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REDUCING SCHOOLING DROP-OUT RATE TO FACILITATE HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

N.S. Modiba* 

ABSTRACT

This article interrogates the destructive nature of the secondary school learner drop-out to the facilitation of human capital development in the 21st century. The article is conceptual and empirical in nature within the qualitative research paradigm. The question guiding this article is: how can learner drop-out in secondary schools be contained to enable the facilitation of the human capital development? Narrative enquiry and interviewing techniques were applied to generate data. Out of a population of 13 public secondary schools in Sekhukhune East District, in Limpopo Province, South Africa, six were conveniently sampled. In each of the six sampled secondary school, a principal and chairperson of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) became research participants. Findings revealed that firstly, there is a connection between learner drop-out and human capital development. Secondly, poor academic learner performance triggers drop-out. Thirdly, drop-out offers a tragic tale for South African youth. Fourthly, poor scholastic assessment test scores trigger drop-out. Lastly, lack of improvement of literary abilities trigger drop-out. The researcher recommends for the zero-rated digital platforms to teaching and learning to contribute to containing drop-out. Lastly, the researcher recommends for the cultivation of the culture of continuous learning and skills development. Finally, the researcher recommends for the declaration of secondary schools as national key points to enable them to service development and an economy of their communities and the country.

Keywords: Development, Digital platforms, Drop-out, Poor performance, Skills Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Anywhere in the world, learner drop-out has to be frowned upon. It leads to the waste of human resource development. Some of the school leavers could have been developed as human capital to subsequently contribute to the advancement of themselves, their economy and society. Sithole (2022)

reasons that schools need not be in a state of paralysis induced by myriad factors. This is when schools do not contribute to the development of their community and its economy owing to the experienced massive learner drop-out. That renders a school less impactful on an area of the development of human capital. There is a connection between a school, the development of its community and its economy and where learner drop-out occurs such a connection is being disrupted¹. Quality schooling which is free from learner drop-out, has a potential of developing its community and its economy². Furthermore, quality schooling could contribute to the eradication of the treble challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty, especially in the continent of Africa. In the interest of facilitating human capital development from pupils, one pupil dropping out is one learner too many³. Appropriate and relevant interventions are required where a school exists, yet it struggles to contain learner drop-out⁴. A rural and under-developed province such as Limpopo can ill-afford learner drop-out in its secondary schooling, considering that every learner at school deserves to be nurtured to have that learner becoming an asset to the province and country. Maloka submits that the logic of insanity that appears to have taken over in this world is exactly what a quality schooling intended to contribute to the development of its community and its economy, has to resist and shun away⁵. In the 21st century, no pupil has to be permitted a space of becoming a school leaver. This can be prevented when quality schooling ascertains that every learner at secondary school is taken good care of for the sake of that learner's human capital development⁶. Secondary schooling needs do not equivocate when coming to its fair share as regards the development of its community and its economy through retaining all learners entrusted to it for scholastic upbringing⁷. Gold emphasises that good governance remains a stressbuster for all the organisational incumbents. This suggests that with a sound

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¹ L Sithole, 'Thinking out of the box crucial' (Sunday World, 4 December 2022).

² D Leshoro, 'Localisation policy is nonsensical as manufacturing sector falters'. City Press, (Johannesburg, 26 June 2022).

³ Ibid.

⁴ L.A. Moses, 'Teachers can stimulate imagination for social change' (Sowetan, 9 October 2023).

⁵ D Maloka (2023). Colonialism has snatched our soul and it shows in Qatar' (Sunday World, 9 December 2022).

⁶ ibid

⁷ S. Gold, 'Places to Recover Your Soul' (Mail and Guardian, Johannesburg, 31 March 2016).

governance in place in a quality schooling, not a single pupil could contemplate leaving a school⁸. The governance under discussion in this article, is discussed by Sebola as the creation of structures and order which cannot be externally imposed, which result from interaction between a multiplicity of governing nodes which influence each other in the creation of a certain order or behaviour for every secondary school learner to enjoy schooling⁹.

Clarke and Msila articulate that lack of improvement of literary abilities by secondary school learners could trigger drop-out mentality^{10 11}. As an attempt to retain every registered pupil at secondary school, perpetually struggling pupils deserve a strong remedial classes so that they continue to experience the value of schooling. Failure by secondary schools to pay adequate attention to less gifted learners, could encourage them to contemplate school quitting. This will be unfortunate due to inhibiting a secondary school from facilitating human capital development with every learner entrusted to a school^{12 13 14}. Khoza, and Masina narrate that where there is a healthy and responsive remedial classes especially for potentially vulnerable learners whose school quitting rate is very high. Creating an inspiring learning space for such pupils could hinder them from dropping-out. The delivery of quality schooling to all learners and better management of consistent poor academic performance of secondary school learners, require special attention if learner drop-out has to be curbed and combatted^{15 16}. Prioritizing the containment of secondary school learner drop-out is necessary in an environment and culture where dropping-out has become a new norm for some secondary

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ M.P. Sebola, (ed.) *Local Government Administration in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Some Critical Perspectives* (Batalea Publishers, 2015).

¹⁰ A Clarke, *The Handbook of School Governors* (Kate McCallum, 2009).

¹¹ V. Msila, 'Don't waste this crisis'. *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg, 31 March 2016)

¹² W. Fox, *A Guide to Public Ethics* (UCT Press, 2010).

¹³ K. I. Theletsane, 'Drawbacks in South Africa's pursuit of democratic rule and good governance' (2014) *Journal of Public Administration*, 49 (3): 836-846.

¹⁴ H Moyo, 'Greed, Corruption leads to poverty among Zim's pensioners'. *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg, 7 August 2015).

¹⁵ G. Khoza 'Courage will right the wrongs. (*Mail and Guardian*, Johannesburg, 26 June 2015)

¹⁶ L. Masina, 'Corrupt police shake down Malawi' (*Mail and Guardian*, Johannesburg, 8 May 2015).

schools¹⁷. Motsepe and Leshoro stress that no educational institution has to write itself off as regards having a share to the uplifting of its own community and its economy banking on the quality graduates which a secondary school produces^{18 19 20}. This is possible when the ever lurking challenge of learner drop-out is put under surveillance and control. Briefly, it is possible for a secondary school to experience no learner drop-out. This is being confirmed by the statement of the problem of the manuscript which centres around curbing the destructive nature of learner drop-out to the facilitation of human capital development of learners for their communities and their economies (Hofstee & Jakes). The research questions addressed in the article do as well strengthen the statement of the problem. Those research questions are as follows: how can learner drop-out in secondary schools be contained to enable the facilitation of the human capital development? What are the covert or hidden factors particularly in public secondary schools that persist to trigger premature school leaving by myriad pupils to the detriment of those learners' communities and economy? Broad as they are, the above questions can be broken down into the following sub-questions: (i) How is learner drop-out understood in the secondary schooling?; (ii) Why are conditions that trigger learner drop-out not disrupted?; (iii) Can human capital development of learners that benefits the community and its economy happen outside the schooling?; and (iv) What decisive intervention mechanisms are necessary to obstruct the occurrence of learner drop-out in public secondary schools?

Evidently, this article comprises five sections, namely, introduction, literature review, discussions of the gaps, recommendation and conclusion. This introduction sketches the background of the article, as well as the statement of the problem. The next section analyse existing literature on human capital development to provide analytical foundation for the rest of the article. The third section centres around the elaboration of barriers to human capital development. The fourth section offers recommendations on what could be done to overcome barriers to human capital development. The last section is the concluding section.

¹⁷ G. Yukl, *Leadership in Organisations* (University of Albany, 2006).

¹⁸ P Motsepe, 'What the continent needs to prosper' (Mail and Guardian, Johannesburg, 5 June 2015)..

¹⁹ Leshoro, (n.2).

²⁰ A. Shejvali, 'Ask the Africans betrayed by their leaders about the ICC' (Mail and Guardian, Johannesburg, 26 June 2015)..

2. THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lee has a point in stressing that decisive intervention is imperative in containing secondary school learner drop-out. Reality on the ground proves that premature school leavers become a dangerous high risk in any society in the form of turning into gangsters that ultimately terrorise everyone in a community²¹. Drop-out learners become a liability instead of being an asset to the community. In the first place, such learners inhibit the facilitation of the human capital development by prematurely exiting schooling having not acquired vital skills requisite for the advancement of their communities and economy. The review of literature highlights that today's secondary school learners are easily bored by schooling such that at all times efforts have to be made to keep them attracted to teaching and learning to avert them from dropping a school. This signifies that all incumbents involved in the enterprise of schooling need always to be mindful of the susceptibility of secondary school learners in their midst towards dropping a school^{22 23}As long as there is unbreakable connectivity between schooling and the development of communities and their economy through human capital development in the form of investing on learners, then all human resources involved need to be handled with circumspect to keep their morale up. Moses stresses that perennial under-performance by learners in the form of getting poor scholastic assessment test scores, could trigger school leaving²⁴. The review of literature attests that as long as secondary school learners get an impression that they are being valued when at school, they are not likely to disappoint in the form of obstructing their human capital development. However, messing up with them could be a start of the deterioration of schooling, especially in terms of stopping to contribute to the development of their communities and its economy through snubbing schooling Lee asserts that with the current secondary school learners ever in high glee, the danger of drop-out disappears²⁵. This implies that learner drop-out is not as intricate

²¹ N. Lee, 'Consistent discipline vital for teaching pupils respect' (Sowetan, Johannesburg, 23 February 2024).

²² Sithole (n.1).

²³ T. Zwane, 'Let's all crush white supremacy'. Sowetan, (Johannesburg, 17 October 2022)..

²⁴ L.A Moses, 'Make reading, writing accessible via digital platforms' Sowetan (Johannesburg, 9 February 2024).

²⁵ Lee (n.21)

as discussed as long as every secondary school operates in a healthy and stimulating learning climate where no single pupil faces teaching and learning boredom when at school. The prevalence of a school in a community has to be a marvel and a celebration for that community and its economy, considering its mandate of amongst others contributing to the human capital development of every pupil entrusted to that school. That is why Leshoro maintains that schooling could assist in getting labour to be more productive through improving training and education to learners under its tutelage²⁶. Where schooling capacitates its graduates with the necessary skills and competencies, those graduates could excel in the labour market. Secondary schooling is awaited to contribute to the growing of an economy. That could happen in many ways one of which is making an immense contribution to curbing and combating learner drop-out from the population of learners attached to a school²⁷

Schooling has to push for a philosophy of developmentalism from a country's pupils for the advancement of economy and society. This adds to the point that in a South African context where there was Covid-19 pandemic and the 2021 Kwazulu-Natal Province and Gauteng Province's mass looting, any economic recovery plan aiming to restore economic order and stability, requires the influence of schooling through human capital development of pupils ²⁸Literature review reiterates that for schools to service their communities and their economies adequately, they need to prioritise the containing of massive learner drop-out. On this issue of how learner drop-out obstructs the facilitation of human capital development on the part of secondary school pupils, Jakes submits that non-school leavers walk into the building in kindergarten already knowing how to "do" schooling²⁹. This signifies that pupils who drop-out of school find a school an unfamiliar territory to them. In the first place, for such learners a school space is uncomfortable. This is demonstrable by their failure to understand the expectations of a school as well as the social norms guiding operations in schools. On the basis of that, such pupils reject a school and validate a self-fulfilling prophecy of schools not being user-friendly for learners who are not from well to do families. Actually, lack of insider knowledge on how

²⁶ Leshoro (n.2)

²⁷ Moses (n.24)

²⁸ A. Bell, We must dream by far and wide to make SA the kind of a country we want (Sowetan, 1 October 2022).

²⁹ T D Jakes, *Disruptive thinking; A daring strategy to change how we live, lead and love* (Hatchette Book Group, Inc. 2023).

schools operate, puts potential quitters under an immense pressure to drop-out sooner rather than later.³⁰

The review of literature further reveals that of the available theories, the one relevant in this article is the Critical Theory. Its choice rests on the relevance the researcher finds in it in terms of sufficiently illuminating the contribution of schooling to the facilitation of the human capital development of secondary school learners to the benefit of their communities and its economy. The Critical Theory helped the researcher to make meaning from the whole notion of community and economic development from the point of view of utilising schooling for the human capital development of pupils. Briefly, one of the principles of the Critical Theory is that very often truth serves the status quo. The other principle relates to the question of “why is it that certain groups of people are so privileged in life than others”? These fundamental principles of this theory were helpful in clarifying why learner drop-out is frequently commonly found from the working-class learners than from the middle and upper-class families. This is better captured by Jakes when accentuating that likely school quitters find the schooling space uncomfortable for them due to coming to school without the inside knowledge³¹. Working class pupils are in most cases likely school leavers due to schooling terrain being ever strange and scary to them³². Failure by the society to sufficiently prepare working class learners for the schooling expectations, makes it difficult for a school to contribute sufficiently to the human capital development of such pupils so that they in turn develop their communities and its economy. The selection of the Critical Theory in this article is informed by its encouragement of reflective and analytical thoughts as regards occurrence of learner drop-out which has already stated is associated more with working class pupils than with their middle and upper class counterparts. A school is expected to serve as a leveller or equality provider within a community and its economy through the facilitation of the human capital development on the part of learners entrusted to a school. The Critical Theory is better placed to respond to issues of development of the community and its economy by means of the facilitation of the human capital development of learners³³

³⁰ Moses (n.24).

³¹ Jakes (n.29).

³² Motsepe (n.18).

³³ Moyo (n.14).

In this article, the Critical Theory reveals that inequality in schooling in the form of school leaving being associated more with the working class pupils than with their counterparts, could be entrenched if community members do not stand up for their own trampled upon rights such as the absence of a healthy schooling space for all the diverse categories of pupils congregating at school for education to benefit the development of their communities and their economies. On that note, the Critical Theory serves as a basis for approaching, understanding and interpreting the whole issue of community development and its economy being traceable to the contribution of its schooling that facilitates the human capital development on the part of pupils. Higgs and Smith advise that knowledge and how truth is understood, including scientific truth, moral truth and historical truth should not be separated from everyday life experiences³⁴. This implies that comprehending the trend on how decent and responsive schooling contributes to the development of communities and their economies by investing on learners, is very imperative. The Critical Theory assists in arriving at the root cause of learner drop-out which disables myriad schools from developing their communities and their economies as required by means of the facilitation of the human capital development of pupils at schools³⁵The other relevance of the Critical Theory for this article is its emphasis of schooling ethics where one learner dropping –out is one pupil too many.

The Critical Theory has a potential of uncovering whether the challenge of inability to create comfortable schooling space for every pupil at secondary school, is a deliberate or unintentional exercise. The credibility of Critical Theory as regards the worrying effects of learner drop-out which prevents some secondary schools from servicing their communities and their economies as required, is not in doubt. Critical Theory stands out in advising against separating “real life testing” from scientific theories.³⁶ The problem examined in this article centres around curbing the destructive nature of learner drop-out, so as to facilitate human capital development of learners for their communities and their economy. The Critical Theory advocates for critical reflection on the society which includes schooling, in order to discover the hidden assumptions that maintain the existing power relationships that keep some societal members perpetually under-developed

³⁴ P. Higgs & S. Smith, *Rethinking truth* (Cape Town, Juta, 2010).

³⁵ E. J Van Niekerk & P. Van Niekerk, ‘Managing change in education through a model of long-term leadership and short term leadership (2009) 8(1) *Journal of Educational Studies*, 1- 21.

³⁶ J Allen, *As a Man Thinketh* (Dover Publishers, 2014).

though in a different form and guise³⁷ This is inclusive of the working-class pupils as schooling conditions are ever unfavourable for them until they drop-out of school. The Critical Theory teaches that schooling requires to be liberated from failing to service both working class learners and their counterparts equitably in terms of the human capital development for the benefit of their communities and their economies^{38 39}

This is a qualitative article and its design is a case study. The problem which this article pursued, centred around curbing the destructive nature of learner drop-out to the facilitation of human capital development of learners for their communities and their economies^{40 41}The choice of the qualitative research methodology flows from the Critical Theory analysis made in the article. The study finds a need to create a synergy between the Critical Theory as the theoretical perspective undergirding the article, as well as the qualitative approach as the overarching research methodology⁴² The combination of the two helped immensely in terms of illuminating issues of educational institutions having to develop their communities and their economies utilising the facilitation of the human capital development of secondary school learners⁴³ With the Critical Theory underpinning the article, the researcher utilised it, to interrogate how stakeholders in schooling comprehend the role of their secondary schools to the development of their communities and its economy by means of the human capital development model or strategy. The theory was also applied to determine the common reaction by secondary schools as regards curbing and combatting learner drop-out as plaguing secondary schools. Coupling the qualitative research approach and the Critical Theory enabled the researcher to make an in-depth understanding of how despite many years since colonialism and apartheid schooling have formally ceased to exist in South Africa, their effects in the form of learner drop-out remain firmly in place. Such effects are still so severe such that many public secondary schools find it difficult to explicitly

³⁷ Higgs and Smith (n.34)

³⁸ P. Arden, *It is not How Good You are, it's How Good you Want to be* (Phaidon, 2013).

³⁹ S. Tisdall, 'Burundi on the brink of a cataclysm' (Mail and Guardian, 8 May 2015).

⁴⁰ C Dawson, *A Practical Guide to Research Methods: A User-Friendly Manual for Mastering Research Techniques and Projects* (2nd edition, How to Books, 2006).

⁴¹ P Levin, 'Excellent dissertations: Student friendly guides' (Open University Press, 2005).

⁴² Dawson (n.40)

⁴³ L Masina, 'Malawi Cash Scandal Reaches SA' Mail and Guardian (Johannesburg, 26 June 2015)

contribute to the development of their communities and their economies applying the human capital development model of schooling. Narrative enquiry and interviewing techniques were utilised to construct data relevant for this article. To be precise, the twelve research participants with two from each of the six sampled secondary school, were offered an opportunity of narrating their views on the decisive intervention mechanisms to contain learner drop-out in secondary schools. To corroborate and triangulate the gleaned data, interviewing was conducted with those twelve research participants, sourced from six sampled secondary schools. Research respondents were a school principal and an RCL Chairperson per six secondary schools. Responses were audio-taped for transcription later-on⁴⁴

3. DISCUSSIONS OF GAPS

Findings arrived at in this article, are in relation to the research topic whose focus is: the reduction of schooling drop-out rate to facilitate human capital development from secondary school learners. The basis of the findings is the analysed data which were generated through the narrative enquiry and the interviewing technique. The twelve research participants, sourced from six secondary schools were interviewed as regards their views pertaining to how learner drop-out obstructs the facilitation of human capital development from secondary school learners to enable them to benefit their communities and their economies. The research participants, were being referred to as School Principal A up to F and RCL Chairperson A up to F. That was done to protect the actual identities of schools, their principals and their RCL Chairpersons. Paying attention only to those sampled schools ought not create an impression that they are worse off as regards failing to facilitate human capital development due to the witnessed learner drop-out⁴⁵ Suffice to disclose that the choice of those six secondary schools was on the basis of the researcher having familiarised himself with issues of learner drop-out and the development of communities and their economies by secondary school learners. The Critical Theory has been sufficiently instrumental in assisting in the analysis of data to ultimately emerge with these findings. Findings and discussion for this article can be categorised as follows: connection between learner drop-out and human capital development; poor academic learner performance triggers drop-out; learner drop-out offers tragic tale for South African youth; poor scholastic assessment test scores trigger drop-out; and

⁴⁴ Glatthorn A A and Joyner R L, 'Writing the winning thesis or dissertation: A step-by step guide' (Corwin press, 2005)

⁴⁵ Dawson (n.40).

lack of improvement of literary abilities trigger drop-out. A detailed discussion of each finding follows.

3.1 Connections between learner drop-out and human capital development

That secondary school learner drop-out inhibits the facilitation of human capital development from learners, is an indisputable fact⁴⁶ ⁴⁷It comes as no shock when the development of a community and its economy is hampered where the containment of learner drop-out is not prioritised ⁴⁸On the above issue, School Principal A from School A recounts that “in the 21st century, it is as important as breathing that all efforts have to be directed towards the elimination of a culture of school-leaving due to its disservice to the development of communities and their economies by secondary school learners”. RCL Chairperson C from School C suggests that “it could be in the interest of every community and its economy if school- quitting could be outlawed due to its delay to the capacitation of learners to be of service to their communities and economies”. Sentiments expressed by research participants are pointing out to the single fact of unbreakable association between learner drop-out and human capital development of pupils⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ ⁵¹. It is advisable for every secondary school to sufficiently make schooling to have value to every learner as a way of discouraging premature school quitting by pupils especially from the working-class backgrounds⁵²

3.2 Poor academic learner performance triggers drop-out

Macha and Leshoro contest that learner drop-out does not create itself but an aftermath of certain occurrences in a schooling sector⁵³ ⁵⁴. By implication, immediately a secondary school is conscious of occurrences that are behind

⁴⁶ C. Brunton, (ed.) Policy handbook for Educators (Universal Print Groups, 2003).

⁴⁷ Zwane (n.23).

⁴⁸ Leshoro (n.2).

⁴⁹ J.T. Tsheola, ‘South Africa in GEAR: “A better life for all” or a zero-sum game of globalization?’ (2002). *GeoJournal* 57,15 <<http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/ricsa/confer/>> Accessed 24 February 2024

⁵⁰ T Mbeki, ‘Public symposium on millennium goals’ Progress Governance Conference (London, 12 July 2003)

⁵¹ Madue, S.M ‘The role of oversight governance’ (2013), 27 *Loyola Journal of Social Sciences* 1, 37

⁵² Doms, T. ‘Youth must take central role in SA politics and not be relegated to the keddies’ table’ *Sowetan* (Johannesburg, 14 June 2022).

⁵³ N Macha, ‘Plan to outsource schooling slammed’ (*Mail and Guardian*, Johannesburg, 14 April 2016)

⁵⁴ Leshoro (n.2)

learner drop-out and pre-empts those, then learner drop –out in that learning institution could become the talked about myth without becoming a reality. On this issue, School Principal B of School B utters that “fixing loop-holes from the secondary schooling sector that encourage learner drop-out has to happen sooner rather than latter if learner- quitting has to become a thing of the past in public schooling in no time”. This point is being shared by an RCL Chairperson F of School F in reminding that “speaking from the perspective of an FET learner, it is an un-contestable truth that perpetual underachievement in itself could constitute school- quitting by a learner if not speedily dealt with by the parties concerned”. Evidently, current schooling in comparison to that of prior 1994 is a little bit struggling to deal head-on with inherited problems such as learner drop-out which has always being in the system from time immemorial. Despite this, the power and capacity of quality schooling to eradicate perpetual poor academic learner performance that triggers pupil drop-out is not in doubt^{55 56 57}

3.3 Learner drop-out offers tragic tale for South African youth

Allen and Maloka submit that there is a need for secondary school learners in South Africa to represent themselves impressively in the form of rolling back learner drop-out which projects this country in a very bad light internationally.^{58 59} School Principal E of School E captures the narrated point so immaculately, when stressing that “out of myriad schooling incidents that have a potential of compromising the respect afforded by international communities to a country’s secondary school learners, one of them is learner-quitting from schooling, which resembles an endemic refusing to disappear and subside which without doubt projects our own secondary school learners as a directionless youth”. RCL Chairperson D of School D aligns herself with the stated point by recounting that “one of the areas which South African secondary school learners have to improve upon, is collectively learning to discourage secondary school learner drop-out irrespective of in which province is it occurring and under what circumstances because its mere happening especially in large scale, attracts despise for the country’s youth”.

⁵⁵ Gobillot, E ‘The connected leader: Creating agile organizations for people performance’ (2008)

⁵⁶ Cunha, Filho & Goncalvers, 2010 Cunha, C.M, Filho, T. & Goncalves, R.S. (2010). ‘Accomplishments and limitations: The National Development Plan as a political economic strategy’ (2010). In Evo Morales’s Latin American Perspectives, 173.37 (4):177-196.

⁵⁷ Sithole (n. 1)

⁵⁸ Allen (n. 36)

⁵⁹ Maloka (n. 5)

This point suggests that secondary school learners can create an impressive international image for themselves by simply refusing to be premature secondary school quitters^{60 61 62 63 64 65}.

3.4 Poor scholastic assessment test scores trigger drop-out

Lee maintains that ascribing learner drop-out as occurring in secondary school to learners' natural hatred of schooling is an underestimation of a number of variables behind school leaving⁶⁶. This is a timely statement considering that poor scholastic assessment test scores could lead to an impulsive decision by some secondary school pupils to cease being learners without parental approval. On this matter, School Principal C of School C reiterates that "learner- quitting of a secondary school could be internally generated by schools themselves through being insensitive to struggling learners through caring less about poor scholastic assessment test scores which such pupils keep on getting". That school insensitivity of publicising low assessment test scores obtained by some pupils, could leave such struggling learners with no alternative but self-withdrawal from a school. The mentioned point is better shared and captured by an RCL Chairperson E of School E in reporting that "no decent learner in his good mental condition could persist with schooling when now and again being belittled and degraded by secondary schools who shamelessly portray poor scholastic assessment test scores of those pupils". That such struggling pupils are likely to be laughed at, mocked and ridiculed by their gifted peers, could be a legitimate reason enough for them to unceremoniously bid secondary schooling goodbye⁶⁷. Jakes is making it abundantly clear that the manner in which schooling is structured is somewhat segregational especially to working class pupils, the majority of whom come to school possessing no

⁶⁰ E. Omano, 'A Democratic Developmental State in Africa?' (Centre for Policy, 2005)

⁶¹ J.M. Kouzes & B.Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco; John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2007)

⁶² C Thornhill and Van Dijk, 'Public administration theory: Justification for concept tualisation' (2010) 45 *Journal of Public Administration* 1.1, 95

⁶³ M P Sebola, 'Objective role of the South African media industry: The watchdogs for good governance and service delivery' (2012) 47 *Journal of Public Administration* 1, 407

⁶⁴ B R Qwabe, *Realising South Africa's vision 2030: A capacity building perspective* (2013) 21 *Administratio Publica* 2, 21

⁶⁵ Tisdall (n. 39).

⁶⁶ Lee (n. 21).

⁶⁷ Moses (N 24)

insider knowledge about an enterprise of schooling and its concomitant expectations⁶⁸.

3.5 Lack of improvement of literary abilities trigger drop-out

One of the skills that could sustain any pupil at school is an improvement of a literary ability by a learner. Possession of such a skill enables a pupil to cope with secondary schooling and its lack is a recipe for disaster and discomfort for struggling learners⁶⁹ On the mentioned point, School Principal D of School D narrates that “indeed the possession of improved literary skills and competencies are very fundamental to every pupil being able to follow the delivery of a syllabus at school with much ease and its absence or lack constitutes an understanding- strain to the affected learner.”

On the mentioned point, RCL Chairperson A of School A confirms that “no pupil is capable of enduring secondary schooling when his literary abilities are at their lowest ebb in comparison to that of peers for fear of inability to cope with current secondary schooling which is in the main requiring possession of literary abilities by learners as its bedrock for the successful schooling” Lee validates the essence of literary abilities by pupils by emphasising that learners are supposed to graduate to secondary schools from the primary schooling sector being in possession of such a vital schooling ability⁷⁰.

4. RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in this article, there is a causal connection between learner drop-out and the success of their human capital development. On that basis it is recommended that all concerted efforts be galvanised to contain learner drop-out in order to enable human capital development to flourish and thrive. The other recommendation is based on a need to professionally manage poor scholastic assessment test scores of learners to prevent such from triggering drop-out. Finally, there is a need to emerge with sustainable interventions whose sole purpose is to improve the literacy abilities of every learner so that lack of improvement of literacy abilities by pupils ceases to trigger drop-out.

⁶⁸ Jakes (N 29)

⁶⁹ Moses (N 24).

⁷⁰ Lee (N 21)

Vividly, it is a secondary school like no other that could contribute to the development of a community and its economy through being able to facilitate human capital development to its learners. Secondary schools with rooted general culture of premature learner-quitting which has become legendary require a decisive intervention mechanism to curb and combat that destructive school-leaving practice. Secondary schools need to deal with their challenges of learner drop-out which disrupts and disturbs the schooling machinery to enable secondary schools to dispense expertise, skills and competencies to learners so that they develop their communities and the economy. As per the findings shared in the preceding paragraphs, the era of secondary schools being detached from their witnessed predicament of learner drop-out that robs communities and their economies of development by their learners, has gone past. The 21st century secondary schools need to contribute to the alleviation of social ills within their ranks which are inclusive of learner drop-out before being awaited to service their communities and economies with aplomb. Findings in this article have shown that a prerequisite for a 21st secondary school being able to contribute to the capacitation of the human capital development of learners entrusted to them for the development of a community and an economy, start with a secondary school overcoming learner drop-out in its ranks.