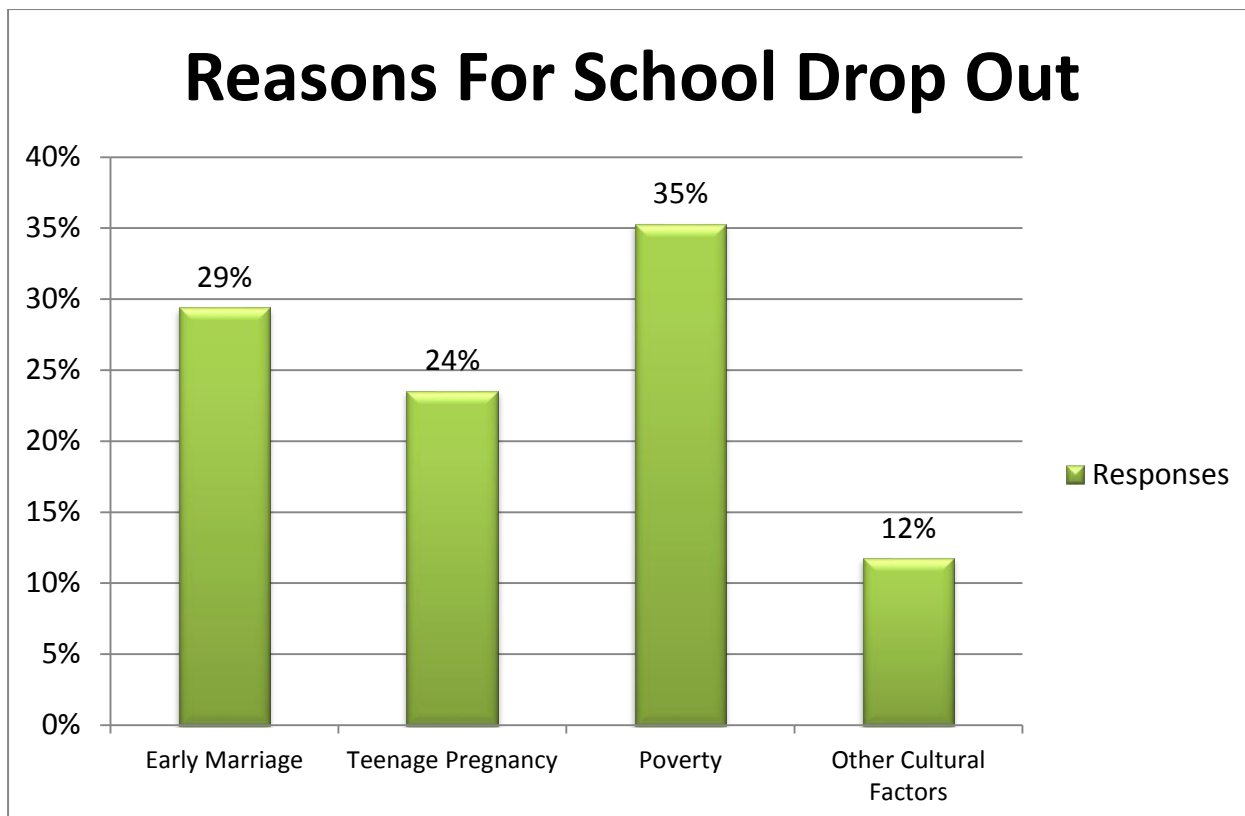


Figure 4.1 Reasons for School Drop Out

Figure 4.1 above showed that girls dropped out of school because of varied reasons of which early marriage was the reason with highest percentage (35%), followed by poverty, teenage pregnancy and religious and cultural factors.

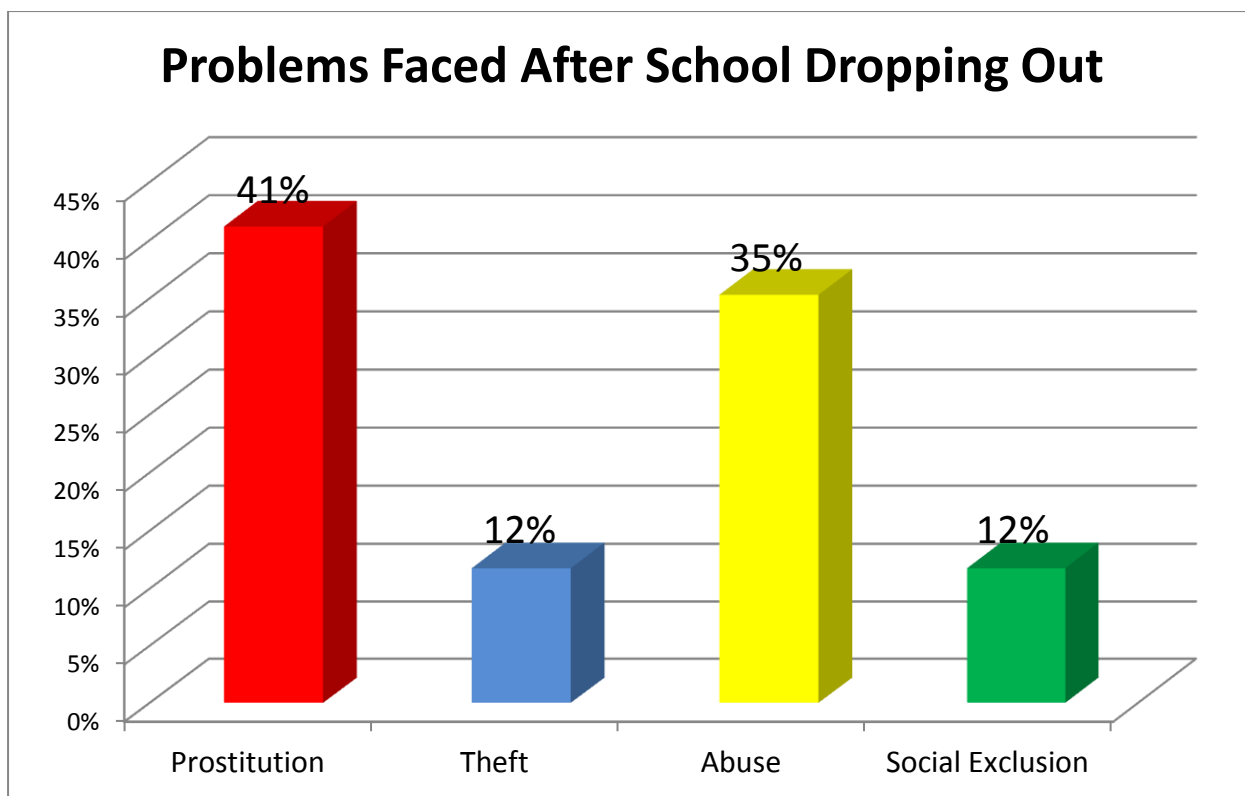


Figure 4.2- Problems faced after dropping out of school

Figure 4.2 above showed problems faced by the girl child after dropping out of school. The results showed that 41 percent of the girls resorted to prostitution, 35 percent were subject to different kinds of abuse. Theft and social exclusion constituted 12 percent of the problems faced respectively.

Implications of Dropping out of School

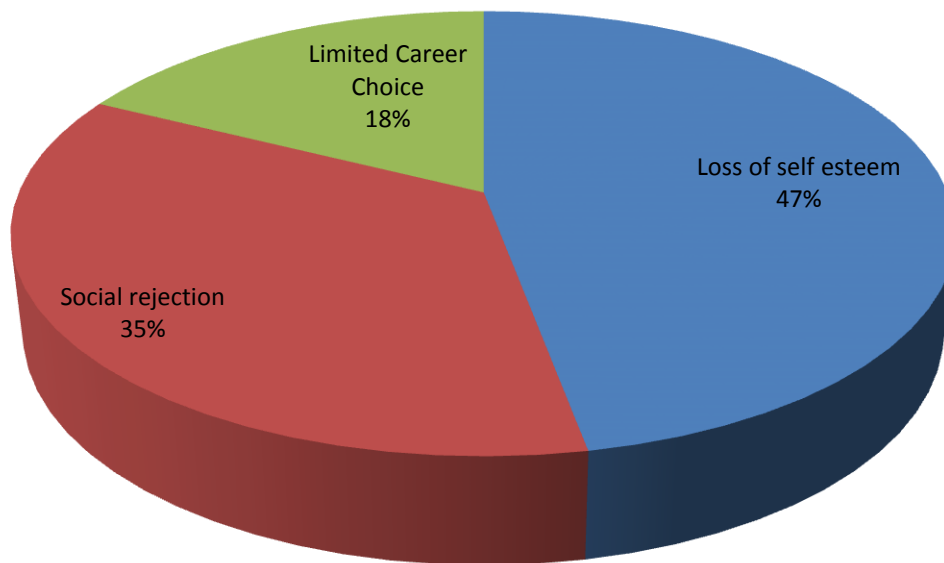


Figure 4.3 Implications of dropping out of school.

As shown in figure 4.3 above dropping out of school had negative implications to the girl child. The majority, 47 percent, of the girl children had a low self-esteem, 35 percent were subjected to social exclusion and 18 percent showed that they had limited career choice. Most of these girl child dropouts became domestic workers, sex workers or street vendors because they lacked the required skills which made themselves marketable in the paying labour markets.

Table 5 - possible solutions to school drop out

N = 17

Solutions	Responses	%
Child friendly schools	2	12
Parental support	9	53
Payment of school fees	4	24
Legal support	2	12
Total	17	100

As shown in table 5 above the majority 53 percent of the respondents need parental support to remain in school. 24 percent of the respondents need financial support from the government and other partners to pay school fees. 12 percent of the respondents needed legal support in terms of forced early marriages and violation of their fundamental rights

Table 6 – recommendations to address dropping out of school

N = 17

Recommendations	Responses	%
Policy implementation	2	12
Community awareness on girl child's rights	12	71
Effective social safety nets	3	17
Total	17	100

Table 6 above depicted that the majority 71 percent of the respondents recommended that there was need for community awareness on girl child’s rights to education. 17 percent recommended that there should be community awareness on girl child rights. 12 percent of the girl children interviewed recommended that effective social safety nets should be put in place

Table 7 - Conceptualization of School Drop Out.

Concept	Responses	%
Continuous absence without reasonable cause	4	80
Voluntary withdrawal from school at premature age	1	20
Totals	3	100

Table 7 showed that 80 percent of the respondents defined school dropout as continuous absence without a reasonable cause. 20 percent of the respondents defined dropping out as voluntary withdrawal from school at a premature age. From a qualitative analysis the respondents have a good appreciation of the concept of school dropout.

Table 8 – Policies to retain girls in school

N = 17

Policy	Responses
Beam/Government policy	5
Social safety nets by NGOs	5
Non exclusion of children for non-payment of school fees	5
Universal education	2
Total	17

Table 8 showed that the majority of respondents cited relevant policies on retention of the girl child in school. However, the respondents lamented lack of policy implementation due to lack of funding. One respondent stated that, “If the funding is inadequate, the unintended beneficiaries end up benefiting”. From a qualitative analysis this statement showed that policy implementers became corrupt and abused the limited funding available to retain girls in school.

Table 9 - Impact of Dropping Out of School

Level	Impact	Responses
School	Reduced pass rate	5
	Domino effect	4
	Reduced enrolment rates	3
Individual	Loss of self esteem	4
	Social vice	4
	Inadequate personal development	5
Community	Increased crime rate	4
	Negative coping strategies	5
	Under development of the community	5
National	Reduced enrolment rates	4
	Reduction in literacy rates	3
	Decreased socio-economic development	5
	Disempowerment	5

Table 9 above highlighted the impact of girl child school dropout. Girl child school dropout impact varies from individual, school, community and national level.

Table 10 – Possible solutions

Possible solution	Responses
Girl child friendly schools	5
Funding of national educational policies	5
Scaling up of NGO support	4
Sanitary support for girls	1
Community sensitization on girl children’s rights	3

From the interviews held, the majority of the respondents highlighted the possible solutions as shown in table 10 above. The 5 respondents cited funding of educational policies and girl child friendly schools as the prominent possible solutions. All the 5 respondents also proffered the adequate funding of national educational policies as a possible solution to address the girl child school dropout problem. 4 respondents cited scaling up of NGO support to the education sector as a possible solution. 3 respondents cited community sensitization on girl children’s rights and 1 respondent suggested provision of sanitary support for girls at school as possible solutions.

Table 11 – Recommendations to Address Girl Child Dropping out

Recommendations	Responses
Increased budget allocation to the education sector	4
Increased funding to social safety nets	5
Policy reform on exclusion of pregnant girl children	4
Legal enforcement on child marriages	3

Table 11 above showed that 5 respondents recommended that the state should increase funding to social safety nets. 4 respondents recommended an in increased budget allocation to the education sector and also 4 respondents recommended for policy reform on exclusion of pregnant girl children from school. 3 of the respondents recommended legal enforcement of laws pertaining to child marriages.

4.5 Discussion

This study sought to answer a number of questions pertaining to the problem of the girl child school dropout. The first question elicited the problems faced by the girl child after dropping out of school. The research results showed that the girls encountered problems which varied from prostitution, theft, abuse, and social exclusion in the community. The research results confirmed the findings by UNICEF (2006) which stated that the girl child resorts to negative coping mechanisms after dropping out of school. In keeping with Maslow's Theory (1943), if the needs are not met one might device other means to meet those needs.

This was further cemented by the finding that girls drop out of school through teenage pregnancy and early marriages. Early marriages and teenage pregnancies lead exclusion of the girl child from school. These findings negate Zombwe, Vira and Jeremia, (2010) who found out that

the right to education is entrenched in international human rights treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The research also sought to find out the impact of dropping out of school to the girl child. The research findings showed that dropping out of school had negative implications to the girl child. The research result echoed Maslow (1943)'s theory on self-esteem needs in that if the needs are not met one loses self-esteem. Dropping out of school had negative impact for the girl child, the community and National levels. The impact varied from, reduced enrolment in schools, low self-esteem, reduction in literacy rates, under development of the community, decreased socio-economic development, disempowerment, increased crime rates and disempowerment.

The third question elicited information on policies in place to retain the girl child in school. Results showed that government policies and social safety nets were in place to address the girl child in school. However, the results also showed that the policies and social safety nets are not adequately funded thereby compounding the problems of school dropouts especially for the girl child. Due to lack of funding the limited resources ended up being abused by policy implementers. This is consistent with Sabates et al (2010) who stated that the limited funding of the education sector leads to abuse of the limited available resources.

National policies on the retention of the girl child are not fully implemented. The study found out that Education Policies such as BEAM are having weaknesses and loopholes which need correction. These loopholes include corruption; the limited funds are benefiting children whose parents can afford to pay school fees for their children. The BEAM is still fraught with bottlenecks. The selection criteria are based on school performance thereby sidelining the often deserving beneficiaries of which girls constitute the greater number. The BEAM programme as a social safety net does not progressively support the beneficiaries to go through the education cycle. For example, BEAM does not support the child from primary school up to university level. In essence the policies lack continuity and consistence. This finding is in accordance with Rani (2011)'s finding that lack of consistence in funding the education sector leads to increases in dropout rates.

The respondents from the questionnaire and interviews suggested practical solutions to address the problem of girl child school dropout. The girl children suggested a number of solutions such as child-friendly schools, parental support, support in payment of school fees, and legal support in terms of early marriages. The headmasters and community leaders suggested that the education policies and safety nets be adequately funded, as well as support from other stakeholders. The results were consistent with UNICEF (2006) which stated that assistance of the girl child terms of payment of school fees and legal assistance is critical in retaining the girl child in school.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the research results from the study. The study results were presented from the questionnaire and a quantitative analysis was given. The quantitative data was presented in table summaries, pie charts, and graphs. The qualitative data from the interviews was presented in table summaries, analyzed. A brief discussion of the research questions in relation to the results was outlined, and a summary.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gave an outline of the research findings. The chapter also outlined the aim of the study, summary of the results and drew conclusions from the findings. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies were also proffered.

5.1 Aim of the Study

Chapter one outlined the objective of carrying out the study. The study sought to investigate the problems faced by the girl child after dropping out of school. In investigating this problem, 4 research questions were used in the study. The research questions were;

- a) What are the problems faced by the girl child when she drops out of school.
- b) What is the impact of the girl child school drop-out?
- c) What policies are in place to address the challenge of school drop-out rates in relation to the girl child?
- d) What are the possible solutions to retain the girl child in school?

Chapter two gave a review of literature on school dropout in relation to the girl child. Maslow's theory of motivation formed the basis of the literature review. In essence Maslow (1943) postulated that human beings have intrinsic needs that need to be fulfilled in order for the person to realize the next need in the hierarchy of needs. If the needs are not met a person might device other means to meet those needs. In the context of this study, the needs of the girl child were assumed not to have been met if she prematurely dropped out of school, for example the girl child could not self-actualize without completing the education cycle. The theoretical and conceptual framework outlined the factors that lead to school dropouts and the implications emanating therefrom. In chapter two international, regional and national literature on girl child drop outs was reviewed. The literature review showed that reasons and problems faced by the girls varied internationally, regionally and nationally.

Chapter three outlined the methodology that was used in carrying the study. The population for the study was identified and a sample was selected from the population. The study adopted the mixed approach that used both the questionnaire and the interview to collect the information from the respondents. The respondents for the questionnaire were 20 girls who dropped out of school, 3 school heads and 2 community leaders.

Chapter four presented the research results. The results were presented in the form of graphs, pie charts and tables. A brief discussion on the research results was also outlined in this chapter.

5.2 Research Findings

The girl child school dropout is a challenge in the Gona Cluster. Gona Cluster has 8 schools. This dropout phenomenon has an impact on the girl child's personal development, the family, and the community at large.

This study found out that;

- A cumulative total of 156 children dropped out of school for the period 2015 – 2016. Of the 156 children, 93 are girls.
- Girls who drop out of school exhibit low self-esteem
- The reason for dropping out of school include, among others, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and cultural factors such as 'Kuzvarira', betrothal.
- School dropout impacts negatively on the girl child's development.
- The education sector is not adequately funded
- National policies on the retention of the girl child are not fully implemented.
- The limited social safety nets were grossly abused to the detriment of the girl child.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the research findings this study concluded that the girl child phenomenon was still a challenge in the education sector. The continued increase in dropout rates affects the girl child in a number of ways. The girl child who was socially excluded ends up adopting negative coping mechanisms such as theft, and prostitution. Prostitution further exposes the girl child to HIV and AIDS and other reproductive challenges. Inconsistent policy implementation and lack of legal support were cited as barriers to retention of the girl child in school. Lack of funding of social safety nets is also hindering the retention of the girl child in school.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made to the:

5.5 Government.

- Education policies should be reformed to enable them to be effective in retaining the girl child in school;
- Legal reforms regarding teenage pregnancy and early marriages should be promoted to ensure the girl child is retained in school;

5.5.1 Community

- Community sensitization on the importance of respecting the rights of the girl child should be scaled up;
- Community safety nets should be promoted;

5.5.2 School.

- At school level child friendly environments and retention schemes should also be promoted;
- Social safety nets and the education sector should be adequately funded.

5.5.3 Suggestion for further studies with reference to retention of the girl child in school.

The girl child school dropout is still a challenge. This study has revealed a number of fundamental problems faced by the girl child. In this regard it is suggested that further studies be carried out on the effect of the education policy framework with particular reference to retention of the girl child in school.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

An investigation into the problems which the girl child faces when she drops out of school

Consent Form.

My name is a student at Midlands State University studying for a Diploma in Adult Education. There are some question related to finding an insight on problems faced by the girl child after she drops out of school. I would like to ask you these questions only if you wish to do so. I assure you that the interview will be conducted in private and your responses will be kept confidential. No identifier (including your name) would be written on the questionnaire to ensure your responses are not linked to these identifiers. I would like to assure you that, there is no harm in taking part in this study. You have full right to decline the interview partly or totally. In case you consent for the interview, I urge you to provide with honest answers to the questions you are free to respond to as this would help us come up with genuine conclusions and recommendations that would potentially help the community, the Ministry of Education and the Government.

For further questions about this research and related issues contact the District Education Officer (Gutu) and my supervisor Mrs Museva on cell. 0773642663.

I have read the above consent form/ the above consent form was read to me: I have understood its contents and I consent to participate in this research project.

Name of participant..... Signature:.....

Date.....

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEADMASTER

I am a student from the Midlands State University conducting a study to elicit information on the problems faced by the girl child after she drops out of school in Gutu district with specific focus on the Gona cluster as a study sample. The information provided will be used solely for academic purposes of the study and will be kept confidentially.

Section A: Personal Information

Gender Male () Female ()

Age

Highest level of education

Religion

Name of school

Section B: Interview questions

1. What do you understand by the concept 'drop out'?

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.....
.....

2. How many girls dropped out of school between the year 2014 and 2016?

.....
.....

3. How many boys dropped out of school between the year 2014 and 2016?

.....
.....

4. Are there any policies to retain girl children in school?

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.....
.....
.....

5. What were the reasons of dropping out?

.....
.....
.....
.....

6. What are the problems faced by the girl child when she drops out of school?

.....
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.....
.....

7. What are the impacts of dropping out of school?

a. School level:

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b. Individual level:

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c. Community level:

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.....

d. National level:

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8. What are the possible solutions?

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.....
.....

9. What are your recommendations to address the problem of the girl child dropping out of school?

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.....

End of the interview

Thank you very much for taking part in this study

Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE GIRL CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL

I am a student from the Midlands State University conducting a study to elicit information on the problems faced by the girl child after she drops out of school in Gutu district with specific focus on the Gona cluster as a study sample. The information provided will be used solely for academic purposes of the study and will be kept confidentially.

Section A: Personal Information

Gender Male () Female ()

Age

Religion

Name of school

Section B: Interview questions

1. What are the reasons for dropping out?

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.....

2. What are the problems faced by the girl child?

.....
.....

3. What are the implications of dropping out of school to the girl child?

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.....

4. What are the policies to retain girl children in school?

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5. What are the possible solutions to resolve the dropping out of school problem?

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6. What are your recommendations to address this problem?

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End of the questionnaire

Thank you very much for taking part in this study

Appendix D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE WARD COUNCILLOR / VILLAGE HEAD

I am a student from the Midlands State University conducting a study to elicit information on the problems faced by the girl child after she drops out of school in Gutu district with specific focus on the Gona cluster as a study sample. The information provided will be used solely for academic purposes of the study and will be kept confidentially.

Section A: Personal Information

Gender Male () Female ()

Age

Highest level of education

Religion

Name of ward / village

Section B: Interview questions

1. What do you understand by the concept 'drop out'?

.....
.....
.....

2. What is the estimated figure of girls who dropped out of school between the year 2014 and 2016 in your ward / village?

.....
.....

3. What is the estimated figure of boys who dropped out of school between the year 2014 and 2016 in your ward / village?

.....
.....

4. Are there any policies to retain girl children in school?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. What were the reasons of dropping out?

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6. What are the problems faced by the girl child when she drops out of school?

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.....
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7. What are the impacts of dropping out of school?

e. School level:

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f. Individual level:

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g. Community level:

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h. National level:

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8. What are the possible solutions?

.....
.....
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.....

9. What are your recommendations to address the problem of the girl child dropping out of school?

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End of the interview

Thank you very much for taking part in this study