

**MoEAC AND UNICEF EDUCATION PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (ePPP):
THE CHALLENGE OF THE HIGH DROPOUT RATE IN NAMIBIA**

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my beloved grandparents, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength to carry on whenever I thought of giving up. They continually provided moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support.

I further dedicate it to my brothers, sisters, cousins, aunties, uncles, mentors, friends, and fellow scholars who shared their word of advice and encouragement to help me finish this study.

And lastly, I dedicate this thesis to the Almighty God and thank Him for His guidance, strength, wisdom, power of mind, protection, skills and my health. All of these, I offer to you.

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Abstract

The inability of many nations, such as Namibia, to singlehandedly provide public services, including educational infrastructure, fostered education public private partnerships (PPP) as a way of involving the private sector in partnerships to combat societal challenges. Learners who dropout from school is a threat to the Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MoEAC). Thus, evidence suggests the adoption of educational PPP (ePPP) to mitigate early learners' exit from school. A stakeholder concept of theoretical thinking was used, emphasizing the engagement and cooperation of all groups and individuals influencing dropout. A qualitative inductive and a single case study approach and design were respectively adopted. The activities of UNICEF, as a vital MoEAC partner on dropout, determined its selection for the data collection site. Participants (Executive-director level) were selected through a purposive sampling technique and semi-structured interview data was collected and analysed thematically. Findings identify five second-order aggregate dimensions: PPP actors and partnerships, foundational drop-out causes, program actions, technology solutions and ePPP dropout challenges. The study findings suggest that the partners need to organize dropout program actions beyond learners and to work alongside other stakeholders, such as parents and NGOs, to control dropout. This is a significant position of the stakeholder concept and management theory. The inductive process constructed theoretical frameworks depicting four challenges that contribute to the ePPP program action dropout failing: inefficient policies and policy programs, limited funding, Covid-19-related challenges, and limited focus of dropout program actions on students.

Keywords: Dropout, Education Public-Private Partnership (ePPP), ePPP failing, Learners' exit, Program actions, Stakeholder framework.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---------|---|
| CSR | Corporate Social Responsibilities |
| ePPP | Education Public-Private Partnership |
| GRN | Government Republic of Namibia |
| IFI | International Financial Institutions |
| MoEAC | Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NSSF | National Safe Schools Framework |
| PE4Life | Physical Education for Life |
| PFI | Private Finance Initiative |
| PPP | Public-Private Partnership |
| PQA | Programme Quality Assurance |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SFP | School Feeding Programme |
| UCT | University of Cape Town |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| UNPAF | United Nations Partnership Framework |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Study Background

Globally, education is one of the fundamental human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948. To substantiate, according to the United Nations (1984), = Article 26: a) it states that everyone has the right to education, education should be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

b) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Internationally, the accepted idea is that education is crucial for sustainable development, as outlined in goal four (4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2018).

Ajake et al. (2014), Lange (2017) and Saint et al. (2003) maintain that education is at the forefront of human and societal development. Contemporarily, education is seen as an indispensable factor in providing solutions to modern and complex individual group challenges, whether in terms of individual self-actualisation, socio-economic exigencies, national development, or consolidation of international relations (Ajake et al., 2014, p. 22).

Education is intrinsic, valuable to a community in general and humanity in particular as it serves as a pathway to growth and development. However, despite the global drive towards global quality education, there is an urgent need to address the numerous educational challenges such as poor education performance, lack of training, low motivation, financial limitations and mismanagement, and high dropout rates. (Lewin, 2009).

As such, this study places focus on the dropout rates of Namibian children out of school.

Dropout can be defined as non-completion of educational pursuits without obtaining an intended credential (de Witte, K., Cabus, S., Thyssen, G., Groot, W., & van den Brink, H. M. (2013).). In general, dropout is considered an impediment to moving to higher education, thereby hampering national development, an innovation-based economy, the availability of skilled resource personnel and labour force and other structural consequences for nations. In developed countries, the dropout rate is as high as 40% (Robison et al., 2017; Stiburek et al., 2017). Meanwhile, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the average dropout rate amongst students stands at 60% (Sabates et al.,

2010). There are several explanations for the dropouts ranging from family-related challenges, social factors, personality, behavioural and structural factors (de Witte et al., 2013; Parr & Bonitz, 2015; Ramsdal et al., 2015) Some scholars argue that inadequate resource allocation, lack of dedicated infrastructure, socio- economic status and technical manpower are generally responsible for dropout (Sabates et al., 2010).

Studies on dropout and child labour found poverty to be the main cause of child labour (Ananga, 2011, Ghana & UNICEF, 2012). According to a study done by Haaveshe Nekongo Nielsen, Nchindo R Mbukusa, Emmy Tjiramba and Florida Beukes (2015), in the Kavango region, some learners drop out to fish and sell or supply fish to somebody's business or cuka shops in order to earn an income for their families. For all three regions some school learners work on commercial farms as teams with their parents for the sustenance of the family. A learner who is at a school along the Grootfontein-Rundu road in the Kavango region occasionally works on a commercial farm in the Grootfontein district where his father is also employed. When he comes back to school it is almost the end of the term or school year, and teachers have covered many topics in the syllabus.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) history can be traced to the 1990s when the partnerships were popularised by the UK's Labour government (Mathonsi, 2013). In recent times, the concept has gathered varieties of epistemological and practical engagements, hence, making it difficult to conceptualise and operationalise. For example, PPPs were introduced as 'internal' or 'national' partnerships of the public and private sectors to combine resources in policy goals and project achievement (Unterhalter, 2017). This is evident in Mathonsi's (2013) definition which sees PPPs as contractual arrangements involving the private sector in the delivery of public services based on a partnership approach; the responsibility for the delivery of services is shared between the public and private sectors, both of which bring complementary skills to the enterprise. However, due to the influx of other actors – external, transnational companies, global actors, etc., PPPs have become multidimensional, popular, diverse, and problematic (Mundy & Menashy, 2012; Robertson & Verger, 2012; Verger, 2012). Some of the factors driving PPPs are equitable risk-sharing, cost savings and value for money, enhanced asset quality and service level, reduced public financing and catalyst for the economy (Chan, A. P. C., Lam, P. T. I., Chan, D. W. M., Cheung, E., & Ke, Y. (2009).; Mathonsi, 2013).

During the 1980s and 1990s, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) promoted the concept of privatisation in Africa as part of the politics of modernisation (Takala, 1998; Verger, 2012).

Subsequent to the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) failures, international aid communities have encouraged and promoted Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Some of the global players include: the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNESCO and UNICEF. Verger (2012) explains that international organisations believe that the public sector cannot face the challenge of education expansion by itself, and they are exploring new ways of providing education in which public and private actors can collaborate. Consequently, this has given birth to, and proliferated, the creation of PPPs in many sectors of the economy, in both the developed and the developing worlds (Verger & Moschetti, 2016). Therefore, ePPPs (Verger, 2012) or ‘PPPs for education’ (Verger & Moschetti, 2016) have increased significantly to address the problems faced by countries in supporting education (Mundy & Menashy, 2012). Similarly, it is recognised that PPPs involve a complicated and multifaceted process with the associated challenges of implementation, multiple stakeholders’ participation, political agendas, donor strings, assessing achievement of targeted deliverables, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of impacts created (Bovens et al., 2006; Naidoo, 2013).

The national government of Namibia has embraced the PPP approach in providing and delivering public services. This includes the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) (Ministry of Finance, 2013; Ministry of Trade & Finance, 2012). In view of the evidence of significant UNICEF partnership with the MoEAC to curb dropout and to provide solutions to the issue of dropout ((Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2018; UNICEF, 2016), the current study investigates dropout in Namibia by mainly focusing on the Education Public-Private Partnership (ePPP) engagement between the MoEAC and UNICEF. The study provides a detailed analysis of the parties forming the ePPP in conjunction with the ministry, the mechanics of operation between the parties and the way they engage to eliminate high dropout rates, to achieve sustainable development and other policy objectives in Namibia.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the substantial promotion of ePPP as a solution to educational challenges globally, the high dropout statistics that are continually recorded are a cause for concern. For example, the dropout rate in Sub-Saharan countries, including Namibia, is recorded at 60% (Sabates et al., 2010). According to Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015), while Namibia has a high percentage of

learners enrolling, very few are recording educational achievement and completion up to junior secondary education level. They further argue that it is crucial “for Namibia as a country to mitigate the dropout phenomenon and ensure more young people progress to secondary education and eventually graduate from secondary school” (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015, p. 114). This is also essential because it is considered an impediment to transit to higher education, it hampers national development, innovation-based economy, the availability of skilled resource personnel and labour force and other structural consequences for nations (de Witte et al., 2013; Freeman & Simonsen, 2015; Sabates et al., 2010). Generally, PPP is a complicated and multifaceted process with the associated challenges of implementation, multiple stakeholders’ participation, political agendas, donor strings, assessing achievement of targeted deliverables, as well as monitoring and evaluation of its impact (Bovens et al., 2006; Naidoo, 2013).

In recognition of the challenge of the high drop-out rate in Namibia, this study takes as its point of departure the PPP for education partnership between the MoEAC and the UNICEF and their activities to curb the high dropout rate in Namibia. The study addresses the bane of educational development in Sub-Saharan Africa — learner dropout (Sabates et al., 2010), through an ePPP analysis approach. As educational access and academic enrolment increase in Africa, the factors that reduce educational competencies and opportunities, including students' academic disobedience, truancy and dropouts are increasing.

1.3 Significance of the study

The study will contribute to the body of knowledge as original research in this area. In gathering materials for this study, the researcher requested the help of a professional librarian to gather relevant materials that speak directly to this topic. As such, this study will be a vital resource for future studies on Namibia’s dropout challenge, a useful reference tool for policymakers, including ePPP organisational and institutional stakeholders, as well as academics. In addition, the study aims to inform strategies, policy, and practice by communicating the findings to the appropriate channels.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research question is:

What are the challenges contributing to the school dropout rate in Namibia?

The sub-questions are:

- a) What are the persistent causes of the high dropout rate amongst basic school learners

in Namibia?

- b) How has the ePPP stakeholders, MoEAC and UNICEF addressed the high dropout rate challenge in Namibia.
- c) What are the challenges and failures encountered by the ePPP players in reducing the dropout rate in Namibia.

1.5 Research Objectives

The main research objective is to study the challenges contributing the school dropout rate in Namibia.

Specific objectives are:

- a. To assess the causes of the high dropout rate amongst basic school learners in Namibia.
- b. To analyse how the ePPP in Namibia has addressed the high dropout rate.
- c. To identify the challenges encountered by the ePPP engagement between MoEAC and UNICEF to lower the dropout rate.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is centred on the issue of dropout amongst school learners in Namibia. Significantly, the study focuses on the program engagements between the MoEAC and another significant education provider in Namibia; UNICEF. The selection of UNICEF is attributed to the vital impact and significant educational operation of the UN organ in the country.

1.7 Definition of Key Concepts

The following concepts are frequently used in the study; consequently, to the context in which they are used is illuminated below.

- **Community:** refers to social groups of individuals, beyond their parents, who provide educational and socialisation support to learners. Smucker (1960) defines community as focal points for providing services, including that of education. As such, in this thesis, community will be used to define the people.
- **Dropout:** the inability of the learner to continue with school, usually due to learners' own capability (performance and behaviour) or socioeconomic conditions (Haaveshe Nekongo-Nielsen, Nchindo R Mbukus, Emmy Tjiramba and Florida Beukes, 2015). This will be used to refer to the learners who left school, for any particular reason.
- **Education Public-Private Partnership (ePPP)/ Public-Private Partnership for education:** This is PPP that is centred on providing educational services. It is a long-term strategy

for promoting equitable, high-quality Education for All (EFA) that is accessible and affordable. In this research, it will be used to refer to the approach used by government to deliver quality services to its population by using the expertise of the private sector.

- MoEAC: It stands for Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and is a critical ministry in Namibia; it will be used to describe how it spearhead the effort to provide governmental educational mentorship, supervision, and services in the country.
- According to the Oxford Dictionary (2005), a parent is defined as a person who is one of the progenitors of a child; a father or mother. In this research, parents will be used to refer to the learners' direct caretakers. This study does not differentiate between biological parents and guardians.
- Programme Actions: are used as the solutions and programmes implemented by partners to combat the high dropout rate.
- Public-Private Partnership: The definition by Linder & Rosenau (2000, p. 5), "the formation of cooperative relationships between government, profit-making firms and non-profit private organisations to fulfil a policy function" meets the PPP understanding of this research.
- Student/Learner is an individual who is registered at a basic educational institution in Namibia and will be used as a reference to indicate an individual who is registered at a basic educational institution in Namibia.
- School: is defined as a formal agency of education designed for specific goals (Hoque, 2023) In this research, the term will be used to refer to basic school only, i.e., primary, or secondary school.
- UNICEF: is a UN organisational organ. This study is focused on the UNICEF office in Namibia.

1.8 Thesis Outline

Chapter one provides the background to and motivation for the study. Importantly, the problem statement is communicated, and the research questions are stated. Relevant literature is reviewed and discussed in the second chapter. Concepts like PPP and ePPP are elucidated. This is followed by an elaboration of the Namibian education sector and the challenges of the dropout rates in the country. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the stakeholder theory as a theoretical framework. Chapter 3 presents the study's methods. A qualitative research paradigm and case study research design were followed, and data was analysed using the Gioia method. Chapter 4 presents the findings; five aggregate dimensions are reported: PPP actors and partnership basis,

foundational factors influencing dropout, program actions on drop-out in Namibia, technology solutions and dropout and challenges of ePPP dropout failures. Chapter 5 discusses the data results in relation to the literature findings and the conclusion and recommendations are provided in the final chapter.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses literature associated with the Namibia's education system and its challenges, school dropout challenges and the factors leading to school dropout, and the emergence of education Public- Private Partnerships (PPP) as a subset of Public -Private Partnerships and their conceptual meaning. It also defines Public-Private Partnerships, provides an overview of, as well as stakeholder management.

2.2 Challenges of Namibia's education system

Namibia's education system is facing challenges, some of which are as follows: Despite the inclusion of education in the Government Republic of Namibia's (GRN) constitution, National Development Policy (NDP) and Vision 2030, the country's education system is plagued by unclear and conflicting policies, ineffective reforms and unbalanced regional enforcement (Hangula et al., 2018). As a result, students and the quality of the education are harmed. Moreover, the country's economy must cope with the consequences (Kandjaba, 2018).

Furthermore, the limited availability of learning support materials (LSM) in Namibia is a barrier to learners and education output quality (Millennium Challenge Corporation, 2020). Widespread composite classes share a small number of learning support materials, as textbooks are required to remain in the schools and are passed down from one generation to the next (Jellenz, Bobek & Horvat, 2020). The textbook policy, established in 2008 to reach a textbook- to-textbook student ratio of 1:1, aims to improve the situation (Shigwedha et al., 2017). A further challenge is that the high unemployment rate in Namibia is influenced by poor graduates and a domestic education system that does not meet labour market demands (World Bank, 2010). As a result, many students choose to study overseas, thereby benefiting from better quality education and better employment opportunities. As a result, the Millennium Challenge Corporation USA (MCC) and some foreign institutions are working to increase the quality of Namibian education. This is being done by expanding educational activities as well as textbook availability and accessibility (Marope, 2005).

Finally, because of Namibia's vast geography and tiny population, the majority of the educational facilities are concentrated in major cities such as Windhoek, the capital. Consequently, citizens in rural or distant areas have an added obstacle to their quality education

(Jellenz et al., 2020). The situation is aggravated by an unfair academic geography and the system-wide allotment of educational resources (Kandjaba, 2018).

2.2.1 The challenges of school dropout in Namibia

High dropout rates in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, conflict significantly with the socio-economic goals set forward by the government and policymakers in promoting long-term economic growth. Dropping out of school has been described as exiting school without obtaining a minimum qualification, usually a higher secondary education certificate (de Witte et al., 2013). According to Lekhesa (2012), school dropouts are students who quit schooling before the end of the educational learning process in which they are engaged; this could be elementary, regular, or higher school education.

Many scholars regard dropout as a developmental activity that begins in the early grades (Evans et al., 1995; Finn, 1989). Dropout, according to these scholars, is a student's incapacity to proceed with schooling, which may be the result of the student's inherent personality (performance and behaviour) or of socio-economic circumstances. There are other instances, according to the scholars, where the system is to blame for the student's inability to stay in school. Some scholars refer to this as "pushout" rather than "dropout" (Reddy & Sinha, 2010; Ananga, 2011). However, studies have proved over time that dropout is the result of a multifaceted engagement among the student, family, school, education policy and community factors (Finn, 1989; Rumberger, 2001; Ananga, 2011; Reddy & Sinha, 2010).

Regardless of the fact that policymakers are placing more emphasis on the challenges of school dropout, it remains a severe problem in society, most especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Namibia in particular. According to the growing body of literature on school dropout, school dropout is most often attributed to prolonged joblessness, poverty, depressing health conditions, steady reliance on government welfare, teenage pregnancy, political and social complacency, and high involvement in crime (Christenson et al., 2000; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Vizcain, 2005).

Table 2.1 Dropout rates of students in Namibia from 2012 to 2018

| School phase | Grade | Year | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| School-leaving rates | | | | | | | | |
| Junior Primary | Grade 1 | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.0% | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.9% | 1.6% |
| | Grade 2 | -0.5% | -0.6% | -0.3% | 0.6% | -1.3% | 0.7% | 0.5% |
| | Grade 3 | 0.4% | 0.3% | -0.4% | 0.9% | -0.6% | 1.3% | -0.1% |
| Senior Primary | Grade 4 | 0.3% | 0.3% | -0.4% | 0.9% | 0.6% | 2.7% | 2.2% |
| | Grade 5 | 2.5% | 2.5% | 3.4% | 3.6% | 2.0% | 3.0% | 2.4% |
| | Grade 6 | 2.7% | 2.6% | 2.4% | 2.4% | 2.3% | 4.0% | 3.3% |
| | Grade 7 | 3.8% | 3.8% | 2.7% | 1.6% | 3.3% | 6.0% | 3.3% |
| Junior Secondary | Grade 8 | 8.9% | 8.9% | 9.2% | 8.1% | 8.0% | 9.9% | 5.3% |
| | Grade 9 | 7.9% | 7.9% | 7.2% | 6.5% | 5.0% | 6.4% | 1.5% |
| Senior Secondary | Grade 10 | 32.7% | 32.7% | 29.4% | 31.2% | 27.8% | 29.7% | 40.6% |
| | Grade 11 | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.9% | 2.2% | 0.4% | 0.8% | 1.1% |

Source: EMIS (2019)

2.2.2 Factors leading to school dropout

There are many factors contributing to the high rate of dropout in developing countries like Namibia. Such factors are categorised as student-related factors, family-related factors, school-related factors, and community-related factors. These factors are discussed below:

- **Student-related factors**

Student-related factors like academic accomplishment have been linked to early school dropout. They are most commonly assessed by employing cross-sectional data from test scores, especially mathematics, reading and science, localised school tests and other factors such as school retention and enrolment in specialised education (Cooper, Chavira & Mena, 2005).

- **School-related factors**

In terms of educational achievement, such as completion of schooling, the nature of the school may be associated with a student's academic performance. It is believed that professional or specialised schools that are more competitive have less dropout of students than non-competitive ones (Dustmann et al., 1996). Additionally, Balfanz and Legters (2005) claim that if a school has more supporting strength (i.e., a larger overall proportion of students graduating from one grade to the next at the right time), dropout is reduced. Pitmann (1993) concurs with Balfanz and Legters (2004) view that the resources of schools, such as the class size and teacher-student ratio, are also factors that influence high dropout. Indeed, one of the justifications for why private

schools perform better than public ones is associated with their lower-class sizes in terms of the ratio of teacher to student (de Witte, 2013).

2.2.3 Education reform in Namibia

The value of education was not instilled in Namibian society or the governmental system before independence. Low-skilled teachers, a lack of financial resources, inadequate facilities (Directorate of Planning & Development, 2017) and apartheid, which provided education based on skin colour, all contributed to Namibia's community having deficient human capital (Kamupingene, 2001). Following the country's independence in 1990, the education programme "Education for All" (EFA) was implemented, incorporating education into the country's rewritten constitution (Jellenz et al., 2020). Since then, the national government has integrated educational goals such as access to equity and quality education in its National Policy Documents (NPDS) (Millennium Challenge Corporation, 2020).

All people are fundamentally entitled to education, prompting increased investment in the education sector. Furthermore, government spending on education has risen significantly, resulting in an adult literacy rate of 80% in the 21st century. Namibia's strengthened human capital is also a critical factor in the country's fight against poverty, inequity, and HIV/AIDS (Kamunpingene, 2002). According to Namibia's constitution, all nationals should have the freedom and opportunity to access basic education with a 7-3-2 education system, which consists of seven years of primary or elementary grade, three years of junior secondary and two years of senior secondary education respectively (Hangula et al., 2018).

2.2.4 Deep-diving into the Namibian Education System

Namibia, formerly known as Southwest Africa, gained independence in 1990 from the colonial control and apartheid laws enforced by South Africa (Angula & Lewis, 1997; Erixon Arreman et al., 2016). It (Namibia) inherited an apartheid-era educational system and, as a result, the entire system of education had to be overhauled. Recently, the curriculum has been updated, and the language of instruction has been switched from Afrikaans to English. Furthermore, they have concentrated on extremely innovative, learner-centred teaching approaches. However, various publications claim that there has been an increase in concern about educational quality in the country (Makuwa, 2005).

The schooling system in Namibia is not rigidly organised into primary and secondary grades but it is categorised into four phases: junior primary including pre-primary grade to grade 3; senior

primary, grades 4-7, junior secondary, grades from 8-10 and the senior secondary, grades 11-12 (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC), 2019; Wikan, 2008). According to the recent education ministry statistics, the number of schools in Namibia has increased from 1,435 in 1996 to 1,894 in 2019 with public schools dominating the space with 1,695 while there are 199 private schools, representing 11.7% of the total number of schools (EMIS, 2019). This statistic shows that there is less investment from the private organisations in establishing educational institutions at the primary, secondary and special education levels. See Figure 2.1 and Table 2.2 for graphical representations of Namibia’s education system and the regional statistics of the educational institutions.

Figure 2.1 Structure of Namibia’s education system (Kamerika, 2020).

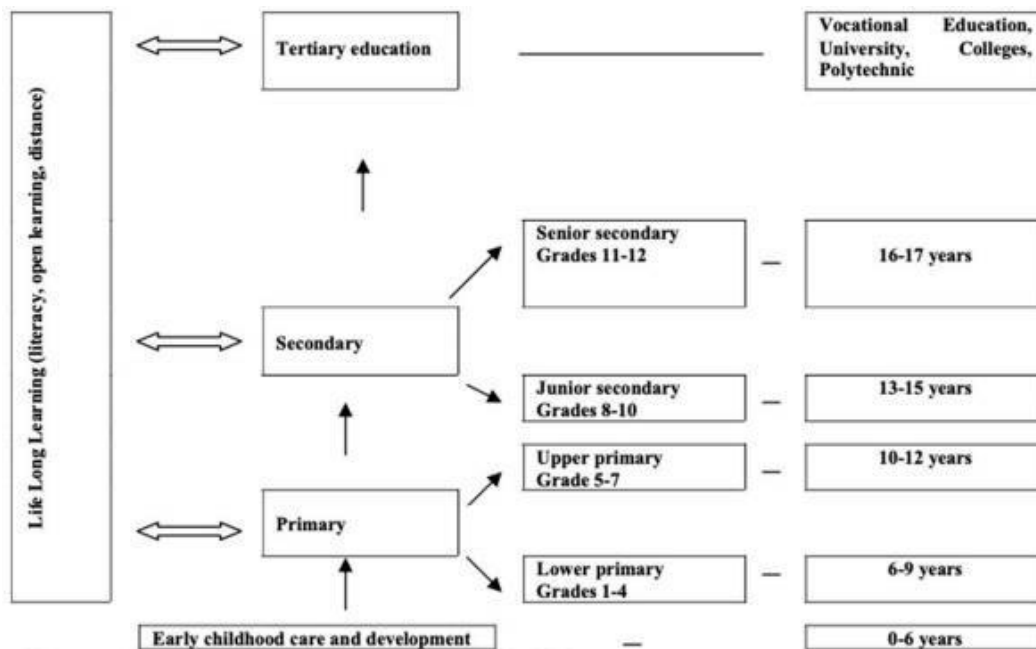


Table 2.2: Regional numbers of schools, circuits, learners, teachers and support staff

| Region | Schools | Circuits | Learners | | Teachers | | Support Staff | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Total | Total | Total | % Female | Total | % Female | Total | % Female |
| Kharas | 55 | 3 | 22,604 | 51.0 | 986 | 72.3 | 246 | 69.9 |
| Erongo | 75 | 3 | 45,082 | 51.4 | 1,811 | 77.6 | 459 | 64.3 |
| Hardap | 60 | 3 | 25,278 | 50.6 | 1,010 | 69.2 | 221 | 69.2 |
| Kavango East | 170 | 6 | 63,460 | 49.7 | 2,176 | 53.1 | 319 | 74.9 |
| Kavango West | 176 | 7 | 42,442 | 49.0 | 1,642 | 50.5 | 181 | 76.2 |
| Khomas | 133 | 4 | 90,380 | 51.8 | 3,839 | 75.6 | 783 | 61.4 |
| Kunene | 68 | 3 | 29,654 | 49.7 | 1,202 | 58.2 | 191 | 62.8 |
| Ohangwena | 266 | 10 | 106,505 | 49.8 | 4,240 | 65.5 | 624 | 65.2 |
| Omaheke | 46 | 2 | 23,216 | 50.1 | 911 | 64.3 | 232 | 62.1 |
| Omusati | 286 | 12 | 97,719 | 49.5 | 4,236 | 67.6 | 706 | 76.8 |
| Oshana | 141 | 5 | 54,382 | 50.8 | 2,377 | 70.9 | 440 | 68.4 |
| Oshikoto | 221 | 8 | 71,119 | 49.3 | 3,087 | 67.0 | 515 | 60.4 |
| Otjozondjupa | 82 | 3 | 45,838 | 50.8 | 1,743 | 71.6 | 316 | 68.4 |
| Zambezi | 115 | 5 | 39,315 | 49.4 | 1,818 | 60.3 | 324 | 79.9 |
| National | 1,894 | 74 | 756,994 | 50.2 | 31,078 | 66.0 | 5,557 | 68.6 |

Source: EMIS (2019)

Given the statistics above, the numbers of established schools, qualified teaching personnel, and the number of enrolled students have all increased dramatically. However, there are still a number of issues to address, such as access to high-quality education which is one of the primary objectives of Namibia's education policy. Also, there are children who have never been enrolled in or attended school; this is coupled with the challenges of school dropouts (Wikan, 2008).

Namibia is sometimes held up as Africa's model for educational development. However, despite the fact that the sector has attracted funding for more than two decades and the participation levels also meet with the Millennium Development Goals, the challenges remain: poor learning outcomes of students and high dropout rates. Also, with over 85 percent of children enrolled in grade 1 and the majority of them completing grade 7, the country is still facing the challenge of keeping children in school until they get to grade 12 (Nampa, 2021). Although there are few examples in the literature about ePPP in the Namibian education sector, Ojanen (2020) reports a collaboration with a private sector company, the University of Finland Ltd, Dololo operations, and a team of professionals to build innovative educational facilities in two Namibian government-owned schools. The Dololearn programme team spent about two and half years researching and creating the Future School Concept (Ojanen, 2020). The initiative was formed as a result of the lack of academic resources in the two Namibian schools. They fixed

the non-functional classrooms, assisted teachers in their professional development training and upgraded the schools' digital learning equipment to impact significantly on students' learning performance and teachers' productivity (Polar Partners, 2020).

2.3 Public – Private Partnership

2.3.1 Emergence of Public-Private Partnership

The term Public-Private Partnership gained popularity in the late 1980s, when it was used to describe new or expanded roles of private entities in supposedly public realms of activities (Afridi, 2017; Bexell & Morth, 2010; Robertson et al., 2012; Wettenhall, 2003). It was developed as a strategic neoliberal alternative for governments to overcome budgetary limitations and other difficulties facing the public services delivery of quality education (Ivan & Chaya, 2020; Kim, 2017; Malik, 2010). Although there is no generally accepted definition of PPP, several scholars have described PPP and each definition reflects specific PPP characteristics, showing that scholars have diverse interpretations of the term PPP. For example, the World Bank (2019) defines PPP as “a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance”.

From another perspective, Linder and Rosenau (2000, p. 5), define PPP as “the formation of cooperative relationships between government, profit-making firms and non-profit private organisations to fulfil a policy function”.

Similarly, Sheppard and Beck (2018) view PPP as a long-term relationship between public and private organisations with the goal of collective gain. Grimsey and Lewis (2002, p. 108) provide a more detailed definition of the term PPP as “an agreement where the public sector enters into long-term contractual agreements with private sector entities for the construction or management of public sector infrastructure facilities by the private sector entity, or the provision of services (using infrastructure facilities) by the private sector entity to the community on behalf of a public sector entity.” Given the aforementioned definitions, it can be deduced that a common conceptualisation of PPP can be described as the coming together of public and private entities to carry out a public service with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of operations through the transfer of private sector competences.

2.3.2 Education Public-Private Partnership (ePPP)

For most of contemporary history, schools were either public or private, and despite some ambiguity, the distinctions between private and public schools were clear. Public schools were funded, controlled, and financed by the government, whereas private schools were funded, financed, and managed by private individuals (Mitra, 2020). However, in recent times, a third form of schooling has emerged in the educational system – the Education Public-Private Partnership or Public-Private Partnership in education.

While education is widely regarded as an essential service for advancing socioeconomic improvement, funding and effectively delivering it constitutes a major difficulty, particularly in developing nations (Amuche & Jangson Kukwi, 2013; Luthra & Mahajan, 2013). Most of Education Public-Private Partnership literature emphasises that ePPP is a long-term strategy for promoting equitable accessibility to affordable and high-quality Education for All (EFA). (Aslam et al., 2017; Malik, 2010; Moschetti & Verger, 2020; UNESCO, 2015). The World Education Forum and UNESCO introduced a new program called “Partnership for Education (Pfe)” in early 2007. The Pfe aspires to build an international network of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Education (MSPEs), which include the commercial sector, to accelerate advancement of EFA. It encourages the formation of new MSPEs to assist and implement successful private sector and corporate commitments to EFA (Draxler, 2008).

The stalling of public funding provided for education, mainly in developing nations (Chattopadhyay & Nogueira, 2013; Draxler, 2015), was one of the key motivations for the formation of PPPs. Theoretically, it is believed that a Public-Private Partnership can use the private sector to benefit the public good (Mitra, 2020). An educational PPP is an agreement in which public and private actors assume responsibility for school funding, management, operations, and possession (Baum, 2018; Patrinos et al., 2009) and collaborate to meet crucial educational, social, and economic goals (Mitra, 2020; LaRocque, 2008). Governments, particularly, have been a driving force behind the emergence of PPPs, as they strive to overcome resource and management shortages. PPPs have also been advocated as a significant funding method by international development institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations, and United Nations agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO - via the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda.

2.3.3 Public-Private Partnership role in the education sector

It is important to understand the various definitions of Public-Private Partnership and its background as a policy instrument and governance tool in global education. It is also important to

emphasise that the private sector has always performed a key role in education and has frequently incorporated a “durable relationship” with the public sector (Robertson et al., 2012).

According to Robertson et al. (2012), conceptualising PPPs in education is difficult and the difference between public and private education is often not clear as the two sectors have traditionally worked together to provide educational services. Moreover, in reality, the private sector has a rich record of providing public functions or services, most especially in the education sector (Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016).

Xiong et al. (2019) defines public-private partnership as an innovative contracting model in which public and private parties collaborate to create infrastructure and offer public services while pooling risk, costs, and rewards. According to Hodge and Greve (2010, p. 5), PPPs should be viewed as both a “language game” and a “governance arrangement”. They claim that PPPs can be thought of as a “language game” in which various policy actors communicate their views on the appropriate responsibilities of the public and private sectors in education. Robertson et al. (2012) define PPP as a semantic umbrella that can cover a heterogeneous phenomenon, ranging within the spectrum of the opposites of straight-out private sector provision and public sector provision. These include contractually based service arrangements between public sector and private providers, formal collaborations and partnerships between the private and public sector, and arrangements between private philanthropic organisations or trusts and governments to jointly commit to a common goal.

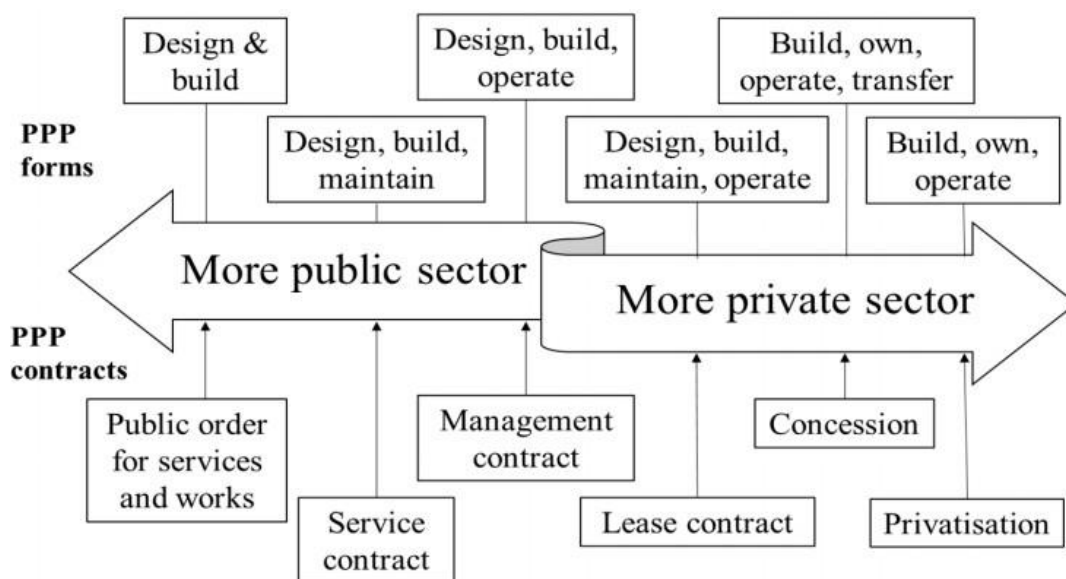
ePPPs are better defined by international economists who favour a more specific and narrow definition that focuses on a government contract with a private entity supplier to obtain services of a specific quantity and quality at an agreed fee for a certain duration (Afridi, 2017; Patrinos et al., 2009), in order to meet the basic educational needs of both poor and privileged groups (UNESCO, 2007). PPP is defined by the OECD as an “agreement between the government and a private partner (that may include operators and financiers) according to the private partner(s) delivering the service in such a manner that the service delivery objectives of government are aligned with the profit objectives of the private partners and where the effectiveness of alignment depends on a sufficient transfer of risk to the private partner(s)” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008, p. 17).

As opposed to the terminology of direct agreement between the national government and private entities, PPPs are more broadly described as the collaborative efforts of private philanthropic and

public sector actors aiming at attaining the common good (Robertson et al., 2012). The UN defines PPPs according to Draxler (2008, p. 16) as “...the pooling and managing of resources, as well as the mobilisation of competencies and commitments by public business and civil society partners to contribute to the expansion and quality of education.” While additional definitions and perceptions of PPP in education can be found in the literature, the practical implementation of PPP varies greatly, depending on the setting. The definitions shared reflect the fundamental features included in most PPP concepts and initiatives.

Figure 2.2 illustrates typical forms of Public-Private Partnerships and contracts.

Figure 2.2 PPP forms and contracts (Wojewnik-Filipkowska & Węgrzyn, 2019)



2.3.4 Examples of PPPs in Education

In the United States, one of the most common educational partnerships is the private management of schools; this has been in existence since the early 1990s (Molnar et al., 2006). In 2005/2006, there were 521 public schools financed and managed by 51 firms in 29 states as well as in the district of Columbia (Robert, 2003). Also, in Colombia, the Colegios en Concesión initiative was established in the City of Bogotá, where some public schools’ management was handed over to private school operators with an excellent track record of success in quality education (Rodriguez & Hovde, 2002). Through the Concesión initiative started in 2004, 25 schools manage and oversee the academic affairs of 26,000 students (World Bank, 2006). The Concesión school programme aimed to address common issues prevalent in public schools, such as ineffective leadership, loss of ability in personnel recruitment, lack of school equipment and the politicisation of education (Alberto& Hovde, 2002).

Further examples of PPP in education are found in Latin America and Spain. An example is Fey Alegría (FyA), which is a non-government organisation that runs formal pre-school, primary, secondary, and technical education programmes in both Latin American and Spanish impoverished communities. The FyA initiative was launched in Venezuela in 1995 and has subsequently expanded to 14 countries. FyA's primary goal is to provide high-quality education to low-income individuals, to guarantee that the children of the less privileged complete a minimum basic schooling level, and to finance the construction of education facilities that promote local community development.

In Pakistan, there is a partnership agreement between the government and the Cooperation for Advancement, Rehabilitation and Education (CARE), a local non-governmental organisation. CARE manages 170 public schools in Lahore City and two in Sargodha, with a total enrolment of about 100,000 students (LaRocque, 2008). Under this partnership agreement, a CARE representative is attached to each school as an internal coordinator who supervises and oversees both CARE and public teachers' productivity and ensures that academic activities are carried out correctly. However, the administrative control of the public employees is beyond the responsibility of the schoolteachers (LaRocque, 2008).

Another ePPP in Pakistan is the quality Education for All programme run by a non-governmental organisation, the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). The partnership arrangement is that NRSP should manage the operation of 48 local schools in the rural communities. The mandate of the agreement is to strengthen the quality of elementary schools, minimise dropout rates and expand the enrolment rates of the students (LaRocque, 2008). In Uganda, the government implemented a system of Universal Secondary Education in February 2007. Under the USE partnership arrangement, the government offers a stipend to each student admitted to a participating private secondary school.

The Ministry of Education and Sports selects the participating schools. The partnership is only open to institutions that charge no more than Ush75,000 per student every term and the eligible schools receive a payment of Ush47,000 per qualified student (Patrinos, 2005). In 1997, the government of New Zealand established a partnership arrangement with an NGO under the project of Alternative Education (AE). AE finances education delivery in non-school environments for school-aged adolescents who have become disenchanted with the educational system. In the United Kingdom, there is a PPP arrangement called Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) in the education sector.

Under PFIs, a capital project such as the building of schools is funded and managed by the private actor consortium with a contractual agreement that lasts for 30 years (HM Treasury, 2003). During the contractual agreement term, the private actor gets paid on a monthly basis by the government, based on its performance. However, if the private actor fails to meet its performance standards, its pay-out will be decreased (HM Treasury, 2003). As of October 2007, 115 PFI contracts, worth almost £4.8 billion, had been instituted by the Department for Children, Schools, and Families (DCSF); the Northamptonshire Schools Project is one of the PFIs, with a value of £191 million (Treasury, 2021).

2.3.5 Educational PPPs and Covid-19 pandemic impact

The recent global Covid-19 pandemic has led to a reduction in the educational budgets in many parts of the world, especially those of low- and middle-income countries struggling with the transfer of resources to combat the disease. Conventional schooling has been significantly disrupted, aggravating existing imbalances and challenges in education. These call for immediate attention (Mitra, 2020). According to the report of the World Bank (2020a), education funding will be cut by an average of 10% globally, based on the estimates of GDP and public expenditure per country. It is also predicted that education expenditure in the low- and middle-income countries will grow more slowly than before the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a decrease in per capita education expenditure (Mitra, 2020). Consequently, several countries have witnessed a fall in education spending. For instance, in Nigeria the federal government proposed a cut of about \$130 million US from the education budget to support its Covid-19 pandemic relief initiatives while in Kenya, the commission on University Education reallocated about \$2.5 million US dollars of its development fund to the Covid-19 emergency fund. Similarly in Ukraine, 4% of its education budget has been diverted to Covid-19 emergency relief (World Bank, 2020b).

As a result of the pandemic, various countries' governments have sought educational public-private partnerships (ePPPs) to make up for the financial and human resource deficiencies. This assertion corroborates the report of the World Economic Forum (2020), that current education challenges would necessitate the assistance of government and Public-Private Partnerships with a variety of stakeholders to address the challenges faced in the educational sectors. In countries where education is primarily funded by the government, ePPPs would become a “prevalent and consequential trend” to future education (World Economic Forum, 2020).

2.3.6 Types of Public-Private Partnership in education

According to Education International (2009), PPP in education or ePPP is categorised according to the type of education services the government requires from the private actor. The typical forms of ePPP include private management of public schools, voucher programmes, professional and support services, educational infrastructural partnerships, and educational philanthropy initiatives (Kumari, 2016). The aforementioned five categories of educational services are briefly discussed below.

2.2.8.1 Private management of schools

This form of PPP is to bridge the gap between poor school management and operations. In this type of ePPP, the government partners with private organisations to run and operate public schools. The core functional area of responsibility of this form of ePPP covers financial management, long-term planning, leadership, and staff management (Kumari, 2016). However, despite the fact that the schools are privately run, the government owns them and is primarily accountable for their performance. Additionally, under this operational arrangement, the private sector operates and staffs the public school (Patrinos et al., 2009).

2.2.8.2 Voucher programs

ePPPs are common in the request of funding private school activities. This involves school vouchers, per-pupil subsidies, and scholarships. In this collaborative arrangement, school vouchers are given to families or schools for families by the government (Kumari, 2016). The primary goal of the voucher system is to enhance education accessibility by providing financial benefits to households to engage their wards in education by rewarding them for the education expenses (Patrinos, 2000). This form of ePPP is common in both developed and developing countries like the United States, New Zealand, Chile, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Colombia, and Pakistan (Kumari, 2016).

2.2.8.3 Professional and support services

The collaborative effort of both public and private partnerships also spreads across providing professional support such as designing curricula, providing textbooks, training teaching staff and obtaining accreditation of schools' quality. The process is perceived as simple, and the results are often positive. Its fundamental benefit is that it makes the expertise of private actors available to public education (Kumari, 2016). In general, this form of ePPP enables the government to tap into private partners' competence, expertise, and efficiency for specific services, while also

saving money. An example is the Escuela Nueva Foundation partners with public entities in Columbia where training is provided for teachers in rural schools, textbooks are provided and curricula are upgraded (Benveniste & Mcewan, 2000).

In respect of service provision, such as training on information technology, curriculum guidance, school development plans, services can be contracted (Hatcher, 2006). For example, Aga Khan Education services, a Pakistani initiative, collaborates with a public agency, Directorate of Private Education, to improve teaching standards and administration in low-cost private schools (LaRocque, 2008).

2.2.8.4 Education philanthropy

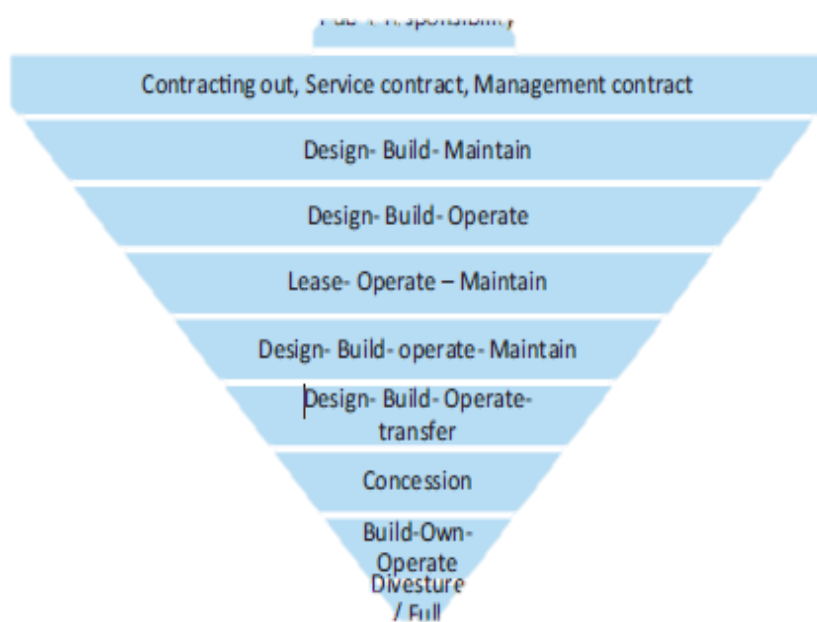
This form of education PPP has a long tradition in many nations, with the corporate social responsibility concept at its core. Infrastructure development, funds to schools, scholarships, education staff training, ICT incorporation, curricula assistance and health/social services are all covered under this form of ePPP (Kumari, 2006). It also involves broader project execution such as the establishment of innovative educational services, scholarship/voucher funding, legislative advocacy and other forms of initiatives aimed at improving education (LaRocque, 2008). A report by Education International (2009), reveals private initiatives, like those of Bill and Melinda Gates, Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford in the US and Bertelsmann in Germany, engaged in providing education and health service delivery in both developed and developing countries with a commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which include Education for All (Kumari, 2016).

2.2.8.5 Educational infrastructure partnership

In the education sector, Public-Private Partnerships are becoming more frequent as a method of procuring significant infrastructure projects. For example, in the most prevalent form of ePPP arrangement which is build-operate-transfer, a private actor is given license to fund, build and manage an educational infrastructure such as a dormitory, a public school or a library (Kumari, 2016). Additionally, the United Kingdom tops the globe in education infrastructure PPPs, with private financing efforts accounting for 10-15% of public service physical investment (LaRocque, 2008). In a similar vein, the government of Egypt has negotiated 15 to 20 years partnership agreements with private actors to build, fund and manage 300 schools throughout 23 provincial capitals, with the goal of increasing the number of schools significantly (LaRocque, 2008).

This procurement technique is also used in a number of European nations. For instance, the state of Flanders in Belgium has authorised a Public-Private Partnership project that will appoint a single partner firm to fund, build and maintain all schools established via private finance schemes in order to take advantage of economies of scale (OECD, 2006). Also, in Canada, the state of Alberta has approved 32 ePPP fixed price deals for a period of 30 years in which the private partner bears the danger and risk of inflationary costs and building inefficiencies (LaRocque, 2008). Figure 2.3 below depicts a variety of alternative PPP models with varying amounts of public accountability.

Figure 2.3: Scale of public private partnerships models (Kumari, 2016),



2.2.9 Key actors of PPP in education

2.2.9.1 The World Bank

The World Bank has been a leader in promoting PPP in education in developing nations and is also at the centre of the PPP debate in developed nations. In pursuance of this, the bank’s private financing division, International Finance Corporation (IFC), has created extensive resources such as a toolkit and webpage on Public-Private Partnerships in education (World Bank, 2003). Additionally, World Bank initiatives have played a major role in providing education through NGOs in different countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Gambia. The function of the Bank and IFC is to provide both funding and technical support in the establishment of PPPs with non-government organisations (World Bank, 2003).

2.2.9.2 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The OECD is also a big proponent of PPP in education. More than 300 publications and events have been reported by the OECD. It has undertaken studies in a number of countries, which include Uganda, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Bulgaria, Vietnam and Albania, on PPPs for educational initiatives (OECD, 2003).

2.2.9.3 The European Union (EU)

The EU has also been notably enthusiastic about PPPs; it published a Green Paper in April 2004 that outlined a number of policies tailored to expanding the private sector's engagement in public services, supporting PPPs most especially in the education sector and guaranteeing that PPPs have accessibility to public resources (Hall, 2004). The objective of such an initiative is to support and promote PPPs as a means of increasing investments for financial and management benefits.

2.2.9.4 United States for International Agency Development (USAID)

Another major advocate and promoter of partnerships in general, and PPPs in education particularly, is the United States for International Agency Development (USAID). The agency has a unique operational bureau responsible for promoting Public-Private Partnership development (USAID, 2005). USAID has established a five-year initiative to foster Public-Private Partnerships in education around the world and has also supported UNESCO partnerships for education and multi-stakeholder partnerships in education (USAID, 2008).

2.2.9.5 UNESCO and UNICEF

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund have both supported PPPs in education and have dedicated customised websites to the programmes. A special unit of UNESCO, the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP), initiated research into Public-Private Partnerships in education, with the purpose of providing training programmes for Education Ministries in member countries. The growing collaboration between UNESCO, the World Economic Forum (WEF), USAID and big, private firms like Microsoft, Cisco and Intel is also noteworthy.

2.2.10 Critical Success Factors of PPP

PPP is widely being recognised by governments, private and international organisations, and

other key stakeholders in the education sector as an effective policy strategy for expanding education systems in an effective, dynamic and productive manner (Tilak, 2015). However, on the other hand, PPP is a demanding, complex, difficult type of governance for both government and the private partners (Bhanji, 2008). Therefore, PPP is regarded as a confusing policy model by academic and expert communities because it is unclear what PPP implies, why nations should embrace it, and what the optimal form of PPP is. Thus, the problems of implementing PPP vary depending on the national and industrial context (World Economic Forum, 2008). This validates the necessity to establish the Critical Success Factors necessary for the effective and sustainable implementation of various kinds of PPP in Namibia's education sector. The CSFs of PPP in education are discussed below.

2.2.10.1 Political Factors

A clearly communicated and accepted political willingness on the part of the governments can help PPP initiatives to mobilise resources by minimising objections and demonstrating the government's commitment to its contractual commitments (Helmy et al., 2020). This factor can further be categorised as political support and a centralised system for managing PPP (Klijn, 2010).

2.2.10.1.1 Political support

PPP as a public policy is directly related to the political environment of the host country (Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2015) because no approval is granted for public investment without the necessary political backing (Klijn, 2010). Therefore, this component is considered vital to the formation and success of PPP initiatives. Additionally, several private partners believe the political risk to be significant in jurisdictions where government support is inadequate (Li et al., 2005). It is also important to emphasise that the availability and continuous amendments of a stated recognised PPP policy declarations, as well as defined frameworks for specific PPP projects, are critical (Helmy et al., 2020).

2.2.10.1 Centralised system for managing PPP projects

One of the fundamental elements of effective PPP initiatives, according to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, is authoritative central government involvement (Helmy et al., 2020). The formation of PPP units, according to the report, is the best way to manage these initiatives. A centralised system will be in charge of advancing PPP programmes, offering

appropriate guidance, functioning as a point of contact for potential private partners and serving as a library for PPP expertise and experience across the country. Furthermore, a PPP unit may assist in government resource constraints and contribute to quality assurance (Helmy et al., 2020).

2.2.10.2 Legal Factors

The legal context in which PPP initiatives operate has a significant impact on the private sector's willingness to participate in the development of the programmes. Private partners are granted security by laws to safeguard their interests and reduce associated risk (Pongsiri, 2002). It is not sufficient to have a thorough and solid legal structure; it must also be a beneficial legal framework. A conducive legal environment allows for the establishment of PPP projects without imposing needless legal restrictions on the private sector's participation (Osei-Kyei et al., 2015). However, disagreement is likely to arise and service delivery will be delayed and hampered. Therefore, the establishment of a working legal and regulatory structure decreases opportunistic impulses, aligns partners' interests, and ensures private investor trust, as it avoids political meddling from public authorities (International Monetary Fund, 2004). In addition, the availability of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms is critical for attracting private and sustainable investment (Khan, 2007).

2.2.10.3 Economic and financial factors

The economic condition of a country is critical to PPP success. As a result, in order to establish a successful PPP, an economic system must be in place that allows PPP initiatives to prosper (Helmy et al., 2020). This element of economic and financial factor is categorised into three sections which are discussed below.

2.2.10.3.1 Stable macroeconomic conditions

Any sustainable approach to boost private sector progress and economic growth requires stable macroeconomic conditions, such as lower and stable inflation, stable and consistent exchange rate, low interest rates and positive foreign exchange balances (Diba, 2012). The lack of stability of the aforementioned factors hampers both domestic and foreign investment (Ong'olo, 2006). Thus, the willingness of the private partners to participate in PPP projects is largely determined by the macroeconomic operational environment or context of the initiative.

2.2.10.3.2 Favourable economic policy

For any partnership or financial agreement to be productive, the economic conditions of that environment must be positive (Osei-Kyei et al., 2015). This is because private investors are more likely to contemplate investing in a community when economic conditions allow for confidence; this can be aided to some extent by effective economic policy. Moreover, private enterprises are less likely to invest in countries whose economic prospects are unstable. Although PPP stakeholders have little or no control over the attractive economic conditions, they are critical to the expansion of any PPP projects (Pongsiri, 2002). Therefore, governments should embrace economic policies to enhance economic stability for private partners to operate with no fear (Ong'olo, 2006).

2.2.10.3.3 Financial market stability

The majority of stakeholders in PPP initiatives are unwilling to incur needless or additional risks. As a result, the composition of financial markets is critical in aiding PPP projects; unappealing financial markets, such as those that are politically uncertain or have high interest rates, may be a hindrance to a PPP's effectiveness (Ong'olo, 2006). Several academics such as Osei-Kyei et al., 2015 contend that project funding is a critical aspect in enticing the private sector to invest in public services. They maintain that the presence of a functional financial market with low interest expense and a diverse range of financial products will attract and motivate the private sector to participate in PPP projects (Helmy et al., 2020).

2.2.11 The regulatory frameworks of Public-Private Partnership programmes.

The regulatory framework for private sector investment consists of a sequence of laws, rules, notifications, and operational procedures (Bellier & Maggie Zhou, 2003). Public entities, such as agencies, ministries, departments, and divisions as well as government policies, legislations, and guidelines are referred to as the regulatory framework (Appuhami et al., 2011). Kumaraswamy & Zhang (2001) stress the need for establishing a well-grounded policy structure to oversee the Public-Private Partnership processes as an indicator for determining the effectiveness or failure of PPP policies. It is also essential to ensure a collaborating agreement to achieve a balance of the public and private interests (Pongsiri, 2002).

Nevertheless, the architecture of regulatory systems varies across countries, especially between the developed and the developing nations. Moreover, research has established that PPP regulatory frameworks in developing nations are inadequate (la Porta et al., 1997; Muleya et al.,

2020). This observation has been stressed in the literature (Pessoa, 2006). While many developing nations have begun PPP initiatives, the majority of them are yet to build an effective and sustainable regulatory framework. In a similar vein, Appuhami et al. (2011) argue that an inadequate regulatory environment makes it difficult to execute PPPs, which further results in a lack of private sector engagement. Xiong et al. (2019) further postulate that putting regulations in place helps create a defined institutional framework for establishing, acquiring, and executing PPPs.

The lack of regulatory framework is applicable to and prevalent in middle-income countries such as Namibia; yet industrialised countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom have effectively and successfully implemented PPP practices with the right regulatory framework. However, in the case of Nigeria where there have been some reforms for the private sector, for example, Private Development Initiative (PDI), Adopt-a-School, Community Accountability and Transparency Initiative (CATI), Public-Private Partnership Initiative (PPPI), engagement in developing the education sector, these reforms have not brought a significant improvement to the sector (Thomas & Thomas-Olufuwa, 2013).

Similarly, in Tanzania, despite the lack of a legislative framework, PPP has been embraced in some sectors – housing, transportation infrastructure and education. However, the country has been suffering from a serious housing deficit (Kavishe & An, 2016). This calls into question the quality and adequacy of the supporting policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks and the public and private parties' understanding of the PPP modality. Indeed, the performance of educational PPPs and public schools has been varied, and there is no significant empirical evidence of their effectiveness. Rather, concerns have been expressed about a variety of challenges like the lack of regulatory framework and openness at PPP schools in Uganda (Brans, 2011) and Liberia (Coalition for Transparency and Accountability in Education, 2017); marginalisation of underprivileged students and children with disabilities in Uganda (Bous & Farr, 2019); growing issues of inequality in Chile (Elacqua, 2012) low-quality education and lack of accountability in Uganda and the Philippines (Brans, 2011; Saguin, 2019), abuse of funds in Pakistan (Afridi, 2018) and an adverse influence on public schooling in Liberia Romero et al., 2017), alluding to an infusion of funding without enough oversight or appropriate regulatory framework.

In the case of Namibia, there is the existence of a PPP policy framework, the National PPP Policy, which was promulgated by the Namibian cabinet in 2012. The framework encompasses the

country's national policy objectives such as access to basic education, inequality reduction, employment creation, pro-poor development, and the development of small and medium enterprises (Ministry of Trade and Finance, 2012). The policy framework outlines institutional responsibilities for several agencies in charge of PPPs. In this case, line agencies, which include Ministries, regional authorities, and local governments, are regarded as owners, and are required to sign project contracts and manage the contractual relationships with the private entities. This framework has subsequently been strengthened by the parliamentary promulgation of the Public Private Partnership Act, 2017 (Act No. 4 of 2017). This is further evidence of the extent to which the Namibian government has embraced the PPP model as a channel for performing its civic duties, providing services & infrastructures, and maintaining high standards of living amongst the citizens.

The policy documents also state clearly that all PPP projects are to be carried out within the context of a transfer of a ministerial function to the private partner and only consider projects worth more than \$10 million to be eligible for PPP assessment (Ministry of Trade and Finance, 2012). However, the policy is only applicable to the Central Government and Regional and Local Authorities, with the exception of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) whose operations are determined by individual jurisdictions.

The researcher's choice of investigating the role of ePPP in the Namibian context is premised on the notion that service delivery is the government's principal mandate. Nonetheless, due to a lack of resources, both financial and material the Namibian government is increasingly seeking alternative service delivery systems to fulfil its primary mandate (Ministry of Finance, 2013; Ministry of Trade & Finance, 2012). Consequently, the PPP model has been embraced by the government as a tool to resolve service delivery issues in the education sector and beyond. Education sector issues include issues of dropout and out-of-school children (UNICEF, 2016). For example, UNPAF 2019-2023 which is a PPP agreement between the UN and the Namibian government emphatically states that the partnership is interested to "support monitoring and support systems to prevent school dropout and grade repetition, as well as to keep learners in school." As a result, this study aims to investigate the degree to which these agreements are working effectively to reduce the challenge of dropouts in Namibia.

2.2.12 Why are Public-Private Partnerships a controversial issue?

The implementation of education Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in education and other

sectors has sparked heated debates, with both advocates and critics (Peterson, 2003; Woessmann, 2006). The operating and funding of public services by private entities, concerns of schooling accountability, openness and independence, fairness and innovation and potential conflicts of the profit-oriented and public good are among the issues that have sparked the most controversy (Mitra, 2020). The advocates of educational PPPs typically see them as a creative way to manage risks and responsibility that benefits all participating actors (Barrera-Osorio & Patrinos, 2009; Latham, 2009). This perspective sees PPPs as having the ability to use the best aspects of private entity activities to enhance the performance of schools, instructors and students through optimised school choice, accountability, competitiveness, and autonomy without the excessively complicated administrative procedures associated with public schools (Baum, 2018; Gauri & Vawda, 2003).

Additionally, Alpert and Nagarajan (2016) maintain that to achieve high quality education and overcome fundamental educational issues, the government must form constructive collaborations with non-governmental organisations. Therefore, PPPs are considered a prudent approach to working on capacity building by expanding educational resources and competence outside public mandates, where collective effort may be leveraged to assure improved quality, equity, and access to quality education (Mitra, 2020). Educational PPPs, on the other hand, are typically seen by the critics as the outcome of the government's inability to perform its primary obligations regarding public education, which is generally regarded as a human right (S. L. Robertson, 2008). They believe that the integration of private actor profit incentives into public service is a key concern of PPPs in education.

Consequently, it is believed that PPPs can generate resources through the private actors to improve quality, establish effective rules and increase access and fairness. On the other hand, PPPs might result in increased expenses due to the execution of regulatory processes (Bous & Farr, 2019). Governments, particularly those of low- and middle-income countries, may lack the capability to adequately supervise the quality of PPPs schools, resulting in diluted and ambiguous obligations, as well as inadequate school accountability. The incorporation of private actors in government decision-making and service delivery alters the nature of public accountability and the protection of public services is required at the cost of private gains (Forrer et al., 2010). Lastly, some arguments arise from a scarcity of information. Given the rise in the many forms of educational PPPs, there is still limited research and instruction on contracting, bidding, and regulation in low and middle countries that have adopted ePPPs (de Koning, 2018).

2.4 The stakeholder concepts

A stakeholder can be defined in several ways. Freeman (1984) defined a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s objectives”. However, different definitions have emerged from this concept. For example, a stakeholder is described by Smith et al. (2001) as an individual who may have an involvement in and potentially contribute to, both indirectly and indirectly, the achievement of a task. Olander and Landin (2005, p. 321) define a stakeholder as “a person or group of people who has a vested interest in the success of a project and the environment within which the projects operate.”

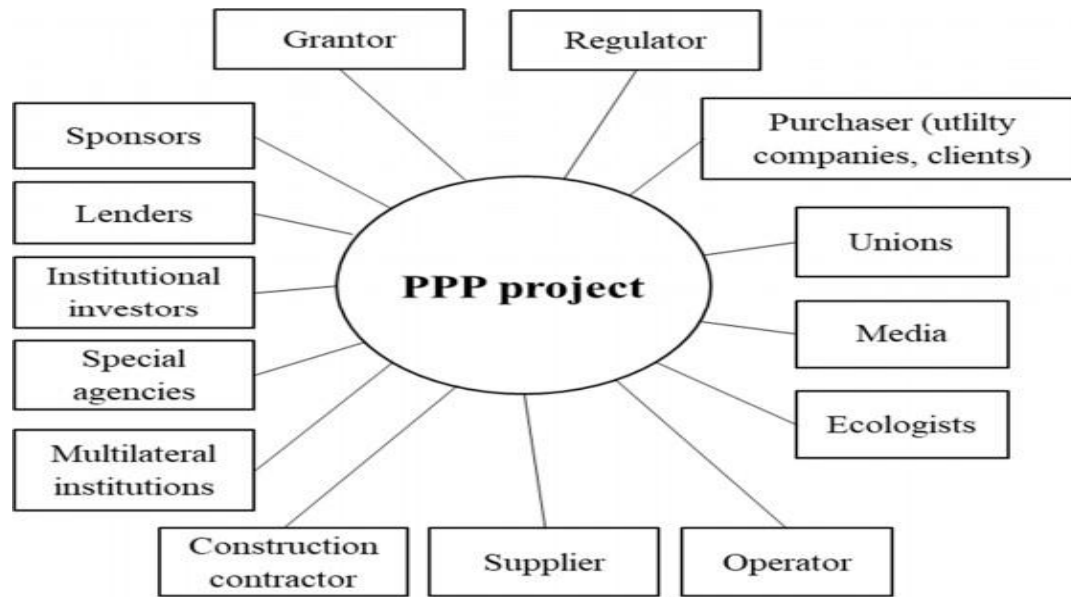
Takim (2009, p. 168) offers a more detailed definition of stakeholder: “as being those who can influence the activities and/or final results of a project, whose lives or environment are positively or negatively affected by the project, and who receive a direct and indirect benefit from it.” However, despite the great effort of several studies to define stakeholders, no commonly agreed-on definition has emerged (Amoatey & Hayibor, 2017; Savage et al., 1991).

2.4.1 Stakeholder management in the PPP context

Stakeholder management is seen as a key element of any initiative, organisation, or activity’s accomplishment. In its most basic form, stakeholder management is described as the process through which an individual obtains and retains endorsement from internal and external entities or actors for a new product, initiative or organisational development (Amoatey, 2017). It has to do with managing relationships with individuals or organisations, as well as a strategy for including stakeholders in the successful implementation of a project. Stakeholder management is the practice of recognising stakeholders’ interests, the values they symbolise, the degree of influence they exert and assessing whether they are impeding or facilitating factors in the development.

In the view of Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 67), stakeholder management is defined as the “... simultaneous attention to the legitimate interests of all appropriate stakeholders, both in the establishment of organizational structure and general policies and in case-by-case decision making.” A Public-Private Partnerships project involves a complexity of stakeholders, with each stakeholder having its own set of goals (Olomolaiye & Chinyio, 2010). (See Figure 2.4 for typical stakeholders of PPP projects.)

Figure 2.4: Public-Private Partnership stakeholders



Source:Wojewnik-Filipkowska & Węgrzyn (2019)

The above set of stakeholders involves those who are internal to the establishment of the PPP projects such as government and private actors, and those who are external stakeholders like local populations, communities, and students, in case of education PPP, and all perform a key role in the effectiveness and implementation of PPP projects (Cleland & Ireland, 2007). In order to help manage these various stakeholders effectively, research has been done and approaches and practices have been established. Some of the studies include those of Bourne and Walker (2006) Cleland and Ireland (2007). The procedures proposed by several researchers' frameworks overlap (Amadi et al., 2019). While previous research suggestions are relevant in managing stakeholders, their applicability in the context of a PPP project is problematic owing to the unique peculiarities of PPPs (de Schepper et al., 2014). It is critical to have an extensive understanding of this PPP uniqueness in order to successfully adopt stakeholder management concepts (Henjewele et al., 2013).

Frameworks for stakeholder management in the PPP setting have been presented by El Gohary et al. (2006). Henjewele (2013) and Ng et al. (2013). These encompass practical procedures for communicating with stakeholders at various stages of PPP programmes, some of which are identical to stakeholder management in conventional public acquisition (Amadi et al., 2019). As a result, it is essential to establish an integrated stakeholder management system for PPP projects, in which both public and private actors work together to achieve the project objectives.

According to Jones (1995) organisations that treat stakeholders fairly will have a chance of gaining a competitive edge because they will be able to cut expenses. In other words, strong stakeholder management equals good business. Therefore, PPP key actors must possess the appropriate qualities necessary to effectively manage the bargaining process with numerous stakeholders (Remme & de Waal, 2020).

2.4.2 Stakeholder theory

In 1963, the Stanford Research Institute was the first to bring the notion of stakeholders into management studies (R. E. Freeman, 1984). Following that, in the 1980s, Freeman offered a strategic management framework, which served as the foundation of stakeholder theory. According to Freeman (1984), “new business environment” is dependent on both internal and external stakeholders and employees, and local communities should be regarded as a “matter of everyday occurrence rather than an execution” (p. 7). The core premises are that an organisation's productivity is determined by how successfully it manages partnerships with key stakeholders such as the host communities, suppliers, employees, customers, and others who might influence its ability to achieve its goals (Flak et al., 2008).

Stakeholder theory has been categorised into three dimensions by Donaldson and Preston (1995) instrumental, descriptive and normative. The instrumental approach attempts to build a link between an organisation's primary goal, such as profitability, and stakeholder management. The descriptive viewpoint examines what organisations do, as well as the strategies and procedures they use to manage their stakeholders. Lastly, the normative dimension ethically examines individuals or groups who have a genuine interest in an organisation to establish that they are intrinsically valuable (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

However, stakeholder theory has traditionally been addressed from the perspective of business ethics, organisation governance and corporate social performance (Friedman & Miles, 2002).

This positions the organisation at the centre of stakeholder evaluation, which prevents stakeholders from being included, resulting in a flawed view of the organisation-stakeholder partnership. This strategy has not only failed to foster good relationships among stakeholders in PPP projects, but it has also resulted in the marginalisation of certain stakeholder groups, notably the external stakeholders (Rwelamila et al., 2014).

Stakeholders, as described by Freeman (1984), are parties without which an organisation would cease to function. Stakeholder theory considers that the composition of stakeholders and their

interests may change over time (Mitchell et al., 1997), which is most relevant to long-term PPP programmes. de Schepper et al. (2014) established a model for stakeholder identification for PPP based on Mitchell et al. (1997) approach. The model recognises three different sorts of stakeholders based on their power and urgency. There are certain stakeholders who have little impact on the project as they do not have control over the important resources and their complaints or concerns are not given urgent attention (Wojewnik-Filipkowska et al., 2019).

On the other hand, definitive stakeholders have a direct influence on PPP projects and the environment because they exert control over important resources and have urgent concerns. In a PPP project evaluated by Henjewele et al., (2013), for the process of multi-stakeholder engagement and administration, they point out issues of the public sector being left out of the project. Despite the fact that Bjärstig (2017) states that collaboration is a potential technique for resolving stakeholder conflicts, Soomro and Zhang (2016) assert that a dispute of interests is a major reason why PPP projects sometimes fail. de Schepper et al. (2014) further maintain that stakeholder challenges arise as a result of a mismatch in reactive and proactive management of stakeholders. Guarini and Battisti (2014) confirm that PPP-based growth and revitalisation procedures necessitate a balance of public and common or general interests.

Therefore, stakeholder theory with its heterogeneous nature might contribute to PPP initiatives' performance by assisting in recognising and characterising PPP stakeholders. In conclusion, stakeholder theory influences the appraisal of PPP programmes, and this appraisal should reflect or encompass all parties involved. The underlying application of this theory in this study is that PPP needs to offer balanced advantages to all stakeholders, citizens, private partners, or government agencies in order to establish and improve value for money or reduce transaction costs (Freeman, 1984; Freeman et al., 2010).

2.5 Summary of the Chapter

The present chapter introduces the idea and the motive for carrying out the current study. Specifically, the chapter comprises three major sections: Public-Private Partnership conceptualisation, an overview of the Republic of Namibia's education system, and stakeholder management. The chapter explains what Public-Private Partnership means in general and specifically in the domain of education, i.e., ePPP. This section of the chapter also discusses the different definitions of the concept, its emergence, its forms, its key actors, and critical success factors.

Subsequently, the chapter gives an overview of Namibia's education system, its associated challenges, and the challenges of dropout rates in the country, coupled with the education reform in the country. Lastly, the final section discusses stakeholder theory.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The processes involved in research are underpinned by the researcher's view of studying a social phenomenon. This is shaped by three principles of philosophical assumptions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Gunzburg, 2017). Ontology is the study of being, truth and existence and epistemology comprises the assumptions on the appropriate way to study truth, being and reality. Methodology is the overall and specific method adopted to conduct a study. One's ontological and epistemological assumptions usually influence one's position on the methodology of a research study. The methodology is the theory of how an investigation proceeds or the particular methods adopted in an investigation (Gunzburg, 2017). This section discusses the research approach and method, research design, study population, data collection, research instrument, sampling strategy, data analysis and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Approach, Strategy and Method

Ontology is the study of being, truth, and existence. Furthermore, ontology also specifies the nature and form of being and of truth and existence. According to Antwi and Hamza (2015), ontology can be seen from two broad contrasting perspectives: objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism holds that "there is an independent reality" while constructionism holds that reality is the product of social processes (Antwi & Hamza, 2015, p. 218). This study adopts the constructionist ontological viewpoint to uncover the nuances and context of dropout rates in Namibia.

Epistemology comprises of assumptions on the appropriate way to study truth and reality. It is the process through which an investigator comes to know reality. Antwi and Hamza (2015) add that epistemology asks questions such as: "What is the relationship between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? What counts as knowledge?" Antwi and Hamza (2015) view epistemology in basic positivist and interpretivist terms as the adoption of an organised method of precise empirical methods to discover and test causes or relationships, which can then be used to predict patterns of human behaviour. i.e., the concern of the positivist way of knowing (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Hjørland, 2005). Meanwhile, interpretivism holds that the way of knowing must be premised on interpretations of the understanding of specific situations and not understanding the general or larger human population. The approach of this study is contextual to the Namibian situation of ePPP; hence, interpretivism has been adopted

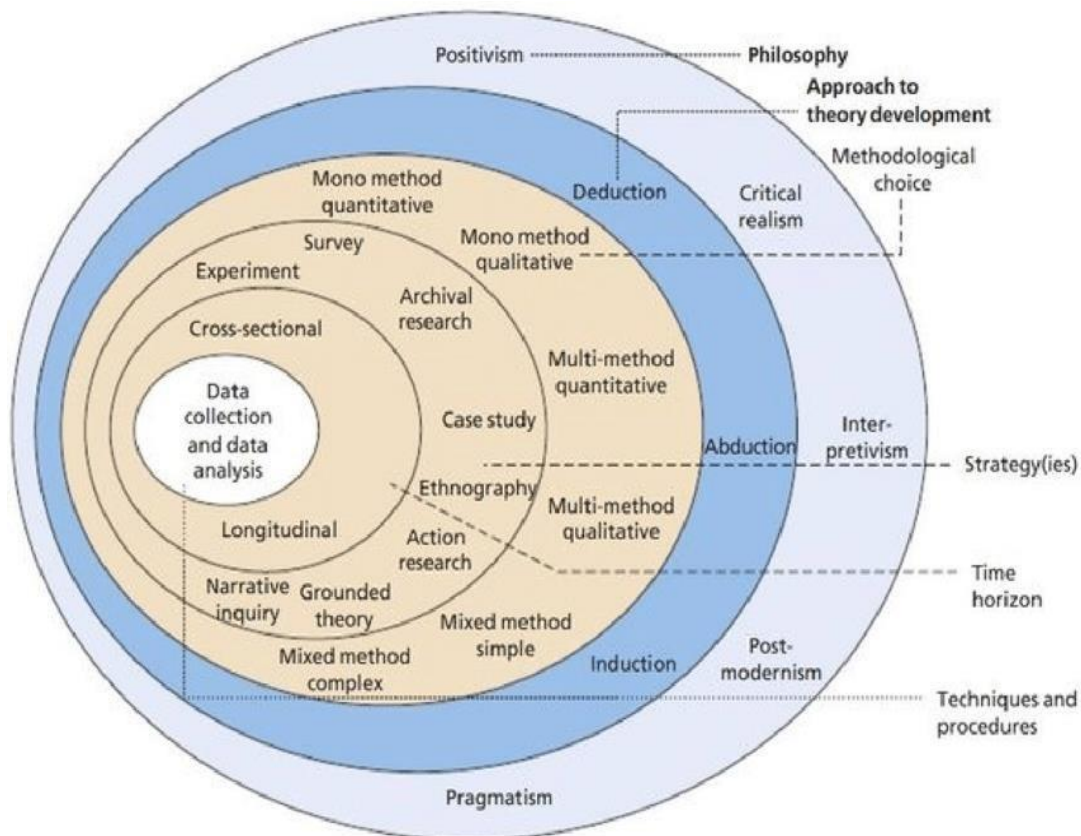
to interpret, understand, and generate results on the dropout situation in Namibia.

Methodology is the approach used to translate principles of ontology and epistemology into specific guidelines to show how research is to be carried out, as well as the principles, procedures and practices that govern the conduct of research (Antwi & Hamza, 2015, p. 220). It is the theory of how an investigation should proceed or, according to Gunzburg (2017), the particular methods adopted in an investigation. The research is qualitative research, while the overall methodological approach is inductive (Lune & Berg, 2017; Maxwell, 2005). The rationale behind these decisions is explained in the sub-sections below.

3.2.1 Research Process and Approach

This study is based on popular philosophical frameworks and understanding of the world and realities of truth, i.e., ontology and epistemology. Moreover, the constructionist and interpretivist models of ontology and epistemology have been adopted respectively. Specifically, the guiding frame of Saunders et al. (2009, p. 108) depicts the conceptual framework of the critical decisions made in the study. The “research onion” framework provides a snapshot summary of the various considerations a researcher must put into perspective while undertaking research vis-à-vis research design, strategy, approach, data collection techniques and sampling method.

Figure 3.1: The research process onion



Source: Saunders et al. (2009, p. 108).

The overall methodological approach of the research is inductive (Lune & Berg, 2017; Maxwell, 2005). Saunders et al. (2009, p. 108) refer to it as a research approach to theory development. Inductive research draws conclusions from specific lines of thought to generalised theories and premises, as opposed to deductive reasoning which is centred on building facts and conclusions from a general standpoint or theories (Maxwell, 2005). Bhattacharjee (2012) further explains that the purpose of inductive research is for the researcher to infer theoretical themes and patterns from observed data. Maxwell (2005) describes this model as flexible as it allows critical and situational analysis and decisions throughout the research process. Consequently, inductive research was preferred, as it allows the researcher to draw conclusions based on premises (patterns) gleaned from the data, and helpful for future studies. For our purpose, little is known about ePPP in Namibia; therefore, there is no Namibian-specific theory or knowledge background as a foundation for the research. This makes deductive research unsuitable for the study (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Despite this challenge, related ePPP studies conducted in other developing countries provide a reference point for this study (LaRocque, 2008; Treasury, 2021). For example, the World Bank (2006, 2019) details examples of ePPP studies of partnerships between the governmental sector and international organisations. This research laid the relevant foundation for this study.

3.2.2 Research Method

In the same vein as, and in association with, inductive research, the study method is qualitative in line with the interactionist epistemology model (Lune & Berg, 2017). A qualitative study is described as a philosophical tradition hinged on the ‘interpretivism’ model of the social world and how the world and social meanings are understood, interpreted, produced, and constituted (Lune & Berg, 2017). Although this research method contrasts with the positivist/objectivist epistemology model, which is usually underpinned by quantitative methods and adopts specific guidelines in conducting research, this research will solely utilize the qualitative research approach as well as the UNICEF framework.

Qualitative studies usually adopt individual and flexible forms of research methods (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Lune and Berg (2017, p. 138) further recommend that qualitative researchers should enumerate the methods of their research at the beginning of their study, and where appropriate, report changes made in the research methods and techniques during the course of the research. The research questions are asked on the basis of the challenge of dropout in Namibia vis-à-vis the participation and partnership of UNICEF with the MoEAC to curb the menace. This influenced the adoption of a qualitative method, so that the nuances of this problem

can be reported from official perspectives. This is of paramount importance because it emphasizes the importance of the voice of the researched and gaining first-hand information regarding the lived experiences of the researched on a particular subject. It tends to focus on social processes, where the established relationship between the researcher and the respondents is valued, rather than primarily or exclusively on outcomes.

3.3 Research Design

The research approach is the plan and procedure that constitutes the steps of broad assumptions that lead to a detailed method of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Davies & Hughes, 2014). It is the overall strategy applied to integrate the different components of the study coherently and logically, thereby ensuring the research problem is effectively addressed (Lune & Berg, 2017; Neneh, 2014). In this way, research design assists in making a clear pathway for the methodology vis-à-vis specific research tasks conducted and adopted research techniques, for example, sampling and instrumentation. Within the context of this research and the research questions put forward, a case-study design is adopted. Babbie and Roberts (2018) and Yin (2009) describe case-study research as the in-depth examination of a single unit, instance, or ‘case’ of a social phenomenon. This may involve the study of a single case, multiple cases or other approaches to case-study research (Gehman et al., 2018; Yin, 2009). The method allows for a detailed analysis of real-life events, especially as they exist in specific instances and when a research question is descriptive ‘what’ or explanatory ‘how’ (Yin, 2009). Case studies are usually adopted in quantitative and qualitative studies (Gehman et al., 2018; Given, 2008; Tracy, 2020). Consequently, a variety of case-study designed research is qualitative (Tracy, 2020).

According to the data collection strategy of this study for instance the number of cases considered, one case study or single case study method is adopted (Hentz, 2017). Other authors have debated multiple case studies, especially in relation to theory-building ground theory research (Gehman et al., 2018). The partnership between two organisations involved in a PPP would be treated as a single case since at least two parties are required to form a single partnership (Ministry of Trade & Finance, 2012; Robertson & Verger, 2012; Verger & Moschetti, 2016; World Bank, 2019). Consequently, UNICEF, as an international multilateral organisation, and the Namibian MoEAC form the unit of analysis of the current study.

Within the context of inductive qualitative theory research, Gehman et al. (2018) and Gioia et al. (2013) examine the methodology of systematically collecting interpretive data within a single

group/organisation/case and maintain rigour, trustworthiness and continue to report a ‘grounded theory model’ that is plausible and defensible (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 22). This is because implausibility is one of the most frequent criticisms of qualitative studies from, who Gioia refers to as ‘impressionistic researchers’ (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 26). This motivated the adoption of a ‘Gioia method’ which explains the research processes and methods of collecting data within a single partnership case, and yet maintains rigour and provides explanations credible for the ePPP context in Namibia.

While Eisenhardt attacks single case studies of being idiosyncratic to the single case and possibly missing explanations of other cases (Gehman et al., 2018), satisfactory evidence is not available that any other international organisation beyond the UNICEF works directly in Namibia on their dropout challenge. Consequently, the inclusion of other cases would cause an unevenness in the study scope. This situation, therefore, does not merit the consideration of an Eisenhardt multiple-case study method. In lieu of this, and to capture the kind of in-depth data described by Gioia as “staying close to informants” and making respondents “knowledgeable agents” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17), this study ensures capturing depth from the single-case interview participants amidst the targeted participants and the interview method.

3.4 Study Population

According to Yin (2009), it is important not only to enumerate the case(s) in case-study research but also to clarify the unit of analysis. The study population includes the multistakeholder players in ePPP in Namibia. These include diverse stakeholders such as international organisations, MoEAC, private school owners, public school administrators, education research organisations, and service-delivery education providers. Only participants from two stakeholders are requested to participate in this study. Firstly, high-ranking representatives and policy design officials of the MoEAC Namibia are targeted. Within this ministry, government officials with diplomatic relations with international organisations were invited to participate. The selection would only be made from Grade 1 level officials – the Executive Director – to Grade 4 – the Chief Education Officer. The selection does not go below the Chief Education Officer in MoEAC because Grade 1 to 4 officials are the only decision-making positions that at the same time have knowledge of PPP and seal official and policy agreements for the ministry (Ministry of Trade & Finance, 2012).

Secondly, only representatives of international organisations, like UNICEF, USAID, and World Bank, form part of the study population. These two groups, in their relationships, provide

direction to the ePPP structure in Namibia. They make decisions about pressing educational matters like the challenge of school dropout, how to resolve it in a decision-making and official capacity, what other educational actors should be consulted, fund provisions, and setting policies (Mundy & Menashy, 2012; Verger & Moschetti, 2016). The study focuses precisely on the activities of UNICEF in their engagement with MoEAC. UNICEF selection is based on the evidence of their long-term vital and recent activities on dropout in conjunction with the MoEAC (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2018; UNICEF, 2016). Since accessing research participants in a qualitative study is usually difficult (Lune & Berg, 2017), the researcher had the cooperation of a Namibian educational official, who acted as gatekeeper to the UNICEF Namibia office. The worker status of the research was relied upon to access the Grade 1 – 4 officials at the MoEAC. However, these provisions were not enough to engage the planned number of participants to be interviewed.

To capture the depth required in Gioia’s single-case method, this study planned to conduct up to 20 interviews. However, since there was the disparity between the number of accessible persons in MoEAC & UNICEF, a disproportionate number of participants were interviewed from both organisations. Finally, however, only eight interviews were fully conducted. This was due to the hesitancy exhibited by people in replying to the shared invitation emails, the influence of COVID-19, and the very tight schedules of the targeted participants. Similarly, a few interviewees canceled their appointments, even up to a few minutes before the interview schedules. As expected, a greater number of participants from MoEAC than from UNICEF were interviewed. After the first round of interviews, a few interviewees who agreed to be consulted a second time were interviewed (usually through emails and phone texts), i.e., repeated interviews in the form of follow-up were conducted to clarify statements or to access unpublished educational documents mentioned by the interviewees.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Techniques for selecting participants in a study range from the probability to the non- probability methodologies (Kothari, 2014). However, since the current research adopts a qualitative interviewing method using face-to-face in-depth interviews, non-probability sampling, was selected (Kothari, 2014; Lune & Berg, 2017)). Specifically, a purposive, also known as judgmental or deliberate, sampling method and convenience sampling strategies were adopted in selecting the participants.

Purposive sampling involved using the researcher's knowledge and judgement to select and invite prospective high-ranking officials from UNICEF and the MoEAC. Similarly, convenience sampling involves collecting data from those that are accessible and close at hand amongst the invited officials (Lune & Berg, 2017). Therefore, the sampling involved using the researcher's experience as an MoEAC worker and her connections with the MoEAC gatekeeper to access the targeted participants.

However, Mason (2002) cautioned researchers about using a purposive sampling method. This is because purposive sampling significantly relies on the researcher's agency; hence, it might lack systematic application, representativeness, and generalisability. Mason (2002) adds that the method has been criticised for being an ad-hoc system. Consequently, he encourages researchers to formulate a detailed sampling strategy and to record decisions reached during the course of participant selection. The study, therefore, selected: High ranking officials of MoEAC and UNICEF Namibia and focus was placed on individuals who had considerable years of experience (minimum 5 years) working with one of the two institutions. Five years was the chosen mark because it meant that the selected individuals had enough experience to regard them as high-ranking officials who know about either of the two organisations and the peculiar challenges of education in Namibia. This was important because it ensured that only experienced officials participated in the study.

In another qualitative methodology study that adopted purposive sampling, the researchers made selections based on their knowledge of schools that were considered fit for the required research data (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). Participants who had worked for a minimum of five years in either MoEAC or UNICEF would have acquired sufficient knowledge and experience of the structure and workings of ePPP in Namibia.

The study also selected those who engaged in the PPP for education relationship between the two organisations, as well as those who possessed considerable knowledge or experience working on the school dropout challenge in Namibia. This was ensured by doing background checks and fact-finding on potential participants, as well as consulting the UNICEF gatekeeper, who was informed of the sampling strategies and the requirement that participating interviewees meet them for their participation in the study.

Tracy (2020) discusses the use of gatekeepers as a popular aspect of qualitative studies and research where access to participants cannot be easily achieved; thus, the method of approaching

gatekeepers became a favourite adopted method. This involves the formal introduction of the research to the gatekeeper in non-technical language; subsequently, the gatekeeper agrees to provide access to the targeted participants and they provide their contact details. Subsequently, the contacts are engaged to gauge their availability for the interviews.

The sampling strategy guided the researcher in appropriately selecting interviewees who informed the study and assisted in answering the research questions. In this research, the sampling size was 20 participants.

3.6 Data Collection

An in-depth (face-to-face or virtual) interviewing strategy was used as the data collection strategy with the interviewees. The researcher travelled to the main research site, Windhoek, Namibia, for the collection of face-to-face data. However, due to the challenges associated with the global Covid-19 pandemic, many participants resisted the face-to-face interviews; hence, virtual interviews were mostly conducted. The virtual interview platforms used are Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

3.7 Research Instrument

A semi-standardised or semi-structured format qualitative research instrument was designed for this study (Lune & Berg, 2017; Mason, 2002). Semi-structured interviews are described by Lune and Berg (2017) as an unstandardised interviewing format that allows the researcher to set predetermined questions or themes. However, the researcher is allowed to digress a bit from the questions, probe certain themes and add additional questions. The rationale for using a semi-structured interview is justified as being suitable for the inductive research approach (Lune & Berg, 2017; Maxwell, 2005). Moreover, a semi-standardised interviewing format is one of the most favoured data collection approaches in the 'Gioia method' (Gehman et al., 2018).

However, semi-structured formatting requires skills in alternating between the interview instrument and other unscheduled questions, on the one hand. On the other hand, it requires the skills of balancing the pursuit of additional information and remaining relevant to the research objectives. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher ensured that the interviews were organised in a formal setting, where the researcher's attention was optimum. To this end, the interviewer used stationery (pencil and coloured pen) to mark unasked questions and those that were unnecessary because of the participants' responses to previous questions.

The interview data was first recorded using a recording device. Recording interviews allows for storing the natural flow of the conversation for further use and consultation. The interviewer also kept interview notes for documenting observations while monitoring the semi-structured interview instrument. The notes serve as additional data to the recording for the analysis. The denaturalised form of transcription was adopted (Azevedo et al., 2017). Denaturalised transcription means that the transcription focuses mainly on the verbal conversations, and idiosyncratic speech elements like long pauses, background noise, and stutters are ignored, except on occasions where the researcher could see a connection between any of the non-verbal speech elements and a change in the conversation flow of the interviewee. The denaturalised transcription method is also preferred because of time constraints. The researcher also used software in order to analyse and interpret data that was collected.

Further steps involved in the analysis include familiarisation with the transcribed qualitative data and a rigorous, deep study of the data. Other activities include reading through the data for coding. As a researcher, one is tasked with the role of conducting the interviews and asking the questions. By employing a combination of these research instruments, the study aims to provide a holistic assessment of the challenges associated with the high dropout rate in Namibia and the role of the MoEAC and UNICEF Education Public-Private Partnership in addressing this critical issue. In this research paper, the UNICEF Framework was also utilized, as part of a theme used to analyse data.

3.8 Data Analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data takes a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes the data set in (rich) detail (Maxwell, 2012). The thematic analysis process is based on the participants' appearance and responses during the interview conversations, juxtaposed with the available literature (Cassell & Symon, 1994). An inductive and latent thematic analysis approach was adopted (Crosley, 2021). An inductive thematic approach stipulates that data analysis is conducted without any preconception of themes or codes. Hence, it was during the coding process that emerging themes were observed and organised. This, in Gioia's view, allows the researcher to give voice to the informants as the knowledge-holders, while the researcher maintains the position of a data reporter (Gioia et al., 2013). Also, because of the problematic nature of dropout in Namibia, the latent approach allows the study to understand the interview conversations' underlying meanings. Hence, the

researcher's interpretation and reflexivity are useful in reading and making sense of the qualitative data (Mason, 2002).

An open and axial coding method was used. Open coding is popular in inductive qualitative studies as the transcribed data is broken into descriptive codes and discrete parts and is later examined for similarities and differences. Axial coding involves moving to a level where similar categories of codes are categorised together; therefore, making connections between initial code categories and sub-categories. Open and axial coding reflects the Gioia method's first order codes and second order themes. In the first order analysis, the researcher maintains a solid focus on the world of data and the participants' real-life experiences. Axial or second-order themes involve a visit to the researcher's world of pre-existing knowledge on the subject-matter and theoretical explanations (Gehman et al., 2018; Gioia et al., 2013). These two levels lead to the construction of a data structure (see table 4.1). Final codes selected or in Gioia's word 'aggregate dimensions' (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20) form the themes of the study vis-à-vis structuring them to answer the research questions. Data summary and display follow, and the final stage is making sense of the data – abstraction and interpretation (Spencer et al., 2014).

Practically, data analysis involves adopting a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software package (CAQDAS) to complete the significant aspects of the thematic analysis. Specifically, NVivo version 12 was used to assist in the coding and data analysis. The transcribed text data was imported to NVivo, and coding of the transcript into nodes followed. Thereafter, queries (analyses) were run on the codes to show data relationships, finalise themes relevant to the research questions, select quotes, and then export the analysed data to Microsoft Word for data analysis report writing.

3.8 Research Criteria

Antwi and Hamza (2015) note that reliability and viability are essential criteria in positivist and quantitative research. However, since qualitative studies are not rooted in measurement, it makes them contentious. Instead, they argue that trustworthiness and credibility are the critical issues in qualitative research (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). These criteria speak to the rationale of justifying chosen methods and data collection and analysis techniques. One popular and relevant framework for qualitative research emphasises credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981).

Credibility is closely associated with the internal validity of quantitative research, i.e., does the study test what it plans to test. Measures to ensure credibility include adopting established research methods, peer scrutiny amongst research peers and receiving comments from a research mentor. This study benefits from comments from the research mentor. In addition, it was shared with two colleagues who assisted with resources and served as a third eye.

Transferability is the substitute for external validity in quantitative research. It is concerned with the extent to which research can be adopted in other contexts. Despite the idea of transferability, it is essential to note that transferability and generalisability are not the aims of qualitative research (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Lune & Berg, 2017). However, this does not mean lessons from this study cannot be relevant in other contexts. Before this study is transferred to other contexts, researchers must ensure they understand the background and the context of this Namibian-specific ePPP research. Subsequently, lessons can then be transferred from it to other contexts. Dependability is the concept of research questioning whether similar results would be obtained if another study is performed under close or similar circumstances (Guba, 1981). Gunzburg (2017) opined that dependability is difficult to achieve in qualitative studies. However, they recommended that researchers should record in detail the processes involved and adopted in a study, i.e., 'create an audit trail' so that a different researcher can adopt the same process(es). This criterion explains why this study carefully defines and explains specific decisions taken. Confirmability is proposed in qualitative studies as similar to seeking objectivity in quantitative studies. This criterion requires that the researcher should not influence the instrument of research. Since the instruments are written based on the researcher's understanding of the research problem, qualitative studies usually involve the researcher's reflections on data collection and analysis. Hence, confirmability is difficult to achieve. As a result, this study makes a point of describing the rationale of adopting the methods it adopted. Furthermore, the limitations of these methods are stated, especially regarding the researcher's reflexivity, judgement, and immersion in the study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study ensured the voluntary participation of participants by obtaining their consent. Firstly, whenever the researcher received a recommendation of a potential participant from a gatekeeper or through personal efforts, this was followed up by sending an interview email invitation, where participants were encouraged to respond if they were interested in being interviewed and volunteering around 30 – 50 minutes of their time. Subsequently, participants shared and returned

a consent form (see appendix B) before the actual interview session. The participants were informed in the consent form about their right to opt out of the study whenever they chose to do so, and that the study was only for educational purposes.

The confidentiality of participants was guaranteed and strictly ensured via anonymity and non-disclosure of participants' identities in the research report. Instead, the sequence of interviewees' participation in the study (Participant 1, Participant 8, etc.) was used to identify them. Furthermore, the study adhered to the University of Cape Town's (UCT's) guidelines on the ethics of field research related to humans. The study was also issued an ethics clearance by the UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB) after the researcher clarified who the research participants were and their risks of involvement in this study. This also formed part of the information given to prospective participants.

Lune and Berg (2017) encourage researchers to ensure the safety and security of their data. Consequently, the qualitative data was stored on an encrypted folder on a personal computer and backed up on a hard drive device. This assisted in preventing careless disclosure and external accessibility to the data. This method of storing the qualitative data is similar to what Tracy (2020) recommends. The author advises that data should be stored in multiple hard and soft copy locations. However, Tracy pinpoints that data should only be stored on personal computers in password-protected folders and files.

3.10 Covid-19 Plans

The study was conducted during a globally challenging period; hence, plans were made concerning limitations arising from Covid-19. During data collection, there was limited or at least controlled movement between South Africa and Namibia, i.e., the requirement to conduct Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test(s) to travel. Similarly, several interviewees were not physically available or uncomfortable with physical interviews because of the socially restricting fears of Covid-19. Hence the adoption of mainly virtual interviews. Since virtual interviewing has its own data associated challenges (bad connections and the inability to study interviewees kinetics and gestures), therefore following the recommendations of Lune and Berg (2017) on how researchers should approach virtual interviews, the interviews were conducted in an area with a good internet connection and the consent of interviewees was sought for virtual video interviews, so that interviewees' body reactions could be seen and monitored.

3.11 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter covers the overarching way of knowing adopted in this research – interpretivism - as well as the step-by-step research principles that allowed for the successful conduct of the study – methodology. The research design is a single case-study design. Data collection involved the collection of qualitative interview data from MoEAC and UNICEF officials. The officials were selected through purposive, and convenience non-probability sampling techniques and the sampling strategies and decisions were clearly detailed. Data analysis involves the drawing of themes from the entire data corpus and the Gioia method was considered to frame the analysis. Ethical considerations were optimally considered and elucidated. These include confidentiality and anonymity of data and participants' information.

Chapter 4. Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

The study has used a single case study design (Hentz, 2017). This is because educational projects are conducted and achieved by multiple stakeholders in a PPP for education as a single unit. The specific target partners of inquiry are the Namibian MoEAC and the United Nation’s UNICEF. Specifically, the ‘Gioia method’ has been used as a qualitative data analysis method and supported by a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software package (CAQDAS), NVivo version 12, which aided the systematic analysis of data. The process required the construction of first-order codes and second-order themes, which are similar to the open and axial coding in general qualitative data analysis methods (Gioia et al., 2013). First order codes require making “extraordinary efforts to give voice to the informants in the early stages of data gathering and analysis and also to represent their voices prominently in the reporting of the research, which creates rich opportunities for discovery of new concepts rather than affirmation of existing concepts” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17). Meanwhile, the second order themes allow the researcher to formulate informant voices in theoretically relevant terms.

The first coding process yielded 48 nodes. This was followed by their reduction to 27 second order themes, more generally known as subthemes. Subthemes are themes within a large theme in qualitative data analysis (QDA). Then the second-order themes were further summarised into a second-order aggregate dimension (Gioia et al., 2013). The aggregate dimensions or themes in QDA are broadly based on refined theoretical knowledge from the literature and data analysis plus efforts to answer the research questions.

The table below depicts the study’s data structure consisting of theoretical concepts, second-order themes, and the aggregate dimensions.

Table 4.1: Data Structure

| Participants concepts | Second-order themes | Second-order aggregate dimensions |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| PPP Actors | | |

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Inter-ministerial government departments Independent non-governmental Organisations | Local actors | PPP actors and partnership basis |
| | | |
| UN agencies UNICEF & UNESCO Governments, Japan, and Germany Private organisations | Non-local actors | |
| Actors' motivation | | |
| Uplift our education system National development plans Strengthen certain subjects, i.e., mathematics, physical education, and accounting Material capacity development | Education development | |
| Mutually benefitting Financial or technical assistance Securing consultancies | Support ministry officials | |
| Don't want to leave any child on the street The Namibian child | The Namibian child & Leave no one behind | |
| Actors' coordination structure | | |
| Coordination is done at the head office We will present our strategies and see that stakeholders support the education sector within the framework that we are working in. We will normally develop joint work plans, and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) | Coordination nationally | |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|
| United Nations Partnership Framework (UNFP) United Nations Partnership Agreement Friends of Education | UN partnership framework | |
| Length of the walking distance to school Social issues | Community/social causes | Foundational factors |
| Culture-specific challenges | | influencing |
| Fear of the spread of COVID Hostels in resource schools are quite overcrowded With Covid-19 ... many children did not return to school Teenage pregnancy was quite high during COVID in mainstream schools | COVID-related | dropout |
| We don't really cater for learners with physical disabilities Barriers to learning ... are not necessarily always identified | Disability access | |
| Financial difficulty is also one of the causes Poverty levels within the family Young kids prefer to hunt for food rather than being in school, when after returning from school, there is nothing to eat at home | Financial | |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| <p>Teenage pregnancy</p> <p>So, they have transactional sex, for example, to get money to buy pads</p> <p>Some learners get pressured into dropping out of school by their friends</p> <p>Repetition is also causing dropout</p> <p>When learners use drugs, drink alcohol, their performance at school will be very less [poor], they will say education is not important at all. Therefore, they'll drop out from schools'</p> | <p>Learner-based</p> | |
| <p>Lack of support from parents</p> <p>Poverty levels within the home within our family homes</p> | <p>Parent-related factor</p> | |
| <p>Cultural reasons ... that children are there to assist their parents</p> <p>There are also parents that demand that the learner should stay at home</p> | | |
| <p>They engage with learners, where they motivate, encourage them, and assist where they can so that learners do not drop out</p> <p>Ministry also provides career and technical education</p> <p>Conduct educational campaigns in Schools</p> <p>Educate both the girl and the boy child about teenage pregnancy</p> <p>Partnered with Project Hub for them to be going to school to target teenage girls in terms of My Future My Choice</p> <p>Knowledge regarding reproductive health and sexuality and in order to capacitate the girl child</p> <p>Introduction of the Pregnancy Policy;</p> | <p>Learners based</p> | <p>Programme actions on dropout in Namibia</p> |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| <p>when a female learner gets pregnant, they allow the learner to stay in school</p> <p>Open up when they feel like someone is pressurising them to do something which is not good for them</p> <p>National School Health Task Force... there is a subcommittee that looks specifically at the ESA commitment, which is around how do we stop girls from getting pregnant</p> <p>We got a lot of masks, foodstuff, blankets for kids who are suffering because of cold</p> | | |
| <p>Encourage parents to talk to their children about the consequences of sexual activities</p> <p>Schools and parents should work together closely</p> <p>During COVID, our teachers are to call and support the kids psychologically</p> | <p>Parents assisted</p> | |
| <p>Train school board members because they represent the parents</p> <p>Safe Schools Framework ... keep the schools as a safe haven</p> <p>An anti-bullying campaigns</p> <p>Maybe schools are not welcoming parents</p> <p>The promotion policy says that the learner should only repeat once in a phase if it is deemed necessary</p> | <p>School-structure</p> | |

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| <p>Partners are engaging with the community</p> <p>Keep schools open to serve as community hubs during the course of the year</p> <p>Accommodating learners and they can provide what we call community hostels</p> <p>Community participation in school governance, you also turn the situation around</p> <p>Safe Schools framework</p> | <p>Social engagements</p> | |
| <p>UNICEF came on board with learning support, and they funded our (MoEAC) training</p> <p>Identify the needs and support incapacitated teachers in the classroom</p> <p>Train teachers on learner support, to expand technical vocational training</p> | <p>Teacher-training</p> | |
| <p>Every teacher is trained to do successful physical education and school sports at schools</p> | | |
| <p>Ministerial interventions</p> | | |
| <p>Free education, primary and secondary ministry provides materials, books for the learners, stationery</p> <p>Mobile Schools that are built in areas if the school is very far away to make education is accessible</p> <p>Infrastructure to provide for the teachers</p> <p>Ministry always go on a road show, this campaign of Come Back to School</p> | <p>Ministry activities</p> | |

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>The distance between one school to another school, ideally the standard is five kilometers between two schools</p> <p>We accommodate the needy ones, the vulnerable ones and those who are from Far</p> | <p>Hotel infrastructures</p> | |
| <p>School feeding programmes are being offered in schools, whereby learners during break time ... and after lunch, they also get to eat</p> <p>Parents are not financially stable; they don't have money for food</p> <p>World Food Programme is ready to assist us to improve and expand the school feeding schemes</p> | <p>School feeding programme</p> | |
| <p>IT based data collection</p> <p>Unique identifiers for our learners</p> <p>We don't have data, the real time data that can inform us</p> | <p>Data system</p> | <p>Technology solutions and dropouts</p> |
| <p>Access in some areas is non-existent</p> | <p>Technological limitations</p> | |
| <p>Even the skills of our teachers need to be brought to some levels when we talk about e-learning</p> <p>The school is the place where the children receive the most attention</p> | | |
| <p>Some parents are not really coming forth</p> <p>Some are not interested in the education of their kids</p> <p>We also want other stakeholders to be involved to address the underlying factors within the families, within the Community</p> | <p>Stakeholder- involvement</p> | |

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| <p>We [the ministry] are operating on a thin budget</p> <p>We still have shortage of classrooms. We still have shortages of infrastructures, we have shortage of table and chairs</p> <p>Within this hardship, economic hardship, we have reduced funding in from our partnerships</p> <p>Some of these partnerships have to be stopped and government have to completely take over</p> <p>Our government which is also within a financial difficulty</p> | <p>Limited funding</p> | <p>Challenges on ePPP dropout Failures</p> |
| <p>Forever struggles and fights about entitlement and procurement</p> <p>Whether it is in a transparent fair process, or whether it is a corrupt process, that is like a stumbling block for us to move forward</p> <p>Returning some of the funds, because of the procurement, there's a lot of delays in procuring of devices</p> | <p>Bureaucratic hold-ups</p> | |
| <p>The committee didn't meet for weeks, because of COVID, there was no quorum</p> <p>Challenges with duplication in the system</p> <p>It does result in a lot of here and there, operational tension</p> <p>An organisational review is required to align better certain functions to avoid Duplication</p> | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>They are not implemented 100% in all schools</p> <p>The implementation of putting it into practice is where it goes wrong</p> <p>Then our percentages and the percentages that the EMIS gave afterwards were not coinciding</p> <p>It meant that we were not getting the full donation</p> <p>There are at times challenges around MOUs including interpretation and Implementation</p> | <p>Policy implementation challenges</p> |
|--|---|

Source: Researcher's construction

Data is presented through short introductions of each aggregate dimension followed by a discussion of the respective second-order themes or sub-themes. The data extracts from the informants are inserted in “double inverted commas” and are italicized. Each participant is identified in the order of their interview participation, i.e., Participant 8 is the participant interviewed; this is eighth followed by the line number of the extract in the transcript. Data is allowed to independently tell a story. Since a semi-structured interviewing approach and a non-cross-sectional organisation of data were adopted, the coding of data was consequently not limited to any individual interview questions asked. Hence, some of the (sub)themes do not reflect any interview questions. However, the introductions lay out the background of the sub-theme in relation to the data to assist reader understanding.

4.2 PPP Actors and Partnerships

This first theme, which is also the most elaborate, discusses PPP actors in Namibian educational institutions beyond and including MoEAC and UNICEF. In addition, it shares ideas on the basis of the actor's involvement in the ePPP partnership and finally, it outlines the way ePPP is structured in Namibia.

Table 4.2: PPP actors and partnership basis frame

| Second-Order Themes | Items | Participants' Concepts |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| PPP Actors | Local actors | Inter-ministerial government departments Independent non-governmental organisations |
| | Non-local actors | UN agencies UNICEF & UNESCO Governments, Japan, and Germany |
| Actors' motivation | Education development | Uplift our education system National development plans Strengthen certain subjects, i.e., mathematics, physical education, and accounting Material capacity development |
| | Support ministry officials | Mutually benefitting Financial or technical assistance Securing consultancies |
| | The Namibian child & leave no-one behind | Don't want to leave any child on the street The Namibian child |
| PPPP coordination structure | Coordination nationally | Coordination is done at the head office We will present our strategies and see that stakeholders support the education sector within the framework that we are working in. We will normally develop joint work plans, and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| | UN Partnership framework | United Nations Partnership Framework (UNFP) United Nations Partnership Agreement Friends of Education |
|--|--------------------------|---|

Source: Researcher's construction

4.2.1 PPP Actors

This theme illustrates the most active parties involved in PPP for education in Namibia. While the participants mentioned different themes, the individual parties, which are mainly organisations, can be categorised into local and non-local actors.

4.2.1.1 Non-local Actors

Here, participants emphasised international actors in the ePPP in Namibia. Participants did not limit the mention of the international actors to actors who were only working on the high dropout rate threat in Namibia; rather, they referred to actors who were generally working in the educational space and working with the ministry.

Participant 2, 25:26 commented that *“directors who are involved in the EPP include the ministry itself. They are the main one, but we also have stakeholders that also play a vital role such as UNICEF, [it]¹ is one of them [and] Friends of Education.”* Participant 4, 37:44, shared similar views in an expansive manner and explained the way in which actors act. *“Although the support comes directly to the ministry, but the trickle-down effect, you'll² feel it in schools at that level and the support that we receive from um UNICEF, in terms of helping us to develop strategies to improve our education sector is one of the things that I'll pick, UNESCO is one of them. Um, The EU, the European Union, with the provision of um infrastructure, more specially for the pre-primary level. And there are a number of international organisations that comes in through that, they are currently supporting our education sector in terms of um infrastructure, policies, strategies ...³ to enhance our education Sector.”*

It is critical to emphasise the contributions of UNICEF. It is the only non-local partner mentioned by all the participants and is described in strong terms. *“It's only UNICEF that has been*

¹ Words in these parentheses: [...], are the researcher's; they are included to join phrases and to make sense of interviewees' descriptions in correct English.

² To maintain originality and credibility of data, contracted words 'you'll, I'll, etc.' used by the informants are retained

³ This punctuation mark, ellipses, ... is used to inform readers that some interviewees words have been omitted. Hence, only important participants' data will be included; it will also assist to summarize relevant data.

sponsoring us with regards to high dropout rates. And obviously, this food supplies needed if there are blankets needed that keeps kids away, then UNICEF will also address that, they are ... UNICEF is actually our biggest partner in education” – Participant 3, 149:152 (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2016; UNICEF, 2016). “We talk about the UNICEF, we talk about, um, UNESCO, we talk about the World Food Program, all these are organisations that are playing a major role within our education sector.”

Other non-local contributors were the Japanese government, “...the development partner aid coming to the Ministry of budget support from the EU. And then there are the UN agencies, there is the German GIZ [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit] organisation that works with us, there are pivots foundation” (Participant 6, 89:92), and the ePPP “also have global fund and some other Oman” – P 2.

4.2.1.2 Local Actors

Local actors that were also generally working in partnership with the ministry and on education were listed by participants. The local actors can be polarised into governmental and non-governmental organisations. “All the coordination is done here at the head office [Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture]. However, at the same time, head office does not leave other stakeholders. Stakeholders are also involved as well as the regional offices” – Participant 2, 53:55.

Another significant inter-ministerial local partner whose role is relevant regarding dropout as explained by Participant 4, 11:20 is NAMCOL [Namibian College of Open Learning]. “I will say we have erm different players that play a role as actors in the education sectors and one of those... in Namibia, for example [is] NAMCOL, although it's a government parastatal. They play a role in terms of absorbing our learners who are failing to continue in the formal education sector. So, NAMCOL takes on those learners and then carries them through and then if they do well, then they can go back to the formal education sector again. And then, we can pick erm another role that erm NAMCOL played most especially during the Covid-19 breakdown, erm NAMCOL, because there was no face-to-face erm teaching. So NAMCOL, developed lessons that were broadcasted to the learners, so that they can continue to learn while there they were not attending face-to-face classes” (Kavetuna, 2010). “Other individual organisations mentioned include the National Planning Commission and Ministry of Agriculture and Water,

Ministry of Gender, Institution of Higher Learning” – Participant 5.

More elaborately, the MoEAC “*work closer with the Ministry of Health and Agriculture and Poverty Eradication and Child Welfare. We have various platforms and committees where we work together, whether it's on water and sanitation, whether it's on the agricultural produce on the ECD (early childhood development) and care and education, with Ministry of Health and Social Services. We do have these interactions and we work together through these committees in implementing these activities. There's also from the office of the Prime Minister, the Disaster Risk Management and Prevention Unit, erm the initiative to eradicate hunger, based on the study of cost of hunger in Africa (COHA), it's called, so there has been a big meeting in a erm national level, you know, where ministers executive directors as well as erm, you know, other operational staff were involved in eliminating, um you know, all activities that are geared towards eliminating hunger in the country and education;, arts and culture serves on that National Committee at all levels” – Participant 6, 478:490. Finally, concerning the governmental local actors, this participant, 373:376, further explained that “*there is an integrated school health taskforce that actually oversees, you know, elements of dropout and the integrated school health taskforce exists at national level and at regional level. And they are even a major success story and in this initiative of transforming education.*”*

Participant 3, 8:10, reported that “*we work with a lot of stakeholders amongst others. Initially, we worked only with inter-ministerial organisations, but we've realised that there's a gap. So ... we started a new platform where we involve non-governmental organisations.*” Participant 4, 22 added another non-governmental organisation (NGO). “*I will say, the private sector, we have a number um of the private sector that comes in different forms, others will come, in donating materials to schools, learning materials, others who come in construction of our classrooms. So those ones, they are many. If we list, I've got a very big list, a long list of those stakeholders that has supported the education sector into that area.*” “*Other local actors that the ministry works with include the universities and in professional development for our teachers.*” – P 7.

4.2.2 Actors' Motivation

This second-order theme generally provides responses to the semi-structured interview instrument question, “*What do you think are the parties' underlying interests in the partnership (ePPP)?*” The researcher further probed the manifest and latent interests of the actors, including the local and international partners in education. Simply, this question aims to record the purposes and aims of the partners in engaging in the PPP for education in Namibia. Participants’

responses include those that reflect on the following:

4.2.2.1 Education Development

This sub-theme consists of actors with aims centered on the development of the overall educational architecture of the country. Participant 5, 67:70 responded, *“Of course, um, the whole general concept is to uplift our education system, um, in general. So, that it is in line with our national development plans (NDP). We talk about the NDP five goals, talk about the vision 2030, talk about the Harambee prosperity... plan”* (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2004). Meanwhile, Participant 7, 89:98, provided an elaborate explanation of the activity of a partner, *“For example, the Old Mutual's and those guys, they want to strengthen mathematics and accounting, and you know, those types of subjects. So, they will look at investing in capacity building there, so that, you know, the children that we produce are more equipped in those things ... they help in various ways, you know, in terms of material capacity material, giving us material capacity development, they're now joining us with physical education, they do a lot around those things. So yeah, it really depends on the interest of the company and what the company also wants, but sometimes we approach them and, and if they are interested in, you know, supporting a certain initiative.”*

4.2.2.2 Support Ministry Officials

Participant, Participant 4, 69:81 explained from an MoEAC viewpoint that when the ministry was *“entering into a partnership, I think the best the benefit to this is [recognising that] doing it alone will be difficult. So, you benefit from the skills that comes from the other party. So that's the most underlying interest that we look at. We do not have all the skills that we need. We believe that when we enter into a partnership, it's mutually beneficial, because each party brings their strength into and when the strengths from the two parties are combined... So, when you form that synergy, I think it becomes better for you to deliver a service for the education sector. So, we are driven by the fact that we benefit mutually. And we put resources together when we form these partnerships, and it also reduces um the issues of um overlapping of responsibilities because for example, if you are targeting a particular school, you have five parties that does, maybe delivers a particular service, and not jointly. You are even making the beneficiaries not able to respond to what you offer. But when you come together to have a joint plan, you go as one, it becomes very beneficial because then you have a strengthened t h e support that you give is not just disjointed, but it's coordinated and combined. So that's the underlying interest that we will look at in the motivation [before entering a partnership].”* Other participants reported how partners

supported the ministry in delivering its core educational services. *“One IT company supported us in developing an application for integrated physical education in school sports. So yeah, I mean, most of the support that they provide is financial ... I mean, our development partners provide more technical and financial support as well”* – Participant 7, 20:23.

A participant, Participant 5, 48:53, however, reported that because of *“the budgetary constraint of the ministry, [which] is always a challenge to us [MoEAC] to execute, to finish what we have planned. And most of these private, um, private entities, they come up with, um, either financial or technical assistance... they are very, very crucial to the ministry... most of these organisations play a major role in securing consultancies for the ministry, so that the programme and project can go ahead.”*

4.2.2.3 The Namibian Child and Leave No-one Behind

Most of the interviewees shared that a significant motivation for their employer’s involvement in the multi-stakeholder ePPP could be attributed to concern for every Namibian child and learner and the international and national obligation to leave none of the Namibian children behind.

Participant 2, 72:80, explained: *“the interest is for the Namibian child to get education ... if we look in terms of the right to education, the Constitution provides that all children have the right to be educated. So, all the parties that are involved, there are many people that ensure that children get educated, they don’t want to leave any child uneducated, they want to make sure that every child out there has access to quality education. Therefore, their main interest is to ensure that all children have access to education or the partners or the stakeholders the ministry, they don’t want to leave any child in the street, they want to give them the right so that they have access to quality education and... by having access to quality education, children will be educated so that they can become someone in the future and carry out the development of the country”* (Robertson et al., 2012).

Participant 1 had similar views. *“Everybody wants to see a difference in the life of the Namibian child. So, everybody wants to see Namibian child, surviving, thriving, claiming, and then it’s an adolescent finishing their basic education, to go on to this year, your vocational education. So, the underlying interest is really to contribute towards vision 2030, towards the different, um, national development plans, strategic plans, and ultimately, to reach the SDGs in terms of really, in the vision 2030 of Namibia to become a global, a global economy, where poverty is reduced, and where basically, young people can also thrive through where they can also become*

employers or develop their own businesses, ... and ultimately, to reduce poverty.” Participant1, 61:68 (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2004, 2020).

In conclusion, *“different actors make sure that the education or the Namibian child is educated.”*
– Participant 5.

4.2.3 PPP Coordination Structure

This second-order theme explains how multistakeholder PPP for education is structured in Namibia. For an education PPP with an array of partners, including diverse local actors (governments and non-governmental) and multifarious international actors (governments of other nations, UN agencies), it is vital to explain how the parties work together to achieve their aims, as explained during the interviews.

4.2.3.1 MoEAC Coordination Framework

Here, participants explained that the ePPP is coordinated nationally at the MoEAC while other stakeholders work with and through the ministry.

“Normally what happens is that when a stakeholder identifies an area where they want to cooperate in, what we will normally do is erm from education [talking about the MoEAC], we will present our strategies and see that that stakeholder supports the education sector within the framework that we are working in. And um we want to make the stakeholder to be part of us that their support should not be seen like, erm it’s something that comes outside of what we do. But it should be seen as supporting our core mandate. So normally, what we’ll do is we’ll make sure that the support or the stakeholder becomes part of us so that we work together so that even when the support comes to an end, the ministry can still continue running with it, because it has been mainstreamed into the operations of the ’Inistry. And part of what we do is we will normally develop joint work plans, others we will develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), so that it will harness our cooperation moving forward. So, we have a unit within the ministry which deals with our development erm cooperation support, where a lot of cooperation is formalised through Memorandums of Understanding. So, we have a number of them and several of them and on an annual basis, they will sit and review on how best this memorandum was implemented and identify the gaps and strengthen [it] moving forward. I think that’s how we coordinate those stakeholders.” – Participant 4, 49:64. This participant talked largely about the way the work was realized between the ministry and new PPP partners.

In terms of how implementation of dropout programmes is realized between the ministry

(situated at Windhoek) and the local offices and schools, Participant 2, 48:57 maintained that *“work is coordinated from head office, where the head office must liaise with regional directorates. So, it’s coordinated from here [affirming the interviewee’s work position at the MoEAC], but regions are also given the mandate to ensure that projects that are earmarked for dropout in terms of interventions are implemented in the regions by the regional directorate. The head office is just to coordinate the process in terms of implementation, and to make sure that all the stakeholders are part and parcel of the process. Therefore, all the coordination is done here at the head office. However, at the same time, head office does not leave other stakeholders, stakeholders are also involved as well as the regional offices since by now, education has been realized. Therefore, regions have to carry out the projects, at the same time, they have to give feedback to head office so that they can use that feedback to see what other measures can be put in place.”* (MoEAC & UNICEF, 2018).

4.2.3.2 The UNICEF Coordination Framework

UNICEF, as a popular UN agency and an agency that is resolute about reducing the dropout rate in Namibia, has a unique operational and coordination framework.

“We’ve [UNICEF interviewee] got quite a number of UN agencies in Namibia, from UNESCO, from UNDP, from WFP, from WHO, UNICEF, etc. And then what we are doing is we jointly, we say that we deliver as one to avoid any overlapping of activities of funding or any duplication. We support the government through what we call a United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF). So, the framework is basically there to coordinate our funding towards a government where, for example, since UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP, for example, or WHO are working on school health, and we’ll put our resources together to the partnership framework and support the Ministry of Education to address any school-related health issues in the school. And if we take, for example, WFP, which focuses on nutrition and establishing school gardens, they also work either with UNESCO with WHO or UNICEF, in supporting schools to really focus on strengthening health aspects in school. So, we work through what we call the United Nations Partnership Agreement. But I think, there is what is now called the Friends of Education (FoE) strategy and approach. It is being used by the Ministry to bring all the stakeholders, partners, development partners or private sector that are involved in education, where they need to look at what are the specific needs of the Ministry, and then they [partners] support through the schools and through the Friends of Education programme” – Participant1, 43:7.

However, it is vital to note that the United Nations Partnership Framework is not operational

only in Namibia. A MoEAC interviewee, Participant 3, said *“I’ve attended once with UNICEF, um, a conference in ****⁴ [a foreign African nation was mentioned here] and then I realized that all those UNICEF officials representing different countries, adopt the same mandate, so in the end, they have their own work plan in the mandate and they need us to facilitate or to successfully achieve what they planned.”* Participant 3, 41:44. From this quotation, one may argue that the interviewee was referring to the UNPAF, which is not limited to a single UN agency but is used to coordinate work across various UN agencies to avoid duplication of programmes and interests (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN) & United Nations Namibia (UN Namibia), 2017). Also, the work across nations is usually shared with relevant government bodies and ministries for programme facilitation and coordination; hence, the UNFP works together with the Friends of Education (FoE), which encompasses all partners working with the Ministry on educational matters.

4.3 Foundational Factors Influencing Dropout

The aggregate dimension captured the factors influencing the high dropout rates in the former white minority-ruled country, Namibia. The following quotations from interviewees highlight the causes of dropout in Namibia. While talking about the coordination involved in the multistakeholder ePPP, Participant1, 179:181 explained that *“school dropouts does not stand on its own, [it is] because of various factors. [When considering a solution to the cause of drop out], one needs to look at the other root causes [before] one can really see what one can do, in terms of addressing school dropouts, because it doesn't happen in isolation”* (Ananga, 2011). The second-order themes captured are community/social causes, COVID-related, disability access associated, finance-related and learner-based causes of dropout.

⁴ This denotes that a specification or term was intentionally omitted to maintain anonymity of participants.

Table 4.3: Foundational factors influencing dropout frame

| Second-order themes | Participant concepts |
|-------------------------|---|
| Community/social causes | Length of the walking distance to school social issues Culture-specific challenges |
| COVID-related | Fear of the spread of COVID-19 Hostels in resource schools are quite overcrowded With COVID-19 ... many children who did not return to school teenage pregnancy was quite high during COVID-19 in mainstream Schools |
| Disability access | We don't really cater for learners with physical disabilities Barriers to learning ... are not necessarily always identified |
| Financial | Financial difficulty is also one of the causes Poverty levels within the family Young kids prefer to hunt for food to being in school, when there is nothing to eat at home after coming from school, |
| Learner-based | Teenage pregnancy So, they have transactional sex, for example, to get money to buy pads |
| | Some learners get pressured into dropping out of school by their friends Repetition is also causing dropout When learners use drugs, drink alcohol, their performance at school will be very less [poor], they will say education is not important at all. Therefore, they'll drop out from schools |
| Parent- factor | Lack of support from parents Poverty levels within the home within our family homes Cultural reasons ... that children are there to assist their parents There are also parents that demand that the learner should stay at home |

Source: Researcher's construction

4.3.1 Community or Social Causes

Community or social causes drive dropout and are associated with factors around the structure of the community or social practices in the environment where learners are based. Here, the far distance of some learners to and from the school was cited by most of the interviewees.

Participant 4, 106:113 observed; *“one thing that I'll pick from the onset is also erm, the distances to school. Hmm, hmm. Yeah, between the villages in school, and some of our learners will not have that strong heart to continue commuting every day for five days, Monday to Friday, to school, when there is that distance between their village and the school, they will even decide this is not for me or drop out or delay. Because of those distances, many of the learners will start school a bit late. So, when they start school a bit later, they will realise that they are aged, it is said that they will be schooling with young ones in the same class. And that does not augur well for too many. So, the option will either be let me just drop out, this is not me, let me just drop out”* (Jellenz et al., 2020; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). Interviewee 6 corroborated this cause with numbers while citing the annually published EMIS report by saying, *“the highest one of 2021 was the distance between school and home, it was one of the highest, it came up to 1236. There are others that you know, are only in the hundreds, left for job, for example, is nearly 500.”* – Participant 6, 305:307.

Secondly and concerning community or social issues, Participant 4, 143:155 reported culture-specific challenges. To substantiate, Maswahu (2012) argues that;

“We still have erm some cultures that still places very low erm value on education. Yeah, very low values on education. They will rather have me as erm someone who is ten years, to go look after the goats. Because this is our livelihood that we have seen throughout [our lives], then me going to school. I think, in particular, we have seen that in what, is it Kaokoland? Yeah, poor Kunene area. Yeah, that's very visible, still very visible, you get um young ones will never went to school, they are looking after the livelihood of the family. Yeah, so it's one of the challenges and we need to see how we educate our communities to change those attitudes. Yeah. And, we still have um where we want partnerships to address those underlying conditions within the families. We still have child marriages that are happening, that are arranged by the families. Someone is still young, but then a marriage is arranged because this man is rich. And the family looks at that and erm sacrifice that. Yeah, and the education is sacrificed. And you arranged that marriage then the person drops out and then gets married, but what is the future of that learner?”

4.3.2 COVID-19-related factors

It is critical to mention that the global health issue and pandemic, COVID-19, was also cited as a cause of the high dropout rate in Namibia by participants 1 and 3.

Participant 1, 77:79 shared the following: *“With Covid-19, we've seen a number of children, many children who did not return to school, either because they've lost their parents or their caretakers, or they didn't get opportunities to continue during the, um, face-to-face school closure [lockdown]”*. In addition, another participant added that *“in general teenage pregnancy was quite high during COVID in mainstream schools, I cannot say that for resource schools. So, in that respect, obviously they [MoEAC and other partners] try to find out the reasons for that. I know the direct division, that's Diagnostic Advisory and Training Services. They are responsible for teenage pregnancy and the policy and implementation thereof. So, they engage with regions and try to find out the reasons for that,”* Participant 3, 178:180 (Kidman et al., 2022; Moscoviz & Evans, 2022).

The participant elaborated by saying, *“I would think parents are a bit concerned because I met a few parents and they were hesitant to send the kids back to school, um, reason being that the kids in resource schools, the kids normally stay in the hostel and I think they fear that the spread of COVID is, um, more possible or what is more prone to happen in that set-up. And it is true that our hostels in resource schools are quite overcrowded because the schools are only in certain towns and certain regions, so the kids rely on hostels to be able to access education and as a result, we have overcrowded [in] the hostels there. So, I would say that is the main cause.”* Participant 3, 67:73.

4.3.3 Disability Access

Participants cited here that the lack of access for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) had influenced dropout, especially amongst people with such disabilities.

Firstly, Participant 3, 120:126 introduced the subject of disability in the Namibian educational services: *“for us in resource schools, we focus on four types of disabilities, which are hearing impaired, visually impaired, intellectually impaired, and learners with learning disabilities. So, um, we don't really cater for learners with physical disabilities, but obviously, you sometimes have kids with multiple disabilities, and one of them could be physical disability, and like a child in a wheelchair or on crutches and they will need ramps, um, also for the visually impaired they will also need ramps. Okay so our special schools or resource schools are not our own flat or ground and they don't have stairs. So, in that respect we do we do cater for learners with physical*

disabilities.”

Furthermore, and beyond this introduction, Participant 7, 109:116 narrated the challenge PWDs often experienced which leads to their dropping out of school: *“And I think from my personal experience, or what I think is that, you know, our children have got barriers to learning, and they are not necessarily always identified. So maybe the child is dyslexic, or, you know, something like that, and it's not identified, and they don't get the support they need. And they become frustrated, and then they, you know, they drop out. Yeah, so I think some of them are, like, unknown or the child is struggling to do maths or read or, you know, these types of things. So, it's a slow learner, and not getting support or not, or the problem isn't identified.”* Beyond the inability of learning institutions to identify students in need, the limited number of school and educational facilities also influences dropout amongst PWDs. Participant1, 96:99, explained that *“if we look at some children who have to go to boarding facilities because there are not many schools in their communities, and they are not staying in, they cannot stay in [because they] are the kids with disabilities, who cannot be housed in boarding facilities, all of these different factors really, um, um, result in high dropout rates”* (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018; Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016).

4.3.4 Financial Factors

Lack of finances to sponsor educational needs of learners was also cited as a foundational influence on high dropout in Namibia.

Participant 2, 117:125 claimed, *“the second one is financial difficulties. Financial difficulty is also one of the causes, whereby you'll find that sometimes the learners' parents are not working, they don't have financial means to get funds to cater for their child's school needs. In terms of uniforms, you know, shoes books, therefore the learner is going to dropout. Let me give you an example. Imagine a learner doesn't have shoes, the trousers are torn, and that child goes to school and that child will be mocked, that child will be bullied. Therefore, as a result, that child will drop off because they are feeling the pain, you know that feeling the pinch, when they go to school, they get mocked. So financial difficulties of parents are also another cause of both the dropout uhhh drugging and alcohol abuse”* (Maswahu, 2012). Participant 2 had initially mentioned teenage pregnancies as the most pressing cause of dropout in schools in Namibia. This is discussed in the next section.

Participant4, 114:122 shared the same notion as P 2. *“Um, some poverty levels within the family,*

it's one of the things that we will normally pick up that others will just drop out. Because, for example, they can't even provide for school uniform, or decent clothing that they can put on when going to school. So, when they see others are putting on better clothes, they will rather drop out and stay at home. And erm other challenges will be as I've mentioned, those poverty levels within the home, within our family homes. Young kids will rather prefer to go hunt for food, search for food than being in school, whereby after coming from school, there is nothing to eat at home, they will rather go search for food, fend for themselves, and continue in that erm, in that path without attending school. So those are some of the causes of um high dropout.” (Ishola et al., 2017; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015).

4.3.5 Learner-based Factors

Learners themselves are causes of dropout. Here a major factor, teenage pregnancy, was listed as the most significant cause of the high dropout experienced in the Namibian educational sector. The description of Participant 2, 115:117 is relevant in introducing the effect of teenage pregnancy and the associated school dropout in Namibia. *“I think the mini cause in the case of Namibia, is teenage pregnancies. Statistics has shown that many dropouts are as a result of teenage pregnancies, whereby the guilty child gets pregnant and then they drop out. In most of the regions high dropout rate is caused by teenage pregnancy” (Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Zulaika et al., 2022).*

Participant 7, 105:107 quoted a study and explained, *“I'm not sure if you have read the study, it's called the Out of School Children Study, I think we did that one in 2016, which showed us the main causes of dropout for our children. And amongst them is issues of teenage pregnancy.”* While the Out of School Children Study is reflected upon and cited in the next chapter, P 6's comment on the annually published EMIS report states that *“pregnancy related is 2658. So, those are the highest ones”*. Aside from the unknown variable (dropouts that cannot be related to a variable cause) which has 7512 entries, teenage pregnancy was the highest cause of dropout mentioned by the participant.

Participant 7, 125:130 further explained that *“because dropout has a lot of causal factors. So, for example, one of the big dropouts is teenage pregnancy. So that one is around how are we educating our children? So, we've got various partners that are looking at what causes teenage pregnancy. So, for example, one of the things is poverty, that children don't have access to menstrual products. So, they have transactional sex, for example, to get money to buy to buy pads.”*

Other factors that can be attributed as learner-based reasons for dropout were postulated by participants 2 and 6. *“Drugging and alcohol abuse is also another one. That I’ll say it is a cause of dropout, because when learners use drugs, drink alcohol, their performance at school will be very less [poor], they will say education is not important at all. Therefore, they’ll drop out from schools”* – Participant 2, 125:127. The same interviewee further reported that *“another one is peer pressure. Now we are living in a changing world and it’s easy to influence someone. So, peer pressure also plays a role in terms of dropout because some learners get pressured, pressured, in dropping out from school by their friends, and as a result, they drop out of school.”* 131:134. Participant 5, 111:112 corroborated the previously mentioned factors: *“As we say, the causes are poverty is drug abuse, peer pressure, we talked about reducing hunger, as we are praying to erm mitigate the dropout”* (Maswahu, 2012).

Finally, *“repetition is also causing dropout because the learner gets frustrated or if it is over emphasised that the learner cannot succeed, then of course, a learner has no interest in school. So, these are the fundamental um I shall say, um world views still existing in in education, in the education sector.”* – Participant 6, 173:177.

4.3.6 Parent-related Factors

Factors associated with parents of students dropping out are cited here. *“And another one that I would say is lack of support from parents. If parents are not really involved in their child’s education, the child will see that there’s no use of me going to school if my parents are not involved, they’re not interested in my education. And therefore, the child will get involved in other things other than education itself.”* Participant 2, 128:131 (Mapani, 2011).

Participant 3 also cited a lack of parental support, albeit of parents of PWDs. *“Obviously the kids fall behind because of lack of support even though, if they could have had access to technology, the parents themselves would not be able to support them, because I’m thinking of the deaf learners, the parents cannot really sign [sign languages] at a professional level, basic communication skills, how the parents need to support the learning of the kids, but when it comes to teaching and learning at a higher level, and they fail, so in that regard, teachers are to support, [however], that was not always possible. So that could be the other one, is that despite the lack of technology, that parental involvement is not very good for different reasons. I think that would be the two most prominent reasons.”* Participant 3, 73:80. This participant also cited the lack of infrastructure and limited hostel facilities as reasons for PWDs to drop out.

Another factor cited as a parent-related cause of dropout is poverty; it may be one form of lack of

parental support: *“Some poverty levels within the family, it is one of the things that we will normally pick up that other [students] will just drop. Because, for example, they can't even provide for school uniform, or decent clothing that they can put on when going to school. So, when they see others are putting on better clothes, they will rather drop out and stay at home.”* – Participant 4, 114:117. Another poverty-related example was described by participant 3. *“Parents, if they cannot send the kids back because they don't have transport money, those are just minor reasons for why they didn't come back to school.”* Participant 3, 81:83. Participant 7, 107:109, summarised these related factors in saying: *“issues of poverty and distance from school, and then also parental support for education [are causes of dropout]. So, if the parents don't value education, then they won't try for the children to go to school.”*

Aside from the lack of support, another significant factor that can be attributed to parents as a reason for dropout may be *“cultural reasons whereby it is believed that children are there to assist their parents in terms of cultivating, assisting in herding, um, livestock's, therefore, some kids will drop out from school so that they can assist their parents in that regard.”* – Participant 2, 139:141 (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018). In relation to learners assisting their parents, participant 6 corroborated by providing the example of when there is an *“illness in the home, that learners have to take care of, of either siblings or parents or guardians and erm then drop out due to that.”* Participant 6, 168:169. In relation to the EMIS report cited by this participant, *“and then there are also parents that demand that the learner stay at home, which is also a 1000. So those are the ones that are the highest ... that I've now listed for you.”* Participant 6, 309:312.

However, this information is limited as the participant does not mention the reason for which parents can request that a student stay at home. This participant earlier quoted the distance between school and home to be 1236, left for job nearly 500, option of unknown is 7512, pregnancy related is 2658 and parents that demand that the learner stay at home is 1000.

4.4 Programme Action on Dropout in Namibia

Dropout is a fundamental challenge in the Namibian educational sector and specifically challenges the MoEAC and its other educational partners, especially UNICEF. As a result, concrete steps, policies, and actionable programmes have been designed and implemented to combat this educational menace in the country. Generally, interviewees responded to question no. 5 of the interview instrument: ‘What is the partnership doing on the high dropout rate in Namibia?’ and their responses were probed to elicit the many causes of dropout they had

mentioned, and the specific role played by their organisation, i.e., MoEAC or UNICEF. Participant 7 explained how ePPP works to reduce the dropout rate: *“So, all the programmes that we do have, with our public- private partners are all aimed at looking at, how do we keep the children in school? How do we identify children with problems? And how do we get them back to school? You know that type of thing. So, it's ... every programme that we have is about keeping our children in schools; about capacitating our teachers, providing them with psychosocial support, you know, these types of things.”* Participant 7, 58:63.

Table 4.4: Programme action on dropout in Namibia

| Second-order themes | Participants’ concepts |
|---------------------|---|
| Learner-based | <p>They engage with learners, where they motivate, encourage them, and assist where they can so that learners do not dropout</p> <p>Ministry also provides career and technical education</p> <p>Conduct educational campaigns in schools</p> <p>Educate both the girl and the boy child about teenage pregnancy</p> <p>Partnered with Project Hub for them to go to schools to target teenage girls in terms of My Future My Choice</p> <p>Knowledge regarding reproductive health and sexuality to capacitate the girl child</p> <p>Introduction of the Pregnancy Policy, when a female learner gets pregnant, they allow the learner to stay in school</p> <p>Open when they feel like someone is pressurising them to do something, which is not good for them</p> <p>National School Health Task Force... there is a subcommittee that looks specifically at the ESA commitment, which is around how do we stop girls from getting pregnant</p> <p>We get a lot of masks, foodstuff, blankets for kids who are suffering because of cold</p> |
| Parent-assisted | <p>Encourage parents to talk to their children about the consequences of sexual activities</p> |
| | <p>Schools and parents should work closely together</p> <p>During COVID, our teachers are to call and support the kids psychologically</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Schools' structure | <p>Train school board members because they represent the parents</p> <p>Safe Schools Framework ... keep the schools as safe havens</p> <p>An anti-bullying campaigns</p> <p>Maybe schools are not welcoming parents</p> <p>The promotion policy says that the learner should only repeat once in a phase if it is deemed necessary</p> |
| Social engagements | <p>Partners are engaging with the community</p> <p>Keep schools open to serve as community hubs during the course of the year</p> <p>Accommodating the learners; they can provide what we call communities hostels</p> <p>Community participation in school governance, you also turn the situation around</p> <p>Safe Schools framework</p> |
| Teachers' training | <p>UNICEF came on board with learning support, and they funded our [MoEAC) trainings</p> <p>Identify the needs and support incapacitated teachers in the classroom</p> <p>Train teachers on learner support, to expand technical vocational training</p> <p>Every teacher is trained to do successful physical education and school sports at schools</p> |
| Ministerial interventions | |
| Ministry activities | <p>Free education, primary and secondary</p> <p>Ministry provides materials, books for the learners, stationery</p> <p>Mobile Schools are built in areas if the school is very far away so that education is accessible</p> <p>Infrastructure to provide for the teachers</p> <p>Ministry goes on road shows, this campaign of Come Back To School</p> |
| Hostel infrastructures | <p>The distance between one school and another school: ideally the standard is five kilometres between two schools</p> |
| | <p>We accommodate the needy ones, the vulnerable ones, and those who are from far</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| School feeding programme | School feeding programmes are offered in schools, whereby learners during break time ... and after lunch, they also get to eat Parents are not financially stable; they don't have money for food World Food Programme is ready to assist us to improve and expand the school feeding |
|--------------------------|---|

Source: Researcher's construction

4.4.1 Learner-based Solutions

These are solutions that are directed at learners who are the direct beneficiaries of these programme actions. Participant 2, 89:98, explained that *partners “are involved with kids. Whereby, how do I put it, they engage with learners, where they motivate, encourage them, and assist where they can so that learners do not drop out. If we look at the many causes of dropout, there are so many causes ... so this is where the stakeholders come in place, and assist the learners, especially as a result of the causes of high dropout rate. They assist the learners, they motivate them, they encourage them. On the Ministry side, the ministry also provides career and technical education. Whereby they try by all means to elaborate the importance of education to the learners, and therefore all these stakeholders that are involved in providing career and technical education, getting parents involved, motivating and encouraging learners, the importance of education.”*

Since teenage pregnancy was mostly cited by the participants as a significant motivator of dropout, critical solutions directed at this learner-based cause of dropout were presented. *“Let me start first with teenage pregnancy, the Ministry, together with their stakeholders, they have various interventions in place. One of the interventions is to conduct educational campaigns in schools whereby they educate both the girl and the boy child about teenage pregnancy. They go to schools. They educate learners on abstaining from sexual activities, and they educate them on how to protect themselves, especially those ones who are sexually active. But the Ministry always emphasises that it's best to abstain from sexual activities. However, in the current world that we are living, it's a bit of a challenge. Therefore, they encourage learners to abstain. At the same time, they educate learners on how to protect themselves when they are involved in sexual activities.”* – Participant 2, 156:163.

Further, Participant 4, 85:91 mentioned another programme aimed at the teenage pregnancy issue. *“As I've mentioned, those partners or the organisation that are supporting us in terms of reproductive sexual health, we have seen an impact. I think you might be aware of, for example,*

was it project hub? where we partnered with Project Hub for them to be going to school to target teenage girls in terms of My Future My Choice. So, when they capacitated these girls and these girls have the knowledge to respond to issues of sexuality, we have realised that yes it has made an impact. I think when, when you look at the pregnancy rate, for example, it has been dropping because of some of the support that we have.” Participant 6, 212:215, referred to a similar initiative provided by the ministry, *“We work with a number of stakeholders in providing the necessary um integrated life skills education that includes you know, the necessary knowledge regarding reproductive health and sexuality and erm in order to capacitate the girl child and the boy child to take care of themselves.”*

On the same issue, teenage pregnancies, the same interviewee, Participant 4, 202:212, continued: *“the other issue that we have identified in the Ministry is you remember in the past ... what was happening was, a female learner gets pregnant, you dropout in school. But erm the introduction of the Pregnancy Policy, the purpose of that was to reduce dropout. When a female learner gets pregnant, they allow the learner to stay in school, continue learning while the learner is pregnant, only go for delivery. And after delivery, the learner can still come back and continue with their education. In the past, once a learner gets pregnant, you completely drop out until when you are finished. Maybe the kid is two years that's when you can decide to come back, and look at your age ... It's already two years that has passed, many of them will never come back. But with the current introduction, with the policy that started was its 2000 or 2008. The management of pregnancy in schools, so we allow them to stay, manage and that they get supported if a learner does not have someone to stay with the kid and wants to return to school after delivery.”* (Matshotyana, 2010; Ministry of Education., 2012b, 2012a). This policy was supported by Participant 6: *“should it still happen that a learner, the girl child falls pregnant and there should be mechanisms to ensure that the girl remains in school or return to school to complete the education because otherwise it is, the negative vicious cycle that just creates more poverty. So, it's only education that can counteract that negative cycle.”*

Another participant cited a solution involving peer pressure, which is like a solution targeted towards teenage pregnancy. *“In terms of peer pressure, the Ministry also educates learners and parents, they also educate learners as well as teachers and the parents of the learner. So now ... I mean, teachers will talk to the learners, motivating them, encouraging them, even encouraging them to open when they feel like someone is pressurising them to do something, which is not good for them.”* Participant 2, 184:188. Participant 7, 71:78, informed the study about *“a National School Health Task Force, which consists of multi stakeholders. And through that task*

force that is our coordinating body ... So, under that task force, for example, there is a subcommittee that looks specifically at the ESA commitment, which is around how do we stop girls from getting pregnant and, you know, dropping out. And so, they have activities under that with various stakeholders, we've got the school sports and physical education subcommittee that looks at implementing those activities with the various stakeholders. So, there is a national coordinating body when it comes to school health.”

Concerning Covid-19 and PWDs, Participant 3, 49:56, indicated that *“we are always in contact with them. So, during COVID, with COVID struggles, 2020 March. They instructed us to immediately do some data analysis and how many kids who dropped out? What are the reasons for them? And where possible they tried to support like, in 2020, we got a lot of masks, foodstuff, um, blankets for kids who are suffering because of cold. So, I think, based on what was identified as the reasons for the high dropout, they tried to support us also, um, kids with disabilities were totally what is the word, um, excluded during teaching time, because of technology and the lack thereof, many of them didn't have access to technology. So as a result, many of our kids with disabilities fall behind in teaching and learning.”*

4.4.2 Parent-assisted Solutions

These are solutions that are direct partnerships between parents and the partners to combat the high dropout issue in the education system.

Concerning teenage pregnancies, Participant 2, 164:168, explained that *“they [ePPP, especially the Ministry] encourage parents to be involved in their children's education. They encourage parents to talk to their children, you know, in Africa, and specifically in Namibia, speaking about sexual activities, for example, parents speaking with their children about sexual activities is considered a taboo. Therefore, the minister is trying to encourage parents to get involved, to talk to their children about the consequences of sexual activities.”*

In addition, *“schools and parents should work closely. And that's what COVID once again emphasised. The one cannot go without the other. We must take hands for the sake of the child, not just educationally but also psychologically. Because what I found now in our resource schools, for instance, is that, um, many of our parents didn't support the kids emotionally. For them, the kids came home, and they're not attended to maybe for various reasons – the parents work, the language communication for the deaf, and all that. So, during COVID, our teachers are to call and support the kids psychologically, on what COVID is and why they are at home*

and all that because kids desperately wanted to come home and go to school, because for them, it was a haven. So, for me, I would say parental involvement is the biggest, biggest measure in, um, combating this.” Participant 3, 204:213 (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018).

4.4.3 School Structure

These solutions emphasize how the programmes, i.e., the administration and operation of schools, can be modified to reduce dropout in schools in Namibia. Participant 3, 213:222, described a specific UNICEF-specific dropout solution targeting schools’ structures. *“I know that UNICEF, they also support the social accountability and school governance, where they train school board members because they represent the parents. And that has really made an impact. I cannot go into details, but I know there was quite a change in that with respect to parents being serving on the school board. And they have a say in school matters. That programme is still to be rolled out in all the regions I think but they almost done with most of the regions.”* (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2020; Khama, 2014).

Participant 6, 252:257 mentioned a programme launched by the Ministry together with UNICEF, *“an anti-bullying campaign and from the anti-bullying campaign, then we develop the sport for development and Physical Education for life. ... The same with um the ah Safe Schools Framework, which was launched in 2018. It also erm aims to keep the schools as a safe haven, where learners would like to be and welcomed and thrive to their potential. And that um policy was erm launched in 2018,”* (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2018).

The last reason stated in the learner-based causes of dropout was that *“repetition is also causing dropout because the learner gets frustrated or if it is over emphasised that the learner cannot succeed”* – P 6, 173:175 (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). The participant later spoke about how they were trying to change the repetition policy of schools and mentioned an educational conference where it was shared that, *“it was only one school principal, was saying they install automatic promotion, ... the promotion policy says that the learner should only repeat once in a phase if it is deemed necessary, because of certain circumstances say the learner felt sick or whatever and it is really in the best interest of the learner ... and all learners should receive the necessary support to achieve and succeed and be able to progress through the system successfully. Because ultimately [MoEAC and partners], it’s our aim to unlock the potential of every individual.”* 190:196.

In relation to the last solution (cooperation between parents and schools) described in the section above, parent-assisted solutions, one participant raised the question of the work relations between the schools and parents, which should allow both parties to work cooperatively to discourage students from leaving schools. *“But we cannot only blame parents, it's also schools, maybe schools are not welcoming parents. So, it's, um, we should try to investigate why are parents not coming to school? Why are they not involved in the learning, in the children's education, and then we take it from being there, to try to strengthen parental involvement.”* Participant 3, 213:216.

4.4.4 Community Engagements

Community engagements are initiatives implemented through engaging with school and learner communities to combat high dropout rate problems.

Firstly, partners *“are engaging with the community. Like I indicated earlier on, the partners, they consult with the Ministry and when they go out there, they engage with the community, whereby they try to consult with the community on what needs to be done in terms of avoiding you know, learners from dropping out.”* – Participant 2, 86:89. The participant continued the topic of consulting the community: *“they try to keep schools open to serve as community hubs during the course of the year, whereby learners [are] free to come, parents are free to come and discuss issues that are affecting the community, so that the Ministry, the stakeholders can get involved in assisting in that regard. In addition to that, there are also mentoring programmes that are ongoing in some regions. You also have volunteers in regions whereby they try to assist in their communities, encouraging learners to be involved, you know, to take their education very seriously.”* Participant 2, 99:105.

Concerning teenage pregnancies as a significant cause of the high dropout rate, partners *“are also engaging the community to get involved as well, to educate learners, educate children not to be involved in sexual activities.”* – Participant 2, 168:170. Furthermore, communities assist in providing hostel infrastructures to schools to keep learners accommodated and, thereby, decrease dropout rates. *“What you must understand is that we have two types of hostels, we have a full funded state government hostels and we have community hostel or a community or a private hostel. This is a group of individuals, private people who say that there is a need for these learners to be at one place, they can construct a shelter that can be accommodated, accommodating the learners and they can provide what we call communities hostels in most cases, wherever you go in the region, there are communities' hostels. The way the parents that*

come together they decide together with the school management that, okay, can we approach a certain company or can we approach a certain individual to make a shelter for our learners.” – Participant 5, 192:200.

Finally, and, in relation to keeping close working cooperation between the parents/communities and the schools/Ministries, Participant 6, 263:268 maintained that *“community participation as well as compassionate dedicated school leadership makes the big difference. So, that school leadership, community development, community involvement and safe, safe surroundings that the school must have, you know, being in favour of academic performance efficiency and effectiveness of the education sector, these within, you know, did also translated into the policy that I said, the Safe Schools framework.”* (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2018). The participant further explained that the *“one element that leads to success for school, and efficient and effective school, the active community participation in school governance. So, there we have as per the Act, as per the Education Act, Act 16 of 2001, we have the school boards, and school boards, ah you know, the communities in school governance, so with the, the social accountability and school governance project, um facilitated through UNICEF, assistance, and the Rosin Foundation, we trained school boards across the country. And with the improved participation, community participation in school governance, you also turn the situation around.”* Participant 6, 239:249 (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2020; Khama, 2014).

4.4.5 Teacher Training

This second-order theme is targeted at untraining, training and retraining teachers to better manage the drastic dropout in the country. Once again, Participant 3, 55:62, spoke of a specific UNICEF programme to equip teachers with the relevant skills and competencies to manage dropout associated with students with disabilities. *“Many of our kids with disabilities fall behind in teaching and learning. UNICEF came on board with learning support, and they funded our [MoEAC] trainings. Um, Last year, we had two trainings last year and last year, we had two different trainings in two regions that are fully funded. And this year, they will also do trainings in our special schools specifically. The other two trainings were at national level, meaning we covered all teachers, even those from the resource special schools, but in this case, the new funds will only be aimed at directly going into the resource schools and capacitate the teachers there to help the learners to cover the backlogs that are there.”* Concerning the training which the interviewee mentioned would be organised ‘this year’: *“from August, we’ll get more funds to go into our resource schools, identify the needs and support incapacitated teachers in the*

classroom. So, it would be like an in-class support. And obviously, UNICEF, um, involve other donors like recently we had handing over for classrooms and clean-up resource schools in our DAP region, and that was funded by Japan government.” Participant 3, 144:148 (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN) & United Nations Namibia (UN Namibia), 2017).

In relation to what Participant 4, 94:96, cited as a solution, i.e., *“when there are other activities apart from being in class, we have realised that they stay longer in school than deciding to drop out”*, Participant 6, 330:333, described how they were training teachers for beyond formal classroom activities. *“So, these efforts are all geared towards efforts to train teachers on learner support, there are um efforts to expand technical vocational training, to enable us not to, to have just an academic stream, but to diversify and have access to technical vocational education.”* In addition, Participant 6, 228:237, spoke of how the Ministry and other partners had *“embarked on strengthening the school sports and physical education, we speak of the IPS, Integrated Physical Education and school sports policy that we have developed. And then we developed for every grade teacher, a guide, that every teacher knows exactly what to do, is erm you know, trained to do successful physical education and school sports at schools, because through school sports, you can achieve a lot and really combat dropout, and even, you know, improve academic performance, that has also been researched proven um with another, you know, public private partnership, where we strengthened our national standards and performance indicators. It's a policy for quality assurance in schools, to uplift the standard across all schools.”* (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & Ministry of Sport Youth and National Service (MoSYNS), 2018a, 2018b).

Participant 6, 518:528, also recommended that teachers be trained to use technology to their advantage to enhance students' retention in schools. *“Well, the only way we can turn the situation around this, I guess, if we retrain our teachers, if we invest in our teachers, in order to be responsive to digitalisation and in order to utilise you know, online resources to enrich the teaching and learning. So, that is how I see it and then the quality education can be there if our teachers are better prepared, and this national consultation that have been conducted The Voice by the Youth, um time and again came out to say our teachers seem not to be properly prepared for this exercise, so, yeah, besides that –is the system properly prepared? Are we able to support our teachers, and I think that's where we still have to team up with more public-private partners in you know, making our teachers digitally literate, IT literate, and then actually reaping the benefits of the digitalisation and improving the quality of education.”*

4.4.6 Ministerial Interventions

It is critical to note that earlier solutions provided to reducing dropouts were mostly provided within the Ministerial mandate, action plan, supervision, and partnership with the MoEAC. Here, emphasis was placed on particular programme actions and policies in whose implementation the Ministry plays an active role. Participant 6, 442:450, suggested that *“reducing dropout is, is at the heart [of the Ministry], because the mere fact that there is a dropout is a contradiction to our mission and mandate, isn't it? yeah. So, that is a flaw in the system. And that is why we are actually coming up with this number of policies... I like to say even, you know, because if, if our inclusive education policy is fully implemented, and our curriculum is fully implemented with its intent, there should not be a dropout, isn't it? Oh, yeah, but there is still dropout. So, that is where we have a problem and that is where we have to strengthen rural communities through all these efforts that we have.”*

4.4.6.1 Ministry Activities

Participant 2, 170:176 specifically mentioned that another notable assistance provided by the Ministry was *“in terms of financial assistance. The Ministry including its stakeholders, they also assist as you are aware now, this free education, primary and secondary. The reason is that so that the parents that do not have the financial means to assist their children, they are relieved of that duty of paying school fees and other needs that are needed. Therefore, learners are able to go to school for free. At the same time, the Ministry provides materials, books for the learners, stationery. For the learners, stakeholders, UNICEF, they're also involved, um, in providing support to children.”* The participant added that *“in terms of distance from schools, the Ministry is in cognisant of that, those communities which are ... far away from the communities, the Ministry is looking into that so that they can build schools in those particular areas in order to reduce the distance. And at the same time, there are temporary schools that are built in those schools' [areas]. Currently, as I'm speaking, there are schools, Mobile Schools that are built in areas whereby the school is, if the school is very far away from the community. The Minister is going to build a mobile school there so that the primary, the kids from grade zero to grade seven can attend instead of walking along long distances.”* Participant 2, 188:196 (Hailombe, 2011).

In addition, Participant 4, 181:193 claimed that the Ministry must ensure that *“there's a conducive environment for learning. ... Where do you start? Number one, you should make sure that your education is accessible, when we look at accessibility, because when you look at our, our mission, ... you look at provision of education infrastructure where they are needed so that learners have access to classrooms, they do not learn under trees, not under tents. And the*

distances to school are reduced. And all of those things. Number two, you have the infrastructure number to provide for the teachers. Those ones that will teach, I think when you look at it, erm our Ministry is one of the biggest, it's the fifth biggest employer in the public service. Hm, because we have to respond to the number of learners that we have in the country through the provision of our teachers, so that learners are able to learn. Then after that, the other resources that you provide the textbooks. So, my Ministry does that in addition to that, with the challenges that we have realised for us to deal with the high dropout rate.”

Finally, Participant 5, 169:178 also explained that at *“the very beginning of each semester or each academic year, the Ministry always erm go on a road show, erm media show emm, this campaign of um Come Back to School. That is one of the major engagements that we do, and we do it with our um regional support, either from other Ministry, we talk about erm the roadshow including the police officers, men in uniform where they patrol the street [and other local partners], regional council political management. We printed flyers, we educate the parents, those are some of the engagements the ministry is really erm doing hard to keep these dropout programmes. Most specifically, UNICEF, they are doing quite a lot erm to make sure that they return students from where they are to classes.”*

4.4.6.2 Hostel Infrastructures

Interviewees repeated that the household distance from schools for many learners was one of the vital issues needing attention from the Ministry to minimise dropout. The participants described how the ministry was intervening to provide student residences.

“In a nutshell um, the distance between one school to another school, ideally the standard is five kilometres between two schools. So, although we know that, a learner in grade, pre- primary or grades one or two have a day to travel 5 kilo and then of course you say hostel is one of the most erm expensive exercise in the whole Ministry budget. hmm, I think we, we are responsible for, I think 10% of the budget, not just feeding the learners, just hosting the learner in the hostel, not talking about um the utility or the salary of this people, it is only feeding the donors. And we don't really want to accommodate each and every person in the hostel. We accommodate the needy ones, the vulnerable ones, and those who are from far, that's why we have a policy that every learner who is within the radius of five kilometres from the hostel, um he cannot be accommodated in the hostel, unless there is a special condition that maybe disable or vulnerable, depend on the hostel management and the reason presented to them if there is a merit for such child to be admitted. So, this long distance we are, from time to time, we are trying to reduce it,

we are identifying um places where schools can be built or established.” Participant 5, 138:154 (Shikalepo, 2020).

Practically, the Ministry needed to *“bring in other stakeholders to support so that we reduce the dropout rate in terms of provision of um hostel facilities where learners can be accommodated so that they do not move long distances to school”* – Participant 4, 126:128.

4.4.6.3 School Feeding Programme

A significant number of the participants cited the *“World Food Programme support, School Feeding Programme”* – participant 3. Participant 2, 175:184, said that a significant partner, *“UNICEF, FAWENA, they're also involved, um, in providing support to children, school feeding programmes are being done in schools, whereby learners during break time, they get to eat. And after lunch, they also get to eat. That is another way of encouraging learners so that they come to school and it's working effectively, especially the school feeding programme, because you'll find that most learners since their parents do not have the means to buy all the other things that are needed. Some other parents are not financially stable, they don't have money for food, their kids go to school, because they know that they will be fed during break and after school. And this has proven to be very working ... in terms of reducing dropout rates.”* (Khama, 2022).

Participant 6, 143:160, explained how the SFP had become standard: *“Remember in 2012, we were also at a similar position, like now, a transition from one development partner agreement to another one, that is the EU, when we used to have these development partners, or joint annual reviews, something like that, you know, where we invite all development partners and um sketch the state of education, so to say, and reflect on our performance and recommit! So that is what we used to do. And in one of these meetings, it came out that a World Food Programme is ready to assist us to improve and expand the school feeding and introduce more, erm or I shall say, creative ways to diversify, but also to, to break the monopoly in terms of these macro contracts, and introduce, you know, homegrown, where the funding is more decentralised and really makes a difference in uplifting communities and so on. So, with that engagement from 2012 onwards, we were then able to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Food Programme, the UN agency, and through the National Planning Commission, and, this then formed, you know, the basis for further technical assistance on doing erm feasibility studies and, ... up to that point, we did not have a school feeding policy as such, but we were implementing the programme, so we were developing together with this technical assistance, the policy and a monitoring and*

evaluation tool in terms of erm data collection and, and checking, you know, um IT based um data collection.”

Concerning the future of the SFP to reduce dropout, Participant 6, 453:457 suggested *“if really the agricultural produce in communities can improve and you know through grant funding, then the produce is purchased and you know, communities are strengthened to produce more for the better nutrition and if the better nutrition, care, health and support is there in communities, our learners will remain in school.”* (Wekesa, 2015).

4.5 Technology Solutions and Dropout

Participants also recommended that technology and IT systems be used to improve students’ retention rates and consequently reduce dropout in Namibia. Firstly, participants were enthusiastic about the capacities of technological systems to reduce dropout. Participant 2, 98:99 shared the following: *“...and also they (ePPP) use technology to engage learners, especially those ones who are well vested with technology.”*

Table 4.5: Technology solutions and dropout frame

| Second-order themes | Participants’ concepts |
|---------------------------|--|
| Data system | IT based data collection Unique identifiers for our learners We don't have data, the real time data that can inform us |
| Technological limitations | Access in some areas is non-existent Even the skills of our teachers need to be brought to some levels when we talk about e-learning The school is the place where the children receive the most attention |

Source: Researcher’s construction

4.5.1 Data System

Two participants spoke about the capacity and the need for an IT educational information system to manage the dropout situation in the country.

“So, we were developing together with this technical assistance, the policy and a monitoring and evaluation tool in terms of erm data collection and, and checking, you know, um IT based data

collection, and it's, it's from those days already, where I was advocating together with the um EMIS colleagues, that we need to come up with unique identifiers for our learners that um will then make it easier to hold school principals and teachers accountable in terms of keeping learners in school.” – Participant 6, 157:163.

In addition, Participant 5, 86:108 said: *“I remember 2017, we launched erm a study on to actually, um find out the root causes of high dropout in mostly, some of the regions, um it's not really all the regions that are facing the challenge of a school dropout. But of course, mostly the region on the North and the region on the South and the Kunene regions, but other regions like Khomas, they are not really facing the higher dropout rate, and Erongo, they are not really facing it. We said, erm as we tried to find out what [was] really the cause, um we find out one of the most important elements to get to the bottom of this. We don't have data, the real time data that can inform us. So that's why we said erm we are strengthening our data at the school level. Sometimes erm we may call that [there is] a dropout, but of course, Elena [just an example] transfer from one region to another region or from one school to another school. You know, there was not a system that can capture that transfer between the regions and that is one of the findings. Those data they are now helping us to actually erm getting information about cohort of the UNICEF, the data must speak, where we link or the system where every learner can be recorded, from the registration, either from Ministry of Home affairs, multisectoral sectors. They (PPP for education) are coming together and they are sharing data, so that we can able to trace, we will not having a system that can trace the movement of the learner and sometimes, we can say erm is a dropout and then of the other thing erm our education data and the National Statistical Agent's data which is coming from census um, it was not really correlating from one another, the um learner that we have in schools and the learner that we have in populations, the children that we have in population under the age of going to school, they are not really correlating because of this data. So, I think planning or the EMIS, they are busy working out those differences. This is some of the things that the partnership is also helping so that we enable to find a solution.” (Kays, 2018).*

Generally, the two participants were speaking about the need to have real-time data to capture student data and show student status.

4.5.2 Technological Limitations

Despite the acknowledgement by participants of the capacity of technologies for teaching and learning to keep students engaged in school activities and extra-curricular tasks, in addition to

managing dropout, some participants cited limitations on the use of technologies for these purposes.

Participant 4, 275:279, cited an inherent limitation and capacity shortage for technological infrastructures. *“I think you are aware, you have been here in Namibia, you know, the challenges that we have, or the challenges that we experienced when it came to e-learning in our schools. Yeah. e-learning in our school is simple, simple, even the skills of our teachers need to be brought to some levels when we talk about e-learning. So, access in some areas is non-existence, you are not going to reach to have access to internet.”*

Similarly, *“I think that technology will always be helpful, and that, but in our society, you can never go away from face-to-face teaching and learning. Because oftentimes, the school is the place where the children receive the most attention, the most care and that so I think technology can add value in certain instances, but in other instances, it also can be very dangerous. We also did a study on online protection for our children and grooming practices. And you would think it's not happening because Namibia is not so advanced, but it really is. So, I think it has both its positives and its negatives. And I think, for example, one of the good things I've seen with technology is like, connecting schools. So, you have a really good school that's doing very well with good teachers and a school that's not so good. And then, you know, you can have that connection with the smart boards. And the teacher that's teaching that lesson is also teaching the children in Chigwe in Zambezi region, for example. So, you know, I think there's definitely possibilities when it comes to technology. But with everything, we have to weigh the risks and make sure that the children are protected.”* Participant 7, 231:243.

4.6 Challenges of ePPP Dropout Failures

Previous aggregate dimensions have talked about the actors working on dropout in Namibia, causes of dropout, and solutions and programme actions by actors to combat dropout in the country. While narrating the solutions cum ministerial engagements, interviewees also described challenges encountered by the ministry as well as the UNICEF in the course of providing solutions to the educational menace.

Table 4.6: Challenges on ePPP Dropout Failure frame

| Second-order themes | Participants' concepts |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Stakeholders' involvement | <p>Some parents are not really coming forth</p> <p>Some are not interested in the education of their kids</p> <p>We also want other stakeholders to be involved to address the underlying factors within the families, within the community</p> |
| Limited funding | <p>We [the ministry] are operating on a thin budget</p> <p>We still have shortage of classrooms. We still have shortages of infrastructures, we have shortage of table and chairs</p> <p>Within this um hardship, economic hardship, we have reduced funding in from our partnerships</p> <p>Some of these partnerships have to be stopped and government have to completely take over</p> <p>Our government which is also within a financial difficulty</p> |
| Bureaucratic Hold-ups | <p>Forever struggles and fights and fights about you know, entitlement and procurement</p> <p>Whether it is in a transparent fair process, or whether it is a corrupt process, that is like a stumbling block for us to move forward</p> <p>Returning some of the funds, because of the procurement, there's a lot of delays in procuring of devices</p> <p>The committee didn't meet for weeks, because of COVID, there was no quorum</p> <p>Challenges that are with duplication in the system</p> <p>It does result in a lot of here and there, operational tension An organisational review is required to align better certain functions to avoid duplication</p> |
| Policy implementation challenges | <p>They are not implemented 100% in all schools</p> <p>The implementation, the practice of putting it into practice is where it goes wrong</p> <p>Then our percentages and the percentages that the EMIS gave afterwards were not coinciding</p> <p>It meant that we were not getting the full donation</p> <p>There are at times challenges around yes MOUs including interpretation and implementation</p> |

Source: Researcher's construction

4.6.1 Stakeholders' Involvement

The interviewees relayed the fears that some of the stakeholders, for example, parents and school communities that were supposed to support the ePPP partners' work in reducing drop-out, were not forthcoming in playing their roles.

For example, *"I would say one of the challenges in terms of implementing this intervention is that some parents are not really coming forth. They're not coming forth. They don't want to be involved. That is why, you know, parents should play a very key role. [However], they don't want to support teachers. They don't want to support the Ministry. ... Some are not interested in the education of their kids."* Participant 2, 213:218 (Maswahu, 2012).

Participant 4, 130:137 added that *"we [partners] can address those challenges in schools. But when we address those challenges at school level, we also want within the community, other stakeholders to be involved to address the underlying factors within the families, within the community. So that those engagement does not end at school level, but it goes into that family. So, if there is that break, in between, we are addressing one angle, we do not address the other angle. It's very challenging. And as a sector education, we can address those challenges at school. But then who addresses the challenges in the family? We want other sectors to come. And we do not see much of um that happening within our community [and] within our sectors."*

An example of the above follows: *"So what we want is, when we say we'll provide a meal at school, in the afternoon, in the evening when they go back to the families, at least another sector should say, okay, in terms of food security, the families will be engaged in erm income generating projects, or some project that will bring food within the family. Then we sustain the support in school and out of school. So, to me, I feel that's a very big challenge. It's a very, very big gap that we still have, because the poverty levels within the families are not addressed."* Participant 4, 137:142 (Khama, 2022).

4.6.2 Limited Funding

A significant number of the participants mentioned that funding was a critical limitation for the partners to reduce the dropout rate and the general educational activities in the country. Firstly, *"you know that we [the ministry] are operating on a thin budget, sometimes um resources."* – Participant 5.

Furthermore, Participant 2, 218:231, described the limitation of funding beyond the Ministry affecting the partners as well: *"Another challenge is that even though we have stakeholders that*

are assisting financially, that assistance is not enough. It's not really in terms of the funding is not enough, because you'll find that we still have shortage of classrooms. Even though there's still funding that is coming in, we still have shortage of classrooms. We still have shortages of infrastructures; we have shortage of table and chairs. When I'm talking about infrastructures, I'm talking about chairs, tables in the classrooms. So, the funding aspect, if the funding could be more, the Ministry would do more. But unfortunately, currently now the funding is not that much. And remember these stakeholders, they're not only assisting the Ministry, but they're also assisting other Ministries. Therefore, the most challenges are the funding in terms of finance and financial means is not that much as well as the support from the parents and the community at large is a bit slacking.”

Other participants talked about limited funding in connection to Covid-19. *“So, within this um hardship, economic hardship [referencing the Covid-19 lockdown], we have reduced funding in from our partnerships. And you have to scale down, you have to reduce the support that you are giving. That's one of the challenges. And some of these partnerships have to be stopped. Because some of the partnerships were dependent on donor funding. And donor funding has dropped. So, some of these partnerships have to be stopped and government have to completely take over. If government was putting 50% and the donor was bringing as a contribution 50%, when that partnership stopped, it's a problem, because even with the government we have limited financial base, that erm we can step in and erm completely fill that gap. That's one of the biggest challenges[s] we have, financial, donors, support going down most especially for a country as per classification and erm our government which is also within a financial difficulty, financial situation, cannot step in and fill that gap. So, at times we have to reduce or completely stop what we're doing in that partnership, just do the critical ones, other ones are left out.”* – Participant 4, 240:251 (Al-Samarrai et al., 2020).

Participant 5, 200:202, summarised the Covid-19 related financial challenges and claimed that *“in most cases, as you know that economics is facing a downturn, to everyone in most of the companies, they are also facing the hardship because a lot of retrenchment they are not really coming for us.”*

4.6.3 Bureaucratic Delays

This second-order theme speaks to bureaucratic bottlenecks faced by ePPP partners in the course of delivering educational values to the Namibian child.

Notably, a significant contributor to the bureaucratic bottlenecks is the limitations faced in the procurement of educational facilities. Participant 6, 536:549 described the situation: *“you know in government there is this um, how do you say a privilege for the education managers or for any manager to have the hire purchase contract for a vehicle or is it a house or what, for every teacher, there should be the privilege of having a hire purchase for a gadget or device for a laptop, for example. You know forever when we try to procure laptops, whether it's for teachers or ourselves or the offices or the resource centres or laboratories, IT laboratories at schools, there are forever struggles and fights and fights about you know, entitlement and procurement and who fights who? And what else because we are a small nation and everybody knows everyone and you know, then it's nepotism, whatever um and so on, you know, and erm this whole issue about whether it is now hmm in a transparent fair process, or whether it is a corrupt process, that that is like a stumbling block for us to move forward, it has been a stumbling block since the days of late Minister Iyambo, who had already the intent to have laptops for every teacher and every secondary learner.”*

In addition, Participant 3, 157:164 related a procurement challenge in relation to Covid-19 which led to *“returning some of the funds, because of the procurement, there's a lot of delays in procuring of devices, equipment. It's also, sometimes, we ordered the things from South Africa. They don't come or the specifications are not right, or procurement didn't meet. The committee didn't meet for weeks, because of COVID, there was no quorum. So, there was just a lot of challenges that we face in that regard. And that made things difficult because our partners, they, especially the UN, they work on strict, um, due dates. And if we don't deliver, we run into problems, but we cannot push procurement. I mean they also have their law limitations. So, it was there that we couldn't meet others up way. And that made it a challenge for us.”*

Another bureaucratic challenge concerned the duplication of work by different individuals, departments, or partners. While describing numerous challenges encountered, specific to the Ministry, Participant 6, 413:429 stated that *‘there are also those challenges that are with duplication in the system. For example, the Ministry has fully staffed programmes and quality assurance, not fully staffed, but anyway, the approved structure is up in the 50s. But the bodies present are just in the 30s. Yeah. So, now, they, erm why do I say an approved structure, we are still conducting the, the direct route is still performing the mandate, even with the lesser staff, which includes, you know, erm, HIV and AIDS response, prevention, health, you know, school house and all of that. And yet, there is a project running in the Ministry called FAWENA that also draws funding, and there is a degree of duplication, you understand, and duplication results.*

I'm not saying in wasting of resources, but it does result in a lot of here and there, operational tension and so on, you understand, yeah. So, if that wasn't there, I think if resources are pooled, perhaps the impact could be better, I'm trying to say that. So, that is where perhaps an organisational review is required to align better certain functions to avoid duplication, but of course, every partner has his own right um his mandate and asks for permission to operate alongside [the ministry], as in schools or communities and so on. And before we would say no, we rather team up, you understand for the benefit of the child. So that that is what always stands in the front, to be there for the Namibian child.”

The final challenge which was also regarded as a bureaucratic control was shared by participant 4: *“We are not able to control all the partnerships that we [have]. Okay, maybe some of the partnerships we have not entered into some agreement with, but we get those institutions that will prefer to go directly to schools to support without us streamlining how that support will be. Yeah. And that becomes a bit challenging.”* Participant 4, 253:256.

4.6.4 Policy Implementation Challenges

In terms of implementing partnership agreements and signed MOUs, interviewees also reported several challenges faced. For example, participant 6 reported activities and programme actions being conducted by the Ministry and other partners, including the UNICEF, in the following words: *“So these are [the] ongoing activities, but sometimes, they are not implemented 100% in all schools, to the best, you know, um comparative to that you wish to see, so that that is what I can say.”* Participant 6, 333:335. This was corroborated by Participant 6’s later words: *“I see that the policy provision is there. But then the implementation the practice of putting it into practice is where it goes wrong.”* 188:189.

Another policy implementation challenge concerns change or review of existing policies. According to Participant 6, 392:411 *“there's this EU, for example, in the last budget support contract with the EU, there was one erm indicator, because it's like result-based funding, you understand? What results based is that the contract is agreed on certain indicators. Now, at the time, when we formulated the indicators, we had erm staff change in the directorate of EMIS, so we were asking for the number or the percentages of qualified teachers. And then the numbers and percentages given to us, and the targets set were aligned. But later on, say the development partner defines the indicator on qualified teachers being a three-year degree. But for us, if you look at the term qualified teacher is even from the previous erm curriculum, the JSC [Junior Secondary School] school graduate and that, you know, having JSC and one year or two year*

makes a teacher qualified to teach, you might be not fully qualified, he might not have a degree but he's qualified he or she is qualified to teach at a particular level. So that then our percentages and the percentages that the EMIS gave afterwards were not coinciding. We had formulated the target initially against the figures that were given by EMIS, which were in the 80s. But then when they really pulled the data, and they put in now the three-year degrees, then the figures dropped to 57% of our teaching force. And then it meant that we were not getting the full donation, the full grant funding budget support, and we lost like millions of euros and Namibian dollars in terms of that, because of ... so they..., there are at times challenges around yes MOUs including interpretation and implementation.”

4.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presents five aggregate dimensions using the ‘Gioia method’ case study analytic framework. The aggregate dimensions are, PPP actors and partnership basis, foundational factors influencing dropout, programme actions on dropout in Namibia, technology solutions and dropout, and challenges of ePPP dropout failures.

Chapter 5. Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

The study's broad aim is to understand the nature of dropout in Namibia amidst the engagement and the failings of PPP for education between the MoEAC and UNICEF to provide solutions. This chapter presents the findings from the previous chapter in context with the reviewed literature explanations and the study's theoretical orientation, stakeholder theory, and management.

5.2 PPP actors and Partnership basis

The first theme presents data findings on PPP actors, the motivation for the actors to engage in the ePPP, and lastly, the way the different engagements between the actors are structured and coordinated, with a focus on the coordination structure of the MoEAC and UNICEF.

The actors' findings are divided into local and non-local actors. The non-local actors are categorised into governments of nations, for example, the Japanese, German, and Oman governments.; foundations such as the Pivot Foundation Inc.; UN organs and agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Food Programme; international and regional organisations such as the European Union, German GIZ; and other bodies such as Friends of Education. The selection of UNICEF as a significant ePPP stakeholder and partner is justified as participants, especially from the MoEAC, described UNICEF in strong terms in relation to its significant involvement in general education issues and specifically, the high dropout rate in Namibia. This is further evidenced in the documents that detail, on the one hand, UNICEF's involvement, and engagement in Namibia and, on the other hand, its interest in dropout (UNICEF, 2016, 2017).

Concerning the local partners, it is significant to note that the leading agency for educational matters and services in Namibia is the MoEAC. The evidence is further described in the Act establishing the ministry. Significantly, the ministry also works with other ministries and government departments and parastatals, such as NAMCOL, National Planning Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water, the Ministry of Gender, institutions of higher learning, the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Disaster Risk Management and Prevention Unit, and the integrated school health taskforce. Notably, NAMCOL is an institution that allows learners that are failing in the formal education sector to repeat subjects, so that they are later re-absorbed into the formal education sector. The institution

also provides adult education (Kavetuna, 2010). Moreover, the institution records learner dropouts, which reached 25.3% and was 6.6% higher than the previous year (Kavetuna, 2010). This activity can be seen as a preventive measure for dropping out of school. In relation to the other government ministries and units mentioned by participants, the findings show that NAMCOL is a partner of the ministry and works in inter-ministerial units on different national projects, i.e., water and sanitation, early childhood development, care and education. It is vital to point out that the projects may be directly or only indirectly related to school learners and the challenge of dropout.

In addition to inter-ministerial government departments working with the Ministry of Education, NGOs and private organisations are significant partners. Usually, the partners undertake projects and support the Ministry to provide educational infrastructures, teachers' training and learning materials. The multi-sectoral key partners of the MoEAC are highlighted in the ministry framework on ensuring safe schools (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2018). Usually, corporate organisations seize the opportunity to partner with the ministry as a way of fulfilling their Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSRs).

Despite noting the plethora of local and non-local partners involved in ePPP in Namibia, the data goes beyond mentioning them to informing the motivations and the reasons for the partners' involvement in the Partnerships. Specifically, data shows the rationale behind UNICEF's involvement in the PPP for education in Namibia.

The first motivation reported in the results chapter is on education development. Partners are involved in the partnership to see to the overall development of education, schooling and learners and capacity building development in the country. This motivation meets the definitions of ePPP according to Baum (2018); LaRocque (2008); Mitra (2020) and Robertson et al. (2012), who mention the involvement of other partners, especially private enterprises, in education funding, school management, etc.

Another significant motivating factor identified from the data is the international and national obligation to leave no Namibian child or learner behind. In essence, the international declaration of education as a fundamental human right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December

1948 (United Nations, 1948; Zandy, 2019) is a key motivator for their involvement. In addition, the highest law of the land, the Namibian constitution, proclaims that every Namibian child has the right to quality education (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2020; Republic of Namibia, 2014).

This is a key reason for the establishment of the MoEAC – to ensure that the international and national right of every Namibian child is achieved (Jellenz et al., 2020). Several international development plans and obligations, to which Namibia is also a signatory, have encouraged this motivation, i.e., the SDGs, Namibian National Development plans, and the country's Vision 2030 (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2004).

Furthermore, findings report that several partners support the education ministry so that it can deliver its constitutional obligation of providing education to every Namibian child. In doing this, the MoEAC is regarded as a core and paramount education service provider; hence, other partners and stakeholders should be available to support the ministry's work and mandate, while also seeing to general education development in the country. The role of private players supporting public departments and governments in the provision of their core services is a major rationale for the introduction and growth of PPP (Afridi, 2017; Robertson et al., 2012). Finally, the last sub-theme reported reflects the way MoEAC and UNICEF work together in Namibia, as significant partners in the ePPP, to provide solutions to the challenge of dropout, and how they coordinate their programmes amidst other key players, programme deliveries, policy designs, implementation, and evaluation.

The MoEAC is the overall body mandated to direct and control education affairs in Namibia. However, in a PPP era, the body encourages international organisations and private enterprises to get involved and participate in ensuring that the fundamental human right of every Namibian learner to education is achieved as enshrined in the constitution (Republic of Namibia, 2014). Hence, the MoEAC usually coordinates the activities of its diverse and multisectoral partners. This method is also reported to prevent project and initiative duplication. Usually, interested partners liaise and meet members of the ministry. Subsequently, joint work plans and where appropriate, a Memorandum of Understanding, are developed by the participating partners. Thereafter, the project is reviewed by the Programme Quality Assurance (PQA) unit of the ministry to monitor implementation progress and control. Furthermore, the ministry works with the regional directorates to implement dropout projects in schools (MoEAC & UNICEF 2018).

Henceforth, decentralised power is adopted in the implementation of programme actions amidst the sharing of feedback and report writing for documentation and control purposes (Khama, 2014). “The concept of decentralization originates from the belief that the state alone cannot control schools but should share its power with other stakeholders, particularly those close to the school” (Niitembu, 2006, p. 24).

The findings also show that the diverse UN agencies in the country, such as the WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, and WFP, coordinate their different projects through the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF). Usually, a United Nations Partnership Agreement is developed amongst the agencies working on different national challenges in conjunction with a member state, for example, the WHO, UNICEF, or WFP, which may be involved, for example, in a school health and nutrition project in Namibia. UNPAF is a dominant framework adopted across member countries and amongst its different agencies as well as other partnership frameworks, as substantiated by Government Republic of Namibia (GRN) and United Nations Namibia (UN Namibia), 2017) (Asian Development Bank, 2017).

5.3 Foundational Factors Influencing Dropout

In thinking about the factors that influence the high dropout rate in Namibia, it is critical to think in a multidimensional manner, as presented by Participant 2: school dropouts do not stand on its own, [it is] because of various factors. One needs to look at the other root causes [before] one can see what one can do, in terms of addressing school dropouts, because it doesn't happen in isolation.” This is supported in the literature (Ananga, 2011; Reddy & Sinha, 2010; Rumberger, 2001). The data presents various gaps in the Namibian education system that influence students to exit school without completing their studies or obtaining the qualification they enrolled for. The fundamental causes reported include community/social causes, disability access, finances, learner-based, and parental factors. The most commonly identified factors in the literature include students and school-related factors (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Cooper et al., 2005).

The first significant factor registered in the category of community/social causes of dropout in Namibia is the walking distance from learners' homes to their schools. Ananga (2011); Reddy and Sinha (2010) refer to these factors as “pushouts” rather than dropouts as they consider them to be structural societal factors. Participants noted that some learners, in conjunction with their parents, found commuting to distant schools problematic, and hence some students delayed,

missed, or exited school. Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) also identify this as a systemic factor related to dropout and share how some grade 1 to 4 students in rural areas walk up to five kilometres to access a school (Jellenz et al., 2020). Another instance described is the way some learners start schooling late, only to find out after their enrolment that they are older than others or over-aged for the class. This results in some students dropping out of school. Another important cause of dropout was identified by participant 4 as ‘culture-specific challenges or cultural factors (Maswahu, 2012). In some communities or social settings, western education is discouraged for children of school-going age. In some instances, the form of social relationships, including economic and work activities, particularly in pastoral social groupings, do not encourage the form of classroom-based learning emphasised by Western educational culture (Nekongo-Nielsen et al. 2015). In other communities, the culture encourages social practices such as early marriages which sacrifice the child’s education in favour of taking on childbearing and -rearing roles (Maswahu, 2012).

The Covid-19 pandemic that brought global health to its knees is another significant contributor to dropout (Kidman et al., 2022; Moscoviz & Evans, 2022). Furthermore, it influenced the failure of the ePPP or at least added another layer to the dropout challenge. Participants cited that the 2020 pandemic affected some learners who did not have the opportunity to continue learning during the closure of face-to-face learning either on e-learning facilities or other media, i.e., radio learning, and did not return to school post Covid-19. In addition, many learners who lost their parents or guardians did not return to school. Research shows that the Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected low-income social groups, adult learners, and females (Kidman et al., 2022; Moscoviz & Evans, 2022). Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) report that there are several learner-headed households in various regions of Namibia and usually the young learners shoulder their own, and sometimes their families' economic responsibilities and do not continue with school. Also, a few parents were hesitant to send their children to school, especially to overcrowded hostels, because of the fear of contracting the virus and getting sick or even losing their lives.

Furthermore, the difficulty of access to schools and schooling facilities such as hostels for PWDs is also a significant cause of dropout amongst PWDs (Mgaiwa & Pontian, 2016). In addition, the teachers and school administrators are unable to identify the particular barriers to learning experienced by PWDs in the same way that it is difficult for them to know how PWDs identify negative experiences in social and environmental relations and the quality of their lives (Shumba & Moodley, 2021). Hence, a student might keep failing or continue to get punished because they

are underperforming, while he or she might have personal problems that inhibit his or her learning but are unidentified by the school structure (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018; Mgaiwa & Pontian 2016). Bamwesigye and Hlavackova (2018) further recognised that the lack of access to special facilities is a significant cause of dropout amongst PWDs.

The high rate of poverty in families and homes is also cited as a basic cause of dropout among learners (Ishola et al., 2017; Mapani, 2011; Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). If parents are unable to fend for their children and provide for their needs, it may result in the children being mocked and bullied by their friends. Subsequently, they may find solace in dropping out of school. Furthermore, many children have had to take on parental roles by assuming economic catering responsibilities, as in the situations of drop-out orphan students (Ishola et al., 2017). Previously, this discussion mentioned the high incidence of learner-headed homes in the country, with evidence from Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015).

It is crucial to note that teenage pregnancy is a significant and the most often cited cause of dropout in Namibia (Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Zulaika et al., 2022). Participants shared that because of limited sexual education of learners, girls frequently fell pregnant, possibly returning to school after giving birth or not returning to school again. Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) corroborate this finding, indicating that around 50% of dropped-out students interviewed exited school because they were pregnant. They added that this issue mainly affects female students. In addition to female pregnancy, other learner-based motivating factors for dropping out are alcohol abuse, truancy, peer pressure, poor academic performance and having to repeat a class (Maswahu, 2012). Mapani (2011) identified that often a male student who abused alcohol and used hard drugs did not concentrate and performed badly with poor success and ended up deciding that 'school is not for them' and leaving school (Balfanz & Legters, 2004).

Peer pressure is another significant reason for dropout (Mapani, 2011; Maswahu, 2012). Generally, students are pressured and lured by their friends to take hard drugs or to believe that 'school is not for them'; perhaps advising them to take 'jobs' outside, and thus they end up dropping out.

The last factor enumerated in the findings of causes for dropout is parental factors. Parental factors usually involve the absence of the support that parents should provide for their learners'

education because of poverty or because the parents do not value education (Mapani, 2011). The support needed by the learners includes supporting their educational needs, such as school clothing/uniforms, shoes, transport, food, and even assisting learners with their academic activities. Usually, homes with low parental education and achievement record higher rates of dropout than the opposite (Mapani, 2011; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). Another significant area where parents fail to support learners' education needs concerns PWD learners. Here, parents cannot fully support the special needs of their children. For example, parents lack the skills to pass information to a deaf learner. The last example cited in the category of parent-related factors is related to social/community factors and involves situations where parents decide that their children need to take on roles of caring for sick family members or taking economic responsibilities such as herding livestock and household duties (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018; Mapani, 2011). Students may end up not completing their education because of these reasons, as they might end up with poor academic performance and ultimately decide to exit school because they are unable to catch up.

5.4 Programme Actions on Dropout in Namibia

It has become clear that there are many causes of dropout. The following discussion considers programmes, actions, projects, and initiatives taken by the ePPP partners to provide solutions to the menace of the Namibian education system – dropout. They can be summarised into learner-based, parent assisted, school structure, social/community engagements, teacher- training and ministerial interventions. Notably, most of the programmes are spearheaded or supervised by UNICEF and MoEAC.

The first form of learner-based action points to the moral and educational support provided by the ministry. Usually, the ministry, in association with regional directorate offices and on the ministry, websites run campaigns for career and technical education and to encourage learners to remain focused and resilient in their school activities. Some of the campaigns focus on sexual and reproductive health. Participants explain how campaigns and integrated life skills' programmes and education are run in schools, including the programme initiated by Project Hub themed 'My Future My Choice', focusing on sexual abstinence and protection (Shigwedha et al., 2017). Furthermore, the ministry has had to promulgate a policy on pregnant learners. Since 2008, pregnant learners have been encouraged and supported to continue learning, only taking required school breaks during delivery. They may immediately return to school after the birth (Ministry of

Education., 2012b, 2012a). On peer pressure and alcohol abuse, learners are supported through campaigns and encouraged to speak to school authorities when they are pressurised. In addition, studies are conducted with the ministry to establish the extent and status of dropouts in the country, record changes and trends, evaluate implemented policies and monitor and provide control where necessary.

The parent-assisted solutions emphasise action taken by the ePPP to encourage parents to become involved in the education of their learners. For instance, parents of PWD students should be able to handle the special needs of their children (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018). In addition, parents should create the opportunity to have sexual and reproductive discussions with their learners. This sub-theme emphasises that parents should work hand-in-hand with learners' teachers to support learners' education.

Concerning the school structure programs and actions, data shows a UNICEF-sponsored program for school board members on social accountability and school governance. Hence, the parents who are board members can extend their knowledge about education improvement to other parents (Khama, 2014; Niitembu, 2006), as intended by the Education Act (GRN 2020). In addition, an anti-bullying campaign has been launched together with Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) and a Physical Education 4 Life (PE4Life) guide (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) & Ministry of Sport Youth and National Service (MoSYNS), 2018b, 2018a; MoEAC & UNICEF 2018). The guide provides the "vision and the guiding principles for building safe and supportive school communities, centred on the wellbeing of learners and educators" (MOEAC & MoS 2018, p. 1). In addition, an interviewee observes that the ministry is in the process of reviewing its students' academic performance and repetition policy so that the system does not over-emphasise failure and class repetitions, which often results in students' dropping out (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). In the school structure programme actions, it is also strongly suggested that schools work together with parents, and there should be synergy between teachers' and schools' activities with regard to learners' education and life training, and their parents (Khama, 2014; Niitembu, 2006).

The next programme action focuses on community engagements. Notably, it was emphasised that the ePPP partners, UNICEF and MoEAC work together with communities for several programme actions. For example, communities are significant stakeholders in the NSSF and creating safe and non-violent schools and communities (MoEAC & UNICEF 2018). Also, to

keep a good partnership between schools and communities, schools are usually kept open all year long and serve as community hubs so that parents can come to discuss general issues affecting the community in schools. In this way, opportunities are created to include challenges learners are facing in the communities and schools, as well as to increase communication between teachers and parents. In addition, and to support the ministry, members of the communities usually provide so-called community or private hostels. These accommodate students whose homes are far away from the school. Sometimes it is necessary to create synergy between parents/community and the schools to raise funds to build the community hostels. As per the GRN (2020), communities are also involved in school governance through membership of the school board (Niitembu, 2006). This research considers this as providing support to ePPP engagements and considers it as a constituent part of the ePPP.

The teacher's training efforts at combating dropout point to three levels of training teachers to support students and prevent learners' dropout. Importantly, UNICEF supports many of the teacher training programme actions (GRN & UN Namibia 2017). Firstly, teachers are trained to support PWDs and to clear the backlog associated with the Covid-19 global pandemic which resulted in academic and physical activities being shut down. Secondly, teachers are trained beyond simply delivering academic activities (MoEAC & MoSYNS 2018b). They are trained in physical and sports education and to increase extra-curricular activities amongst learners, as emphasised by the creation of a PE4Life guide for each grade (MoEAC & MoSYNS 2018b, 2018a). Third and finally, teachers are trained to increase their capacity for digitalisation and e-learning to enrich their teaching and learning activities.

The penultimate second-order theme emphasises the direct ministerial interventions to combat dropout offered by one of the largest ministries in Namibia, MoEAC. There are three different levels of activity. The first points to the general MoEAC activities on dropout. The ministry provides school materials, books, and stationery for learners through various educational programmes and as part of various projects. Concerning the distance of many rural learners' homes from schools (Jellenz et al., 2020), the ministry is concerned with building additional schools and currently has an arrangement called 'mobile schools' to cater for the educational needs of nomads, especially in areas like Kunene (Hailombe, 2011). At the beginning of every session, the ministry, in collaboration with the regional directorates of education, art, and culture, organises community and physical campaigns tagged, 'Come Back to School', to encourage parents and communities to bring learners back to school.

In addition, the ministry provides hostel facilities to students in need. One participant explained that five kilometres is the standard distance between two schools. Consequently, students who are disadvantaged and cannot access any school within the standard distance, as well as students deserving of it based on their specific needs, are usually housed in a government hostel facility. In addition to getting food provisions, they are also offered moral and technical support. The literature consulted notes that additional hostels are drastically required, especially in rural schools (Shikalepo, 2020).

The ministry has also increased its capacity in the creation of an SFP (Khama, 2022) so that learners have the opportunity to eat at school twice daily, during break periods and at lunchtime. Khama (2014) reports that the programme is fraught with challenges and learners tend to be fed at least once a day. The programme started in 2012 to solve the problem of family poverty and to increase the student retention rate. Participants share the sustainability intention of the programme, making the SFP a homegrown feeding programme and further increasing the employment and income generation capacity of communities. Wekesa (2015) maintains that the SFP increases the student retention rate in Kenya.

5.5 Technology Solutions and Dropouts

This separate aggregate dimension briefly discusses how technology and IT systems can be used to improve the student retention rate and control the dropout rate in Namibia. Firstly, participants mentioned the need for a data system that would attach a unique identifier to every learner and create a unique and real-time data system at school levels to monitor student movement, i.e., promotion, school transfer, repetition, school completion/graduation, dropout and admission to higher grades. Despite the optimism and enthusiasm usually shared by policymakers on the possibilities of technology and e-learning to improve student retention rates, connect schools, and share teaching and learning resources (Kays, 2018), participants had reservations about adopting e-learning in Namibia. Notably, there are challenges concerning internet access in some areas of the country and there were doubts about the ability of all teachers to adapt to and to use e-learning technologies optimally. GRN and UN (2017) report having started a programme to strengthen and include other information in the annually published EMIS report. This also represents the challenge of a lack of internet access that contributes to the non-optimum adoption of technology to combat dropout and to collect student data.

5.6 Challenges of ePPP Dropout Failure

Findings indicate that the most significant dropout actors in Namibia, MoEAC and UNICEF, have faced significant challenges that have influenced their ePPP dropout shortcomings and failures when designing and implementing programme actions, projects, and technological solutions to reduce students' dropout. The challenges are stakeholder involvement, limited funding, bureaucratic hold-ups, and policy implementation challenges.

The stakeholders' involvement affects the limited participation of other stakeholders, such as parents and communities, in reducing learners' dropout. MoEAC officials and participants complain that some parents and families and cultures are disinterested in the education of learners (Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015) and do not give the necessary support to the partner's programmes or deal with the causes of learners' dropout at family levels (Maswahu, 2012). In addition, interviewees pointed out that the focus of partners' programme actions was on students and schools and omitted other factors/spaces contributing to learners' dropout. For example, the programme could not provide the required nutrients and energy to support learners while poverty levels in families and the community persist. They therefore encouraged other ePPP partners to work with these stakeholders, for instance, in providing means for income generation at family levels in addition to making other inter-governmental ministries play their role in supporting the Namibian economy, health and agriculture (Khama, 2022). The limited concentration of dropout programmes in families emerged as a significant failing of the ePPP to address dropout. Moreover, it inhibits the impact of other action programs such as the SFP.

Significantly, participants repeatedly mentioned the general funding crisis in the low-income country, Namibia, and the consequent impact on the ministry's budget. Participants lamented the lack of basic educational amenities such as schools (which makes the distance between schools daunting for students to travel), classrooms, stationery, and furniture, to mention a few (Khama, 2014). Participants reflected on the way the global economic lockdown had caused significant strain on partner and donor funding and the consequent withdrawal of some programme actions (Al-Samarrai et al., 2020; World Bank, 2020). Findings show that the economic lockdown also translated to a decrease in the CSR responsibilities of corporates and other profit-making organisations contributing to educational matters.

With regard to bureaucratic delays as a challenge to reducing dropout, participants claimed that there were sometimes bottlenecks in procurements, i.e., gaining access to educational support resources, including allowing teachers to purchase items on hire purchase. Another form of procurement challenge is the reliance on a border country – South Africa - and its border laws to procure educational resources. In the past and later compounded by the Covid-19 lockdown and economic shutdown, a partner working with strict deadlines had to withdraw support and funding from the ministry as a result of delays in procuring educational resources. In addition, a participant referred to duplication in the organisation and provision of programme actions and projects. This is caused by similar projects run by different partners or the preference of some partners to work directly with specific target populations, i.e., schools and learners, to avoid the ‘bureaucracy’ of working in partnership with MoEAC.

The challenges encountered by the partners while administering dropout policies and programme actions also represent a significant cause of ePPP failure. The first challenge in this regard relates to the under-implementation of projects below the desired or design level and gaps between policy and implementation due to several reasons mentioned before, for example, funding and lack of support from stakeholders. Furthermore, reviewing or modifying policies or criteria, for instance, to access funds or qualify participants amid programme implementation was another challenge experienced by the interviewees.

5.7 Synthesis of Findings and Theoretical Contributions

It is important to summarise and show how this study has contributed to knowledge and theory. In that light, it is relevant to present the study findings and the way they intersect with the literature. Hence, the section below.

5.8 Synthesis of Findings with the Literature

In this discussion, we delve into the multi-faceted issue of school dropout in Namibia, exploring the various actors involved, their motivations, coordination structures, and the foundational factors that influence dropout rates. We also examine the contributions to knowledge and program actions aimed at addressing this critical challenge.

Section 1: Understanding the Actors in the Fight Against School Dropout

UNICEF's Significant Role: UNICEF plays a crucial role as a partner with the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC) in addressing dropouts. The partnership's significance is highlighted in various sources (MoEAC & UNICEF, 2016, 2018; UNICEF, 2016).

NAMCOL's Role: NAMCOL, as an inter-government department, contributes to the efforts to combat dropout. Kavetuna's research (2010) sheds light on the involvement of this institution. *Multi-Sectoral Key Partners:* The MoEAC collaborates with numerous multi-sectoral key partners, as emphasized by MoEAC and UNICEF (2018).

Section 2: Motivations Driving Anti-Dropout Actions

Enhancing the Namibian Education System: Motivated by the goal of improving the Namibian education system, the Ministry of Trade & Finance (2012) takes action

International and National Obligations: International and national obligations drive efforts need to be implemented in order to ensure that no Namibian child is left behind (GRN, 2020; Republic of Namibia, 2014; United Nations, 1948).

Supporting the Education Ministry: Supporting the education ministry and its officials is a key motivation, as suggested by Afridi (2017).

Section 3: Actors' Coordination Structures

Decentralization in MoEAC: The MoEAC employs a decentralized coordination structure, a subject explored by Khama (2014) and Niitembu (2006).

UN Partnership Framework: The United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) takes center stage in UNICEF's efforts, as indicated by the Government Republic of Namibia (GRN) & United Nations Namibia (UN Namibia) in 2017.

Section 4: Foundational Factors Influencing Dropout

Multi-Dimensional Approach: Researchers like Ananga (2011), Reddy & Sinha (2010), and Rumberger (2001) highlight the importance of adopting a multi-dimensional approach when considering the causes of dropout.

Various Factors Affecting Dropout: These factors include geographical proximity to schools (Ananga, 2011; Reddy & Sinha, 2010; Rumberger, 2001), culture-specific challenges (Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015), and the impact of external events like the COVID-19 pandemic (Kidman et al., 2022).

Section 5: Contributions to Knowledge and Program Actions

Addressing Parental Concerns During the Pandemic: Parents' hesitance to send their children to overcrowded hostels due to COVID-19 fears is an important finding that contributed to knowledge.

Identifying Learning Barriers for PWDs: The research of Bamwesigye & Hlavackova (2018) emphasizes that schools often struggle to identify learning barriers for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), leading to dropout.

Impact of Poverty: Several studies (Ishola et al., 2017; Mapani, 2011; Maswahu, 2012) underscore the impact of poverty on dropout rates.

Teenage Pregnancy: Research reveals that there is a connection between teenage pregnancy and school dropout rates (Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Zulaika et al., 2022).

Section 6: Program Actions Targeting Dropouts in Namibia

Educational and Health Campaigns: Initiatives, such as educational and sexual and reproductive health campaigns in schools, are discussed (Shigwedha et al., 2017).

Policies and Frameworks: The implementation of a learner pregnancy policy since 2012 (Matshotyana, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2012) and the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) Policy (MoEAC & UNICEF, 2018) is noteworthy.

Involvement of Parents and Communities: Collaboration between parents, teachers, and schools is encouraged (Khama, 2014; Niitembu, 2006), with parents taking on essential roles (Government Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2020; MoEAC & UNICEF, 2018).

Training and Support: It is also evident that there is a need for training programs for school board members (Khama, 2014; Niitembu, 2006), teachers (GRN & UN Namibia, 2017), and the

introduction of Physical Education 4 Life (PE4Life) guide (MoEAC & Ministry of Sport Youth and National Service, 2018) to be implemented.

Alternative Approaches: As an initiative to curb school dropout rates, 'Mobile schools' catering to areas without schools (Hailombe, 2011) and School Feeding Programs (SFP) to reduce dropout rates (Khama, 2022; Wekesa, 2015) are outlined.

Section 7: Technology Solutions and Dropout Challenges

Limitations of E-Learning: According to contributing knowledge, several limitations hinder the adoption of e-learning technologies in Namibia.

Section 8: Challenges in ePPP Dropout Failures

Insufficient Parental Support: Parents' lack of support is observed to play a significant role in the dropout rates (Maswahu, 2012; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015).

Impact on Other Stakeholders: According to contributing knowledge, ePPP dropout programs sometimes have a limited impact on other stakeholders, including parents and communities.

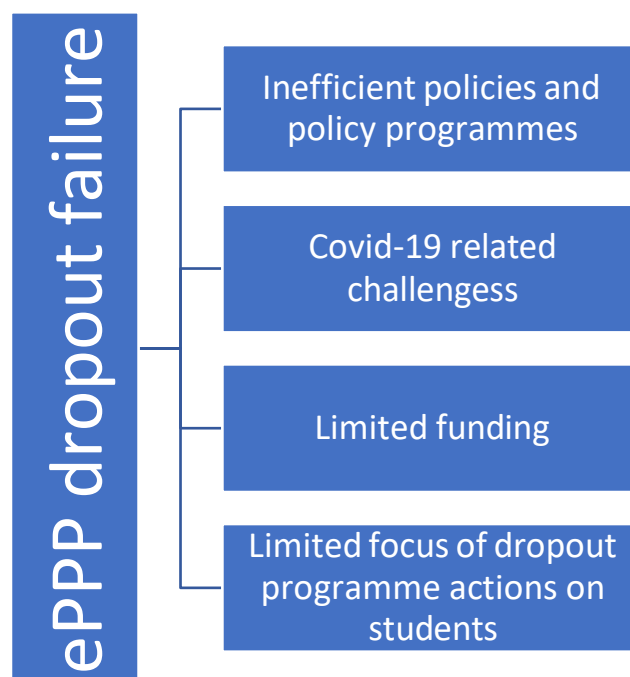
Funding Challenges: Limited funding for educational amenities in schools and the strain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Al-Samarrai et al., 2020; World Bank, 2020) are also findings.

Source: Researcher's construction

Section 5.1 summarises study findings together with literature reports. This summary makes it easier to comprehend the study's effort in contributing to knowledge. In essence, there are several Covid-19-related influences on dropout in Namibia that have not been reported in the literature and are contributors to the MoEAC and UNICEF's ePPP failure. For example, the global health pandemic resulted in an increase in teenage pregnancies, delay in sending children to the hostels, and procurement delays from South Africa as a result of COVID-19 rules and restrictions. Similarly, the study reports an under-implementation of dropout programme actions, with the policy design level below.

The theoretical diagrammatic framework below shows the significant factors contributing to the ePPP dropout failure.

Figure 5.1: Theoretical Framework - ePPP Challenges and Dropout Failure



Source: Researcher's construction

From the foregoing, the inductive process has developed the schema showing the most significant challenges contributing to the inability of the ePPP to address dropout in Namibia. Foremost, the study recognises that there are various foundational reasons for the ePPP and the ePPP approach was seen as an adequate way of confronting the causes of dropout and of being a mechanism to provide action programmes to address causes of dropout. However, the ePPP partnership between the MoEAC and UNICEF faces other challenges that limit the impact of its programme action and lead to its ultimate failure to address the Namibian dropout situation. The theoretical framework shows inefficient policies and policy programmes as a significant challenge. For example, data shows that the pregnancy policy has been implemented since 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2012b, 2012a); however, the data also shows that the effectiveness of the policy cannot be verified as several participants and literature sources recount teenage pregnancies as one of the foundational causes of dropout (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). Similarly, data shows that several programme policies have not been implemented to policy design level or there are several cracks and gaps between policy design and implementation.

There are also several challenges related to the coronavirus. This study argues that the global health challenge has added another layer of complexity to the dropout menace in Namibia. Firstly, data shows that teenage pregnancies increased during the coronavirus lockdown, as seen

in Kenya (Zulaika et al., 2022). Moreover, learners experienced delays in being sent to the already overcrowded government and community hostels by their parents, due to the fears and social relations of the pandemic, i.e., physical isolation. Furthermore, learners who lost parents because of the virus were largely reported not to have returned to school (Kidman et al., 2022). Lastly, the lockdown resulted in delays on procurement across international borders. The Covid-19 pandemic was also influential on the next factor, i.e., limited funding, which is also an independent and mediating factor that limited the ePPP capacity to curb dropout. The Covid-19 and consequent economic lockdown meant the reduction or withdrawal of funding from several donor partners. Similarly, the MoEAC participants reiterate the funding challenges within the ministry, which was conveyed by participant 6 in saying that the Ministry operates “on a thin budget”. The challenge is also evident in the long distances between schools and shortage of educational infrastructure, including schools (Ananga, 2011; Khama, 2014; Reddy & Sinha, 2010).

Lastly, the data shows that focusing dropout action programmes mainly on students has hindered the ePPP capacity to curb dropout in view of the influence of other stakeholders, i.e., communities, parents, etc. For instance, a participant maintained that the ePPP SFP program was a good initiative to retain learners in schools. However, if other stakeholder influences that contribute to dropout, such as food insecurity, family poverty, learner-headed homes and culture-specific challenges are not controlled beyond the specific learner action programme, the ePPP dropout solutions might continue to face fundamental challenges that contribute to ePPP dropout failure.

5.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter discusses the findings in relation to the literature. Policy documents are cited to back up the several government projects and programme actions to curb dropout, i.e., teenage pregnancy policy, NSSF and SFP. Furthermore, findings indicate that, despite the many actions to curb dropout, the dropout education pandemic persists in Namibia amidst challenges that include policy implementation, the disinterestedness of other key stakeholders, limited funding, and bureaucratic hold-ups. The chapter also illustrates a synthesis of the findings with the literature and presents a theoretical framework construction that shows the ePPP challenges and dropout failures.

Chapter 6. Conclusion and Future Directions

6.1 Introduction

The study is concluded in this final chapter. In addition, recommendations are made, the study limitations are identified, and suggestions are made for further research in the study area.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The study's problem statement and motivation for conducting the study are justified as the data shows that dropping out is a significant educational menace in Namibia. MoEAC is a consequential government body charged with delivering educational services and providing supervision to other stakeholders in education; it has embraced PPP in delivering these services (Ministry of Trade & Finance, 2012). As a result, UNICEF is a MoEAC partner that seriously undertakes curbing dropouts. Other partners can be categorised into local and non-local ePPP partners. Non-local partners include governments of nations, international and regional foundations and organisations and UN organs and agencies. Among the local partners are other Namibian government ministries and special departments, such as NAMCOL and independent NGOs. The partners work together with the ministry to uplift the country's education system, to build capacity, and to support MoEAC officials for better service delivery. Consequently, they have a keen interest in the Namibian child, and they desire to leave no child behind in the universal declaration of education as a fundamental human right (United Nations, 1948). The findings also show that the MoEAC coordinates its multisectoral partners, including its regional directorates and schools, in a decentralised fashion (Khama, 2014). The UNICEF programmes are usually guided through the UNPAF, signed between the Namibian central government and the numerous UN agencies (GRN & UN Namibia 2017). Consequently, UNICEF streamlines its work according to the objectives and targets specified in the UNPAF.

Dropout in Namibia is influenced by many factors which include community factors, the distance from schools, late school enrolment and cultural-specific challenges, including child marriages (Maswahu, 2012). COVID-19 is another factor impacting dropout through specific causes like an increase in teenage pregnancies during the pandemic lockdown, and the fear of returning to schools and hostels associated with a fear of contracting the virus. Limited access for PWD students and a lack of support and identification of their special needs also contributes to dropout amongst the PWD population. The high poverty rate within families and associated learner-headed homes are further cited as a cause of dropout (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015).

Teenage pregnancy is the most commonly mentioned cause of dropout and is summarised under the heading Learner-based Factors. Among other reasons for dropout are peer pressure and alcohol abuse, repeated academic failures and class repetitions. The final factors related to dropout are summarised in the section Parent-based Causes of Dropout. These factors include family poverty, limited support from parents, little appreciation of the value of education and impeding students' academic progress with conflicting familial roles (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018; Mapani, 2011).

To curb dropout, the MoEAC leads activities to support learners' moral and technical education and runs campaigns on physical education and reproductive health issues in conjunction with its regional offices. In addition, parents are encouraged during educational and school programmes and conferences to provide supplementary support of students' education. This includes chatting with them about sexual health issues. The school structure solution emphasises increased partnerships with the parents, communities, and schools, through school board members' governance and accountability (Khama, 2014). UNICEF has sponsored training to achieve these objectives, as specified in the education act (GRN 2020). Schools are also reworked to act as havens and safe spaces for learners.

Furthermore, other programme actions centre on social engagement, for example by keeping schools open all year long for communal activities, the provision of community hostels to support schools and to accommodate learners who live far from the schools, and “allowing the reasonable use of the school facilities for community purposes” (Khama, 2014, p. 51). Teachers are also supported with physical and sporting activities, PWD learning support, and e-learning and educational digitalisation activities. Finally, ministerial interventions emphasise direct activities organised by the ministry to curb dropout, such as the provision of school and learner educational materials and support of nomad education through the mobile school arrangement (Hailombe, 2011). In the same vein, the ministry provides government hostels and an SFP to stimulate learners' learning capacity.

Part of the technological solutions stated by the participants include plans to create and strengthen an IT-based data system that has a unique identifier for every student and provides real-time data to record students' movement across school(s), including school transfers. However, some limitations associated with the technological solutions, such as limited internet access in some areas and upgrading teacher skills to match e-learning solutions and systems, were noted.

Four challenges are presented in the last theme. Despite the efforts taken by the ePPP partners to curb learner dropout, participants showed that some educational stakeholders, such as parents and communities, were not supportive. The current study reports that some parents make learners take adult caring and economic roles (Bamwesigye & Hlavackova, 2018; Mapani, 2011) as some parents of some social classes and social groupings do not appreciate the value of classroom education (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). This shows a limitation in the ability of the PPP for education to achieve its objective to control dropout according to the stakeholder concept and management theory (Flak et al., 2008). Limited funding is another significant challenge faced by the ePPP. There is evidence of this in limited educational infrastructure and curtailed finances and donors associated with the Covid-19 economic shutdown. Bureaucratic hold-ups are also a significant challenge. Examples include procurement challenges, including delays in procurement of educational equipment such as laptops from international countries as well as duplication of some educational services or activities. The policy implementation challenges emphasise implementation below the policy or design level and the need to review programme criteria or design during implementation.

6.3 Conclusion

Learner dropout has a long association in the entire sub-Saharan sub-continent, including Namibia (Sabates et al., 2010). Moreover, the involvement of local and international partners with an ePPP engagement has been unable to curb the dropout. Some of the dominant specific causes of dropout are teenage pregnancies, distance from schools, Covid-19 and PWD-associated factors, and the high rate of poverty of many Namibian families.

Some of the popular actions and solutions undertaken to curb dropout include the SFP, mobile school arrangement, extra-curricular activities, i.e., PE4Life, and ensuring a safe school environment, i.e., the NSSF. Part of the recommended solutions centre on creating a real-time data system to monitor each student and his or her entire studentship cycle and progress across different schools including higher institutions. However, the study observes that some of the older solutions have not yet borne the expected fruits. For example, despite the evidence that teenage pregnancy is a significant cause of dropout, the old and 2012 learners' pregnancy policy (Ministry of Education., 2012b, 2012a) repeated the citation of the factor as a cause of dropout. Some of the associated ePPP challenges in curbing dropout include limited funding available to use for the MoEAC and reduced funding from donors associated with Covid-19, procurement challenges and delays, and implementation of underperforming programmes. Similarly, the theoretical orientation of the stakeholder concept and stakeholder management theory shows that

the ePPP partners have additional work to do concerning the active participation of other educational stakeholders such as parents, communities, and NGOs in general educational affairs and, specifically, controlling dropouts. Flak et al., (2008) explain that an organisation's productivity and goal achievement is determined by the extent of its stakeholder management. Other theoretical contributions to the study of the ePPP challenges contributing to the dropout programme actions' failure are mainly associated with Covid-19. These include an increase in teenage pregnancies, inefficient policies and policy programmes, and limited funding. (See Figure 5.1).

6.4 Recommendations

The in-depth insights obtained from the data and the literature reviewed indicate that the following should be put in place:

There is a need for special programmes and campaigns to be initiated and implemented in order to combat teenage pregnancies amongst learners. Specifically, an evaluation of the learners' pregnancy policy, or at least a review of it, must be conducted. However, while the physical and social effects of COVID-19 might have reduced in Namibian society, it is critical that the ePPP pay attention to the way it impacted the educational sector and, specifically, to the long-term Covid-19 effect on dropout. It has also been observed that dropout programmes should also be targeted at other stakeholders and not just learners. The ePPP should create programme actions to intensely involve parents and communities in various dropout and educational solutions. This also means creating community empowerment programmes to reduce poverty in families. Similarly, campaigns in joint partnership with communities must be organised to combat culture-specific causes of dropout.

Furthermore, real-time data system to monitor the learner life cycles and educational history should be created. In addition, the data system needs to have the capacity to be shared by the multisectoral partners and stakeholders involved in education.

Current programme actions combating learners' early exit from school, such as NSSF, PE4Life and mobile schools should be reviewed, and their level of implementation assessed and remodelled to meet policy design expectations. In addition, there is a critical need for additional funding for general educational services in the country. Furthermore, additional funding must be directed towards programmes preventing learners' dropout from schools.

Special programmes and resources targeting PWDs and including identification of their disabilities and needs should also be provided.

6.5 Study Limitations and Future Directions

The number of participants recruited for the study using a qualitative paradigm did not allow for generalisation. However, the affirmation of the qualitative research criteria, i.e., credibility, confirmability, and transferability mean the study can be reflectively and selectively adopted in other situations vis-à-vis deep reflections and supported with the conducting of situational short surveys.

Consequently, this study recommends that similar studies consider a multistakeholder involvement in the PPP for education in Namibia, i.e., education partners beyond the MoEAC and UNICEF.

Furthermore, a study that involves other stakeholders such as teachers, school administrators and students either concurrently or individually is encouraged. Such a study would provide credence and confirmation of data collected from educational policy officials, limited to the MoEAC and UNICEF.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Ethics Form



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21 06 2021

Monica Elise Hella Ilonga
Graduate School of Business
University of Cape Town
REF: REC 2021/06/005

EDUCATION PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (ePPP) IN NAMIBIA: THE CHALLENGE OF HIGH DROP RATES

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid until 30-Jun-2022.

Your clearance may be renewed upon application.

Please be aware that you need to notify the Ethics Committee immediately should any aspect of your study regarding the engagement with participants as approved in this application, change. This may include aspects such as changes to the research design, questionnaires, or choice of participants.

The ongoing ethical conduct throughout the duration of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

We wish you well for your research.

Signed by candidate

2021.06.21
15:13:11 +02'00'

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"Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

Appendix B. Interview Consent Form

Graduate School of Business (GSB), University of Cape Town, South Africa

Education Public-Private Partnership (ePPP) In Namibia: The Challenge of High Dropout Rates

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I am confident that this research is for academic and research purposes only.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that my identity in this study will be kept anonymous
- I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the research report.
- I understand that I can request and be sent a copy of my interview recording or transcript (when available).
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Research participant

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

Appendix C. Qualitative Interview Instrument

Interview Guide on Education Public-Private Partnership (ePPP) In Namibia: The Challenge of High Dropout

Section A: Introduction:

- Welcome the participant and ask about their day
- Introduce yourself and ask if they would like to introduce themselves as well
- Request permission to record and transcribe the interview
- If the participant had requested a copy of the instrument before the interview, inform him or her you may ask follow-up and probing questions
- Remind them the interview would not go beyond one hour
- Ask them if they had gone through the informed consent and confirm that they want to continue to participate in the study

Section B: Socio-demographic Questions

1. Organisation
2. Department in organisation
3. Position/Role
4. Years of experience in the organisation (1)
5. Have you worked in other organisations/countries? Number of years?

Section C: Core Questions

1. What is the current structure of ePPP in Namibia?
 - History (brief) and motivation of PPP in education
 - Who are the actors (old and new) involved in the ePPP? Generally, what do they do?
 - Probe on current 'lead' and 'subordinate' actors?
 - Roles of the actors?
 - Briefly probe on past PPP projects on education
2. How is the multistakeholder education partnership coordinated?
 - Probe on major and minor funders
 - Who usually sets the agenda? Who is more influential and why?
3. What do you think are the parties' underlying interests in the partnership?
 - Probe on manifest and latent interests
4. Generally, what do you know about 'dropping out of school' in Namibia?
 - Probe on the extent to which the interviewee regards it as a 'problem', do they know any official dropout figure?
 - What are the causes of dropout? Probe on structural causes (resource allocation,

- dedicated infrastructure, socio-economics reasons, and technical manpower)
- Probe on how reliable EMIS is for capturing dropout rates & their significance
 - Probe if they are aware of social factors (family and student-related) factors.
5. What is the partnership doing about the high dropout rate in Namibia?
 - Probe interviewee based on their response on the many causes above
 - What are the specific roles of your organisation in the partnership?
 - Briefly probe on personal duties
 6. What can you say about the effectiveness of the ePPP in combating school dropout?
 7. What are the challenges faced in the partnership engagements on dropout rate?
 - Probe on structural, social, family-related and student challenges
 8. What advice can you give the partners engaged in ePPP in Namibia?
 - Probe on whether the ePPP is not doing something right
 - Probe on reviewing the relationship between partners in the ePPP
 - Probe on whether more partners are needed? What type of partners and their roles?

Section D: Conclusion:

- Inform them the interview has come to an end and ask them if they would like to ask any question
- Inform them you might contact them again if you need to clarify or further understand any part of their response.
- Express appreciation for their time and valuable contributions