

**AN INVESTIGATION ON THE FACTORS INFLUENCING PRIMARY
SCHOOL PUPILS' DROPOUT IN RUANGWA DISTRICT, LINDI REGION**

HAULE ERNEST GEORGE

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a Thesis titled “*An investigation of the influence of primary school pupils dropout in Ruangwa District, Lindi region*” in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Education Administration, Planning and Policy studies at the Open University of Tanzania

.....

Dr. Evaristo Andreas Mtitu (PhD)

(Supervisor)

.....

Date

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I, **Ernest, George Haule**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my lovely wife Lucy George Mrope and our beloved children Nancy, Mercy and Maureen

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This dissertation is a result of various contributions and cooperative efforts of many individuals. Since it is not possible to mention all of them, I would like to mention just a few. First, I am grateful to our Lord GOD for His blessing and grace. Indeed, God has been good to me throughout the period of studies. Secondly, I am particularly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Evaristo Mtitu for his kind guidance and devotion. His scholarly advice, patience, encouragement, tireless effort and concern for accuracy have shaped this study into its present form. Thirdly, I extend my sincere gratitude to my lovely wife Lucy G. Mrope for her tolerance, prayers, tender and passionate love all the time during my studies and her moral support. Fourthly, I owe my gratitude to my employer Andrea G. Chezue who is the District Executive Director (DED) of Ruangwa District Council for giving me permission to attend studies. Fifthly, I express my thanks to all my children: Nancy, Mercy and Maureen for their prayers, tolerance and comfort during my study. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to all members of the Open University of Tanzania. I also thank my lecturers and fellow MED-APPS (Master of Education Administration Planning and Policy Studies) pupils of the 2016/ 2017 intake for their cooperation, encouragement and suggestions during all the time of study. They deserve appreciation for close cooperation during the study period. However, I am responsible for any shortfalls with the writing and/ or data presentation.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the factors influencing primary school pupils' dropout in Ruangwa District, Lindi Region. The study was guided by four research objectives: Assess education stakeholders' conception of pupils' drop out, investigate the influence of family background on pupils dropout, examine the factors which contribute to pupils drop out of school, and suggest ways of reducing pupils dropout of the schools. The study used descriptive research design informed by mixed methods research approaches i.e. qualitative and quantitative approaches. A sample of 130 respondents was drawn from the target population using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. It included 30 parents, 30 teachers, 30 enrolled pupils, 30 dropped out pupils, 6 headteachers, 3 ward education officer and 1 district education officer. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and Focused Group Discussion (FGD). The study revealed that people conceptualize dropout as the tendency of pupils not completing the cycle of schooling due to various reasons including early marriage and low economic income of the family; the study further revealed family background including poor education level to have an influence on pupils' dropout. The study recommended some ways of reducing dropout in primary schools to include policy innovation to allow stakeholders flexibility in addressing challenges related to truancy and dropout. The government and other stakeholders to ensure presence of enough teachers and adequate teaching and learning resources in schools. The study recommends for further study around this topic focusing on other level of learners and theoretical application and methodological approaches. It is predicted that if another similar study is undertaken, it is likely to reveal similar results hence not only increasing the reliability and validity or trustworthiness of the study but also adding new knowledge on the knowledge base about the factors influencing pupils dropout in Ruangwa District schools.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| DEO | District Educational Officer |
| EFA | Education For All |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| MDGs | Millenium Development Goals |
| PEDP | Primary Education Development Plan |
| REO | Reogional Educational Officer |
| TPB | Theory of Planned Behaviour |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| UPE | Universal Primary Education |
| WEO | Ward Educational Officer |
| WEC | Ward Education Coordinator |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE SYDY

1.1 Introduction

The chapter present the back ground of the study statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, significance of the study scope and limitation of the study conceptual framework and definition of the key terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

Education brings many benefits to both individuals and societies. Education is fundamental to the development of individuals and as such, the right to primary education is legally guaranteed in most countries of the world (UNESCO, 2005). Sifuna (1990) contends that education plays an important role in socialising the individual to fit and participate adequately in the development of the society. The educated population is more productive than the one that is not since the former is easier to train and work better than the latter. (Mbunda, 1983) highlights the benefits of education as: improving the productive capacity of a society; reducing poverty by mitigating its effects on population, health and nutrition, increasing the value and efficiency of the labour offered by the poor and enhancing democracy and good governance among others. Above all, international human rights conventions as well recognises the right to education. The right to education has been ratified by a succession of UN Conventions, starting from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which received the status of international law in 1990. According to Article 28 of the Convention, governments have the responsibility of making primary education compulsory and

mandatory for children aged 7-15. In Tanzania, primary education is free to all. Education is recognized as crucial not only to human development and to the eradication of poverty but also to enable all people to live in dignity (Wils *et al.* 2006). The Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have resulted in more attention being paid to issues of both participation and completion in education. Universal primary education is goal number two of both EFA (Jomtien, 1990 reaffirmed in Dakar, 2000) and MDGs, and was adopted by UN Member States in 2000 (UNESCO, 2005).

Ruangwa District has experienced high enrolment rates in Primary Schools, however the dropout rate is also high as it stands at 38.43% in these schools despite the government's free fee education programme in all public primary schools. The trend for pupils dropout for the years 2011 – 2017 is as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Trend for Pupils Dropout in Ruangwa District (2011 - 2017)

| Year | Enrolled Pupils in STDI | | | Pupils Registered for Examinations | | | Pupils not Registered for Examinations | | | % Of Pupils Dropout |
|------|----------------------------|------|------|---------------------------------------|------|------|--|-----|------|------------------------|
| | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | |
| 2011 | 2064 | 2109 | 4173 | 1525 | 1800 | 3325 | 539 | 309 | 848 | 20.32 |
| 2012 | 2042 | 1939 | 3981 | 1210 | 1418 | 2628 | 832 | 521 | 1353 | 33.99 |
| 2013 | 1738 | 1650 | 3388 | 1102 | 1406 | 2508 | 636 | 244 | 880 | 25.97 |
| 2014 | 2039 | 1970 | 4009 | 946 | 1147 | 2093 | 1093 | 823 | 1916 | 47.79 |
| 2015 | 2065 | 1832 | 3897 | 803 | 995 | 1798 | 1262 | 837 | 2099 | 53.86 |
| 2016 | 1982 | 1793 | 3775 | 833 | 1139 | 1972 | 1149 | 654 | 1803 | 47.76 |
| 2017 | 2085 | 2031 | 4116 | 1093 | 1406 | 2499 | 992 | 625 | 1617 | 39.29 |

Source: Ruangwa District Education Office (DEOs OFFICE)

While the dropout rate in Ruangwa district in Lindi Region, still persists little information is available about its influence or rather causes. Therefore, this study

sought to unpack the situation in order to find out ways and strategies to improve school attendance consequently academic performance.

According to UNICEF (2011) and UNESCO, (2011), school dropouts refer to children who were enrolled in school but have left school before completion. Factors for pupils dropping out of school can be classified in four categories, namely: individual, family, school, and community factors. This study focused on all factors, though recognising that there is no single risk factor that can be used to accurately predict who is at risk of dropping out. However, the accuracy of dropout predictions increases when combinations of multiple risk factors are involved.

The study by Hammond *et al.* (2007) found that pupils who drop out often cite factors across multiple categories. There are complex interactions among risk factors leading to dropping out. Dropping out of school is often the result of a long process of disengagement that may begin in some cases even before a child enters school, and is often described as a process, with factors building and compounding overtime. School dropout is a complex, multifaceted problem and the decision to drop out of school is a process, not an event.

Education Policy and Data Center (2009) has cited that several studies, carried out in the United States of America (USA) and in 35 developing countries primarily concerned with the identification of characteristics associated with dropout have consistently cited school, as one of the characteristics associated with dropping out. It is for this reason this study focuses on identifying school related factors leading to pupils drop out of primary school system. . It is important to clearly recognise that the

final goal is not only to get children in school but also to ensure their continued stay in school so that schooling results in good learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2005).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In 2001, Tanzania implemented the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) and eliminated school fees in public primary schools in order to increase access to primary education. Schooling is now mandatory for children aged 7-15. Although enrolment has dramatically increased, Tanzania has not yet achieved universal primary education (UPE) and education for All (EFA). According to different figures, 20-40% of children still do not attend school as shown from Ruangwa statistical data from 2011-2017. Apart from school being the focal point of the education process, UNESCO, (2005) insists that the role of the school is not only merely to get children into school but also to ensure they stay in school to completion. This view suggests the need for schools to create conducive environment to ensure pupils do not dropout. In Tanzania, despite the government implementing PEDP by providing free primary education, training, recruiting and supplying teachers, providing school infrastructure, teaching and learning materials; pupils still drop out of school. For example, Ruangwa district council recorded 10516 dropouts from 2011-2017 URT, 2013). This raise the question on what influences pupils dropout, therefore, the study investigated the factors influencing pupils dropout in primary schools taking Ruangwa district as case study.

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the factors influencing pupils' dropout in primary schools.

1.4.2 Specific Objective of the Study

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- (i) Assess education stakeholders' conception of pupils' drop out,
- (ii) Investigate the influence of family background on pupils dropout
- (iii) Examine the factors, which contribute to pupils drop out of school,
- (iv) Suggest ways of reducing pupils drop out of the schools

1.5 Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions asked

- (i) How do education stake holders conceive about pupils dropout?
- (ii) What is the influence of family background on pupils dropout from schools?
- (iii) What are factors, which contribute to pupils dropping out of school?
- (iv) What are the alternative ways of reducing pupils dropping out of the school?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to contribute knowledge to education stakeholders including policy makers, parliamentarians, human rights activists, educational officers, teachers and parents or guardians about pupil's school attendance and dropout in primary schools. The study may also energize efforts toward school transformation aimed at preventing school dropout and promote pupils retention resulting in high completion rates. The study may enhance policy makers with knowledge of factors that are contributing to pupils drop out making the designing of interventions possible. To adopt an existing intervention program or developing a new one, practitioners need to use evidence-based strategies to evaluate programs to assure effectiveness. This was what the study sought to provide.

1.7 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

1.7.1 Limitation of the Study

Limitations refer to some aspects of the study that the researcher knew might negatively affect the research but over which the researcher has no control (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Normally researchers tend to find relevant solutions to work out the limitations in order to ensure the required data are collected. The following were the likely limitations of the study.

The study was limited by the lack of cooperation from the respondents who were busy with their time table. However, the researcher explained the importance of this research to their children that they understood and participated. English Language was also seen to limit participants' maximum involvement in the provision of data. The researcher had to prepare in advance data collection instruments in the language of participants i.e. Kiswahili resulting in increasing cooperation from the participants.

1.7.2 Delimitation of the Study

The study was carried out in Ruangwa district council where the problem of school drop-out was seen to be critical. The study was conducted in three wards namely Mandawa, Ruangwa and Nandagala where two primary schools from each ward were selected. The study was confined in few primary schools in Ruangwa District council in order to collect rich data informed by evidences from real life experience. The study was delimited on the factors influencing dropout among primary school pupils

1.8 Theoretical Framework of the Study

According to Kumar (2001) Theoretical framework is used interchangeably with the terms analytical framework and depending on the way one defines it from a

particular context as well. A framework is a collection of interrelated concepts, theories not necessarily so well worked out which guide the research, in determining what things should be studied, measured and statistical relationships to look for. Also a conceptual framework is a research tool intended to assist a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of a situation under scrutiny and communicate it to a wider community (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). A number of theoretical models that have attempted to explain this phenomenon and its relationship to other indicators of school performance further illustrate this complexity.

This study applied a psychological theory known as “Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) which states that the best predictor of behavior is one’s intention to perform that behavior. In turn, intentions are determined by attitudes (evaluation of the behavior), subjective norms (social pressure to perform the behavior), and perceived control (one’s belief that he or she has the ability to perform the behavior). Specifically, the *Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)* — a psychological theory that includes the role of attitudes — holds promise in predicting drop out. Briefly, the theory says that intentions are the best predictor of behavior and that intentions are predicted by:

- (a) *Attitudes*, meaning a person’s evaluation of his or her own behavior or of others’ behaviors;
- (b) *Subjective norms*, which refers to the social pressure one feels to perform the behavior; and
- (c) *Perceived control*, meaning a person’s perception of his or her own capability to perform the behavior.

Thus far, only a few studies have used this theory to predict school drop out, and they did so with great success especially in the developed economies (Davis, Ajzen, Saunders & Williams, 2002). In this study, pupils, teachers and parents completed sets of questions which sought to understand each of the components of the TPB. The researcher then predicted whether the pupils would complete their schooling within time frame or later or leave before altogether. Results revealed that the participants' responses significantly predicted whether they eventually graduated or dropped out. In a 2006 study, 69% of the dropouts claimed that adults did not expect them to perform well, and that these low expectations contributed to their decision to drop out.

“The higher the percentage of a school's pupils living in poverty, the higher the dropout rate. Poverty seemsto be one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of a school's dropout rate.”

This was equally the same with the findings collected from the field. Issues of poverty, culture and parents level of education seemed to have high influence on pupils dropout in Ruangwa District Council. The theory of planned behaviour is thus of very significant to the study. It has illuminated the study to such extent stakeholders need to work on the identified factors to ensure they are effectively and efficiently addressed.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Key Concept

1.9.1 Influence

In this study, the term influence refers to pressurize of something as the results to get the impact on something

1.9.2 Dropout

In this study, the term dropout refers to those pupils who leave school before the end of the final year of an education cycle in which they are enrolled.

1.9.3 Primary Education

In this study, the term primary education refers to education offered to people who are studying seven years of schooling.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically discusses both the theoretical and empirical studies related to the research topic under investigation. Just after the theoretical review of literature, the chapter reviews the empirical studies conducted around the study. The review is undertaken on the basis of research objectives in order to simplify its understanding. The chapter thus constitutes the following subtopics: Introduction, theoretical review of literature, empirical literature review which is presented in subheadings from research objectives and subsequently identification of research gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

Addressing the dropout crisis requires a better understanding of why pupils drop out. Yet identifying the causes of dropping out is extremely challenging. Like other forms of educational achievements, the act of dropping out is influenced by an array of factors related to both the individual student and to the family, school, and community settings in which the student lives (Segumba, 2016). Dropouts themselves report a variety of reasons for leaving school, including school-related reasons, family-related reasons, and work-related reasons (Colclough, C. *et al.* 2003).

The most cited reasons reported by 2002 tenth-graders who dropped out were “missed too many school days” (44 percent); and “could not keep up with schoolwork” (32 percent) (Colclough, *et al.* 2003). But these reasons do not reveal the underlying causes of why students quit school, particularly those factors in primary school that

may have contributed to students' attitudes, behaviors, and performance immediately preceding their decision to leave school especially in Ruangwa district council. Moreover, if many factors contribute to school dropout over a long period of time, it is definitely impossible to make obvious a causal connection between any single factor and the decision to drop school.

One group of models addresses the issue of why students drop out of secondary school. Existing dropout models all suggest that the process is influenced by several types of factors: early and recent school performance, academic and social behaviors, and educational as well as general attitudes. What differentiates these models is how these various factors interact to foster the process of gradual withdrawal and ultimately dropping out, as well as the relative focus on individual versus institutional factors. Wehlage and his colleagues developed a model in which dropping out, as well as other school outcomes, is jointly influenced by two broad factors: school membership (or social bonding) and educational engagement Creswell, et al (2006).

School membership concerns the social dimension of schooling and is influenced by such things as social ties to others, commitment to the institution, involvement in school activities, and beliefs in the value and legitimacy of school. Educational engagement concerns the academic dimension of schooling and is influenced by the extrinsic rewards associated with school work and the intrinsic rewards associated with the curriculum and the way educational activities are constructed. Finn (1989) reviews two alternative models. The first, which he labels the "frustration-self-esteem" model, argues that the initial antecedent to school withdrawal is early school failure, which, in turn, leads to low self-esteem and then problem behaviors Problem

behaviors further erode school performance and, subsequently, self-esteem and behavior. Eventually, students either voluntarily quit school or are removed from school because of their problematic behavior.

The second model Finn labels the "participation-identification" model. In this model, the initial antecedent to withdrawal is the lack of Participation in school activities, which, in turn, leads to poor school performance and then to less identification with school. Participation in school activities includes responding to teacher directions and class requirements, participation in homework and other learning activities, participation in non-academic school activities, and participation in the governance of the school. This model argues there is both a behavioral and emotional component to the withdrawal process.

Both of Finn's models involve long-term processes that begin in early elementary school. A number of other models of the dropout process have been developed in recent years based on long-term empirical studies of small cohorts of students in particular communities (Reynolds, On, & Topitzes, 2004). However, effective school attendance has been cited as one of the factors accelerating academic performance among pupils globally. In his study about school attendance and pupils academic performance in Namibian Primary Schools Mugenda and Mugenda(2003) found that pupils who attended many days in schools performed well in their studies than those with few schools attendance days. Similar observation was presented by Grant (2011) when he stated that Botswana academic performance is accounted by many factors including school attendance among pupils. According to Grant (2011) economic status i.e. poor economic background by some of pupils contributes to

limited school attendance. From the discussion above, one could conclude about school attendance in two perspectives; First, school attendance affects pupils' academic performance, Secondly, there are different factors under pupils which affect their attendance at school.

Literature across the globe present different views regarding pupils dropout. Literature from developed economies such as the United States of America (US), Canada and Australia present such factors as: existence of many jobs distributed according to age, lack of government emphasis on school attendance . Other factors include children extra freedom over school attendance, that means, number of minimal punishment relating to pupils dropout, economic development resulting to families life satisfaction and not seeing the importance of school any more. In addition to that, existence of many choices over schooling system that is, some pupils go straight to technical and vocational colleges before undergoing primary or secondary schooling, family education background and lack of parental guidance towards school attendance to mention a few (Orenstonc,2011).

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

The following subsections presents a review of literature based on research objectives.

2.3.1 Conception of Pupils' Drop Out,

Various researchers defined the phenomenon of 'drop out' differently. According to Alli, (2010)., drop out is "a term used for the children, who for any reason other than death, discontinue schooling and leave their education uncompleted". This is quite broad definition and includes all those students discontinuing their studies without

completing their studies for any reason other than the death of the student. This definition includes students at all levels of studies. This also covers those students who are expelled by the education institution due to their weak performance or failure in studies. Some of the students discontinue studies due to their illness, may also be included in the above definition of drop out. According to Malekela, (2008). drop out can be defined as, a student who left school before completing a course of study. This definition does not cover any complexity of the phenomenon and has not clear in substance. This is much generalized definition covering all students quitting their schools prior completing their courses.

On the other hand Umoh (1986) define dropout as, “student who left school before the completion of the program for which they are enrolled, for unseen reasons”. This is a flexible definition covering all those students leaving their planned study program for any reason before completion. Hence, this definition of drop out a quite comprehensive definition and focused. The UNICEF and Government of Pakistan (2000) did joint study and they define drop out as withdrawal of children from school at any stage before completion of primary education”. They further explain that drop out is a “terminology used for the student who left his/her education incomplete, before the completion of the specific program/level of education for which he/she was enrolled in the school, for any reason, and he/she is no more enrolled in the same level or in any equivalent qualification

2.3.2 The Influence of Family Background on Pupils Dropout

As it has been discussed herein and across literature, pupils’ dropout is caused by several factors including family background. Family background variables include

aspects such as culture, socio-economic status, political interests, and family attachment to education. Nyerere (1967) stressed the importance of education on the wellbeing of the people and that the family as the unit of production was seen as an important segment to promote the development of education.

According to Nyerere, the family cultural practices and socio economic status predicted its potential on influencing provision and engagement in educational process. In his paper on the assessment of the quality of secondary education in Tanzania, Lutz, (2007), stated that in order to improve the participation and the quality of secondary education in Tanzania, it is quite necessary to improve the status of the family as the foundation of education development amongst nations. Ishumi's reflection about the role of family in education development looks similar with that of Nyerere (1967) whose mission was to see the family is growing socially, culutrally and economically. In order to achieve this, families were to take education as the priority agenda. Nyerere felt education as an engine of socio economic development and that the family as a unit of production was expected to fully participate in the education process. This could mean that parents, guardians and all stakeholders should provide sufficing support to their children especially pupils to ensure they attend schools effectively. In a normal language, the existing challenges of pupils dropout should not be threatening either in villages or urban if parents would have been aware and more importantly well knowledgeable in terms of education.

Based on the discussion about the role of family background on influencing pupils dropout in Rungwa and elsewhere, it could be logically argued that when the family socio-economic status improves even the dropout rate decreases. This was attested by

the findings which indicated that pupils coming from poor family background showed high level of school dropout as compared to those from well socio-economic background. One could thus conclude by making a point that in order to improve school attendance in Ruangwa District council, the government and all stakeholders should strive to improve the wellbeing of the family. This will only be possible if there will be viable strategies and informed economic and educational policies to inform the planners and implementers of the respective policies resulting in to effective and efficient implementation and thus high rate of school attendance.

2.3.3 Examine the Factors, which Contribute to Pupils Drop Out of School

Based on the argument on school attendance experience from developed economies it appears that school attendance is influenced by economic advancement and employment diversity across aging. Increased freedom of choice and life in general pays a significant contribution towards school attendance among pupils in many developed economies.

Different from dropout experience in developed economies; scholars from least developed economies such as Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania present similar factors accelerating pupils. dropout but in different direction/ways. Scholars like Mtitu (2008) and Chiuri and Chiuri (2005) outline factors for school dropout as being community culture, socio-economic background, teacher- pupils' relationship and community/tribe mindsets. Others include unfriendly school environment language of instruction, shortage of teachers, and lack of intra and interschool academic sports competition. Similar factors are explained differently by different scholars as critically reviewed here.

Sullivan (2009) conducted a study on the factors for decline of academic performance in Namibia secondary schools. The study used a sample of seventy pupils and twenty teachers from four different schools. Using questionnaires and semi-structured interview. Discussing about reasons for pupils dropout; the study findings indicated that some cultures do not encourage their children to attend school. They consider sending girls to school as wastage of wealth which could otherwise be used to invest more in their projects. According to Sullivan (2009) the same tribe was not ready to assist their boys in school suggesting that they wanted their male children to involve in economic production including livestock keeping. This cultural conception over school attendance is also supported by Ali(2008) who states that parents involvement of their children in economic activities such as agriculture petty trade and nomadic were some of the factors that accelerated poor attendance among pupils. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) also found that poor teacher student relationship results in increased pupils dropout.

According Grant (2011) teachers claim to possess knowledge for student, who do not have it, and persistence use of corporal punishment to control pupils discipline seemed to discourage pupils regular attendance to school. Different teachers' behaviors over pupils like use of extra-corporal punishment, abusive language and calling pupils bad names discourage pupils from attending to school. Overworking pupils with out of school activities like collection of firewood and agricultural activities.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda(2003) pupils felt that they were going to school not for studies but rather for being tortured and involved in other activities than studies. All these conditions accelerated by teachers influenced pupils poor school

attendance hence poor academic performance. Based on the reviewed literature about teacher-student relationships, it appears that unless teacher-pupils relationship change from a cat and a rat to the learning community, the challenge of school dropout will not be effectively and efficiently addressed.

Issues of school dropout are also reported by several studies in Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda (Chiuri and Kiurmi, 2005). Many of these studies looked at the relationships between school dropout and pupils academic performance. They mainly used quantitative studies to investigate the influence of school dropout on pupils academic performance especially at secondary school level. The study by Chiuri and Kiurmi (2005) found that increased dropout resulted in pupils poor school attendance consequently lead to poor academic performance.

Parents contributions to school was the main reasons for poor attendance among pupils. URT(2012) stated that parents were required to pay for school several contributions including furniture, health, security, school development inter and intra school examinations. Many parents were unable to pay for this contribution thus, they discouraged their children from attending school.

According for URT (2012). The study recommended to the government of the republic of Kenya to reconsider the situation and look for alternative ways to support secondary school including providing enough instructional resources in order only to attend secondary school but also to promote their attendance. From this study, one can argue that there are different factors influencing academic performance including dropout. Based on this study pupils dropout is accelerated by a number of factors

which can also be addressed if the government and stakeholders are willingly to promote attendance as well as academic performance in Kenya and elsewhere in the globe.

Another similar study was conducted in Uganda by Kane, (2004).study investigated the impact of school dropout on pupils' academic performance in northern Uganda. Based on this study, culture seemed to have high percentage rate for causing school dropout. The findings noted the language of instruction, economic activities and limited motive to send children to school. Children were involved in agriculture and livestock keeping at this early age. The only attended schools were those under the government special operation of demanding parents and guardians to send their children to school otherwise they would have faced legal penalties.

Ugandan study recommended other studies to be conducted while focusing mainly on the factors for influencing pupils' dropout in primary school. The study further noted that other studies could cause dropout Model, motivational theories had the potential to impact the type of findings collected. The findings by the current study is in line with the observation by Gabwel (2011) who studied the implementation of competency based curriculum in Western Tanzania (Kigoma and Tabora). She used constructivism theory to assess learner centered teaching and learning (KTC) based on constructivism belief on knowledge construction. The use of construction teaching and learning indicated lack of understanding of the existence of many other theories such as critical theory which looks a phenomenon in three dimensions that is strengths, weakness and strategies to improve this phenomenon. This could mean that a researcher should be able to identify and use appropriate theory as a lens to effectively illuminate the study.

There are few studies which focused on dropout in Tanzania. These studies were conducted mainly to investigate dropout and academic performance in Dar es Salaam Secondary Schools, Iringa, Tabora and some few in Mbeya and Dodoma regions. Thus many of these studies concentrated in secondary schools with a few studies focusing on primary schools (HakiElimu, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2015). These studies used single research approach mainly quantitative research approach and some other few studies used qualitative research approach.

While each of the research approaches is good, it has its own limitations which could be addressed if such studies could have used a mixed method approach where the weaknesses of one research approach would be complemented by the strengths of the other approach (Mtitu, 2014).

2.3.4 Suggest Ways of Reducing Pupils Drop out of the Schools

While schools have limited influence over many of the factors that impact student attendance (HakiElimu, 2008), understanding the cause of absences is critical to identifying the appropriate intervention. Responding quickly by working in partnership with students and their families is the most effective way to manage absences and disengagement in order that absenteeism is not kept growing. Schools may consider implementing improvement strategies when a student has been absent more than five days in a term for any reason including parent approved health related absences. They should also follow up and implement improvement strategies where: The absence is having a significant impact on a student's academic performance and achievement. This will depend on number of days absent, number of consecutive days, reason for the absence, time of year, age of the student and the type of learning

that will occur outside school. The scrutiny of students' absenteeism may provide some feedback including: the student has been absent without parental consent; availability of a parent reports that a student refuses to attend school; there has been no explanation for the student's absence or a parent repeatedly fails to provide a reasonable excuse. Schools can have a positive influence on student attendance by increasing student engagement.

Stakeholders should adopt an active role in fostering positive, open communication with students and parents. These approaches may include: Promoting school attendance, building a positive school climate, monitoring attendance, and supporting students and families to address barriers that influence school attendance are all key elements in helping students to improve their attendance and maximise their educational attainment. Most students consistently rate school as important or very important. Equally, they rate coping with stress, school or study problems as one of their top issues of concern. Declining attendance or a change in attendance patterns may be an early warning sign of early disengagement. Any intervention or initiative needs to be mindful of the reasons why students may be absent from school. Other aspects which need to be worked if the challenge of student dropout should be addressed once and for all. They include: distance from the school, early marriages and teenage pregnancies, low level of parents education, poor family socio-economic background and the harsh school environment just to mention a few.

2.4 Justification of Research Gaps

Different from other studies, the current study took a new approach in theory, study location, research approach and focused on participants' characteristics. In order to

effectively investigate stakeholders' conception of pupils dropout, the factors accelerating pupils dropout, challenges faced by stakeholders including the local and central government in addressing dropout and alternative ways/strategies to improve school attendance in Tanzania. The study was conducted in Ruangwa District, Lindi region in some selected primary schools. The study uses mixed methods approach that quantitative and qualitative research approaches for triangulation and complimentary purposes where as the Planned Behaviour Theory (PBT) is applied as a theoretical framework to critically assess factors for increased dropout rate in Ruangwa District.

The selection of the study area and research topic is backed up by the research gaps advanced by the existing literatures as presented herein. One of the major reasons for conducting the study in Ruangwa district is the fact that for more than five years now (Mbepera, 2009) that the southern regions including Lindi and Mtwara have been performing poorly in the national examinations. Pupils' dropout has been identified to be one of the causes. This has been experienced in both primary and secondary schools. Therefore, it was the researcher's interest to investigate the factors contributing to pupils dropout in Ruangwa district so that alternative strategies could be devised to resolve the situation consequently, providing quality teaching and learning, leading to positive attendance and improved academic performance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology which were employed in this study. It includes the area of the study, research design and research approach, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, ethical considerations and data analysis procedure.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Ruangwa District Council, in Lindi region where by all three divisions of Mandawa, Ruangwa and Mnacho were involved. From the selected division the study was done in the wards of Mandawa, Nandagala and Nachingwea in which two primary schools from each ward were selected. These schools included Nahanga, Chikundi, Dodoma, Ruangwa, Mkata and Nandagala. This area of Ruangwa District was strategically selected due to the fact that the area is backward in terms of social economic aspects and had an experience of excessive dropouts of pupils for a long time.

3.3 Research Design

Segumba (2016) define a research design as a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. Creswel (2014) describes a research design as a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed. Polit *et al* (2001) define a research design as the researcher's overall for answering the research question or testing the research hypothesis. For the purpose of this study a researcher employed descriptive design.

This is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals. It is used to collect information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or social issues such as education Denscombe, (1998). The researcher employed this design in order to collect information direct from the respondents.

3.4 Research Approaches

The study employed mixed research approach. The reason behind the use of approach was due to the nature of study which involved data that needed to be described and quantified. Creswel (2014) points out that quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined at different stages of the research process in the study of the same phenomena. Several researchers advocate combining the two methods not only for the purpose of triangulation but also for the purpose of drawing from the strength of both methods since both have their own strengths and weaknesses. Creswell (2006) advises that qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complimentary rather than as rival camps so that combining them allows the researcher to offset their weaknesses to draw on the strengths of both in order to ensure that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact.

3.5 Population

3.5.1 Target Population

According to Omari (2011) a population is the totality of any group of units which have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest. The target population for this study comprised of all head teachers, teachers, currently enrolled pupils, dropout pupils, parents and District Education Officers.

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

3.6.1 Sample Size

Kothari (2004) defines a sample as a small proportion of a population selected for observations and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is carefully drawn. The sample comprised of one hundred and thirty (130) respondents where 1 was a District Education Officer, 3 were Ward Education Coordinators, 6 were head teachers, 30 were teachers, 30 were current enrolled pupils, 30 were dropout pupils and 30 were Parents.

Table 3.1: Sample of Informants in the Study Area

| Key Informant | Number |
|----------------|------------|
| WECs | 03 |
| HTs | 06 |
| DEO | 01 |
| Teachers | 30 |
| Parents | 30 |
| Current Pupils | 30 |
| Dropout pupils | 30 |
| Total | 130 |

Source: Research Data, 2017

3.6.2 Sampling Technique

Kothari (2004) defines sampling technique as the process by which a representative portion of the population is selected for analysis. The study employed simple random and purposive sampling technique. Kumar (2011), defines simple random sampling as the type of sampling which provides equal chance to every member in the population to be included in the study. It gives equal opportunity to every individual in the

population to be selected as a sample in order to avoid biasness. The researcher employed simple random sampling technique in selecting the teachers, current enrolled pupils and parents because each teacher and current enrolled pupils had equal chance to participate in the study. Omari (2011) defines purposive sampling as a process which involves picking units most relevant or knowledgeable on the subject matter, and study them. It is a technique whereby the researcher judges who is to be included in the sample to give the right information which may not be easily obtained from any other respondents. The head teachers, District Education Officer, Ward Education Coordinator and dropped out pupils were purposively selected. Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that, the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting participants who provide the richest depth analysis related to the central issue being studied. Brown (2001) defines questionnaire as any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing ones.

3.7 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

In this study both primary and secondary data were collected and three data collection instruments were employed including questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion

3.7.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is very useful in the study because it permits greater depth in understanding the issues at hand, permits probing to obtain more complete data and makes it possible to establish and maintain rapport with respondents, or at least determine when rapport has not been established (Omari, 2011). In this study, both

open ended and close ended questions as the methods of data collection were administered to collect both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. The use of open ended questions gave respondents a greater freedom to answer the questions because they answer in a way that suits their interpretation while close ended questions limit the number of possible answers to be given (Kothari (2004)). The use of close ended questions entailed the respondents to choose from the provided responses. The closed ended questions were preferred because they are normally easy to fill in, take little time and effort, keep the subjects to the point, giving them a wide range of choice ((Kothari, 2004)) A questionnaire was used to collect information from current primary school pupils and head teachers .The researcher used both open ended and closed questions.

3.7.2 Interview

Interview is another research instrument that was used by the researcher to collect data. Kothari (2004) defines an interview as a technique that can be employed to collect information that involves oral and questioning of respondents. A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or over the telephone (Easwaramoorthy and Zarinpoush, 2006).

The interview is advantageous because it is quite flexible, adaptable and can be used for many people (Frankel and Wallen, 1990). Detailed information can be obtained and well explained, more over an interview can gather other supplementary information and quality information by probing for more information. However the

interview can be disadvantageous since the interviews may be subjective in responding to the questions and the responses being biased. The researcher employed both structured and unstructured interview questions to collect information from District Education Officer, dropout pupils, and Teachers

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

Kombo and Tromp (2006) argue that focus group discussion is a data collection technique with the objectives of tapping relevant information from the selected respondents. Focus group discussion can produce a lot of information quickly and is good in identifying and explaining beliefs, ideas or opinion from the respondents. This method was used by the researcher because it helped the individuals who were involved in the discussion to feel as a part of the study, hence more ideas and views were contributed. The focus group discussions in this study involved six dropout pupils and six teachers on the attitudes, opinions and ideas about the causes of school dropout among the pupils.

3.8 Source of Data

The study used both primary and secondary data

3.8.1 Primary Data

Adamu (2008) has shown that primary data is the data collected by the research from the field for the purpose of answering a research question/issue. Also Kothari (2004) contend that primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time hence being original in character. These data allowed the researcher to control the information provided by the respondents rather than depending on questions and

information asked by another party perhaps with quite different intentions. In this study data were collected through questionnaires which were administered to current enrolled pupils and head teachers. Interview was used to collect information from dropout pupils, teachers, DEO, Weecs and parents.

3.8.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data are those data that are already available. They refer to data which have already been collected and analyzed by someone else for some other purposes (Saunders *et al*, 2003).The researcher used such data in order to gather relevant information for the study. Secondary data were obtained through documentary review such as guidelines for pupil's enrolments, attendance register and pupil's dropout profile

3.9 Validation of Instruments and Data

The instruments are said to be valid if they are accurate and actually measure what are intended to measure. The method which was used to validate data collection instruments in this study were tried out. Before going to the field questionnaire and interview questions were administered to some members in schools to check if they were bringing about the required information. After this tryout, instruments were improved to remove weaknesses that were identified .Also experts were consulted to check if instruments were well designed in relation to the research objectives. To ensure validity and reliability of data, the researcher used a variety of methods in data collection. This method is called triangulation, a typical strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research findings. Creswell (2012) described that triangulation means the use of different data sources of information by examining

evidence from these sources and using them to build a coherent justification for theme.

3.10 Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis is the process of making sense out one,s data. It involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp 2006).The methods which are used in data analysis are influenced by whether the research is qualitative or quantitative. In this study therefore data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

3.10.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data was subjected to content analysis. Qualitative data ware collected and used in interpreting, verifying and illustrating qualitative findings. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) content analysis is a systematic procedure designed to examine and analyze the recorded information. Through content analysis, the researcher was able to synthesize and search for the general pattern by grouping data into meaningful categories.

The information and data addressing a particular research question were put together and subdivided into coherent categories that helped in searching for the main themes which were latter analyzed according to the research questions. Gender of pupil factors within the school and parent education level as related to school dropout were the themes to be analyzed. Some of the arguments from the respondents presented as quotations. Data were coded, transcribed and labeled according to the findings

3.10.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed by computer using Microsoft Excel programme. Consequently data were summarized, compiled and presented using frequencies tables, percentages and graphs to enable comparison and for easy interpretation. Descriptive and analytical methods were used to present the research findings.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

Ethics refers to the set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for and behavioral expectations of the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employees, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and pupils ((Resnik ,2011).). According to Shah, (2011). , the ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conducting research. In the search for truth, the researcher's conduct must conform to generally accepted norms and values. In accordance to this study, the researcher adhered to the following ethical issues: to ask permission of conducting the research from vice chancellor of the open university of Tanzania in which the authority of conducting research was obtained.

Also during the study the names of and identifying information about the participants and their families remained confidential. Each participant was given adequate time to read the information concerning the study and its requirements. Participants also were given an opportunity to explain their right to ask questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. For case of clarification, respondents were allowed to discuss in English and Kiswahili. The researcher recorded the notes using the operational language which remained to be English. Resnik (2011) argues that ethics is very

essential in research because it monitors and directs the researcher on principles of science or scientific method.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the methodology used in conducting the research. Different sub-parts are discussed. These sub-parts include: areas of the study where by the area of study is Ruangwa District Council. This study applied descriptive research design as well as combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Research sample was 120 respondents in total. The participants were grouped into seven groups, namely District Education Officer, Ward Education Coordinator, Head teachers, teachers, parents and school and out of school pupils. Sampling techniques was simple random techniques which used teachers, parents, drop out pupils and school pupils while purposive techniques, used to select District Education Officer, Ward Education Coordinator and Head teachers. The methods used to collect data included interview, questionnaire and focus group discussion. The research design employed in this study was descriptive research design and hence data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively by coding, reading, sorting and presenting thematically.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key research findings, analysis and discussion using relevant literature and researcher's disposition. The presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings is done based on the research objectives. The analysis and discussion is organized under the conception and experience about pupils dropout, the influence of parents' education level on pupil dropping out from school, factors which contribute to pupils dropping out of school and ways of reducing pupils dropping out of the school. They include the following:

4.2 Education Stakeholders' Conception And Experience of Pupils' Dropout

When DEO was asked to conceptualize dropout, he was of the opinion that it is as an emerging big threat which act as an obstacle in achieving Education for All goals. It threatens the very fabric of education in terms of its structure, organization and provision. It specifically affects the equality of education received by pupils in primary schools. However, heads of school conceptualize Dropout as a situation which is highly influenced by uneducated families, low income this situation increases out-of-school children due to lack of awareness about pupils dropout.

Similarly, WEO's conception and experience of pupils dropout as the situation in which pupils delay on attending classes for a long period of time. Experience by Teachers shows that despite the efforts undertaken by the government there has been a growing concern throughout the country that many pupils do not complete primary

education. Teachers experiences shows that there are many cases of drop outs such as truancy, death, parents' inability to meet basic needs, illness, includes parental illness, indiscipline and early pregnancies. Teachers conceptualize pupils dropout as a product of pupils being far from the location of school this situation discourages them to go to school continuously until they leave school completely. When teachers include pupils death as one of the causes of pupils' dropout, different scholars present different direction of arguments stating that death has nothing to do with pupils dropout.

According to HakiElimu (2008), dropout should not include death which occurs naturally. HakiElimu reiterates further that understanding of pupils dropout should include all circumstances or factors such as school environment, family background, school location and teacher-pupil relationship to mention a few. Attitude and beliefs were also seen to impact pupils dropout. Findings from Head teacher revealed that some of the attitudes and beliefs such as locus of control, motivation to achieve that pupils hold toward school are important predictors of dropout. More importantly; pupils with poor grades are at greater risk of dropping out. However, interviewed pupils whose families provided higher levels of educational support for learning are less likely to dropout. Furthermore, interviewed respondent indicated that positive school climate is associated with lower rates of dropout. Parenting homes characterized by permissive parenting styles have been linked with higher rates of dropout.

Generally respondents conceptualize dropout as a product of pupils being far from the location of school this situation discourages them to go to school continuously until they leave school completely Hari, (2007) indicated that attitude and belief such as locus of control, motivation to achieve) that pupils hold toward school are

important predictors of dropout. More important pupils with poor grades are at greater risk of drop out.

4.3 The Influence of Parents' Education Level on Pupil Dropping Out from School

The researcher sought to collect his findings about parents' educational level and their influence on school dropout. When interviewed the WEO about the state of student absenteeism and dropout in the district, it was noted that dropout was likely to be caused by family background. This was assumed because of the responsibility attached to parents or guardians. Parents are the one who make decision about their children including buying pupils' school facilities such as exercise book, books, pen, pencils, school uniform, providing bus fare especially for those coming far from school compound and other related needs. Therefore, if parents do not know the importance of education they are not likely to support their children positively. On the other side, some of the parents with low level of education think their children is a source of income due to this situation they entertain earning little money from their children by being house boy and house girl, some of them engage in other economic activities like mulching guys, hired pastures.

During interview session with Ward Education Officer, He further indicated that parents with low level of education normally will entertain marrying many wives this situation results into having many children as a result it becomes difficult to support them effectively. Emphasising on the relational function between low level of education amongst the parents on students dropout the WEO stated:

One day I visited a certain primary school in my district where I met one parent who was ordered by village executives officer to respond to the head of school as to why his children were no longer attending classes, the parent said that, 'my first wife is lazy that is why I am no longer supporting her. Do you see mama Ajuaye the way her children always attend schools without any problem: ' The parent inquired.

According to the WEO, it appears that if that parent had only one wife it could have been easier to send her children to school. Similar question was asked to the DEO whose reaction did not differ much from the previous parent. The DEO stated that there were relationship between the level of education attained by both parents and reduction of dropout where by educated parents normally struggles to enhance their children realize self-esteem. They regularly discuss education issues including making follow ups on their children progress, counseling, advice their children on the selection of peers who are interested in studies, and other interpersonal relations in class. parents established strategies that increase feedback to their children and teachers. The DEO further indicated that parents with low level of education who have limited initiatives to establish strategies such as making follow up about pupils progress including having time table based on discussion of educational issues or insisting their children to study hard.

The study used questionnaires to collect the findings about Influence of parent level of education and pupils Drop out. Teachers in primary Aschool were asked on the role of parent in student dropout whereas, teachers viewed parents low level of education influenced student dropout because many parents with low level of education are not confident to share their thoughts about children schooling on how to improve performance of standard seven in the final examinations. The teacher provided an example of one parent who did not come to the meeting whereas after three days he

came to submit pay in slip for school fees. When the teacher asked the parent about the situation. The parent explained:

“I don't know why you are inviting we parents to come to school because it is your role to ensure students are studying we are laymen who don't know anything”.

The parent's response to the teacher signifies her not being aware of the parents need to effectively participate in the provision of education. However, the teacher informed the parent on the importance of parents to cooperate with schools in improving teaching and learning of our pupils. Very unfortunately the same parent kept insisting the teacher to work on their own in teaching and learning meanwhile parents' responsibility being that of fees payments alone stating that *“we need you as teacher to assist our children”*. Based on that explanation it is clear that the respective parent does not share school matters with her children including providing advice and insisting children to study hard.

The study show that there is a relationship between the level of education attained by parents and drop out as pointed by Malekela, (1996), who indicates that the level of education for most parents in rural areas is very low to such an extent that they are termed illiterate who do not know the value of education hence do not see the need of sending their children to school. This explanation are supported by Mlama, (2005) pointed out that some group of pupils are also at great risk of dropping out of school due to lack of awareness of their parents about the importance of education. Based on that explanation the study suggest that the school administration should develop an attitude of inviting parents consistently so as to allow parents develop a tendency of making follow up on their children progress. Forexample, another teacher revealed

that the role of parent is not only teaching but also provision of moral and material support to motivate students in their studies. Parents low level of education limit their thinking about their children as they rely on using them as sources of income by allowing them to work as house girls and house boy in major cities mainly Dar Es Salaam.

Some of them especially boys keep on being fishermen. Similar experience was seen from pupils who are in school and those who dropped out . When asked as to how parents level of education contribute towards student drop out in schools, the following were there response. Pupils in Ruangwa district specifically at A primary school indicated that parents with low level of education prevents them from understanding about the importance of education thus why even when their children ask for their parents to buy books they argue that your school should buy books for you.

One respondent who dropped out of school disclosed

“My parents does not question anything even if I remain watching television in the evening but my friend normally were telling me that they are not allowed to watch television in the evening they are forced to study ,doing home work ,but my father does not ask me whether I have home work or not”

This participant pointed out that “My parent have no education thus why they don’t motivate me to learn. Pupils in Ruangwa district specifically at B primary school revealed that uneducated parent does not fill committed to make follow up on pupils progress. Further more one of the pupils in Ruangwa district specifically at B primary school pointed out that her parents are educated they keep on helping her in doing

various exercise he disclosed that her parents have bought a book which contain past paper for doing home works. Another student in the same school responded by saying that his parents were not educated his father ended in class three and his mother does not know even how to read and write. However, they supported him very much through insisting him to study hard so that he would help his family He has this to say.

“I have not reached standard seven therefore I don’t like my children to be like me and my wife I would like to see my children are working hard and attain higher level of education, not for the sake of supporting me but to be in a position to support themselves and their famil”.

Interview results in Ruangwa district specifically from B primary school pointed out that Parents with low level of education do not make follow up about pupils progress. They further said that educated parents are committed to use their income to support their children at school due to that situation their children get uniform ,exercise books pen and books. On the other hand uneducated parent think about using money for other activities including buying food and investing more rather than supporting their children through tuition,buying books which widen pupils knowledge.

4.4 Factors Contributing to Pupils Drop Out of School

Questionnaire results indicate that factors contributing to pupils drop out included single parent family, separation of family, low income of the family, parents low level of education, early marriages , insignificance distance from school and poor teacher pupil relationship. Therefore, those are factors which create condition which promote pupils drop out in primary school.

Table 4.1: Factors which Contribute to Pupils Dropping Out of School (N=130)

| No. | Statements | Agree | Undecided | Disagree |
|-----|---|-------|-----------|----------|
| 1 | Unfriendly school environment contribute for pupils drop out | 73 | 2 | 25 |
| 2 | Stakeholders have different conception on pupils dropout of school in Ruangwa district | 68 | - | 32 |
| 3 | School management and the government have well established strategies /program me to address pupils drop outs in Ruangwa district and Tanzania in general | 64 | 5 | 31 |
| 4 | Different cultural practices such as nomadic and early marriage contribute to pupils dropouts | 75 | 5 | 20 |
| 5 | Emergency of mineral s deposits contribute to pupils drop outs | 66 | 3 | 31 |
| 6 | Low level of family /household education about the importance of education accelerate pupils drop out in Luangwa district | 75 | 1 | 24 |
| 7 | Improving school environment is one way of minimizing the problem of school drop out | 67 | 3 | 30 |
| 8 | Loose education policy on of attendance influence pupils drop out | 68 | 2 | 30 |
| 9 | Simsim shifting agriculture in Luangwa district contribute for pupils drop out | 76 | 2 | 22 |
| 10 | House hold made employment in township particularly Dar es salam contributes to pupils drop out in Ruangwa District | 58 | 2 | 40 |

Source: Field Data (2017)

Results from the questionnaire which stated that Unfriendly school environment contribute for pupils drop out where 73% agreed with the statement while 25% where disagree and 2% were undecided. This situation shows that school environment were not conducive to support pupils to learn. Also results from the questionnaire show that low level of family household education about the importance of education accelerate pupils drop out in Luangwa district where 75% agree, 24% disagree and 1% where undecided.

Furthermore, results from the questionnaire show that loose education policy on of attendance influence pupils drop out where 68%,where as 30% disagree and 2% were undecided. More important results from the questionnaire reveal that different cultural practices such as nomadic and early marriage contribute to pupils dropouts in this statement 75% agree, where as 20% disagree and 5% were undecided Significantly, Results from the questionnaire show that emergency of mineral s deposits contribute to pupils drop outs 66%agree, whereas,31%and 3% were undecided.

Findings from questionnaires were triangulated by those collected from interviews. For example, interview findings from DEO in Ruangwa district indicated that divorce in many families have played a big role in increasing dropout in schools because once there is separation of family either father or mother remain alone with children it is easier for those children to droupout. For example, once a family remain with father alone father does not make follow up effectively as a result children become free to move from one place to another ,some times it is easier to attend on

recreational area which entertain during school hours showing cinemas, video show and dances.

Further more, similar findings were presented by WEO who suggested that dropout are most likely to come from broken homes and families whose parents are not interested to care . On the other hand when children remain with their mother especially a mother with low income it becomes difficult for her to send children to schools. In many cases, those children will be involved in searching for income as a result it becomes difficult to proceed with studies as disclosed by one respondent who dropped out of studies. Similar findings were experienced from head teachers, teachers, parents as well as pupils. Many of the respondents had the view that pupils dropout in Ruangwa District was mainly due to poor family socio-economic background. For example, Head teacher in B primary school in Ruangwa District indicated that parents low income was one of the factor which causes pupils dropout.

The head teacher indicated that pupils from low income families failed to buy basic school needs such as uniform , exercise books,books, penand pencils. As a result those pupils will shy away from coming to schools at the end they dropouts. Further clarification from the head teacher at A primary school indicated that parents low income hinder student from distant areas to attend school every day and slowly they develop absenteeism, finally they dropout The head teacher in A primary school pointed out that in Ruangwa district droup out for girls is high especially for those girls who have reached adolescence stage they are married while they are very young,,the head teacher linked that with low income suggesting that it is what contribute to students' dropout.

Teachers from A primary school indicated that good teacher student relationship play a big role in maintaining student ability to stay in schools but once teacher are harsh to the pupils they develop they tend to run away from hi/her period, in a long run they dropout. Further clarification was provided by teacher at B primary school who indicated that when pupils arrive in a classroom they tend to establish relationships with people around them, especially the teachers. If the teacher makes the effort to understand the student and his/ her background a good relationship is likely to develop.

This is important because if pupils have problems they can speak freely with their teachers to find a solution that is good for them. If the student teacher relationship is maintained in good faith and the communication there is a high possibility of student to remain in school. If the relationship is bad, and trust, respect and understanding is not maintained, then going to school will not be so encouraging for pupils and they will lose interest in school and their teachers. Primary school teachers in B secondary school indicated that a husband with many wives it becomes difficult to fulfill the needs for the whole family as a result it will be difficult for those pupils to get basic school needs. Parents in Ruangwa district indicated that dropout in the district schools is caused by lack of family planning resulting in one family having many children bringing difficult to provide them with some basic school needs as required.

Emphasising on family planning as a factor influencing dropout, one parent stated;

We have one neighbour who had eight children with an interval of one year. Five children were supposed to be in school but due to failure to support them in buying uniform, books ,exercise books ,only two children are in school two children have dropped out because they have no uniform.

When asked why they have dropped out she said

'let them wait until their two sisters finish standard seven then it will be possible for them to proceed'.

This parent experience could mean that dropout challenge in Ruangwa is not only contributed by single factor but it is a function of multiple reasons including some families living away from school. When the father or mother are away means that children live by themselves something which might attract them to living bad. lifestyles which may consequently results into abnormal conditions such as alcoholism, physical illness, violence, abuse, family conflicts and associated stresses resulting into pupils to dropout.

The findings revealed that broken homes in which divorce, separation, extending family where father or mother figure is away from homes for a long time children are likely to drop out of school. This argument was clarified by Kalimaposo, (2008) who indicated that those families where there is broken homes are in great danger of having a life style that lead to abnormal condition like truancy ,alcoholism, violence due to lack of assistance from parents as a result they will end up dropping out from schools. The study suggested that there is a need to ensure that parents/guardian maintain good parental care by remaining intact with their children supporting them, directing them ,advising them to be in a ring truck so as to reduce drop out in schools.

Teaching and learning resources are important for effective and efficient teaching and learning process and it is a motivation which develop interest to the learner therefore absence or limited teaching and learning resources affect pupils in their studies.

According to Shadreck, (2013) in order to retain completion rate of pupils in schools, the government is required to support schools with enough teaching and learning resources. The study recommend that schools should possess adequate teaching and learning materials to support teachers teach effectively so as to motivate learners positively.

The study shows that limited number of teachers in school influence pupils dropout as pointed by Nkoma,(1979).who indicated that schools having few teachers student become idle moving out side the school compound and as time goes some of the student will not be coming to school every day .the study recommend that the government should make sure that enough teachers are employed in schools so as to allow pupils learn effectively.

The study findings indicate that good teacher student relationship maintain high student completion rate while bad relationship play a big role in increasing pupils drop out in primary schools as maintained by Hurngo (2005) who revealed that positive relationship between teacher and pupils help to maintain harmony, Teacher help student to be passionate with their work ,also Atayi, (2008). insisted that when pupils arrive in a classroom they tend to establish relationship with people around them ,therefore if the teacher makes their effort to understand the student and his/her background a good relationship is likely to develop and student will pay more attention in his/her classroom. Therefore teacher should maintain good relationship with student so as to reduce unnecessary dropout associated with harassment , torturing which increases drop out.

Social economic background including financial circumstance and income of the family influence pupils drop out where by household income is found to be an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially occurs a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Upfront costs include school fees, while the more hidden costs include uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Household income is linked to a range of factors: when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop out. According to Kalimaposo, (2008) argue that some pupils drop out of school due to low income in the family which limit them to proceed with studies due to inability to buy school uniform, travel and other necessary needs.

UNESCO (2004) pointed out that household income interacts with dropping out of school in particular where there is a link between poverty and dropping out from school describing exclusions rather than dropout per se, point poverty as 'the most common primary and contributory reason for pupils to be out of school'. Bogonko, (1992) described dropouts as coming from low-income families whose parents had little or no education, and who were unemployed or had jobs that gave them little or irregular income.

Therefore, this study recommends that parents should develop an attitude of saving money in fixed account from the early stage when their children are born so as to allow them start withdrawing those money when their children start primary school. Social cultural factors like circumcision "*Jando na Unyago*" early marriages and polygamy play a big role in increasing pupils drop out in schools as complained by

Bogonko (1992) parents involve their children in traditions and customs that led to poor attendance in schools as a result some of the pupils drop out completely. The study suggest that those practices should be done in the weekend or during holiday so as to avoid pupils drop out.

Gendered cultural practices associated with provision of education for boys and leaving girls especially when they are matured as pointed out by Coldough *et al.*(2000) gendered cultural practices at house hold level affect the opportunities of girls to access education until the end further support for this argument as explained by Herman,(2009) pointed out that some societies believe that educating a girl as a poor way of investment because girls will get married and leave homes,bringing the benefits of education to the husband rather than family rather than their homes.

The study recommends that bad cultural practices which influence pupils drop out should be condemned by the village government which is close to the people so as to maintain those culture which retain pupils in schools example positive reinforcement which motivate pupils to be interested with schools. In this study, children are seen as source of income and source of labour power ,this attitude affect pupils opportunities to to access and complete education as explained by Nafziger, (1988).who said that some of the parents use their children as a source of earning income they entertain involving their children in business like mulching guys while girls are directed to to work as hose girl ,on the other hand other parents instead of going to school every day there are some of the days they are involved in farms. This study recommend that parents are advised to involve their children in economic activities after class hours, during weekend and holidays.

Response from pupils who are at school and those who have dropped out indicated that some of the families have negative attitudes towards education especially for girls. Those families would like to see their children support them through labour by working in the farms or working as retailers so as to complement to family income. Pupils at B secondary school indicated that death of one or both parent were also found to be the problems leading to school dropout. Because parents are the one who support the children in buying school uniform, exercise books, pen pencils, school fees for private schools. , Therefore, the death of parents will result into difficulties for those pupils to proceed with studies unless relatives fill pinch and support them financially and morally it will be possible to proceed with studies. Further more, pupils indicated that they were interested in attending to school every day because teachers love them support them

*“Im happy in my school because teachers love me very much and I also love them because they teach well.”*one student said..

Pupils at B primary school pointed out that pressure from peer groups play a big role in increasing drop out pupils at B primary school indicated that some of the pupils drop out of school because they are accompanied with friends who are not interested in studying , one respondent disclosed

One student in our class was my friend who used to be a good pupil coming to school every day. As time went on, she got new friend from standard V those pupils were truancy coming to school when they like some time they were running away before class hours. those pupils dropped out when they were in standard six and our friend was in standard five.

This respondent experience tells us that school dropout is also accelerated by the peers relationship or mob psychology to keep that simple. The point one can get out of this practice is that parents just like teachers should strive to build an acceptable behaviour

to pupils and children by advising them several good practices and the danger of mob psychology. Pupils should be taught to learn cooperatively.

4.5 Ways of Reducing Pupils Dropping Out in Ruangwa Primary Schools

Teachers in A primary school responding to the interview insisted on the government to ensure that school possess conducive environment that support student to learn. Further support for that argument was pointed by Teachers in B secondary school who insisted on the support from the school committee to communicate with parents so as to ensure the presence of food in primary schools so as to reduce drop out brought as a result of hunger vex. Parents responding to interview suggested that teacher s need to maintain good relationship with pupils so as to avoid misunderstanding with pupils which creat upset which increases truancy and drop out. WEO insisted the village government to ensure traditional ceremonies like “*Jando na Unyago*” are held during holidays and weekends and not when pupils are at school. DEO insisted on the government to ensure the presence of enough teachers together with adequate teaching and learning resources in schools. The DEO verified that evidence shows that schools with few teachers have large number of truancy and drop outs. Pupils at school and those dropped out of school suggested that their should be no punishment that make pupils dropout. They also insisted on the government to ensure that pupils are near to schools.

Close ended questions from the respondents had suggestions to reduce pupils drop outs including. The government should make sure that there is mass mobilization and sensitization on education to make member of a society be aware of the importance of primary education. Should fight poverty families and ensure condusive schools and

communities environment. This would require considerable, political will, and public support to reduce the huge disparities in family income, access to health care, school funding and student composition, and community resources, School should enhance guidance and counseling to address girls droup out.

Interview with teachers revealed that parents should make follow up on their pupils attendance, response in writing tasks provided by teachers. They further indicated that parental care should be associated with communication with teachers to get feedback about pupils progress. Parents recommended on reducing the cost of education. Interview held with teachers revealed that creating friendly environment, construction of dormitories especially those school located far from settlement also the discussant insisted on parents to be informed about the importance of education.

The findings show that the debate on school drop outs need to be solved as suggested by Bridgeland *et al.* (2006) who contends that to help pupils stay in school the following should be observed: (i) improve teaching and curricula to make school more relevant and engaging to enhance the connection between school and work; (ii) improve instruction and access to support for struggling pupils; (iii) ensure strong adult-student relationships within the school; (iv) build a student relationships within the school; and (v) improve the communication between parents and school. From the findings, some more suggestions can be included. These are: improving the socio-economic conditions of the people by fighting poverty and hunger; educating parents on the role of engagement in school development including motivating learners to attend to school and creating conducive school environment suitable for schooling.

Therefore, based on the findings the study recommend that schools need to establish positive school climate which is associated with lower rates of dropout. More important homes need to be characterized by good parenting styles linked with support, guidance and counseling all these will reduce higher rates of dropout

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five presented a discussion of major themes advanced by the study. This chapter concludes the study and presents its contribution to the existing body of knowledge about an investigation of the influence of primary school pupils dropout in Ruangwa District, Lindi region. The chapter constitutes four major sections: summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and chapter summary.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study investigated the influence of primary school pupils dropout in Ruangwa District, Lindi Region. It specifically focused on investigating the education stakeholders' conception about pupils dropout, investigate the effect of family background on pupils dropout from school, examine the factors which contribute to pupils dropping out of school and find out ways of reducing pupils dropping out of the schools.

The study used descriptive research design with methods research approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data collection methods used were questionnaires and interviews. A sample of 130 respondents was drawn from the target population using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The study revealed that people conceptualize dropout in different ways besides their variation in conceptions of what it means by pupils' dropout, they seemed to mean similar understanding i.e. pupils leaving schools for different reasons including early

and teenage pregnancies as well as family soci-economic background. It was observed that pupils dropout in Ruangwa was accelerating to the extent of as an threatening efforts geared to achieve Education for All as signed and ratified at the international meeting such as that of Jomtien 1990. Dropout may specifically affects the equality of education received by pupils in primary schools.

The study also experienceds the influence of parent level of education in increasing pupils drop out these included lack of understanding about the importance of education, parents with low level of education were entertaines bad cultural practices which promote pupils drop out. These bad practice including circumcision ceremonies, early marriages, also parents with low level of education seemed to limit government and other stakeholders initiatives to establish strategies including making follow up about pupils progress. It recommends among other aspects, government and stakeholders to provide training and awareness creation on parents, teachers and community about pupils dropout and its effect on teaching and learning as well as on academic performance. The training shoulde also focus on the importance of education for pupils today and tomorrow.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the study findings, the study indicates that pupils dropout from school is influenced by multiple factors and that joint efforts are required in order to cub the challenge once and for all. From the findings, one can conclude that in order to improve academic performance of pupils in Ruangwa district there is a need to critically determine the real strategies that could practically address the causes of pupils dropout from schools.

Based on the findings, it was experienced that stakeholders have different conception about school dropout though their differences meant the same thing i.e. pupils not completing their school due to several reasons. Many of the conceptions of pupils dropout were attached to the particular causes or meaning a particular group attach to it.

According to the findings, it can logically be concluded that parent level of education may increase pupils drop out. This can happen when parents lack understanding of the importance of education. Parents with low level of education will entertain bad cultural practices which promote pupils drop out like early marriage presenting also limited initiatives to establish strategies including making follow up about pupils progress.

Besides serious pupils dropout in Ruangwa district, yet, there are many possibilities of improving pupils attendance and hence academic performance. Improving production capacity among parents, awareness creation on the role of education to the socio-economic development and elimination of all bad cultural practices which trigger pupils' dropout are just some of the alternative ways to improve school attendance among pupils. Significantly, the study pointed out that ways of reducing drop out in primary schools includes teachers need to maintain good relationship with pupils so as to avoid misunderstanding with pupils which create upset which increases truancy and dropout.

5.4 Recommendations

The following are the recommendation made.

5.4.1 Recommendation for Policy and Practice

5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy

The government should establish good policy which will facilitate parents to ensure that they maintain good parental care by remaining intact with their children while supporting them, directing them, advising them to behave schools should wish to do.

5.4.2 Recommendation for Practice

Stakeholders including parents, guardians, government, school owners and pupils should cultivate what is called a community of learners whereby they encourage one another, learn one another, discuss one another, debate one another and indeed they ALL should strive to improve both home and school environments in order to motivate and attract pupils to stay at school. The school management, parents and school committee should ensure that pupils are provided with food meanwhile teachers should maintain good relationship with pupils so as to reduce unnecessary dropout associated with harassment, torturing which increases drop out.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Further Research

The study on the influence of primary school pupils dropout in Ruangwa District, Lindi region. The study was confined to only six primary schools, three wards and three division where only four specific objectives were worked out. These objectives included: stakeholders conception of dropout from school; the influence of family background to pupils dropout; factors accelerating dropout from school in Ruangwa and more importantly the study sought ways to improve pupils attendance and hence academic performance in Ruangwa District, Lindi region. Moreover the study used only 130 participants which in either case could not be used to generalise to a large

part of the area in the country. It is for these reasons that the study recommends a similar study be conducted in other regions in the country and most probably with marked differences in social cultural and economic base. Such a study may consider using new approaches and theories as well as different levels of institutions. This will not only expand the coverage but more important these studies will add up knowledge to the existing body of knowledge about dropout challenges in schools across the country and the glo.

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APPENDICES

**Appendix I: Questionnaire for District Education Officers, Ward Education
Coordinators, Head Teachers, Teachers and Pupils**

Dear Sir/Madam

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influences of primary school pupils' dropout in Ruangwa District, Lindi Region. You are sympathetically requested to give sincere responses to the questions. This questionnaire intends to obtain a profile of responses related to the research attention. Note that the information you give will be treated with the extreme privacy and used profoundly for academic purpose indicated hereunder.

1. Outline five factors for school attendance at your school/district

2. Briefly explain what do you know about pupils' dropout?

3. How does the school address the problem of pupils' dropout?

4. What factors that influence pupils' dropout in Ruangwa Districts?

4. What are the school and government efforts to resolve pupils dropout in Ruangwa District

5. Indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree with influences of pupils dropout in Ruangwa District in the table below as follows:

- 1) **SA=Strongly Agree.** 2) **A=Agree.** 3) **U=Undecided.** 4) **D=Disagree.** 5) **SD=Strongly Disagree**

| S/N | Statement | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|------------|---|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| i. | Unfriendly school environment contribute for pupils dropout in Ruangwa District | | | | | |
| ii. | Stakeholders have different conception of pupils dropout of schools in Ruangwa District | | | | | |
| iii. | Schools Management and the government have well established strategies/programmes to address pupil's dropout in Ruangwa District and Tanzania in general. | | | | | |
| iv. | Different cultural practices such as nomadism and early marriages contribute to pupils dropouts | | | | | |
| v. | Emergent of minerals deposits contribute for pupils dropouts | | | | | |
| vi. | Low level of family/ household education about the importance of education accelerate pupils dropout in Ruangwa District | | | | | |
| Vii | Improving school environment is one way of minimizing the problem of school dropout. | | | | | |
| viii. | Loose education policy on aspect of attendance influence pupils dropout | | | | | |
| ix. | Simsim shifting cultivation in Ruangwa district contribute for pupils dropout | | | | | |
| x. | Household made employment in township particularly Dar es salaam contributes to pupil's dropout in Ruangwa District. | | | | | |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Appendix II: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Teachers and Parents

1. What do you understand about pupils' dropout in Ruangwa District?
2. What do people conceive about pupils' dropout of schools in Ruangwa district?
3. How is stakeholders understanding/ conception of pupils dropout affect government efforts to address the challenges?
4. What reason accelerate pupils' dropout in Ruangwa District?
5. How is school environment affect pupils dropout in Ruangwa District?
6. What ways the government and other stakeholders can use to get rid of pupils dropout challenges?
7. Does the socio-economic background of parents and guidance have any effects on pupils dropout in Ruangwa District?
8. What is the influence of culture on pupils dropout in Ruangwa district primary schools
9. Can you freely share with me about pupils dropout in Ruangwa District?

THANKS FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Appendix III: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Pupils

1. What school contribution do your parents pay for schools?
2. How do your parents manage to pay for school contribution?
3. Do you enjoy your studies? Why?
4. How often do you come to school in a week?
5. How does the school environment influence your school attendance?
6. How does availability of teaching and learning materials influence your academic performance?
7. What do you think are the factors that contribute for your school attendance?
8. What activities are you involved in at school?
9. Is your cultural affiliation has any connection to your school attendance?
10. What can you comment about you school attendance?

THANKS FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Appendix IV: Focused Group Guide for Teachers and Parents

1. How does pupils drop out conceived by stakeholders?
2. What is the contribution of parents' education level on students' dropout from schools?
3. Factors contributing to pupils' dropout from schools in Ruangwa district?
4. How can pupils' dropout be reduced in Ruangwa district?

THANKS FOR YOUR COLLABORATION