THE INTENTION AND IMPACT OF VISIBLY REWARDING LEARNERS IN TWO GAUTENG HIGH SCHOOLS

by

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ABSTRACT

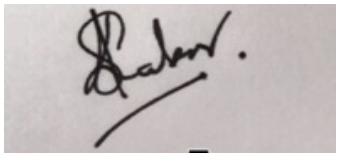
In order to explore the ways in which visibly rewarding learners (via badges, accolades, awards, honour board listings) for academic achievement is consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education, this critical realist study provides the perspectives of learners, parents, teachers and senior management at two Gauteng high schools. The study is primarily focused on exploring the possibility that the current competitive structure found in Gauteng high schools as manifested by visible rewards can be a barrier to inclusive education, particularly the participation and achievement of all learners. As such, it is both descriptive and explanatory. The study is set within a theoretical framework that includes Johnson and Johnson's Social Interdependence Theory together with the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) and Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017).

Drawing on constructs from psychology and sociology in the way the concept of inclusive education is explored, I have employed a mixed method approach. Quantitative learner and parent surveys allow for greater reach of maximum participants in the school. Qualitative focus group interviews with learners and semi-structured interviews with teachers and senior management provide richness and depth from information-rich participants that are directly involved in the decision-making processes and procedures of visibly rewarding learners. In exploring the participation and achievement of all learners, the valuable perspectives of the learners and their parents provide a greater understanding of visible rewards.

Keywords: visible rewards, inclusive education; participation and achievement, critical realism, sequential mixed methods, Gauteng province.

DECLARATION

I, Shakira Akabor, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is entirely my own work. It has been submitted exclusively to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.



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Signed on this 29th day of July 2020.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B. Ed:	Bachelor of Education
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CRPD:	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations)
DoE:	Department of Education
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
EFA:	Education for All
PIRLS:	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SEN:	Special Education Needs
SIAS:	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SGB:	School Governing Body
SMT:	Senior Management Team
TIMSS:	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
WP6:	Education White Paper 6

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

"*Inclusive education commences with the recognition of the unequal social relations that produce exclusion"*

(Slee, 2011, p.39)

1.1. Introduction and background

The above quote by Slee highlights that inclusive education begins with identifying unequal social relations. This is of great significance in our schools, given the history of this country. Schools in South Africa are facing a number of challenges today. Foremost among these challenges is providing equal and equitable education for all, following a dishonourable history of an unequal education system. Numerous attempts at education redress towards inclusion have been explored at national, provincial and local levels of government under the new dispensation. Since 1994 the South African education system has, via the means of ample legislation, instituted radical reforms (Chrisholm, 2004). Yet, the problems surrounding the provision of equitable education for all faced at school level still persist.

South Africa is one of 92 countries that adopted the Salamanca Statement in 1994. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) recommended a shift in policy from special education to inclusive education models that expect schools to serve all children. The statement outlines strategies and policies for including learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. Its main significance lies in the fact that it considers inclusion the best way to learn, for *all* students (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015).

Thereafter, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2007) was formed. Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and General Comments requires state parties to provide persons with disabilities the right to inclusive education. The CRPD is the first United Nations treaty that is solely concerned with disability issues. It is also the first human rights treaty to be concluded by both the European Union (EU) and individual member states. It ensures that people with disabilities benefit from existing human rights on an equal basis with others (Fontaine, 2019). In all-encompassing terms, inclusive education is

a concept that can best be described as the education of all learners by addressing learners' needs without discrimination on any basis (CRPD, 2007).

South Africa's Constitution states that "everyone has the right to a basic education" (RSA, 1996, 29 (1)) that is clearly congruent with inclusive education. The inclusive education system is consistent with the democratic principles underlying South Africa's democratic government (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006) and implementing inclusive education is therefore heavily relied upon in terms of educational transformation. In its broadest sense, the discourse of inclusive education incorporates the South African goal of extending quality education to the whole population (Engelbrecht, 1999). Providing quality education to all is not a uniquely South African problem, but one that pervades countries worldwide (Walton, 2015).

With regards to providing quality education, recent recommendations from the Global Monitoring Report (EFA, 2015, p.204) prioritize the fostering of learner-friendly school environments, "encompassing the physical school infrastructure and interaction between learners and teachers as one of the most important requirements for better quality education". Since inclusive education is viewed as the means by which quality education for all can be achieved, the learning environment, both at school and classroom level, is therefore crucial for its successful implementation. An inclusive approach helps us to understand that the key to learner success at school is not to allow preconceptions about ability to limit what we believe is possible, but rather create the right conditions for learning for all children (Volmink, 2018).

Although there are no statistics available, evidence from the media suggests that it is common practice among South African schools to follow the rituals of a prize-giving or award ceremony at year-end, as a culmination of rewarding learners' academic achievement. Schools also reward learners publicly and visibly throughout the year in a variety of ways. For instance, publicly displaying printed names on honour boards in the school hall, awarding certificates and medals in assemblies and handing out scrolls, badges and pins that learners may wear on their uniforms. These visible rewards are given to learners as an acknowledgement of their scholastic achievement and as a token of their contribution to the school's culture of academic excellence.

In order to reward learners at award ceremonies, it follows that schools must maintain a driven environment with a strong focus on maintaining the highest standards, by honing the academic talents and strengths of learners to produce excellence. In such an environment, some learners will be winners, whilst others will be losers. Thus, learners are stratified and differentiated into a schooling system, with different

provisions for different ability groupings. The success of the selected and talented few is determined at the expense of the majority of learners, who are excluded from belonging to this exclusive group, but whose existence is necessary to validate and give meaning to the rewarded few (Dorling, 2010). Learners rewarded for their excellent academic achievement are viewed as more worthy, belonging to an elite group, and are generally given more opportunities than the rest of the learners at school. This creates the likelihood for exclusion for those who have worked extremely hard, but have fallen short of the criteria necessary to be rewarded visibly and publicly.

Moreover, creating an environment that publicly rewards learner achievement in the top 10 percent of their cohort for the year creates undue pressure not simply to achieve between 80-100% in any given subject, but to be within the “top 20” highest results across all subjects, within the grade. Anecdotal evidence suggests that at some schools, losing a “top 20” spot by 0.1% is not unheard of. Against this background, learners would be pressurised to perform academically in order to be visibly rewarded for their achievements. Unhealthy pressure on high school learners can affect the emotional wellbeing of learners (Volmink, 2018). The high school years in South African schools usually take place from 13-18 years, situating learners in the adolescent phase. Adolescence is considered to be a period of increased emotional instability (Van Batenburg-Eddes & Jolles, 2013). Brain development during this time typically impacts on higher cognitive functions and risk-vs-reward appraisal and motivation (Paus, Keshavan & Giedd, 2008). As adolescent learners in high school are developing their personalities and identities (Hamilton & O’Hara, 2011), visible rewards are likely to influence their emotional wellbeing. It follows that the resultant emotions from expecting visible rewards for academic achievement but not receiving them, can lead to negative feelings. Negative feelings commonly experienced by learners with regards to achievement are resentment, hopelessness, and feelings of unworthiness (Reay, 2017; Reay & Williams, 1999).

Research shows that learners can become indifferent to rewards and demotivated to study when competition becomes so strong and goals are unachievable (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017; Dweck, 2006; Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Kohn,1992). Indifference is characterized by a lack of concern, or unimportance given towards visible rewards at school. Learners who are indifferent do not show any positivity towards rewards; it does not motivate them, nor is it of any concern to them (Kohn,1992). Although rewards are intended to motivate, rewards can demotivate learners when they have worked towards them but did not get rewarded as expected (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999).

1.2. Problem Statement

The practice of visibly and publicly rewarding learners is common among Gauteng high schools. Although the rationale surrounding the practice of visible rewards is rooted in behavourism, little is known about its impact on learners within an inclusive education system. An abundance of research on the relationship between motivation and academic achievement implies that intrinsic motivation is the basis of academic success (Anderman & Patrick, 2012; Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008; Phillips & Lindsay, 2006), and that competitiveness at school does not foster an enabling environment in which all learners can learn (Lu et al., 2013; Chiu et al., 2016; Watkins, et al. 2003). According to Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) inclusive education entails changing attitudes and environments to minimize barriers to learning. Research suggests that advocating non-competitiveness tends to facilitate inclusion broadly (Poonwassie & Charter, 2005) and at classroom level (Kohn, 1992; Akabor, 2015). In addition, research on motivation shows that teachers' attempts to promote intrinsic motivation in learners is undermined by a school culture that displays honour rolls and rewards top students at prize-givings (Anderman & Young, 1993). More importantly, Ainscow and Miles (2009, p. 6) assert that in order to move inclusive policies forward, we need to question "taken for granted assumptions" regarding expectations of certain groups of students, as well as their capabilities and behaviours. Literature on South African school practices and their consistency with inclusive education does exist (Majoko & Phasha, 2018; Walton, 2013; Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006), however the practice of rewarding learners visibly and publicly for academic achievement has not been explored. Thus a gap exists in the literature regarding the practice of visibly rewarding learners within the context of upholding the aims and ideals of inclusive education. The school-wide practice of visibly and tangibly rewarding learners for academic achievement and its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education is explored via this study.

1.3. Purpose Statement

Given that South African schools are generally not inclusive in practice (Makoelle, 2012; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; de Jager, 2013) despite the numerous inclusion policies that have been formulated since Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), it is useful to examine the reasons behind the entrenched school-wide practice of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement. The purpose of this research is to explore the nature of visibly rewarding learners in terms of its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education and to highlight the possibility of visible rewards

contributing to exclusionary beliefs and practices. As such, the intentions of the school in rewarding learners might be sound, but the potential impact on learners might cause harm and not result in the desired outcome as the school anticipated.

As an award-winner myself during my schooling years, I have lived experiences and I am aware of the disappointments given the high stakes involved in school reward programmes. In addition, I am also aware of the possibility of exclusion and marginalization that is inherent in the rewards system. School managers, teachers, learners and parents could benefit from this study as they are made aware of the various factors at play when reviewing the rewards system at their own schools. Perhaps South African schools can consider the impact of these rewards on learners in future planning of schools. The findings of this research could serve the following purposes:

- This study could provide valuable insight for both schools and policy-makers, regarding the use of visible rewards and its impact on fostering inclusive education at school level.
- The findings of this study would provide awareness of the voices of various stakeholders involved, including learners and parents, who have thus far been voiceless with regards to school policy and practice.
- The findings of this study could broaden understandings of taken-for-granted school practices and its relation to inclusion and exclusion.
- The findings will expand on the body of literature on inclusive education in South Africa.

In order to achieve this purpose, the following research questions were formulated.

1.4. Research Questions

The main research question that will guide this study is:

> ***In what ways is visibly rewarding learners at high school consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education?***

In order to answer this question, the following two sub-questions were formulated:

1. How do the criteria, procedures and processes of visibly rewarding learners promote or hinder the participation and achievement of all?

2. What are the attitudes and beliefs of key stakeholders at high schools that drive or challenge the practice of visible rewards?

1.5. Aims of the Study

This study aimed to:

- Explore the procedures and processes used by schools in visibly rewarding learners.
- Probe normal and taken-for-granted school practices in light of the need for participation and achievement of all learners.
- Understand how the attitudes and beliefs underlying the practice of visibly rewarding learners is consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education.
- Explore the ways in which visible rewards promote or hinder the implementation of inclusive education by unearthing the perceptions of learners, parents, teachers and Senior Management Team (SMT) members.

1.6. Research Methodology

In this critical realist mixed methods study, I explored the phenomenon of visibly rewarding learners in relation to the aims and ideals of inclusive education. The study follows a sequential mixed methods design, which allowed for a more complete investigation, not only providing the perspectives of the learners, parents and teachers, but also explaining the effects of the practice of visible rewards. The research questions were formulated to allow for both qualitative and quantitative collections of data. Data was collected from the grade 11 learners, grade 11 parents, teachers and Senior Management Team (SMT) members at two ordinary high schools in Gauteng. Data collection took place in two phases. Firstly, quantitative surveying via questionnaire was used to explore the learners' and parents' perceptions of visible rewards as well as to identify those grade 11 learners who would be the information rich participants for the collection of qualitative data via focus group interviews. Two sets of focus group interviews were carried out per school for the grade 11 learners, totalling four focus group interviews. Semi-structured individual interviews were undertaken with the teachers and SMT members. Through focus group interviews of the learners, detailed perspectives of visible rewards were elicited. These will be elaborated upon in more detail in chapter 5 (methodology).

1.7. Clarification of the Relevant Terms:

1.7.1. Inclusive Education:

Inclusive education is a contested term and many definitions of inclusion exist. There are both broad and narrow definitions of inclusive education. However, for the

purposes of this research, inclusive education will be broadly defined as “enabling schools to serve all children” (UNESCO, 1994, p iii) and the focus is on educational provision for all learners regardless of difference.

1.7.2. Visible Rewards:

The term Visible Rewards as used in this study refers to an umbrella of practices involving tangible rewards. This includes but is not limited to, badges, trophies, certificates, and listings on honour boards linked to academic achievement that are usually publicly presented at a ceremonious occasion attended by the majority of the school staff and learners (Akabor, 2019). For the purposes of this research, rewards and recognition for sporting and cultural achievements will not be considered. This is because sporting and cultural activities are usually the domain of outside service providers who may or may not follow the school’s policies.

1.7.3. Attitudes and Beliefs:

Attitudes refer to the way a person expresses or applies their beliefs and values through words and behaviour. Beliefs are internal feelings that one holds as true. Attitudes and beliefs are interconnected with one’s underlying value system and taken for granted assumptions (McMaster, 2015).

1.7.4. Achievement:

Achievement as described by Florian, Rouse, Black-Hawkins and Jull (2004) is the progress made by learners over time. Academic achievement is the measurement of learners’ academic outcomes usually by tests and examinations at the end of a determined term or year.

1.7.5. Participation:

Participation as used in this study follows the definition by Booth and Ainscow (2011) in the Index for Inclusion. Participation means learning alongside others and collaborating with them in shared learning experiences. It requires active engagement with learning and having a say in how education is experienced (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

1.7.6. Ordinary schools:

Ordinary public schools (as opposed to special schools) in South Africa occur in both rural and urban settings, and are mainly funded by the government. Although the

preferred term in South Africa is “ordinary schools” as per White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), the international literature, uses the terms “regular”, “mainstream” and “general” schools interchangeably. All regular schools are encouraged to be responsive to learner diversity. The site for this study are two ordinary public high schools in Gauteng.

1.7.7. Practice:

Whilst practice can describe virtually any act undertaken in the classroom by the teacher (Florian, 2016), practice as used in this study refers to the tangible acts that teachers engage in at a school-wide level. Specific reference is made to the term practice as understood by Booth and Ainscow’s (2011) definition as the practical implementation of plans that is a part of a wider systemic process. In this instance practice is used to refer to the acts involved in acknowledging learners’ excellence in academic achievement both visibly and publicly, resulting in of rewarding learners visibly and publicly.

1.8. Overview of the study

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This chapter provides a brief introduction and background to the study, highlighting the problem within which this study is situated. The research questions are provided, together with the aims of this study. An explanation of the relevant terms used in the thesis is given, clearing any uncertainties or misconceptions regarding specific terms used in this study.

Chapter 2: Inclusive Education

In this chapter, the historical development of inclusive education is provided. Relevant literature pertaining to inclusive education as a values-based initiative both abroad and in South Africa, are considered. The chronological development of inclusive education is outlined first as a worldwide movement, and then its emergence and implementation in South Africa is reviewed. This leads to the topic of the aims and ideals of inclusive education, which is explored and elaborated on, with emphasis on the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework is explored. Beginning with Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1989) and the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011), the discussion moves on to the basic tenets of critical realism as a suitable ontological and epistemological underpinning to this study. Relevant literature pertaining to critical realism, Archer's Realist Social Theory and its value to research in education are considered. The chapter ends with the analytical framework that is later used in the data analysis stage.

Chapter 4: Visible Rewards

A review of the literature on rewards and related concepts is undertaken in this chapter. A discussion of the concepts such as visible rewards, neoliberalism, motivation, academic talent, the hidden curriculum and school culture is provided. A gap in the literature is identified, providing the justification for this study.

Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological aspects of this mixed methods study, providing justification for the use of a two phase, sequential mixed methods study. Site and participation selection are discussed, including the use of nested sampling technique.

Then, a discussion follows of the data collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Details of ethical considerations are provided as well as issues such as validity and rigour, researcher bias, and triangulation.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Findings and Discussion

This chapter reports on the quantitative findings of the study derived from the learner questionnaires and the parent questionnaires. Quantitative findings are presented with a discussion of the statistical analysis of the survey data.

Chapter 7: Qualitative Findings and Discussion

This chapter reports on the qualitative findings of the study derived from the learner focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews with teaching staff and school management. Qualitative findings are presented with a discussion of all the interviews with learners, teachers and school managers.

Chapter 8: Joint Display of the Findings

An integrated joint display of the findings is presented from a critical realist perspective with an analytical framework and a discussion of both qualitative and quantitative strands of data. Archer's Social Theory is used to present all the data together. A discussion follows the presentation.

Chapter 9: Summary and Recommendations

In this concluding chapter, a summary of the findings is presented as well as recommendations for future research. Limitations of the study are also discussed.

Chapter 2: Inclusive Education

"Inclusion is a much more radical idea than integration, for it aspires to move modern schooling away from a one-size-fits-all normative ideal to a more dynamic structure that recognises diversity as the norm"

(Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 288)

2.1. Introduction

According to Graham and Slee (2008), inclusive education goes beyond simply integrating learners of varying abilities and backgrounds within the same space. It is about changing our attitudes and accepting diversity as standard in any classroom. As such, this will mean changing our views on teaching and learning. This study is concerned with unearthing the intention and impact of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at high schools. In the previous chapter, I provided an introduction and background to the study. This chapter will first provide a literature review of inclusive education. Given that inclusive education is not a theory in itself, I have made use of Social Interdependence Theory to explore the inclusivity of visible rewards as a school practice, which appears in the next chapter. In order to gain a clear understanding of the lens through which the study is framed, it is vital that I begin by discussing inclusive education: its relevance, timeliness and necessity. After defining inclusive education, outlining its historical development, and describing the aims and ideals of inclusive education; the next chapter will then provide an explanation of and justification for using Social Interdependence Theory, and illustrate how the positive interdependence model is embedded within the aims and ideals of inclusive education.

2.2. Definition of Inclusive Education

In its simplest form, and for the purposes of this study, inclusive education can be described as the education of all learners by addressing learners' needs without discrimination on any basis (UNESCO, 1994). Numerous definitions of inclusive education exist; many of which are highly detailed and contextualised. Some refer to inclusive education as a process, for example, Booth and Ainscow (2011, p.40) describe inclusive education as "a never-ending process involving the progressive discovery and removal of limits to participation and learning." Others describe inclusive education as robust activism. For example, Corbett and Slee (2000, p.134) refer to inclusive education as "an unabashed announcement, a public and political declaration and celebration of difference." It can also be referred to as a worldwide social justice

issue. Illustrating that inclusive education is a worldwide concern, Swart and Oswald (2008) contend that inclusive education is currently a major issue facing education systems throughout the world. In terms of social justice, Slee (2011, p.39) maintains "inclusive education commences with the recognition of the unequal social relations that produce exclusion". Similarly, Loxley and Thomas (2001, p. 124) state that "inclusion is about comprehensive education, equality and collective belonging."

The common theme in these varied definitions is the idea that inclusive education goes beyond the discourse of incorporating learners with special needs - it is a movement that radically challenges current norms, it is embedded in social justice and it has gained momentum as a world-wide agenda. In this regard, Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017, p.7) argue that "inclusive education was originally concerned with students previously excluded from mainstream schools, notably students with disabilities, but has evolved to become a broad rights-based concept that encompasses anyone who might be excluded from or have limited access to the educational system within a country".

For the purposes of this study, inclusion is especially focused on those children or groups of learners who are "at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement" Ainscow, (2005, p. 119). The use of the word "all" learners in the above definitions is not limited to learners qualifying for a specific educational service, nor is it reduced to groups of learners who have been identified with medical diagnoses. "All" as used in this study could be any learner that might face exclusion, the learner who is on the outside looking in, feeling as though they do not belong, and limited in terms of their full and meaningful participation in the daily life of the school. In exploring the historical development of inclusive education, it is necessary to look at the way education was arranged prior to the movement towards inclusion, namely the bifurcation in education: regular education and special education. I shall begin by looking at why special education became a problematic issue internationally, then move on to discussing integration and inclusion, and the issue of labelling learners. Below is a summary of the events that led to what is now known as inclusive education.

2.2.1. Critique of Special Education

A prominent critique of special education is that the quality of education provided by special schools is inferior to mainstream schools, and has far-reaching implications into adulthood. Oliver and Barnes (2010, p. 555) state that special education has "not provided disabled children with the qualifications and skills needed for adulthood", therefore inadequately preparing them for life as full members of society. It can also

be argued that special schools can set learners up for failure. Finn and Rotherham (as cited in Cook & Schirmer, 2003) describe special education as a “a cul-de-sac” in the road to life. Likewise, Tomlinson (1985) has criticised the growth of special education for placing children in schools that are the ultimate in non-achievement. According to Oliver and Barnes (2010), parents have to some extent challenged special education policies that separated their children from mainstream schools using irrelevant medical labels. As the relevance and necessity for segregated special education was questioned and critiqued, the need for a paradigm shift strengthened.

Another major critique of special education has been its resources-intense model, making it an unsustainable solution for every district requiring a special school. Not only was special education increasingly being scrutinized for its use of expensive resources Daniels, (2006), questions arose about the necessity and beneficiaries of the use of highly trained professionals Norwich, (2013) and Tomlinson, (1985). In this regard, Daniels (2006, p. 5) believes that some highly trained professionals tend to further their own needs, noting that “when professionals find complex needs confusing, they often rush to apply a category or diagnoses to solve their problems rather than the child’s”. Thus the ever-growing list of special needs categories serves to further the expertise of special education experts rather than being a genuine response to helping learners. By the same token, Tomlinson (1985) raises similar concerns when she questions who benefits from special education, referring to the professionals that rely on special education cases in order to promote their own careers. From a cost and resources perspective, it is clear that special education did not offer the best value for learners with disabilities. The logical option would thus be to teach all learners both inclusively and cost-effectively, reinforcing the case for inclusive education Slee, (2011).

2.2.2. Move from Integration to Inclusion

Dyson and Forlin (1999) claim that the roots of inclusion can be traced back to the 1960’s ‘integration’ movement that occurred in Scandinavian countries. Endorsed by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), inclusive education offers a cost-effective way to achieve education for all. The actual notion of a single, unitary system of education however had occurred many years prior to the Salamanca Statement. Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 68) notes that the history of one-room schools at the turn of the twentieth century in the USA has recorded classes with mixed ability and ages “long before the language of ‘full inclusion’”, citing examples of inclusive practices such

as “looping” (having the same teacher for more than a year) and multi-age classrooms. Whilst Sapon-Shevin (2007) provides a historical view of America’s earliest indications of inclusive education, Dyson and Forlin’s (1999) integration describes the development that saw learners from special schools integrated into regular schools forming a single system of education.

At a glance, integration and inclusion might appear similar, but upon closer inspection, it is clear that they differ considerably. Deppeler (2002) argues that ‘integration’ occurred from the outside, where learners were ‘normalised’ to fit into regular schools and classrooms. This became problematic because learners who had differing abilities were expected to assimilate into regular schools and if they did not or were not able, the problem was situated squarely within the learner, with no accountability falling on the school in terms of provision from teachers. In this regard, Booth (1996) argues that simply moving students from a special education setting to a regular classroom without differentiating instruction and changing established classroom climates gives rise to a change of environment for students with a disability, and not the anticipated shift in educational opportunity and citizenship.

Inclusion on the other hand, is premised at the outset by embracing the diversity of all learners and goes far deeper than simply placing disabled learners within the same proximity as able-bodied learners. Inclusion heralds a shift in thinking about schools and schooling. Instead of merely integrating learners within the same physical space, inclusion calls for a more dynamic schooling structure that recognises diversity as the norm (Graham & Slee, 2008) and responds to this diversity. Over the next three decades the transformation from integration to inclusion slowly took place, resulting in a worldwide movement. A common practice in the recognition of disabilities is the identification and classification of learners who are considered to be different to the norm, and the idea of labelling learners in inclusive education is a topic that is debated.

2.2.3. Labelling and its effect on learners

Learners with disabilities or *Learners with Special Education Needs* or the South African equivalent, *Learners who experience Barriers to Learning* are terms often used to refer to a broad category of children at school that require additional support. Whereas physical disabilities and medical diagnoses like diabetes and genetic abnormalities like Down’s syndrome can either be seen outwardly or show up positive in diagnostic testing, other classifications of learning disabilities such as ADHD and EBD (emotional and behavioural difficulties) tend to be grey areas with symptoms that are not always clearly defined. This prompts questions with respect to how disability

should be classified, as well as the usefulness of grouping forms of disability (physical, mental, learning, and emotional) under the umbrella term of 'disability' (Norwich, 2008). Disability classification in education is thus a hotly debated topic, with the most crucial aspect centring around the use of categorisations (Terzi, 2008; Norwich, 2008; Croft, 2012). Croft (2012) argues that disability classification is problematic even in instances where there are visible physical disabilities, referring to complexities such as finding a category description for a child who is deaf as well as in a wheelchair. Furthermore, Norwich and Lewis (2005) believe that disability classification results in the unnecessarily high use of labelling learners.

Graham and Macartney (2012, p. 4) define labelling as "the measurement and definition of children according to comparisons based on pre-defined expectations for 'normal' development and behaviour", believing that "labels are not facts, they are social and cultural constructions". Given that labels are socially and culturally constructed and are in close partnership with teacher expectations of learner ability (Farrell, 2014), labels affect the ways in which teachers view learners with varying abilities, disabilities and cognitive impairments (Norwich, 2008). In acknowledging the negative effects of labelling learners, Farrell (2014) argues for a new way of conceptualising learners' differences and for using a softer language to overcome the stigmatizing effects of labelling learners. For instance, using the term "differently abled" rather than disabled is a gentler, more respectful way of referring to learners without causing shame and embarrassment to the learner.

Whilst it is widely accepted that labelling learners can create situations that enable discrimination, stereotyping, segregation and stigmatization at school (Brantlinger, 2004; Minow, 1990; Graham & Macartney, 2012; Farrell, 2014) there are some benefits to labelling children (Terzi, 2008; Farrell, 2014). Norwich (as cited in Terzi, 2008, p.245) refers to the issue of disability classification as the "dilemma of difference". Based on earlier work by Minow (1990), who first coined the term 'dilemma of difference', teachers are faced with the predicament of whether labels harm or help the learner. The dilemma rests in the choice of identifying learners' differences in order to ensure appropriate educational provision, with the risk of labelling and discriminating on the one hand, whilst on the other, highlighting learners' similarities and offering common provision at the risk of not fully addressing learners' needs.

Similarly, Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010, p. 243) argue that labelling does have a positive side in revealing what is known about the learning needs of special groups, among which are gifted learners. Labelling can be meaningfully used with discretion –

without revealing sensitive information that might embarrass or belittle learners. In this regard, Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 179) believes that "if introducing someone's label or diagnosis is not directly connected to our capacity to educate, then we should rethink our language."

However, Graham and Slee (2008) vehemently disagree on labelling learners, believing that labels perpetuate hegemonic structures at school, thereby contributing to an exclusionary school culture. Graham and Slee (2008, p. 287) argue:

> when we identify categories of children, whether we refer to children at risk or children with a disability or children whose first language is not English, we not only make difference *visible* but work to maintain power imbalances and structural inequity by reifying *unnamed* attributes that carry social, political and cultural currency.

By the same token, Brantlinger (2004) refers to labelling and segregation of learners as humiliating, and suggests that the use of labelling should be avoided at schools. This can be achieved by ensuring teachers are more skilful in effectively educating a broad range of learners in integrated settings (Brantlinger, 2004). As mentioned earlier, labels can influence the ways in which learners would be provided for in the classroom, constructively but also destructively (Kihn, 2001). For instance, using labels such as "slow reader" and "failing learner" has a negative impact on the ways in which teachers view learners' abilities, and could result in blocking learners' epistemological access to the lesson. Consequently, learners are excluded from participating in the lesson despite being physically present in the classroom.

Additionally, the issue with labelling is that it does not disappear easily. Removing labels after learners' make progression proves difficult (Norwich & Lewis, 2005), leaving learners stigmatized and unable to eradicate the labels attached to them. Labelling learners in an ordinary school environment thus stratifies and pigeonholes learners, limiting their opportunities and participation both within the classroom and beyond their school years. Based on these arguments, I conclude that whilst labelling could potentially provide valuable information resulting in a responsive education particularly for learners requiring extra support, there are many risks involved in explicitly labelling learners.

For this study, I have adopted a broad view of inclusion, one that is concerned with the education of all learners, regardless of race, cognitive ability, socio-economic factors, physical disabilities and health status (UNESCO, 1994). This is representative of the demographic of South African schools anywhere in the country. As noted by Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017, p.12), "inclusion is about high quality educational

opportunity for everyone." The focus on quality education for all is salient, given that schools historically have had different provision for different types of learners. This was a legacy of apartheid schooling, but the South African Schools Act, section 29, claims the right to education for all South Africans, regardless of race. In the arguments above, I have explored the international literature on inclusive education, following the chronological developments of inclusion and related disability issues over the years. My focus now turns to local perspectives and literature on inclusive education and its implementation.

2.3. Inclusive Education and its implementation in South Africa

The move towards inclusion in South African schools is a fairly recent development when compared to international trends. Although the foundation for inclusive education in South Africa had been laid in the Constitution (1996), initially in Section 29 (1), where it is stated that "everyone has the right to basic education", inclusive education as a discourse and policy in South Africa was introduced by the publication of *Education White Paper 6 (WP6): Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (DoE, 2001). WP6 advocates a broad definition of inclusion, where the focus is not limited to learners with disabilities, but includes all learners. According to WP6, inclusive education acknowledges the diversity of learners and their ability to learn. In order to meet the needs of all learners, WP6 outlines a plan that includes "enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies" (DoE, 2001, p.6) so that all learners can optimally benefit from the education system.

Although WP6 was welcomed in South Africa as its policy is in line with international concern for and a move towards inclusive education, it became clear that WP6 needed further clarification and expansion for inclusive education to be applied practically in South African schools. Subsequently, policy documents offering practical support of WP6 followed, namely the *National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* or SIAS (DoE, 2008), *Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools* (DoE, 2009) and *Guidelines for inclusive teaching and learning* (DoE, 2010). Schools have a detailed system for the screening, identification, assessment and support of learners who might be experiencing barriers to learning, whether it might be physical disabilities, mental disabilities, mild to moderate learning disabilities, second-language acquisition, HIV-related impairments, and issues arising from poverty and/or malnutrition. In 2011, the *National Development Plan 2030* was published, highlighting the role of the education sector in building inclusivity for society, recognised as an important issue to address in South Africa (Majoko & Phasha, 2018). Yet, there exists

a sizeable implementation gap between government policy and the practices realized by schools and teachers (Makoelle, 2012), thus hindering the move towards realising inclusion for learners in South African schools.

Following Naicker's (1999) definition, inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. This is particularly relevant in the South African context that is underpinned by the need to address past inequalities. Volmink (2018) describes inclusive education in South Africa as an interconnectedness between learners, educators and communities of learning, and providing a constructive environment that positively affects the self-worth, self-belief and achievement of learners.

It is a widely known fact that the provision of education in South African schools was unequal, fragmented and classified according to racial lines pre-1994, leaving the current post-apartheid government with an inheritance of multi-layered inequalities (Sayed & Soudien, 2004; Walton, Nel, Hugo, & Muller, 2009). These inequalities of the past are inextricably linked to the diverse needs of learners today. Meltz, Herman and Pillay (2014) carefully demonstrate how the social model of disability as used in South African policy documents, underpins the ideals of inclusive education, thus facilitating equity in education and society. In its broadest sense, the discourse of inclusive education incorporates the South African goal of extending quality education to the whole population Engelbrecht, (1999). Furthermore, Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin (2006, p.121) believe that an inclusive education system is consistent with the democratic principles underlying South Africa's nascent democracy. Similarly, Makoelle (2012) argues that inclusive education also works to promote a cohesive society. For this reason, Meltz, Herman and Pillay (2014) maintain that implementing inclusive education is heavily relied upon in terms of educational transformation in South Africa.

The available literature on the implementation of inclusive education in South African schools is not altogether positive. A variety of challenges including funding constraints, lack of clarity in policy, poor teacher attitudes towards inclusion, inadequate teacher training and inadequate support have been explored (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007; Stofile, 2008; Meier & Hartell, 2009; Walton, 2011; D'Amant, 2012; Donohue & Bornman; 2014; Makoelle, 2012). Both D'Amant (2012) and Walton (2011) argue that apart from inclusive teaching strategies that are sorely needed, questions should be raised regarding the structures, practices and beliefs that continue to perpetuate exclusion in South African schools. Furthermore, Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue

that teachers should be willing to challenge outdated beliefs and practices that act as barriers to inclusive education.

In terms of accepting diversity and accommodating all cultures at former white schools post-1994, Meier and Hartell (2009) argue that attempts at inclusion had thus far failed. Van Heerden (1998) posits that desegregation at two South African high schools resulted in a case of assimilating black learners into the school and its culture, with the result that the status quo is integrally maintained. The implication is that new learners to the school come from educationally and culturally inferior backgrounds, resulting in lowering high standards in these former white schools when changing the curriculum to meet the newcomers' needs (Meier & Hartell; 2009). In an attempt by schools to signal acceptance of new learners, Van Heerden (1998) points out that "cultural day" is a superficial add-on gesture that does little to bring about real unity in diversity. The problem is not that schools begin this way, but that they often stop there, with no attempt being made to address deep-seated issues of racism and inequity (Carrim; 1998). Research in South Africa has since focused on identifying factors that need to be interrogated regarding the challenging implementation of inclusive education (Majoko & Phasha, 2018; Makoelle, 2012; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Sayed & Soudien, 2004, however, few have identified and called into question the specific ethos or particular cultural school practices that contribute to this challenging context (Walton, 2013; Meier & Hartell, 2009).

In Majoko and Phasha's (2018) recent research report entitled *The state of inclusive education in South Africa and the implications for teacher training programmes,* attention is drawn to implementation issues such as gaps in policy, disjuncture between policy and practice, issues concerning the classroom environment and the training of teachers. Of relevance to this study is the issue of classroom environment. Physical access to school does not equate to equal access to learning opportunities, and there is still a risk of exclusion within an inclusionary framework (Majoko & Phasha, 2018). This is because all learners do not have equal access to the curriculum.

The Department of Education (2009) states that one of the major impediments to the realisation of inclusive education is that schooling remains fundamentally unchanged. In the same vein, Walton (2013) notes that the systemic school legacies and the current policies and practices that give rise to, and sustain, marginalisation and exclusion in schools needs interrogation. Walton (2013) indicates that a greater focus should be given to what exactly learners could be included into, highlighting the need for research in the social and peer group environment within South African schools. With this in mind, I have chosen to interrogate the practice of visibly rewarding learners

for academic achievement, as it is indicative of a cultural school practice that has remained unchanged and largely synonymous with schooling in South Africa. In order to explicate issues of diversity, school culture, policy and transformation, I found that the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) proved to be a useful tool, which I have used as part of my theoretical framework. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3 (Theoretical Framework). I continue with the discussion on participation and achievement below.

2.4. Participation

Participation, according to the *Index for Inclusion*, means learning alongside others and collaborating with them in shared learning experiences. It requires active engagement with learning and having a say in how education is experienced (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). At a deeper level, and from the perspective of the learner, participation is about being recognised, accepted and valued for oneself (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Similarly, Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017) consider educational participation to be a series of ever-shifting processes that require careful attention. In using participation as the principle that underpins their Participation Framework, participation is conceptualised as being concerned with the interconnection of all members of a school's community, and all aspects of school and classroom life (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). In addition, participation is concerned with response to diversity, participation is about active and collaborative learning, and participation is a relationship of mutual recognition and acceptance (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). Therefore, participation can be considered the very embodiment of inclusion. "Inclusive education is about creating school cultures that cherish participation: learning, playing and working with others as well as making choices about, and having a say in, what happens in the school community." (Väyrynen, & Paksuniemi, 2018, p.147). From these conceptualisations it is clear that learner participation is central to the notion of inclusivity at school.

Learner participation can be understood at two different levels: firstly, at school level, which entails involvement in democratic processes and decision-making and then participation can be viewed within the classroom, as teaching and learning occurs. Engaging with children and young people in decision-making that involves them is a complex and challenging process (Kellett, 2011), and as such, requires a change in values and attitudes of the teachers and other stakeholders involved at schools. Teachers' knowledge of democratic participation and how to encourage learner participation within the classroom is important. It is possible that teachers' incorrect use of strategies can inadvertently undermine learners' participation, as indicated by

Thornberg (2009) study on allowing learners to develop school rules. Allowing learners access to decision-making is not the only strategy that teachers can employ, rather they must allow full participation to learners. When school democracy meetings take place, they tend to be illusory; which typically involves reducing negotiation with learners and instead requesting learners to confirm proposals from authorities (Thornberg, 2009).

Participation within an inclusive classroom context refers to all learners being given opportunities to be involved in the daily life of the classroom (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). Within the classroom, participation can be framed as quality interactions between learners, and between learners and teachers. Questions regarding successful student-student interaction such as giving each other answers, discussing, debating, explaining and providing examples should indicate engagement in quality interactions (Jacobs & Greliche, 2017). Mulongo (2013) found that teachers who taught actively, allowed learners to participate effectively in class – learners were encouraged to take initiative during class, and allowed to influence the lessons' direction – participation went beyond passive listening and note-taking. However, teachers and learners do not share the same views on what participation entails. The literature indicates that classroom participation and its relation to academic achievement is conceptualised differently by teachers and learners (Siddig & AlKhoudary, 2018; Niia, Almqvist, Brunnberg & Granlund, 2015). In addition, there is evidence that learners participated more when they perceived warmth from their teachers in the classroom (Voelkl, 1995) and when they were given opportunities to participate actively within the classroom (Mulongo, 2013).

For this study, aspects of the Index for Inclusion provide a useful framework within which to investigate the participation and achievement of learners whilst probing the phenomena of visible rewards. In particular, I have used parts of the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) as well as the principle of participation found in the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) as a structure to probe the dimensions of school policies and school practices in relation to its inclusivity. In doing so, barriers to participation and learning of all learners will be identified by questioning the beliefs, attitudes and processes that underpin the practice of visibly rewarding learners.

2.4.1. Barriers to Learning and Participation

In the Index for Inclusion, an alternative concept to that of special education needs is provided by use of "barriers to learning and participation" (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p.4). This is because framing the learner as having a "special educational need" is

saying that educational difficulties are within the learner, and automatically the label leads to lowered expectations. Attention is thus deflected from difficulties that other learners experience, as well as sources of difficulties in relationships, cultures, curricula, teaching and learning approaches, school organization and policy (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In using the term “barriers to learning and participation” schools can focus their attention on improving education for all children.

Given that barriers to learning and participation occur in a variety of ways and in all aspects of schooling, it can prevent access to school or limit participation within it (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). For instance, when learners feel that they are being judged for their abilities if they ask a question during a lesson, they might not ask questions due to possible fear of shame and humiliation resulting from their question. Thus, learners can experience barriers as they interact with each other, and this can affect how and what they are taught (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

In addition, participation and barriers to participation can be described as interconnected and continual processes, such that increasing participation reduces barriers to participation, and vice versa. (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). Activities in a school may increase participation for some, whilst simultaneously reinforcing barriers to participation for others (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). These interconnected and never-ending processes are constantly shifting and can be difficult to change (Ainscow, 2005). Given that institutions are always changing, however, there can never be a fully participatory school (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). This does not mean that increasing participation levels at schools is a fruitless exercise; however, it does highlight that increasing participation is an ongoing and continual process.

2.4.2. Resources to support learning and participation

Minimizing barriers to learning and participation requires mobilising resources within the school and its communities. Booth and Ainscow (2011) argue that there are always more resources to support learning and participation than are currently used within any setting, and resources are not just about money. This has particular relevance to local settings in South Africa where funding constraints have been widely documented (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007) and is a common lamentation of teachers regarding the lack of inclusivity in our schools (Makoelle, 2012; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). The Index for Inclusion however, is focused on using resources currently available within the school. Resources can be found in learners, parents and caregivers, teachers, and communities (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In order to fully realise the potential of these resources, changes in cultures, policies and practices

must occur. Much of this is possible with minimal funding or no funding at all.

Resources can be found within learners and teachers themselves. Learners' capacity to direct their own learning, and to support each others' learning, may be particularly under-utilized as may be the potential for the teaching staff to support each others' development (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Framing knowledge as a resource from which inclusion can be realized, Booth and Ainscow (2011) argue that there is a wealth of knowledge available within a school about what impedes the learning and participation of learners. And this is not being used optimally. Thus the Index for Inclusion helps schools draw on this knowledge to inform school development.

It is from this basis of readily available resources that my study is situated. By gaining the perspectives of learners, their parents, their teachers and the senior management staff of the school, I investigated the use of visible rewards as a possible barrier to the learning and participation of all learners. Opening the way to investigate other means that can be used to enhance learning.

2.4.3. Institutional Discrimination

Institutional discrimination has been identified as being deeply embedded within the cultures of an institution (Booth & Ainscow, 2011), and is known to influence the way people are perceived as well as the responses that are made to them. Institutions may disadvantage people as a result of their gender, ethnicity, disability, class and sexual orientation. Institutional discrimination is a barrier to participation and within education, it may hinder learning. Racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and disablism share a common root in intolerance to difference and the abuse of power to create and perpetuate inequalities (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In South Africa, racism at schools is seen as an outcome of individual ignorance and prejudice rather than focusing on inherent structural factors in society (Meier & Hartell, 2009). These structural factors exist despite the decentralisation that has since been in place since the South African Schools Act (1996).

Sayed and Soudien (2004) argue that although the South African Schools Act (1996) provides schools real opportunity for institutionalising democratic structures and practices, these have not been used to make any real change. Their study undertaken in three provinces involving 12 schools, found that the way in which decentralisation was implemented by transferring governance to schools via the School Governing Bodies (SGB) provided racially and economically defined communities with the legal means to preserve their privileges (Sayed & Soudien, 2004). Thus schools continued to re-articulate institutional discrimination without having to use to the word race in any of their policies. For example, using language policies to determine access helped

sustain the status quo at some schools. In reference to the development of new discriminatory policies, Jansen (2004) argues that the SGB is the entity that determines the pace, content and direction of change at schools, despite the South Africa School's Act (1996) being democratic.

Making schools more inclusive thus involves the painful process of challenging their own discriminatory practices and attitudes (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). At its extreme, discrimination ends in the exclusion and marginalisation of learners (Graham & Macartney, 2012; Grimaldi, 2012). Learners who feel unworthy, unwelcome and unwanted can result in learners choosing to drop out of school (Majoko & Phasha, 2018). As Slee (2011) recommends, inclusive education starts with identifying and dismantling exclusion. In light of Slee's recommendation, this study is aimed at probing the tradition of rewarding learners visibly and publicly, and to examine the possibility that it may be discriminatory institutional practice, and thus stand in the way of inclusion of all learners.

2.5. Exclusion and Marginalisation

In order to fully understand the aims of inclusive education, it is useful to explore the related concepts of exclusion and marginalisation. On a broad level, social exclusion is conceptualized as a negative condition deriving from unsuccessful participation in education and training (Alexiadou, 2002). Excluded young people are usually not in the mainstream of social activity, lacking participation at any level either within school or in employment. Exclusion can be described as a reference to temporary or longer lasting pressures, hindering full participation (Booth and Ainscow, 2011; Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). At school level, exclusion can occur as a result of difficulties in relationships, or with what is taught, or from feelings of not being valued (Booth and Ainscow, 2011). Framed in this way, inclusion in society is therefore seen as synonymous with educational success (Grimaldi, 2012). Including learners within the school and within classrooms is therefore the goal and aim of inclusive education. It is hoped that that when children are included, feel a sense of belonging, are given opportunities to participate and achieve at school, they will mirror this kind of behaviour later on as they develop into full and active members of a democratic society; consequently, children who experience marginalisation at school are likely to become excluded members of society as adults (Grimaldi, 2012).

Marginalisation is defined by the United Nations Development Programme, as "the state of being considered unimportant, undesirable, unworthy, insignificant and different resulting in inequity, unfairness, deprivation and enforced lack of access to

mainstream power" (UNDP, 1996). Marginalisation ultimately results in social exclusion. Marginalisation is a complex phenomenon and can be used to understand the necessity of inclusion and participation in school settings (Messiou, 2012). Graham and Macartney (2012, p.6) define marginalisation as "the exclusion of particular groups of people from full respect, participation and inclusion within education and society and involves processes of 'othering' where groups such as disabled children are pushed by the 'centre' out to the 'margins' with limiting effects on their rights, and their opportunities to contribute to and shape learning environments, relationships and society". As a result, learners experience what is known as 'silent exclusion'. Although physically present in the classroom, learners are not actively participating in lessons, are overlooked and often ignored as full members of the classroom by the teacher conducting the lesson. Thus learners with a disability can experience new forms of exclusion through social isolation (Graham & Macartney, 2012).

Using the belief that marginalisation is experienced by some learners in any given context, Messiou (2012) argues that issues resulting in marginalisation of children can be obvious, but may also be complex and hidden, and unless emphasis is placed on all children's voices, they can be easily overlooked. The importance of understanding marginalisation in education is a potentially powerful approach to inclusive education when the emphasis is on how children themselves perceive what is happening in educational contexts and how they feel about specific aspects of school life (Messiou, 2012). Therefore, one of the foremost aims of inclusive education is to reduce barriers to participation thereby preventing the exclusion and marginalisation of learners.

2.6. Aims and ideals of Inclusive Education

According to White Paper 6, one of the key strategies required to achieve the vision of a socially just, participatory, socially integrated inclusive education system is to transform all aspects of the education system (DoE, 2001). The agenda of transformation post-1994 is ubiquitous among all facets and levels of government and policy-making in South Africa as democracy prevailed at the end of apartheid. Educational transformation according to White Paper 6 requires "changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environments to meet the needs of all learners" (DoE, 2001, p.7). This point is clarified and explicated in the Index for Inclusion: making schools more inclusive involves people in the painful process of challenging their own discriminatory practices and attitudes (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Whilst I have chosen to refer to the values associated with inclusive education as aims

and ideals in this study, words such as values, themes, fundamental assumptions, ideals and aims are used interchangeably in the literature.

The aims and ideals of inclusive education in terms of school structure is illuminated in Ellen Brantlinger's explication of ideology (2004). Ideology is described as the images, myths, ideas and beliefs that mediate our understanding of the world in profoundly unconscious ways (Brantlinger, 2004). Furthermore, there is an automaticity in the way ideology influences our actions: people act with little realization of an action's ideological grounding (Brantlinger, 2004). In her description of basic clusters of ideology, Brantlinger has outlined the two types of ideologies: *hierarchical* and *communal*. *Hierarchical* ideologies are those related to establishing social hierarchies through interpersonal competition and stratifying practices, whilst *communal* ideologies are those based on collective ideals that recognise human dignity, commonality, equality and reciprocity (Brantlinger, 2004). The two types of ideological clusters are in sharp contrast, one promotes exclusionary practices, the other is embedded in inclusionary practice. As Brantlinger (2004) argues, it is clear that hierarchical ideologies are prevalent in modern society and dominate social, political and economic institutions and practices. Slee's (2011) call for the activism and fight for inclusion in schools is poignant here. Should the voices of the majority be silent, the status quo will continue at schools and exclusion will remain an unfortunate but acceptable outcome.

Teacher expectations regarding the academic capabilities of the learner strongly affect how learners see themselves (Reay, 2017). These academic expectations form part of the learner's identity and remains with the learner throughout his or her schooling career. Inclusive education is concerned with the learning of all, and believing that all learners can learn (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). An important part of this belief is that it must be actioned by teachers allowing learners to develop positive identities and believing that they can learn. However, Volmink (2018, p.9) states that the tendency of teachers is to uncritically accept arguments about ability and disability, rather than examine the underlying causes which construct "success" and "failure" and to examine our own attitudes which place a limit on what we believe can be achieved.

The aims and ideals of inclusive education appears to represent a modern mixture of values such as equal opportunity, social respect and solidarity (Norwich, 2014; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). In short, inclusive education represents the ideals we should be striving for in providing quality education to all. Whilst the language of inclusion is recent, it is based on old and established values (Norwich, 2014). The definition of

inclusive education provided by UNESCO (2015) shifts away from the predominant association of inclusive education with special educational needs and disability. Given that this study is aligned with a broader understanding of inclusive education, there will not be a focus on specified groups of individuals but rather, inclusive education will bunderstood as the provision of education to all learners irrespective of differences in race, class, home language, abilities and impairments.

There is a pressing need to address the issue of inclusivity in South African schools (Majoko & Phasha, 2018; Makoelle, 2012; Meier & Hartell, 2009; Walton, 2013; Chrisholm, 2004. In terms of the timeliness and necessity for inclusion in American schools, Beck and Malley (1998, p. 137) argue that the current "impersonality of large schools; the emphasis on compliance, control, and orderliness; and the preoccupation with grades, competition, and individual success have created a social milieu that contributes to a sense of alienation, apathy, and isolation." Whilst the description comes from an American source, it is not far removed from what South African schools currently experience. Volmink (2018) states that South African schools that are not inclusive result in poor learner performance, a sense of failure, risk-taking behaviour, absenteeism, and drop out. For this reason, schools need to provide a welcoming environment to all learners. Students with positive self esteem and family support may tend to succeed in large, competitive environments whilst rejected and neglected children with damaged spirits and a diminished sense of self are however at high risk for failure, dropping out of school, joining gangs, and/or becoming substance abusers (Beck & Malley, 1998). In order to prevent deviant behaviour and social exclusion, schools must focus on teaching all learners how to live in an inclusive community where each person is treated with respect and dignity and is enlisted to participate fully in the life of the community. Inclusive education is thus necessary in schools today to ensure that learners' dignity and their right to participate fully as members of the classroom and the school.

The values associated with inclusive education, according to Norwich (2014) are (1) access and quality, (2) equity and social justice, (3) democratic values and participation and (4) the balance between unity and diversity. Furthermore, the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p. 3) mentions the basis of inclusive values in the form of statements, within which the Index has been built upon. These include:

- Everyone is made to feel welcome
- Students help each other
- There is a partnership between staff and parents
- There are high expectations of all students

- Staff, governors (school managers), students and parents share a philosophy of inclusion
- Students are equally valued
- Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school
- The school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination
- Lessons encourage the participation of all students
- Students learn collaboratively
- Assessment contributes to the achievements of all students
- Valuing all students and staff equally
- Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.
- Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely.
- Emphasising the role of schools in building communities and developing values, as well as increasing achievement.

In addition to the Index for Inclusion, I used statements from The Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). The Participation Framework is divided into four sections: participation and access, participation and collaboration, participation and achievement and lastly, participation and diversity. Access refers to learners being present, collaboration refers to learning and working together, achievement refers to supporting everyone's learning and diversity refers to the recognition and acceptance of all learners. Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017, p. 157) state that "any section or element within a section can be taken as a starting point in terms of establishing a research focus". In addition, the notion of participation is seen as crucial to the development of both achievement and inclusion in schools (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). The statements that I had used from the Participation Framework were:

- maintaining the dignity and respect of all learners,
- policies and practices encouraging students to use each other as a resource for learning,
- valuing and rewarding a range of achievements,
- certain forms of achievement that are more highly valued than others,
- policies, practices and interactions that reinforce barriers to achievement of some individuals,

Based on the values listed above, it is clear that the aims and ideals of inclusive education are for the benefit of all. This includes not only the diverse group of learners, but also the teaching staff and the school itself. However, this study is focused on the learners and thus I have selected indicators that apply to the participation and achievement of all learners. It must be noted that the aims and ideals of inclusive education are closely aligned with the transformative agenda of South African schools (Meltz, Herman & Pillay, 2014; Makoelle, 2012; Engelbrecht, 1999). However, a common criticism against inclusive education is the dropping of standards in order to diversify the learners within the classroom, resulting in lower achievement.

2.7. Achievement

Achievement might be defined as being the progress made by learners over time (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). Given this definition of achievement, Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017, p.11) state that "it is possible to have achieved well, given their starting point, but to not have reached the arbitrary standards as pre-specified by performance criteria". Most learners will increase their level of achievement as they pass through school. The amount of progress over time however will differ between individuals (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017).

A review of the literature focusing on achievement in South Africa is highly contextualised to the school subject and location of the study. Studies have been conducted in mathematics education (Maree, Fletcher & Erasmus, 2013; Reddy, Van der Berg, Van Rensburg & Taylor, 2012) mother tongue instruction (Hanemann & McKay, 2019), Science education (Zenda, 2017; Prinsloo, Rogers & Harvey, 2018), critical reading skills (Van Staden, Combrinck & Roux, 2014) and mapwork skills (Mwenesongole, 2009). Other studies focused on comparisons between South African learner achievement in international tests such as PIRLS (Zimmerman & Smit, 2016; Van Staden & Howie, 2010), TIMMS (Long, & Wendt, 2017), and inter-country comparisons of science performance with Korea (Cho, Scherman & Gaigher, 2014).

Despite the contextualised nature of the studies, poor learner achievement appears as a common concern in many studies at local level (Zenda, 2017; Van Staden, Combrinck & Roux, 2014; Reddy, Van der Berg, Van Rensburg & Taylor, 2012; Mwenesongole, 2009) as well as poor performance in international tests (Zimmerman & Smit, 2016; Cho, Scherman & Gaigher, 2014; Van Staden & Howie, 2010). Some of the factors contributing to poor learner achievement have been attributed to teacher attitudes (Zenda, 2017; Mwenesongole, 2009), teaching practice (Zimmerman & Smit,

2016) and teaching skill (Prinsloo, Rogers & Harvey, 2018). Raising achievement for all learners is thus a major concern for schools in South Africa (Geduld, 2017; Reddy, Van der Berg, Van Rensburg & Taylor, 2012).

2.7.1. Achievement and Bell-curve thinking

With regards to learner achievement in the UK, Loxley and Thomas (2001) argue that assumptions about bell-curve thinking regarding learner ability has become naturalised in education and its negative effects on achievement and participation in the classroom have been a concern for many years. Bell-curve thinking refers to a distributive model that places the majority of occurrences of any phenomena in the middle (referred to as normal), with a few occurrences at either the high or low extremes (Fendler & Muzaffar, 2008). In education, bell-curve distribution is used to sort children and stream them from an early age into what their teachers perceive their abilities to be, often placing a ceiling on what they could achieve (Florian, 2014). The use of grades and percentages reinforces the idea of bell-curve thinking which in turn promotes labelling and stratification of learners, forming the basis for exclusionary practice (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse; 2017).

The attitudes and beliefs associated with bell-curve thinking, such as normal, average, low achieving, high achieving are oppositional to inclusive practice. It is these normalising practices that are among the reasons for an expanding and expensive Special Education Needs (SEN) industry (Tomlinson, 2012). Teachers look at learners within the low achieving band and believe they cannot be taught and thus refer them to special schools. Believing that all children can learn is the basis of inclusive pedagogy according to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011). Furthermore, Sapon-Shevin (2007) believes that there is no possible way of measuring whether a learner has potential, whether high potential or low. Thus ability is framed as being flexible, dynamic and subject to change. Interestingly, Fendler and Muzaffar's (2008) argument that people who treat bell curve assumptions as factual reality are those that do not hold a social democratic worldview. Rather, their capitalistic attitude towards the purpose of education is to provide selected individuals with a competitive advantage, thus ensuring "the survival of the fittest" (Fendler & Muzaffar, 2008, p. 79). This mentality can also be linked to the meritocratic idea of promoting those who possess merit. However, Mijs (2016) argues that merit in itself is a problematic concept. (See sub-section 4.5.4. for discussion on Meritocracy).

2.7.2. Achievement and Inclusion

Researchers within the field of inclusive education have undertaken studies that probe the relationship between achievement and inclusion. Contrary to popular belief that educating all learners, despite their differences, may lower standards and result in lower levels of achievement, the findings indicate otherwise. Higher levels of achievement have been found within inclusive schools across all students within the school (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017; Allan & Persson, 2016; Allan & Slee, 2008). Much of the success of these schools can be attributed to a replacement of the idea that separating children with differing abilities in order to teach them, as well an insistence that everyone can succeed, and expectations of helping each other get there (Allan & Persson, 2016). A pedagogical model that promotes a sense of community and belonging by strengthening teacher-student relationships and integrating cooperative learning strategies into the curriculum is required (Väyrynen, & Paksuniemi, 2018).

With a decades' worth of work on inclusion and achievement in UK schools, Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017) use participation as an underlying principle in understanding achievement. Achievement is listed alongside participation as the third indicator of the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). Therefore, achievement is viewed as as outcome of participation, and regarded as necessary for supporting everyone's learning. A full discussion on how the participation and achievement of learners is aligned with the positive social interdependence model can be found in sub-section 3.4. Social Interdependence Theory in Chapter 3.

2.8. Conclusion

Thus far, I have explored the inclusion literature at both local and international levels discussing issues affecting the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, the aims and ideals of inclusive education as well as the relationship between inclusive education and achievement. In the next chapter, I will continue with the theoretical framework, which comprises critical realism, Social Interdependence Theory and the Index for Inclusion.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

"Intelligence is constructed against another's stupidity"

(Brantlinger, 2004, p.20)

3.1. Introduction

As noted by Brantlinger (2004), the way we define concepts is often in relation to its inverse or opposite. Accordingly, this knowledge can be flawed and may distort our perceptions of reality. This study is concerned with investigating the practice of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement at two high schools in Gauteng and its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. In the previous chapter, I provided a broad overview of inclusive education, its historical development; its aims and ideals as well as the current circumstances regarding inclusive education in South African schools. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background of the theories which underpin the study. The theoretical framework for this study broadly encompasses inclusive education and critical realism. The purpose of a conceptual framework, is to create a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that will support and guide the research (Maxwell, 2005). Given that this study is situated within the discourse of inclusive education, with a focus on the participation and achievement of all learners, I have chosen the theoretical perspectives arising from Social Interdependence Theory. This perspective allows me to integrate aspects of learner participation and achievement within a competitive or cooperative school culture. In using a critical and social realist philosophy to underpin the study, I have primarily drawn on the philosophies and works of Roy Bhaskar and Margaret Archer. I begin this chapter by discussing the use of the Index for Inclusion as part of my theoretical framework as well as the alignment of Social Interdependence Theory with inclusive education. Then I will discuss the basic tenets of Roy Bhaskar's critical realism. Finally, I discuss the Margaret Archer's Social Realist Theory, and show how this provides the analytical tools for the interrogation of the practice of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement.

3.2. Index for Inclusion

An abundance of recommendations has been made by researchers for the transformation of schools as a starting point in the implementation of inclusive

education (Ainscow & Miles, 2009; Slee, 2011; Ainscow, 1999; Slee, 2003). These include a detailed analysis of existing arrangements at schools by addressing and challenging the thinking behind such practices (Ainscow & Miles, 2009), identifying and dismantling exclusionary practices at schools (Slee, 2011) and using the "hidden voices" of marginalised learners to improve schools in ways that would be of benefit to all learners (Ainscow, 1999, p.9). The initial Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), developed as a result of a collaborative action research project, provides a useful framework within which schools can begin challenging and changing institutional practices that might consciously or unwittingly impede the implementation of inclusive education. A later, revised version of the Index for Inclusion has since been published (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). The aim of the Index for Inclusion is to explore the development of schools in ways that support the learning of all students by addressing barriers to learning and participation within current cultures, policies and practices, in order to identify priorities for change (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). The Index for Inclusion has a strong focus on the presence, participation and achievement of diverse learners at school, without selecting and identifying groups of learners.

The Index for Inclusion was designed to be used and adapted by individual schools (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). The Index process involves reviewing the existing school culture through indicators, questions and activities. Schools can then identify and prioritise areas of concern such as barriers, areas of strength, and areas to improve on. Following this analysis, action plans can be developed, followed through, and reviewed for further development. This Index process is designed to take place within a school year, incorporating the exploration of values and the examination of the theories upon which practices and assumptions are based. The Index for Inclusion can thus be described as a spiral: review, produce a plan, take action, and review the subsequent development.

Although initially developed and used in the UK, researchers in over 31 countries throughout the world have used the Index for Inclusion. The Index has been used to assist in generating school reform that is beneficial to all learners. It has also been modified and used in South Africa at three schools in the Western Cape (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006). The Index revolves around the two main concepts of putting inclusive values into action, and identifying and removing barriers to learning and participation. In the self-review process, views are sought from the four major stakeholders in education: the management, teaching staff, learners and parents. A set of indicators per school dimension (culture, policies, practices) is provided. Sets of questions are attached per indicator. The questions define the meaning of each indicator, as well as probe the challenges that need investigation. A number of

modifications and adaptations have resulted since its inception in 2000. Given the changes and modifications that have taken place, as well as its translation into over thirty languages, the Index for Inclusion can be lauded for its flexibility, allowing it to be used in a variety of school cultures and contexts (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006).

Critics have argued that the Index uses language that might minimize the significance of difference. For instance, the use of the word diversity, where difference is established as a resource and opportunity, can downplay the actual difficulties associated with difference and may even deny the challenges associated with disability (Norwich, 2014). The *Index for Inclusion* is a values-based framework that is meant to be used to explore the values, beliefs and attitudes that prevail in a school and how best these could be used to effect change. Despite its widespread use however, the *Index for Inclusion* is not primarily an evaluation tool, and a conscious decision was taken by the developers of the Index to avoid the use of quantitative devices (Booth, 2013). The following image is from the first edition of the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) providing a visual of the three dimensions on which the comprehensive *Index* has been formulated.

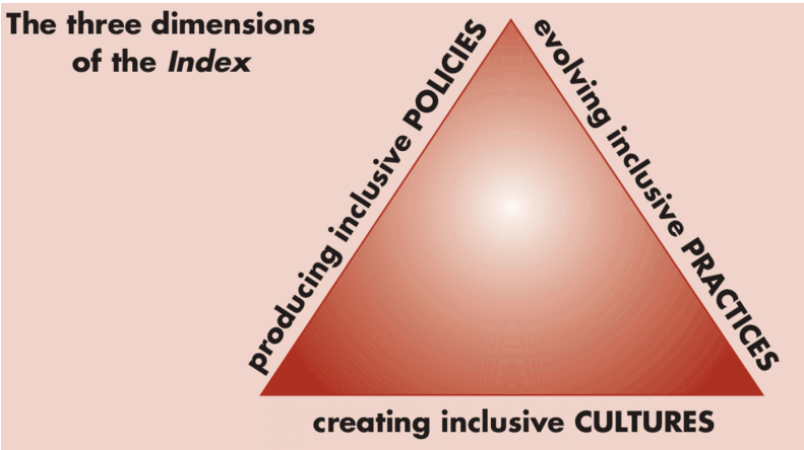


Figure 1: The three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002, p.7).

Of importance to this study in the exploration of visible rewarding learners, is the dimension relation to inclusive cultures. Given that rewarding learners is generally found within a competitive school culture, it is necessary to investigate the culture of the school and to determine whether rewards are congruent within an inclusive education system. For this purpose, I have selected the Index for Inclusion. It is therefore an important aspect of the theoretical framework. In the image above, “creating inclusive cultures” forms the base of the triangle, upon which other dimensions of inclusivity rest, such as inclusive policies, and inclusive practices. Thus an inclusive school culture is imperative in promoting inclusion at schools.

3.3. Creating Inclusive Cultures

The Index for Inclusion is divided into three interconnected dimensions that are necessary for the development of inclusive cultures at school. Booth and Ainscow (2011) argue that despite being at the heart of school improvement, little attention is paid to the potential of school cultures to either support or undermine developments in teaching and learning. Whilst this study is not implementing the Index for Inclusion in its entirety for its intended purpose of school reform, the Index is nonetheless a useful framework within which to situate the probing of visible rewards as part of school culture in this study. Given that inclusive school culture has been shown to be the basis of any inclusive change at school, the interconnected relationships are carefully outlined by Booth and Ainscow (2011) as having three dimensions. These three dimensions are:

- A. Creating inclusive cultures
- B. Producing inclusive policies, and
- C. Evolving inclusive practices.

Each dimension listed above has an explanation of ways in which to reach the desired outcome. In A, *creating inclusive cultures*, the dimension is further broken down into '*building communities'* and '*establishing inclusive values'*. Here the focus is on helping schools to build themselves such that it is a secure, accepting, collaborating and stimulating community. Everyone is valued as the foundation for the highest achievements of all. Shared inclusive values are developed and shared with all members of staff, learners, governing body members and parents/carers. Creating an inclusive culture is thus based upon inclusive principles and values that will guide decisions about policy and moment to moment practice in classrooms (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In this way, school development is a continuous process.

The second dimension, B, *producing inclusive policies*, offers two ways in which schools could view inclusive policy: 'Developing the school for all' and 'organising support for diversity'. This can be achieved by policies that encourage the staff and learners to participate from the moment they join the school, reaching out to learners in the locality, and minimizing exclusionary pressures. All policies should involve clear strategies for change. In terms of organising support for diversity, support is considered to be any activity that increases the capacity of a school to respond to learner diversity (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

The third dimension, C, *evolving inclusive practices*, also offers two ways in which

schools should view inclusive practices: 'orchestrating learning' and 'mobilising resources'. In this dimension, schools develop practices which reflect the inclusive cultures and policies of the school. Lessons are made responsive to student diversity. The focus here would be on pedagogical practices within the classroom; teachers should encourage all learners to participate actively in the lesson (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Learners are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their education, drawing on their knowledge and experience outside of school. Each learners' contribution should be equally valued to ensure active participation from the whole class (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In terms of mobilising resources, both material and human beings as resources to support learning are considered, such as 'reading mums' to help listen to learners reading for instance. The teaching staff identify material resources as well as resources within each other, other students, parents/carers and local communities which can be mobilised to support learning and participation (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

In the three dimensions above, creating inclusive cultures, policies and practices is realised as a whole school effort that emanates from a framework that guides the process. Thus inclusivity cannot be viewed as little bits that are added on to existing arrangements based on an exclusionary system. It is clear that inclusive principles should guide the practices and policies for the culture to be inclusive at schools. A detailed discussion of school culture can be found in section 4.6. in Chapter 4. The Index for Inclusion is a very detailed and lengthy document that is used as a tool for helping to unearth exclusionary assumptions, questioning taken-for-granted practices and encouraging whole school reform towards inclusivity. Given that the nature and size of my study is of a much smaller scale and is probing the practice of visible rewards, I have not used the Index for Inclusion in its entirety for this study. Rather, I have focused on the aspects of learner participation and belonging and how these are mitigated by the policies of the school with respect to rewarding learners. In particular, I have drawn on the Index where I felt it has contributed to the development of my theoretical framework, using it in conjunction with the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). A full discussion on participation appears in section 2.4.2. in Chapter 2.

3.4. Social Interdependence Theory

As discussed in chapter 2, achievement is viewed within the Participation Framework as being in direct relation to participation. Therefore, I have chosen to use Social Interdependence Theory to explore how learners might help each other to reach common goals within the classroom, and how learner participation in group settings

affects the achievement of all learners. In order to understand the phenomenon of visible rewards and its relation to the aims and ideals of inclusive education with respect to learner participation and achievement, Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1989) provides as a useful framework for comparison. Social Interdependence Theory is premised on three situations that arise from the way learners interact with each other in class: positive social interdependence, negative social interdependence and no interdependence. Social Interdependence Theory explains that cooperative efforts provide positive interdependence. Individuals encourage and facilitate each others' efforts to reach goals together. The positive interdependence situation ties in well with the South African concept of *Ubuntu*.

The African philosophical concept of *Ubuntu* embodies the sense of togetherness, and attributes success as a result of 'I am because we are' or, as stated by Walton (2011, p. 243) "I am fully human in relationship with others". Similarly, Volmink (2018, p. 10) explains the essence of *Ubuntu* as a delicate web of interconnectedness and interdependence with each other, such that "if I diminish, insult or mistreat another person, I do similarly to myself". Majoko and Phasha (2018) state that the consciousness of *Ubuntu* is that every individual, even those that are considered different to the norm, should be accepted as valued and loved human beings. A sense of community and cooperation is emphasised in the South African context in the spirit of *Ubuntu*, by the sharing of whatever resources are available (Walton, 2011). Furthermore, rejection, stigmatisation and exclusionary practices are unacceptable within the philosophical framework of *Ubuntu*, because they undermine one's identity and self-respect (Majoko & Phasha, 2018). The sharing and cooperation mentioned above can be aligned with positive interdependence from Social Interdependence Theory. Because the belief system framework for inclusive education principles exist within *Ubuntu,* South Africa is well-placed to link policy, practice and the community to improve inclusive education (Phasha & Condy, 2017).

Another aspect that supports my choice to use Social Interdependence Theory to understand the impact of visible rewards is the way in which the aims and ideals of inclusive education are affiliated with the positive interdependence model of cooperation and mutual attainment of goals. As participation, active engagement, cooperation and collaboration form the basis of inclusion for all learners in the classroom (Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2018; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011), a correlation between inclusive values and positive interdependence can thus be drawn. It is the notion that "facilitating and promoting the success of others is a natural way of life" (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p.367) is particularly

inclusive.

The historical roots of Social Interdependence Theory can be traced to the emerging school of "gestalt psychology" in the early 1900's. Kurt Lewin (1948) built on the principles of gestalt psychology. He proposed that the essence of the group is the interdependence among members that results in the group being a dynamic whole. Such that a change in the state of any member or subgroup changes the state of any other member or subgroup. Through common goals, group members are made interdependent. A state of tension arises that motivates movement towards the accomplishment of goals, as members perceive their common goals. I have chosen Social Interdependence Theory to guide this study based on this state of tension that exists between the competitiveness of schooling as manifested by visible rewards, together with the necessity for schools to be more inclusive, which is associated with the meaningful participation and achievement of all learners.

Johnson and Johnson's (1989) Social Interdependence Theory examines how to build cooperation among teams and classmates. By creating the right conditions for the groups to truly cooperate and use each other's strengths. If instead they fail to blend as a group, some members will end up doing the bulk of the work whilst others will provide minimal engagement.

The basic premise of Social Interdependence Theory is that the way in which interdependence is structured determines how individuals interact, which in turn, determines outcomes (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Within any group situation where group members of the group are given a task to complete, three types of effort can occur: two types of social interdependence; positive interdependence and negative interdependence, and the third is the absence of interdependence. These three situations and their implications are provided by Johnson and Johnson (2009, p. 367):

> **Positive social interdependence** exists when there is a positive correlation among individuals' goal attainments. Individuals perceive that they can attain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked attain their goals. Positive interdependence results in promotive interaction, wherein individuals encourage and facilitate each others' efforts to complete tasks in order to reach the groups goals.
> **Negative social interdependence** exists when there is a negative correlation among individuals' goal achievements. Individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are

competitively linked, fail to obtain their goals. Negative interdependence results in oppositional interaction, wherein individuals discourage and obstruct each others' efforts to complete tasks in order to reach their goals.

No interdependence exists when there is no correlation between individuals' goal achievements; individuals perceive that the achievement of their goals is unrelated to the goal achievement of others.

According to Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), three types of efforts can be seen in group situations: cooperative efforts, competitive efforts and individualistic experiences. Cooperative efforts teach values such as a commitment to one's own and others' success and well-being, commitment to the common good, and the view that facilitating and promoting the success of others is a natural way of life. Competitive efforts inherently teach the values of getting more than others, beating and defeating others, seeing winning as important and believing that opposing and obstructing the success of others is a natural way of life. Individualistic experiences inherently teach the values of a commitment to one's own self-interest and the view that others' well-being is irrelevant. I have chosen a values-based understanding of inclusive education. Social Interdependence Theory thus fits well with my study.

Within the positive interdependence model, individuals' goals are structured cooperatively and their actions tend to promote the success of others (e.g., mutual help and assistance, sharing resources and information, and acting in trustworthy and trusting ways). When positive interdependence flourishes amongst students, the environment for learning brightens considerably (Jacobs & Greliche, 2017). By contrast, competitive goal structures result in oppositional interaction patterns (e.g., obstructing others' goal achievement efforts, hiding resources and information from each other, and acting in distrustful and distrusting ways). The absence of goal structures results in the absence of interaction, or no interaction between individuals (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

Since its inception, Social Interdependence Theory has been developed and used in many ways by researchers over the years. According to Johnson and Johnson (2009) more than 1,200 research studies have been conducted in the past century on cooperative, competitive, and individualistic efforts. Findings from these studies have validated, modified, refined, and extended the theory and applications can be found in a variety of disciplines, including sport (Jacobs, Teh & Spencer, 2017), hospitality and tourism studies (Tang, 2014), library services (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 2002), organisational management (Janssen, Van De Vliert & Veenstra, 1999), performance

management (Tarricone & Luca, 2002) and information systems development (Pee, Kankanhalli & Kim, 2010), amongst others. In education, Social Interdependence Theory has been used in many studies, highlighting the importance of collaboration and cooperation within the classroom as being a successful model for group learning.

The positive social interdependence has been shown in the literature on classroom studies to promote each others' success (Jacobs & Greliche, 2017). Collaboration within groups ensures active participation for all learners within the classroom. It thereby shifts the focus away from a hierarchical approach where the teacher is the main purveyor of knowledge in the classroom and leaners are expected to be obedient recipients of that knowledge (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Collaboration between learners in groups enhances the inclusivity of the classroom and provides opportunities for learners to engage in critical thinking via robust discussions. Positive interdependence thus allows for a model of successful learning of all within the classroom (Gratton, 2015).

One of the most successful examples of using Social Interdependence Theory in education is the development of the theory of Cooperative Learning in the classroom (Jacobs & Greliche, 2017). The use of positive interdependence from the Social Interdependence Theory provided the foundation on which cooperative learning is built (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Within the field of education, cooperative learning consistently has shown the value of collaboration between learners in reaching educational outcomes, giving rise to an extended version of the original theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Cooperative learning as a theory in itself has been applied and hundreds of studies have been generated globally as a result (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Meta-analyses of the many studies in education using cooperative learning have shown that cooperation was superior to competition for tasks involving concept attainment, verbal problem solving, categorizing, retention and memory and spatial problem solving (Hattie, 2009). Studies involving structured activities among learners in the classroom have shown that peer learning is a powerful way to enhance learning in both cooperative and competitive settings (Hattie, 2009).

A meta-analysis was used to review 148 independent studies to investigate the relationship between early adolescents' achievement and their peer relationships. How these may be promoted simultaneously was undertaken by Roseth, Johnson and Johnson (2008) using Social Interdependence Theory. The effects of cooperative learning were found to have more support for cooperative than competitive conditions (d = 0.46), cooperative than individualistic (d = 0.55), and competitive versus

individualist (*d* = 0.20) (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson, 2008). This study suggests that when teachers structure students' academic goals cooperatively early on (as opposed to competitively or individualistically), the following three results can be observed:
(a) the more students will tend to achieve,
(b) the more positive students' relationships will tend to be, and
(c) higher levels of achievement will be associated with more positive peer relationships (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

One prediction of Social Interdependence Theory is that cooperative goal structures will result in higher achievement than competitive or individualistic goal structures. This hypothesis has been supported by results of previous meta-analyses (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1989; D. W. Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981). The alignment with cooperative and collaborative schooling environments and higher levels of achievement is also found in the inclusion literature (Väyrynen, & Paksuniemi, 2018; Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017; Booth & Ainscow, 2011, Brantlinger, 2004).

With regards to a theoretical background for inclusive education in this study, I found Johnson and Johnson's (1984; 1989; 2002; 2009) Social Interdependence Theory to be the most suitable choice for my study. The notion that the goal of achievement has moved from "what I can do" to "what we can do" is a major shift in perspective that promotes cohesiveness, positive social relations and teamwork, all of which are inclusive ways of relating to others. A pedagogy that emphasises belonging and the democratic ideal is one in which caring and cooperating are integral to the learning process (Väyrynen, & Paksuniemi, 2018). Social Interdependence Theory allows for the exploration of the cooperative atmosphere required to enable inclusive education in schools. As such, it is a good choice for the investigation of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at schools.

Positive social interdependence promotes cohesiveness within the groups in the classroom, and is rooted in collaboration rather than competition, thereby endorsing inclusivity. It allows learners to value each others' input and view each other as valuable members of the team. Their own successes are embedded within the success of all learners. Therefore, learners would be more likely to support and assist each other within their own group. In contrast, negative interdependence as a result of competitiveness, would result in learners perceiving other learners as rivals and as obstacles to their own success, thereby withholding information and assistance from their peers. It is therefore relevant to this study to determine whether rewarding learners fosters positive or negative interdependence, thus making Social Interdependence Theory an ideal choice.

The ideals and values associated with inclusive education as adapted from the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) and The Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) discussed in chapter 2 (see sub-section 2.5.) can be aligned with the positive interdependence situation of the theory. Values such as collaboration, cooperation, information-sharing, fostering mutually sustaining relationships, viewing learner differences as resources to support learning, overcoming barriers to participation for particular learners, and assisting one another are synchronised with inclusive values (a full list of the aims and ideals of inclusive education is in sub-section 2.6. of chapter 2). Using practices that promote positive interdependence would therefore be congruent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. In using Social Interdependence Theory as part of my theoretical framework, it allows for the exploration of inclusivity within the classroom. Specifically, I found the theory useful to explore how learner participation in group settings and the achievement of all learners is related to the use of visible rewards. I now discuss the use of critical realism as part of my theoretical framework.

3.5. Why Critical Realism?

In exploring the practice of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement, I am interested in how and why learners are visibly rewarded at high schools for academic achievement and the ways in which it has impacted on the learning of all. Due to the complex nature of the study, I considered several options and approaches ontologically and epistemologically. I found that positivist and idealist epistemologies would not have been sufficient to explore visibly rewarding learners. Whilst positivism relies on uncovering the truth based on measurable observation, idealism is concerned with descriptions of experiences that exist only in the participants' minds (Mingers, 2000). Therefore, using a positivist or idealist approach would have fallen short of the depth of understanding required in this enquiry.

I had considered the use of Systems Theory too, as rewarding learners was a practice that occurs as a result of beliefs, attitudes as well as other practices such as teaching, learning, participation and achievement. Therefore, visibly rewarding learners can be considered a practice that is a consequence of a larger set of practices, beliefs, attitudes and values. Whilst Systems Theory could describe the practice of visible rewards and situate it within a larger system, it is limited in offering deeper understandings of the practice of visible rewards. For instance, using Systems Theory would not have allowed for the interrogation of visible rewards from a social justice perspective. As I have come to this study from an inclusive education standpoint,

concerned with the participation and achievement of all learners, the social justice aspect is crucial to the study.

Therefore, the choice to use critical realism proved to be the best option that allowed me to explore the practice of visibly rewarding learners in a way that provides in depth understanding and a fuller awareness of the various factors influencing the practice. Critical and social realists focus on identifying hidden causal mechanisms, analysing how they work, determining whether they are active or not, and establishing the conditions under which they become active (Sayer, 2000). Critical realism is a paradigm that provides a comprehensive alternative to both positivism and idealism (Bhaskar, 1978). Examining phenomena in layered realities and working towards an understanding that promotes emancipation of those who are experiencing marginalisation are some of the opportunities offered by critical realism, resonating with my study's aims and purpose.

3.6. What is Critical Realism?

Critical realism is a paradigm that makes assumptions about epistemology and ontology, provides a philosophical underpinning that would guide the study as a whole. Initially called "transcendental realism", Bhaskar's critical realism began as a new philosophical movement in the 1970's. Bhaskar created a distinctive and evolving philosophy called critical realism, by using a combination of many threads of realism in its radical, critical and scientific forms, together with idealism and critical theory (Gratton, 2015). According to Hartwig (2007, p.97), Bhaskar posited that "basic" critical realism could allow the oppressed to "with the aid of science, fallibly come to apprehend the real causes of their suffering and act to transform them". Thus it can be seen that critical realism has its roots in an emancipatory ontology.

Critical realism is known for its powerful critiques on both modern positivist science, and postmodern sociology (Gratton, 2015). By using a non-reductionist conception of theory, critical realism separates what *happens* from what *is*. Critical realism is often referred to as the "under labourer" of the sciences (Gratton, 2015), giving researchers ways in which to undertake (and not to undertake) science. Thus it provides the philosophical underpinnings that would guide the study, but does not stipulate to the researcher a distinct methodology, nor does it prescribe specific data collection tools. Critical realism is grounded in the supposition of an external world existing independently of our experiences of it (Bhaskar, 1978, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie (1998) In this regard, Bhaskar (1978) refers to the "epistemic fallacy" as the

mistake of analysing ontological questions of being in terms of epistemological knowledge of being, and is rejected by critical realism. Corbett (2011) explains Bhaskar's epistemic fallacy as a mistake in how one has constructed one's knowledge of the world, such that what we believe to be a verified body of knowledge is actually a construction of the tools and instruments we use (including the history and structures of our society and culture) rather than viewing knowledge as being a property of the world itself. Thus Bhaskar's critical realism views knowledge as something that exists independently (intransitive) and its existence is unrelated to our conceptions of our socially produced known world (transitive). Bhaskar further explains that the transitive world is linked to fallible claims to knowledge. This ontological assumption, termed "transcendental" (Bhaskar, 1978) forms the basis for critical realism's differentiated and stratified reality.

3.7. Stratification of reality

In looking at reality in layers, critical realism differs from positivism and idealism (Davidsen, 2005). Critical realism views reality as differentiated and stratified, and Bhaskar (1978) distinguishes between these three layers, using the terms "empirical, actual and real". Based on earlier works by Bhaskar (1998) it developed the concept of stratification to describe three layers of reality, as well as to show how each layer above is emergent from the one preceding it. Thus the concept of *emergence* is formed (Bhaskar, 1978). In attempting to understand the role of emergence in individual events, and the relations between causes at different emergent levels, the correct account of individual events is inherently stratified (Elder-Vass, 2005). This means that we must view reality in many dimensions and that our sensorial ability to perceive provides us with only a slice of reality. There can be more to what is an observed event and it exists without our knowledge of it.

Viewing reality as having more than one dimension stems from Bhaskar's (1978) question, "what must the world be like for that activity to be possible", creating a new vision for science. This new vision allows for science to be exploratory, essentially concerned with explaining why, searching for unknown causes of known phenomena and transcending other scientific views of the world which tend to reproduce descriptions of our everyday knowledge and ordinary experience (Bhaskar, 2016). Elder-Vass (2005) further explains the three layers as domains, in which Bhaskar clearly intends the domain of the empirical to be a subset of the domain of the actual, which in turn is a subset of the domain of the real (Bhaskar, 2016).

	Domain of Real	Domain of Actual	Domain of Empirical
Mechanisms	X		
Events	X	X	
Experiences	X	X	X

Figure 2: Bhaskar's stratified reality and emergence (taken from Bhaskar, 1978, p.13)

In a differentiated and stratified world, the most accessible level of reality is at the level of the **empirical**. This level consists of our observations and experiences (Elder-Vass, 2005). It is how we define the world by means of facts and data, relative to our theoretical framework and conceptions. Given that theory changes, our knowledge at the level of the empirical is therefore unstable and fallible. As new knowledge is created, our conceptions of the world at the level of the empirical will change. For example, technology has changed the way classrooms operate such that many definitions regarding schooling have changed and some definitions no longer exist in the manner they did a decade ago.

In my study, the level of the **empirical** would refer to the act of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement at public award ceremonies with the presentation of tangible awards such as trophies, badges, scrolls, honour board listings, different items of clothing and certificates. In addition, the level of the empirical would encompass the schools and societies' widely accepted view of visible rewards as the way in which schools promote excellence in academic achievement, recognise the hard work and talent of learners, and motivate learners to achieve academically.

However, critical realists reject the reliance of only empirical knowledge, as it does not account for reality that exists independently of human knowledge of it (Bhaskar, 1978). By looking at further explorations of empirical knowledge, critical realists therefore believe the layer of the **empirical** can be uncovered to expose what is responsible for people's experiences and observations of the world (Elder-Vass, 2005). To do this, critical realists dig deeper into the layers of reality to reveal the levels of the **actual** and the **real**. The level of the empirical is dependent upon the level immediately beneath it, which is the level of the **actual**.

The level of the **actual** consists of the structures and events of the world (Bhaskar, 2016). Events depend on specific structural conditions and cannot be reduced to what

is observable at the empirical level. It refers to the events and entities of the world whether they are experienced by people or not (Danermark, 2002). Events at the actual are not observable like those at the level of the empirical. The events which populate Bhaskar's 'domain of the actual' are downwardly-inclusive and multi- levelled (Elder-Vass, 2005). This clearly corresponds to Bhaskar's conception of the actual as that domain of reality in which a vast range of particular causes interact to cause events.

The actual includes not only events that are unobserved by virtue of the absence of an observer, but also those levels of downwardly-inclusive events that are unobserved by virtue of operating below (or above) the perceived levels of reality (Elder-Vass, 2005). According to Bhaskar (1978), generative mechanisms exist in the domain of the real, but not in the actual, and this seems to imply that the same is true of entities. One way to resolve this apparent contradiction is to suggest that 'entities' exist in these two domains in two different forms. Within the domain of the actual, entities exist as individual instances of things, but in the domain of the real, the generative mechanisms occur that would result in the level of the actual (Elder-Vass, 2005). Elder-Vass (2005) explains the understanding of the level of the **actual** as events that involve the behaviour of things, or entities.

Like events, we are accustomed to perceiving entities in level-abstracted terms. Using the example of a falling pen, Elder-Vass (2005) explains the falling in the domain of the actual in that a downwardly-inclusively defined pen includes its material components, its molecules, its atoms. Giving an inclusive casual account of the dropping of the pen, will be giving an account that presumes that the falling of the molecules, atoms, etc., is inherently part of that event, since these are inherently part of the entity that has been dropped. In this inclusive ontology, then, it is not only events, but also entities that must be treated as existing at multiple levels all the way down (Elder-Vass, 2005).

In my study, the level of the actual would refer to the documents detailing the criteria for learners to qualify for awards, number of awards, and the various types and categories of awards available to the learners. It would refer to the reward/award committees at schools formed for decision-making regarding visible rewards. It would include the documented names of the learners who have had the highest marks in their respective subjects and have therefore qualified to be awarded/rewarded at the upcoming award ceremonies. It would be the learners who have completed the pathway of attaining an 80% average over four years and now qualify for the 'coloured

blazer' award in their matric year. It refers to the learner who achieved the highest marks in the grade for a specific subject, in order to be recognised as the best learner in that respective subject. It would refer to the weighting of the final percentage during tests and exams which will ultimately contribute to determining the top learner in any subject.

The level of the **real** is the deepest level of reality. Bhaskar (1978) refers to this level as the intransitive domain, because at this level, reality is relatively stable. The **real** refers to anything that exists, whether it is natural or social, but has the power to cause events and experiences at the levels above it, which is the level of the actual and the level of the empirical. In my study the **real** refers to everything related to the phenomenon of visible rewards, such as the school's structure of visible rewards with its various criteria, processes and procedures, the teachers using visible rewards to make academics appear to learners as fashionable and worthwhile, the learners working hard to achieve, the learners being motivated/demotivated to achieve, meeting the criteria for being rewarded, parents' pride in their children's' efforts as well as the pressure placed on their children to earn academic rewards, parents' support and encouragement of their children's' efforts to achieve, to name but a few. Since the domain of the **real** is so vast, it can be divided into mechanisms that allow for analysis, as Archer (1995) has described as "separating the parts from the people". These are further explained in section 3.8. below.

Critical realism makes a clear distinction between scientific laws and patterns of events. Events, experiences and mechanisms are three aspects which constitute the overlapping domains of reality (Elder-Vass, 2005) and the structures and mechanisms are real and distinct from the patterns of events that they generate. In the same way, events are real and distinct from the experiences in which they are apprehended (Elder-Vass, 2005). Because critical realism offers an explanation of truth that exists beyond the surface appearance of things, which Benton and Craib (2001, p.120) refer to as "potentially misleading to their true character", it was the most logical choice for this study, which is concerned with deeper understandings of the practice of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement.

One of the main possibilities that critical realism offers to my study is that it allows for an interrogation of the practice of visible rewards in what Bhaskar has identified as the three differentiated levels of reality (empirical, actual and real). According to Bhaskar (1978) when we acknowledge that reality is layered, we can see something can exist at one level and manifest at another level in unique and unpredictable ways. This

acknowledgement of layered or stratified reality is fundamentally important because it ties in with my research question of the intention and impact of visible rewards. For instance, it might be that the school had intended the outcome of rewarding learners in recognition of their hard work, but the impact on the learners might not have the intended consequence, or that the ways in which the rewards are perceived by learners went far beyond what the school actually intended.

3.8. Critical realism in Education studies

Education research has largely not adopted critical realism as a philosophical underpinning for studies. Critical realism has not been used in any great extent yet offers the potential for fresh perspectives with regards to educational change, both in the construction of policy and in the management of change in schools (Priestley, 2011). Critical realism could potentially offer a nuanced perspective to education research. In the field of international and comparative education, Tikly (2015) argues that it becomes possible to move beyond the dominant 'what works' agenda favoured by empiricists to critically consider what works, for *who* and under what circumstances. Similarly, critical realism may be applied to illuminate issues in the field of curriculum change (Priestley, 2011) but he cautions researchers that critical realism offers the tool making tools rather than the precise methodological tools themselves.

Critical realism is able to offer possibilities that go beyond description and into the underlying mechanisms that result in what is outwardly observed. For example, Cochran-Smith et al. (2014) used a combination of complexity theory and critical realism for their work on initial teacher education. They posit that critical realism has the capacity to "show how things work, not simply how they are" and further argue that this kind of understanding is essential for change and improvement (Cochran-Smith et al.; 2014, p.108). Similarly, Shipway (2002) argues that critical realism has the potential to change conceptions of educational research and pedagogy in ways that are different to other paradigms in that the combination of critical realism's epistemological relativism and ontological realism forges a middle ground between the extremes of other dominant positions. As Shipway (2002, p. 24) argues, "these dominant positions are ultimately susceptible to either the foundationalism of positivism, or the regression of idealism".

Critical realism allows for us to have a nuanced view of social structures. One of its most important features argues Porpora (2007) is its fallibilist approach to the philosophy of science, which requires a refinement of our understandings of social

structure. Therefore, a long process of refining even the refinements should be anticipated (Porpora, 2007). In simple terms, this means that our understanding of reality cannot be a “one size fits all” approach, and similarly Slee (2011) has argued for this very point when determining the direction for solutions in inclusive education. Thus critical realism extends a position for the inclusive education researcher that is refined and nuanced and offers much more depth than other paradigms would, as opposed to what Bhaskar (1978) refers to as the “flat ontologies” of positivism and idealism.

Despite calls for the use of critical realism in education research, it is not commonly used by education researchers. Gratton (2015) offers two reasons for this: an application of critical realism within educational research is both complicated and problematic, as it does not offer researchers a discrete methodology nor does it specify any data collection tools. In addition, Gratton (2015) argues that critical realism contains near impenetrable language, which he refers to as ‘critical-realese’, making it poorly represented within the field of education. Despite these issues of application, critical realism can be used successfully in educational research.

3.9. Critical Realism and Inclusive Education research

Research in inclusive education that employ a critical realist philosophy is scarce (Shipway, 2004; Cochran-Smith et.al; 2014). However, the use of critical realism as a philosophical underpinning in inclusive education research has been suggested by a number of researchers for a variety of reasons (Clegg, 2005; Egbo, 2005; Burnett, 2007; Gable, 2014; Gratton, 2015; Priestly, 2011). Amongst the reasons presented for the choice of critical realism as a lens to inform inclusive education research is that the critical realist perspective has potential to examine and reframe policy.

Educational policy has long been a subject of debate amongst both disability studies and inclusive educationists. Slee (2001) argues that the context of educational policy creates the conditions for exclusion that militate against the inclusive education project. Similarly, Gable (2014, p.90) argues for the interrogation of policy, stating that unexamined policy could potentially be “replicating oppressive systems of education and therefore requires ongoing review and critique”. In addition, Egbo (2005) states that critical realism has considerable potential for research that is geared towards improving educational policies and administrative practices at all levels of the educational system. Critical realism thus allows for a nuanced policy interrogation that would result in new directions for research, eventually resulting in narrowing the policy-

to-practice gap (Clegg, 2005). Similarly, Burnett (2007) argues that critical realism avoids many of the fallacies that are associated with education research and provides a useful way forward in the debate around inclusion.

For instance, Gable (2014) has argued that critical realism offers a way to reconceptualise disability models in education as a complex phenomenon with multiple layers of mechanisms. This reconceptualisation has the potential to generate multifaceted issues, problems and experiences for students, whereas current disability epistemologies are "broadly considered to be the major barrier to more responsive and meaningful educational practices" (Gable, 2014, p.91). Given that critical realism describes social practices and their relation to institutions, it ties in well with visible rewards being a cluster of practices (social practices) that contribute to the value of the school (institution) as provider of quality education. Thus in critically evaluating this practice, other dimensions are unearthed, such as the link between visible rewards and the hidden curriculum and the responsibility of schools. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

With respect to the emancipatory aspect of critical realism (Bhaskar & Danermark, 2006), inclusive education can be conceptualised in ways that allow for critical social scientific enquiry, in what Egbo (2005, p.268) refers to as a "philosophical compass". Egbo's work is not situated in inclusive education, but rather within educational administration, aimed at transforming undesirable social realities. She advocates for the use of critical realism in the social sciences as it "transcends surface appearances and aims to reveal enduring social structures that endorses special interests and the status quo in society" (Egbo, 2005, p.268). It is this ability to transcend surface appearances that makes critical realism an ideal choice as a philosophical underpinning for my current investigation. I adopted a critical realist perspective when interrogating school's practice of visibly rewarding learners as it promised to reveal underlying causal mechanisms that are not easily seen outwardly.

Bhaskar (1978) has positioned critical realism as "emancipatory research" and this fits in well with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. Burnett (2007) has argued that critical realism must be used in the field of inclusive education for its transformational ability given that Bhaskar's (1998) Transformational Model of Social Activity shows both individuals' impact on society whilst recognising the impact society has on individuals. Burnett (2007) uses the example of special education leaders playing a transforming role by looking at how they can interact with social structures, mechanisms, attitudes and beliefs to bring about a more inclusive educational system.

In addition, critical realism informs but does not specify, a methodology, giving the inclusive education researcher freedom to pair critical realism with a variety of methods and methodologies.

3.10. Critical realism and Mixed Methods

Critical realism is a philosophy that can easily be combined with mixed methods and pushes both qualitative and quantitative researchers to examine closely some issues that they often tend to dismiss or ignore (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Mixed methods is a term given to a methodology that uses both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, tools and techniques (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Maxwell (2012) has argued for the use of mixed methods in critical realist studies as it leads to more useful and realistic research. According to critical realism, the goal of science is to hold steadfastly to the goal of getting it right about reality, even though it remains an unachievable goal (Gratton, 2015). Because all measurement is fallible, the critical realist emphasises the importance of multiple measures and observations, each of which may possess a different type of error, but together may meet the need for triangulation (Gratton, 2015). Thus the pairing of mixed methods with critical realism is logical and complementary.

Critical realism according to Maxwell (2012), challenges the dominant "regularity" view of causality in quantitative research; it advocates an alternative approach to causality that emphasises causal processes, and highlights some limitations of “variable-oriented” methods for causal explanation. Although a new wave of mixed methods critical realism studies has emerged, it is scarce in education. In other disciplines however, critical realism has been used extensively. For instance, critical realist mixed methods research exists in accounting (Brown & Brignall, 2007), operations management (Mingers, 2000), economics (Downward, Finch & Ramsay, 2002), political science (Patomaki, 2002), medicine (Clark, MacIntyre, & Cruikshank, 2007) and in the field of nursing (Lipscomb, 2008). These studies are not meant to be an exhaustive list, instead they cast a spotlight on the paucity of critical realist mixed methods studies in education.

Critical realism implies that diversity itself is a real phenomenon (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010) and as such allows mixed methods to fully explore this phenomenon in ways that either quantitative or qualitative methods alone cannot. Maxwell and Mittapalli (2010) argue that quantitative research often aggregates data across individuals and settings and ignores individual and group diversity that cannot be incorporated into a

general explanation. As a result, quantitative methods emphasise general descriptions and causal theories, while ignoring and suppressing diversity as it offers simplistic models that do not take account of individual variations, unique contextual influences, diverse meanings and idiosyncratic phenomena.

Similarly, qualitative methods also tend to neglect diversity, as argued by Maxwell and Mittapalli (2010), which is often the result of social theories that emphasize uniformity. In addition, the sample size used in many qualitative studies is not adequate to fully identify and characterize the actual diversity that exists in the social setting (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Mixed methods, however, offer the researcher a way to overcome these methodological challenges and can thus illuminate issues of diversity. In addition, mixed methods, when combined with a critical realist paradigm, do not simply treat quantitative and qualitative as equally valid and useful, it serves to increase the usefulness of both approaches within a single study (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010).

This is important for my study given that it is a relatively new area of research, and not much is known about visibly rewarding learners, other than its roots in behaviourism. By adopting a mixed methods approach, this study provides in-depth information from a variety of sources to increase understandings of the phenomenon of visible rewards. Part of a critical realist study is to engage in hermeneutics, which could take a variety of forms, including the form of a literature review, questionnaires to gauge what participants think and interviews to investigate participants understanding and experiences (Elder-Vass, 2005).

3.11. Archer's Realist Social Theory

I have chosen Margaret Archer's Realist Social Theory as the theoretical underpinning for my study concerned with the practice of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement and its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. As such, applying Archer's theory allows for a descriptive and explanatory methodology that takes into account the various layers of reality surrounding the phenomenon of visible rewards. Described as a complex philosophy with many facets, Bhaskar's critical realism does not need to be applied in its entirety (Gratton, 2015). Rather, critical realism can be applied at the phase that best suits the purpose of an endeavour or nature of scientific study. There are different currents of thought in the complex terrain of critical realism (Priestley, 2011) but I will focus my thesis primarily on the work of sociologist Margaret Archer (1995, 1996, 2000). As a starting point, I will be using Bhaskar's notion of stratified reality, but my study relies heavily on Margaret

Archer's Realist Social Theory. Whilst Bhaskar is a critical realist, Archer is a social scientist and critical realist (Seal, 2016). Archer has drawn on Bhaskar's work and developed a theoretical application, the Realist Social Theory, and has practically engaged with the concepts of culture, structure and agency.

Archer's Realist Social Theory is also called Morphogenesis/Morphostasis. It refers to the relationship between individuals and society, or structure and agency. Archer rejects one-dimensional theorising: pure individualism, which she says results in Downward Conflation, and pure collectivism, which results in Upward Conflation. Margaret Archer (1995) argues that social theory undergoes the generic defect of conflation where, due to either a reluctance or inability to theorise emergent relationships between social phenomena. Causal autonomy is blocked from one side of the relation. She has found both pure individualism and pure collectivism to be deficient, and proposes an explanatory methodology, which she refers to as the 'morphogenetic' approach, where 'morpho' is an acknowledgement that society, has no pre-set form or preferred state. 'Genetic' is recognition that it takes its shape from, and is formed by agents, originating from the intended/unintended consequences of their activities (Archer, 1995). This explanation of the interplay and interconnection of non-conflationary structure and agency model is what I have based my study on.

3.11.1. Analytical Dualism

Archer (1995) offers the approach of analytical dualism. While recognising the interdependence of structure and agency (i.e. without people there would be no structures) she argues that they operate on different timescales. At any particular moment, existing structures constrain and enable agents (Archer, 1995). Interactions between structure and agency produce intended and unintended consequences, which can lead to structural elaboration, resulting in either the reproduction or transformation of the initial structure. Thus, the structure then stipulates a similar context of action for future agents. Similarly, the initial existing structure was itself the outcome of structural elaboration resulting from the action of prior agents. While structure and agency are interdependent, Archer (1995) argues that it is possible to untangle them analytically. In isolating structural and/or cultural factors, it is possible to investigate how those factors shape the subsequent interactions of agents and how those interactions in turn reproduce or transform the initial context (Archer, 1995).

For instance, cultural and structural factors can be used to understand the phenomenon of privilege. With regards to the use of Archer's critical realism for explaining the concept of privilege, Seal (2016, p. 269) posits that critical realism allows for explaining privilege, an under theorised concept, "which is often unacknowledged or not felt by those who benefit from it…" in separating culture from structure and agency, it is possible to understand the various mechanisms at that benefits some and reproduces to continue to benefit the same people over time. As such, Seal (2016) argues, we are made aware of something in our nature, or outside of us can impact on us. It disrupts us and allows us to challenge the social constructions we are subject to. In this way, our agency can be used to stop the reproduction of privilege, resulting in transformation.

The recognition that other forces are acting upon people provides them the potential to investigate, name and articulate other worlds and understandings acting upon them. In this way, the relationship between social conditioning and the use of agency is explained. Archer (1995) refers to this as a morphogenetic sequence. Social processes are established through a never-ending range of such sequences. As a consequence of their chronological arrangement, it is possible to separate any sequence in order to examine its internal causal dynamics. In doing so, Archer (2000) argues, it is possible to give empirical accounts of how structural and agential phenomena interconnect over a period of time, instead of simply stating their theoretical interdependence. It is therefore understood that although Archer (1998) separates culture, structure and agency in order to analyse them, they do not exist as individual silos; rather they intersect with underlying mechanisms causing either reproduction or transformation of events.

As argued by Archer (1995, p.21), "Social practices are the bedrock of institutions for institutions are nothing more but regularized practices, structured by rules and resources. When structural properties are drawn upon in a routinised fashion, an institution becomes 'sedimented' as a clustering of the practices constituting it." Archer's assertion above can be applied to the phenomenon of visible rewards as a social practice, that can be viewed as the bedrock of "good schools". The entire system of rewards, the structure of the winners, the categories of the winners, the criteria by which learners are awarded, etc. forms part of the "structural properties" of schools. Inclusive education is concerned with the participation and achievement of all learners, and not just the top learners. Thus it is necessary to question the underlying causal mechanisms of a practice that results in a situation where not all learners who have

excelled, have been recognised for it; and all learners who deserve recognition, are not granted such recognition from the school.

Archer (1995) distinguishes between culture, structure and agency, and argues that individuals and social structures have a degree of dependency and independency, which brings about what Burnett (2007) refers to as the 'riddle' of structure and agency. The riddle is where structure is viewed in relation to the social structures at play, and agency is identified as human purposiveness, such as wants, beliefs, desires and emotions (Archer, 1995). Archer (1995) defines not only cultural mechanisms and structural mechanisms, but also agential mechanisms. Archer elaborates on what is meant by agency by arguing that there is a "need to distinguish between collective agents and individual actors. The reality experienced by the collectivity is not reducible to the personal reactions of its members; nor is the subjectivity of the latter understandable without reference to the objectivity of the former" (Archer, 1995, p.120). Understanding the interplay between society and the individual, structure and agency, it is important to note the significance of context. Burnett (2007) simplifies this by stating that the realist explanation of how things occur is that the outcome of an action follows from mechanisms acting in particular contexts. Put in another way, it could mean looking at how the leadership (action) is informed by the attitudes, values and beliefs (mechanisms) of individual leaders within their professional lives (context) and how this impacts on what actually happens (outcome).

In the figure below, the morphogenetic/static cycle is shown as occurring in three phases, explaining analytical dualism. In phase 1 (T1), the initial structure pre-dates the actions which transform it. Then in phase 2 (T2 and T3), socio-cultural interactions take place, that either result in Structural elaboration or Structural reproduction (end of T4). The Structural elaboration necessarily post-dates those actions which have transformed it. Archer (1998) describes this explanatory framework as one that acknowledges and incorporates:

(a) *Pre-existent structures* as generative mechanisms
(b) Their *interplay* with other objects possessing causal powers and liabilities in a stratified social world, and
(c) Non-predictable but explicable *outcomes* arising from interactions between the above, that take place in an open system in society.

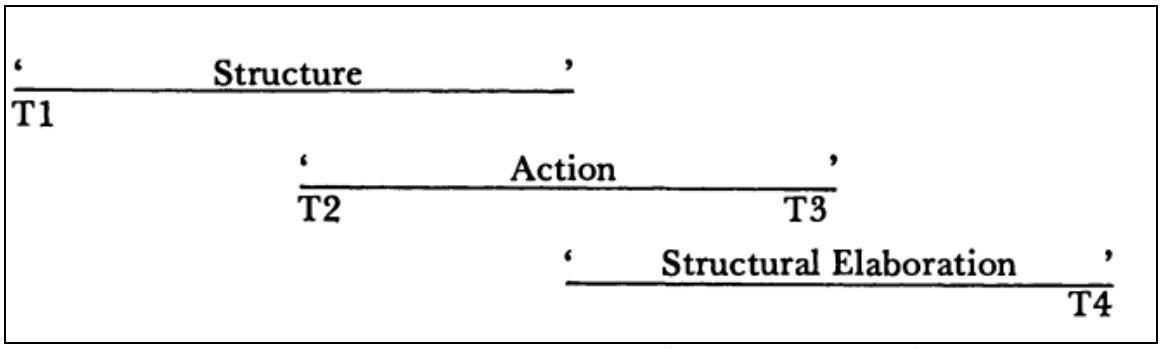


Figure 3: Archer's Morphogenetic structure and agency (Archer, 1998, p. 375)

Using this realist explanation of outcomes based on the beliefs and attitudes of stakeholders at schools has helped me formulate my study by looking at the attitudes and beliefs surrounding the practice on visible rewards on the learners. The next aspect to be discussed are the mechanisms – cultural, structural and agential, present at schools where visible rewards are practiced.

3.11.2. Cultural Mechanisms

Cultural mechanisms are looked at via Archer's (1996, p.16) analytical dualism, thus separating the "parts from the people". She separates culture into two different domains, the *cultural system* and *socio-cultural life*, which do not exist or operate separately from one another; they overlap, intertwine, and are mutually influential and is referred to as cultural dynamics (Archer, 1996), However, in order to analyse them and understand the causal influences that exist between them, the cultural system needs to be separated from the socio-cultural life. Archer (1996) rejects a conflation between the two, which she calls the Myth of Cultural Integration, referring to the perpetuation of an image of culture as a coherent pattern, a uniform ethos or a symbolically consistent universe. By separating the parts from the people, Archer (1996) reveals the mechanisms that underlie culture, such as the influence of one group over another, in what she terms "causal consensus". Causal consensus is the degree to which cultural uniformity is produced by the imposition of ideas by one set of people on another through techniques such as manipulation, mystification, legitimation, naturalisation, persuasion and argument. In addition, Archer (1996) describes causal consensus as intimately linked to the use of power and influence. On the other hand, Archer (1996) identifies "logical consistency" which is entirely independent of power and influence, and exists whether or not it is socially exploited or concealed, regardless of it being recognised. Archer talks about a *cultural system*, which refers to the relations between the components of culture (the parts), and *socio-cultural life*, which refers to the relationships between cultural agents, (the people).

The cultural system and its mechanisms can be applied to my study such that visible rewards can be divided into the following mechanisms. The schools competitive culture forms **the parts** that promote elitism and privileges for some, but that disadvantage most learners. The lack of embodiment of inclusive values is the **causal consensus** as a result of the relationship between and interplay of cultural mechanisms. The attitudes and beliefs regarding talents, visible rewards, the hidden curriculum, achievement and motivation of learners to achieve held by teachers, school management team members, parents and learners refer to **the people.** In this way, visible rewards at the school forms the **cultural system.**

3.11.3. Structural Mechanisms

Structural mechanisms are different but parallel to cultural mechanisms from a critical realist perspective. Cultural and structural domains are substantively very different, but are parallel to one another (Archer, 1995). Likewise, as the mechanisms are described above, Archer differentiates between the structural mechanisms that she analytically separates structure from agency. In doing so, Archer (1995) argues that structure pre-dates the actions which transform it, and that structural elaboration necessarily post-dates those actions. This means that a structure has to exist before people (agents) can act within them. As a result of this action, it can transform or reproduce the original structure. In this way, Archer (1995, p.168) argues that this is what "leads realists to insist that agency does not create structure, but only reproduces or transforms it in any generation". Archer (1995) further argues that this results in Emergence – Interplay – Outcome, which are outlined in her four basic propositions:

i. there are internal and necessary relations within and between Social Structures (SS)
ii. causal influences exerted by Social Structures (SS) on Social Interaction (SI)
iii. there are causal relationships between groups and individuals at the level of Social Interaction (SI)
iv. Social Interaction (SI) elaborates upon the composition of Social Structures (SS) by modifying current internal and necessary structural relationships and introducing new ones where morphogenesis is concerned.

The above four propositions provide a step by step explanation of the set up of social structures, the influences exerted on people by the structures and as a result of these

influences how organizations either change their relationships in the case of morphogenesis, or stay the same in the case of morphostasis.

In identifying the parts and the people within the structural mechanism, Archer (1995) argues that three effects can be noted between them: consistency, contradiction and causality. Archer (1995, p.145) further argues that "what differentiates a structural emergent property is its primary dependence upon material resources, both physical and human". In other words, structures can only exist if people create such structures, and have physical or material constituents that could exert causal powers that characterise the structure. In this study, I looked at structure as being the aspects of visible rewards that have manifested as systems and hierarchies at schools. For instance, some of the categories falling under structural mechanisms would be the hierarchy within school, hierarchy within subjects, criteria for winning awards, and the limited number of award categories determined by the school. These are expanded upon in the findings and discussions chapters (chapters 6, 7 and 8).

3.11.4. Agential Mechanisms

In elaborating what is meant by agency, and agential mechanisms, Archer (1995, p.120) argues that we need to "distinguish between collective agents and individual actors". As such, it can be said that the reality experienced by the collectivity is not reducible to the personal reactions of its members; nor is the subjectivity of the individual actors understandable without reference to the objectivity of the collective agents. With this in mind, the individual agents in my study are the SMT members, the teachers, the learners and the parents. For example, conceptualisations of motivation, abilities and talents based on structural and cultural mechanisms varied for each category of the groups.

3.12. Analytical Framework

All these perspectives put together allowed me to look at visible rewards in a way that took cognisance of the influences and underlying causal mechanisms that exist within the schools. I have employed the Realist Social Theory to help uncover the hidden meanings and unknown impact of the phenomenon of visible rewards, and to enable schools to find ways of changing and challenging practices and structures that bind them to exclusion so that they can identify these practices and work towards being more inclusive. In the table below, I illustrate my analytical framework:

Table 1: Analytical framework derived from Archer's Social Theory

School-wide Practice of Visible Rewards			
Empirical	Visible and tangible ways in which rewards/awards manifest at the school		
Actual	Events taking place at the school that would result in empirical layer above, regardless if learners experience these events or not		
Real	**Cultural mechanisms**	**Structural mechanisms**	**Agential mechanisms**
	Exploring the attitudes and beliefs surrounding visible rewards by the school management, by the teachers, by the learners and by the parents and an embodiment of inclusive values by the use of Social Interdependence Theory	Exploring the school's criteria, processes and procedures that result in the awarding of visible rewards to learners and an embodiment of inclusive values by the use of Social Interdependence Theory	Exploring the way teachers and learners in the study responded to structural and cultural constraints and how their responses are an embodiment of inclusive values by the use of Social Interdependence Theory

In the table above, I have shown how the critical realist notion of stratified reality and Archer's analytical dualism has allowed me to account for the various levels in which visible rewards manifests at schools. From the analytical framework above, it is possible for visible rewards to be examined beyond a single perspective, or one that is dominant, or correct. Instead, this analytical framework has taken into account multiple perspectives from the various stakeholders, highlighting the possibilities and manifestations that schools might not have considered at the time that such practices were agreed upon. Thereafter I had developed another table expanding on the embodiment of inclusive values.

The following table forms part of the analytical tool that contains the aims and ideals of inclusive education derived from the literature and presented from a Critical Realist perspective. Using ten of the thirteen indicators the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) as well as five statements from the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017), the table contains statements that are relevant to the participation and achievement of all learners. I have separated the statements from the Index and the Participation Framework into those pertaining to school culture (such as everyone is made to feel welcome, and there are high expectations for all learners), school structure (such as staff seeking to remove barriers to participation in all aspects of the school, and the school minimising all forms of discrimination), and individual

agency (such as learners helping each other, and staff collaborating with each other). The full list of statements as separated by culture, structure and agency appears in the table below.

Table 2: Aims and ideals of Inclusive education: a critical realist perspective

AIMS AND IDEALS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REALIST PERSPECTIVE		
Cultural Statements	Structural Statements	Agential Statements
Everyone is made to feel welcome	Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school	Students help each other
There are high expectations of all students	The school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination	Staff collaborate with each other
Staff, governors (school managers), students and parents share a philosophy of inclusion	Valuing and rewarding a range of achievements	Lessons encourage the participation of all students
Maintaining the dignity and respect of all learners	Policies and practices encouraging students to use each other as a resource for learning	Students learn collaboratively
Certain forms of achievement that are more highly valued than others,	Policies, practices and interactions that reinforce barriers to achievement of some individuals	Students are equally valued

3.13. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the theoretical framework used in this study, including the Index for Inclusion, Social Interdependence Theory and Critical realism. I have shown how a combination of these provides the most appropriate guiding philosophical principles for this study, given that I am investigating the consistency of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement with inclusive education. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, critical realism allows for the probing of structure and culture, both of which are embodied in the practice of visible rewards; this is because outward manifestation of a deeper, cultural and social structure is embedded in schooling. In addition, visible rewards are complex, with their reach stretching from the policies of the school, to classroom practice, from the parents' aspirations for their children, to the learners' motivational goals, from the teachers' discipline methods to the ways in which learners shape their identity as possessors and participants of knowledge and skills. Although critical realism has not been used extensively in inclusive education studies, there are clear links between critical realism and the emancipatory nature of inclusive education. It provides the "under labouring" (Gratton, 2015, n.p.) required to identify and deconstruct operational social structures, such as

attitudes, values, beliefs and ultimately practices that might inadvertently result in lowering participation and the achievement of learners at school. As Cochran-Smith et al. (2014) argue, challenging the structures that reproduce inequalities is dependent on adequately interpreting the social world to begin with. Critical realism allows for this interpretation.

Chapter 4: Visible Rewards

"Competition is to self esteem like sugar is to teeth."
Alfie Kohn (1996)

4.1. Introduction

Kohn's assertion above regarding competition and self esteem is instantly recognisable as a negative relationship. In a competitive school system, the self esteem of learners is often eroded and lost as learners are pitted against each other in order to select winners and leave the rest as losers. In the previous chapter, a theoretical framework was established using inclusive education and critical realism.This chapter will provide a review of the literature on the topic of visible rewards and related concepts. Given that I have taken a critical realist stance for this study, I included structural and cultural concepts as well as rewards as a taken-for-granted practice at schools. Among the structural concepts, there exists neoliberalism which in turn results in meritocracy, where success is framed as being scarce. This is represented by neoliberal notions of success. The cultural aspects include conceptualisations of academic talent and resultant school practices such as streaming, and teacher beliefs about intelligence. Other structural aspects include competitiveness at schools as a manifestation of school culture. Then school practice and the hidden curriculum are considered as by products of this system. At the agential level, there are concepts such as learner motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, performance and mastery goals. I have reviewed literature of these concepts related to the study.

It must be noted that studying visible rewards in the South African context is an area of little research, thus the majority of the literature on rewarding learners used in this review comes from other countries. This indicates an overall gap in the South African literature in the area of visible rewards. As the literature is taken from various countries, terms such as non-monetary rewards, tangible rewards, awards and visible rewards awards are all used to mean the awarding of a reward to the learner for academic achievement. I begin the literature review by providing a concept map of the various related concepts I have used in the review of the literature on visible rewards. The literature on rewards is rooted in behaviourist understandings of education, with a fair number of studies focusing on rewarding learners at schools as well as rewards as part of organisational management and the workplace.

Also, as a result of the paucity of literature on visible rewards in South African schools, the next step was to find similar topics to review in relation to visible rewards.

Therefore, I examined rewards as a reflection of the contemporary neoliberal world, thus the concept of neoliberalism appeared in the review. Similarly, I took into consideration how rewards were often presented to learners that are considered talented, and explored the ways in which we view academic talent at schools. Then I considered what spurs learners to work towards awards, and explored learner motivation. Finally, I considered the culture of awarding learners and explored school culture.

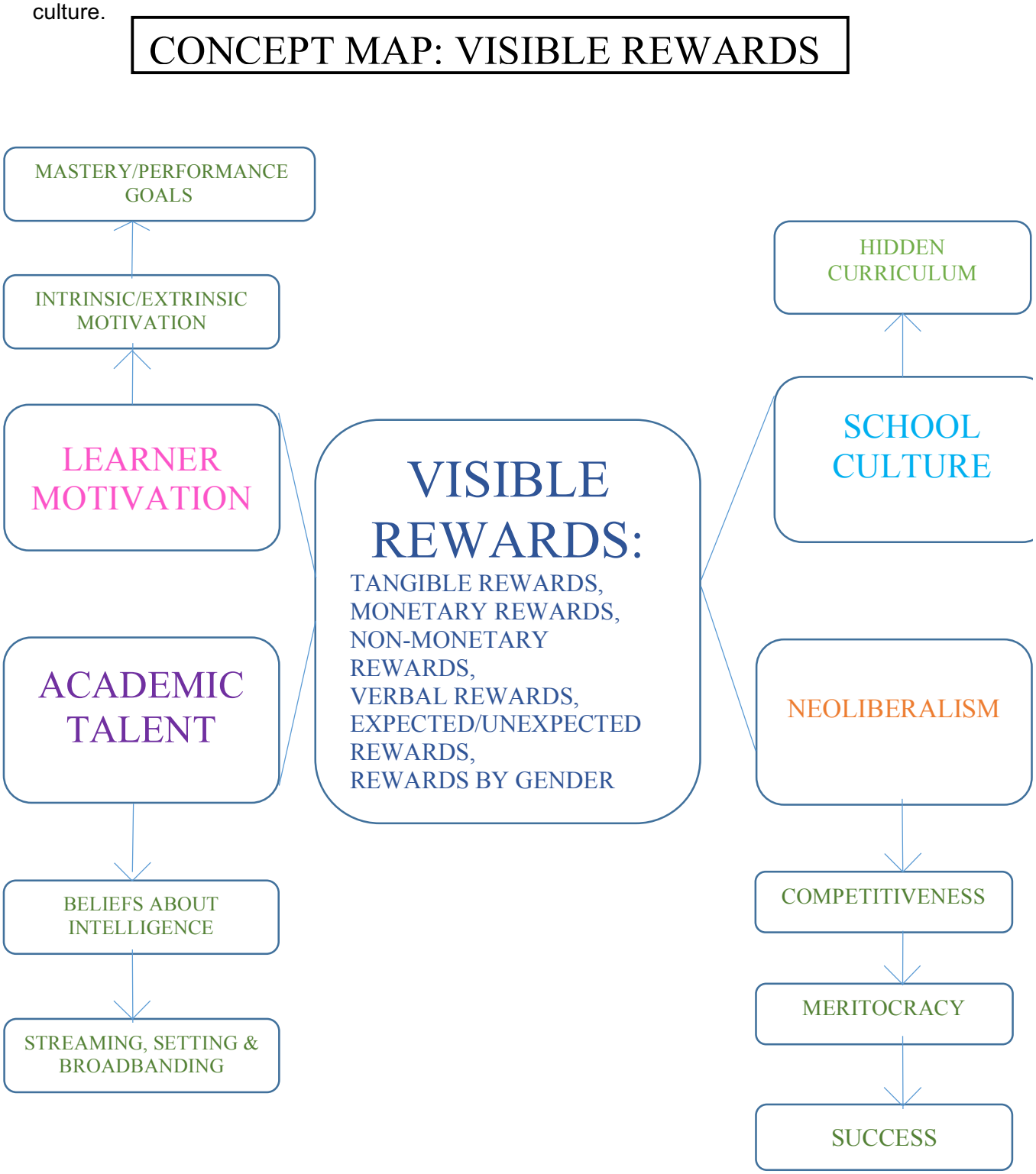


Figure 4: Concept Map of Visible Rewards

The concepts discussed in this review begin with visible rewards itself, and the various ways in which we reward learners for academic achievement. Then, related to the ways in which visible rewards exists, I discuss the possible reasons for its existence. Reasons for rewarding included learner motivation, recognition of academic talent, an expression of school culture, as well as a manifestation of the neoliberal world we live in. Arising from those four major categories are school practices that prevail and are closely related to rewards; such as streaming, notions of success, competitiveness and the hidden curriculum.

4.2. Visible Rewards

Much of the international literature on tangible rewards has been dominated by studies focused on its effects on motivation (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998; Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Bettinger & Slonim, 2007; Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2001). As discussed thus far, there is a considerable amount of literature showing the negative effects of rewarding learners in terms of their intrinsic motivation to learn (in other words, to love and enjoy learning). However, this study is interested in unearthing the intention and impact of visibly rewarding learners from an inclusive education perspective. Accordingly, a gap exists in the international literature regarding rewards and inclusion. There is also a paucity of South African literature on rewarding learners for academic achievement. In order to further understand the role of visible rewards, I will now explore the literature on the various types of rewards offered to learners and the effects that have been documented thereof.

4.2.1. Rewards and Behaviourism

At the most basic level, the rationale behind rewards can be understood to be a part of the behaviourist approach to education. In particular, the work of B.J. Skinner (1938) and operant conditioning is relevant here. According to Skinner (1938) operant conditioning means changing the behaviour of children using reinforcement, which is given after the desired response. Operant conditioning is the way living organisms operate in response to a certain stimulus. Skinner believed that all behaviours are acquired through operant conditioning. By definition, conditioning occurs through the interaction with the environment and if the acquired behaviour is desired, then reinforcement may be used to encourage repeated occurrences of such behaviour (Skinner, 1938).

Reinforcement means strengthening a response after a stimulus by rewarding the individual. Both positive and negative reinforcement are intended to strengthen certain

behaviours, but they work in different ways (Crain, 2011). Positive reinforcement involves adding a stimulus to a response. This can be praise or positive attention, which strengthens the response and increases its likelihood of occuring again (Schunk, 2012). Negative reinforcement involves the removal of unpleasant behaviour by removing a certain stimulus. This in turn decreases the future likelihood of such a response occurring (Schunk, 2012).

However, operant conditioning is not without critique and cannot fully explain why rewards are used in the way schools currently use them, given the time period during which they occur is not always immediate. Among its many critiques, operant conditioning fails to take into account the role of inherited and cognitive factors in learning. As a result, it is an incomplete explanation of the learning process in humans (McLeod, 2015). Kohler (1924) found that primates often solve problems with a flash of insight rather than trial and error learning. In addition, social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests that humans can learn automatically through observation rather than through personal experience. The use of animal research in operant conditioning studies also raises the issue of extrapolation, as it is not entirely clear that human behaviour can be generalized from studies on animals (McLeod, 2015). Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention that the earliest work on rewarding learner behaviour can be situated in operant conditioning. Educational psychologists have also linked rewards to positive reinforcements, such as the use of praise in the classroom.

4.2.2. Verbal Rewards

In their extensive work regarding the use of rewards by teachers and its effects on the internal motivation of learners, Deci et al (2001) categorize rewards further into tangible or verbal, expected or unexpected and controlling or informational. Verbal rewards refer to praise, such as praising the learner for a job well done, or praising the learner for being the best Mathematics student. Tangible rewards refer to the use of certificates, badges, trophies and other symbolic items for learners when they have met the set criteria for receiving the award.

According to Deci et al. (2001) verbal rewards tend to be informational when it contains positive performance feedback and is therefore likely to enhance intrinsic motivation. However, verbal rewards can have a significant controlling aspect leading learners to engage in behaviours specifically to gain praise, and verbal rewards have the potential to undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 2001). Depending on the interpersonal context in which teachers use praise, the desired effects of encouraging intrinsic motivation may not be achieved if communicated to the learner when praise is used as means of control rather than to provide informational feedback. An interpersonal

context is considered controlling to the extent that learners feel pressured by it to think, feel, or behave in a particular way (Ryan, Mims & Koestner, 1983).

Similarly, Porter (2015) identifies differences between acknowledgement and praise: whilst the former teaches children to evaluate their own efforts, praise gives the teachers' evaluation of those efforts, usually combined with judgments about their efforts. In addition, acknowledgement is considered a private or personal communication that, unlike praise, does not show children up in public or try to manipulate their behaviour such that they are mimicking others (Porter, 2015). Thus it is possible to acknowledge and affirm learners as well as to encourage them to carry out their own self-evaluations without praising them. However, this study is focused on exploring the use of tangible rewards as opposed to verbal rewards. Whilst the literature commonly uses the word tangible to describe a symbolic object given as a reward, I have used the term visible reward interchangeably with tangible rewards. I now shift my focus from verbal rewards to tangible or visible rewards.

4.2.3. Monetary and Non-Monetary Rewards

Monetary rewards refer to financial rewards, such as winning money in the form of a bursary or scholarship, or cash prizes that will be awarded to the winner in school tournaments or competitions. A financial reward is one example of a variety of extrinsic motivators (Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014). A number of studies show that paying learners results in better performance (Bettinger & Slonim, 2007; Eisenkopf, 2011; Fryer, 2011; Bettinger, 2012; Paola, Scoppa & Nistico; 2012). Some developing countries such as Kenya, Mexico and Colombia have programmes in place with cash payments going to families in relation to school attendance and learner performance (Paola, Scoppa & Nistico; 2012). For example, in Kenya, the Girls' Scholarship Programme provided financial awards to female students who obtained the highest test results (Kremer, Miguel & Thornton, 2009). However, financial awards did not affect all learners positively. Different results were noted for learners identified as being high ability and low ability, with the high ability learners showing positive effects on performance.

In another study, financial incentives seem to be positive on learner performance for high ability students but no effects were found on low ability students (Paola, Scoppa & Nistico; 2012; Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014). In the experimental study carried out on Italian undergraduate students by Paola, Scoppa and Nistico (2012), it was found that a large reward of 700 Euros offered to the first student group showed a positive effect, whilst the low reward of 250 Euros offered to the second group ability students also produced a similar positive effect. However, what was noteworthy in both

instances is the positive effects were noted on the high ability students only, whilst negative effects on performance were noted on low ability students. These findings are significant from an inclusive education perspective, which is based on what works for all learners, and not just what works for certain learners based on their abilities.

In another experimental study conducted by Jalava, Joensen and Pellas (2014), the effects of non-financial rewards were examined on over a thousand sixth-grade learners at Swedish primary schools by dividing them up into four groups, three treatment groups and one control group. When making the reward threshold cut-off higher for attaining a reward increased the competitiveness level, it was found that learners with a lower skill level got discouraged rather than encouraged by rewards. In addition, when looking at ranking the learners according to their mark/grade attained, it was noted that high ability learners exerted more effort to outdo their peers, whilst low ability learners did not feature in the rewards programme no matter how hard they worked.

In South Africa, evidence of the use of monetary rewards has been found in the literature (Geduld, 2017) to enhance motivation for learners at township schools. In Geduld's (2017) study, 14 secondary school teachers were interviewed to garner teacher's perceptions of the factors that influence academic success in learners. Reference is made of small monetary rewards from teachers' own money, together with stars and positive feedback. However, no distinction is made regarding learners' expectations of these rewards, whether they are expected or unexpected.

4.2.4. Expected and Unexpected Rewards

Differences in motivation were noted when learners expect rewards, as compared to when they are given unexpectedly to learners. Rewards that are given unexpectedly to learners have no effect on their intrinsic motivation, whilst expected rewards could cause intrinsic motivation to decrease, especially when learners did not receive the expected reward (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Levitt, List, Neckermann & Sadoff, 2012; Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014). When expected rewards are given and later taken away, they are referred to as "losses". Rewards framed as "losses" were found to be more effective on primary school children but had little effect on older learners (Levitt, et.al., 2012). In addition, findings showed that delayed rewards had no motivational power (Levitt, et al., 2012). Anecdotal evidence suggests that rewards are often delayed till the end of year award ceremonies for many South African learners, the lack of motivational powere has potentially important implications for the way the reward system is currently set up at South African schools, if they are intended to be a source of motivation for learners.

4.2.5. Rewards by Gender

Many findings regarding the positive effects of rewards separated by gender were noted in the literature. The literature shows that the majority of learners who respond positively to rewards are girls (Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014; Paola, Scoppa & Nistico, 2012; Kremer, Miguel & Thornton, 2009). Whilst it is acknowledged that boys enjoy a competitive environment, the results showed that girls outperformed boys in each of the four test situations in their experimental study (Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014). Combining this information with the number of high school dropouts that tend to be more male than female (Grimaldi, 2012; Aronson & Steele, 2005), there seems to be a trend that academic rewards within competitive high school settings are better suited to females than males. From the perspective of social justice and equity for both male and female learners, questioning the practice of academic rewards is necessary in terms of its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education.

4.2.6. Rewards from an inclusive education perspective

The discussion on rewards thus far has focused on a variety of factors such as verbal rewards, tangible rewards, expected versus unexpected rewards, monetary rewards and rewards by gender, as well as the literature on rewards and its negative effects on intrinsic motivation. In this regard, Kohn's (1993, p.257) argument that "what matters is not how motivated someone is, but how someone is motivated" emphasises the importance of fostering meaningful participation as opposed to the disturbing trend of "teaching to the test" (Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014) which results in high achievement on paper but minimal mastery learning. Learners should be given opportunities to work on their strengths and develop their abilities through full participation and active engagement rather than focusing on working towards outstanding achievements that rank them higher than their peers. In discussing the impact of awards, Courus (2010, n.p.) argues that "students should know where their strengths are and what they need to work on, not how they fit into our magical grading system". Rewarding a small number of learners for excellence in academic achievement highlights that the emphasis of learning is not about engagement with knowledge or a deep mastery of the subject, as mastery is not rewarded. Rather, a small number of predetermined awards translate into assessment outcomes being a measuring task in which some learners' achievements have to be better than others in order to qualify for the reward.

Although not without critique, Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis of what works to promote achievement at schools in noteworthy. After synthesising the results of 23 meta-

analyses, the results of the research were then ranked in order of most effective to least effective in terms of aiding and enhancing learner achievement. Programmed instruction, praise, punishment and extrinsic rewards were found to be the least effective forms of feedback for enhancing achievement (Hattie, 2009). Of interest to this study is the use of extrinsic rewards, and its weak relation to learner participation and achievement.

However, it is possible that not only learners benefit from the visible rewards system. Schools benefit in many ways from the achievements of their learners, among which is the school's image of providing excellence in academic achievement. In doing so, the award-winning learners contribute to and are beneficiaries of, the pride that schools hold when they are highly ranked for the number of A's they produce at matric level (Akabor, 2019). Although this topic has not been formally explored by the literature in South Africa, a look at newspapers in January after matric results are released provides evidence of the prestige associated with producing excellent matric results (Sobuwa, 2020, January 7). Schools and districts themselves are rewarded by the Minister of Basic Education. In publicly recognising the schools' achievements, it appears as a motivation for schools to produce better results. Given that not all learners are motivated to achieve at school (Geduld, 2017) questions are raised regarding learner motivation to achieve and how this can be encouraged for all learners. The widely believed claim that rewarding learners motivates them to achieve at school (Kohn, 2007; Dweck, 2006; Phillip & Lindsay, 2006) is explored by a discussion on learner motivation below.

4.3. Learner Motivation

There is evidence suggesting that South African teachers are of the belief that visibly and tangibly rewarding learners motivates them to achieve at school (Geduld, 2017), thus follows a discussion on motivation in academic settings – particularly, what motivates learners to achieve. The literature on motivation is vastly extensive and rooted in educational psychology. It must be noted that motivation is not the main focus of my study. However, given that rewards are linked to motivation, it is thus a pertinent concept related to the study. In particular, motivation related to academic success is considered.

This is not an exhaustive review of all literature on this topic but rather a critical consideration of significant elements associated with learner motivation and achievement. I included selected literature which focused on the different forms of motivation, and how this is related to achievement. My rationale for selecting literature was that it related to the research sub-question of whether visible rewards promote or

hinder the participation and the achievement of all learners within the classroom. It was critical for me to discuss literature that provided a deeper understanding of learner participation and achievement, and what leads to these outcomes. Thus I selected aspects of the motivation literature for this purpose.

Motivation can be described as the internal goal-directing behaviour that drives actions and provides sustained interest in tasks (Murphy & Roopchand, 2003). Motivation has also been defined as the psychological process that gives behaviour purpose and direction (Ryan & Deci, 2000); a tendency to behave in a purposive method to achieve specific, unmet desires (Buford, Bedeian, & Lindner, 1995); the will to accomplish (Bedeian, 1993) and an inner force to please an unsatisfied need (Higgins, 1994). Among the various definitions of motivation, it is evident that there is some impetus or driving force behind a persons' behaviour. An example of this driving force can be a desire to do well in a task. An individual's motivational state is manifested by the extent of an individual's behaviour, namely, in the way duties are executed. A highly motivated person tries to achieve to the best of his/her abilities and is often consistent in that achievement (Sikhwari, 2007).

Since learner motivation is strongly correlated with achievement at school (Geduld, 2017; Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014; Dweck, 1986; Ryan & Deci, 2000) it follows that the teachers' understanding of motivation in learners is important for academic success. Motivation is a complex construct to understand and each person is motivated by different factors (Dweck & Master, 2007), and it is not possible to directly motivate others (Deci, Koestner and Ryan 1999). However, it is possible that teachers can influence what learners are motivated to do (Dweck, 2006). Whilst Lens and Rand (2000, p.194) argue that there is no "all-embracing" theory of motivation for all types of motivated behaviour, motivation can broadly be defined into two categories: intrinsic or extrinsic, and a combination of the two can be found in many behaviours.

4.3.1. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is essential in an educational setting. This is because the kind of learning that results out of either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation differs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation coming from within the learners themselves and is driven by an interest in, or an enjoyment of, the task itself (Phillip & Lindsay, 2006). When intrinsically motivated, it is the spontaneous experiences of interest and enjoyment entailed in the activity that supply the "rewards." (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017, p.21). On the other hand, extrinsic

motivation relies on external factors as a driving force for motivating the learners (Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014). Another definition for intrinsic motivation in academic settings is when learning occurs for its own sake, for internal, personal satisfaction, while extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors such as rewards or threats of punishment (Phillip & Lindsay, 2006; Deci & Ryan, 2001). Extrinsically motivated behaviour involves doing an activity to attain a separable consequence, whether tangible or otherwise (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017).

Human beings know intuitively that motivation is stronger with those things that we find interesting (Phillip & Lindsay, 2006). Interest can be generated from novelty, mystery and possibility, as a result of topic, individual or situational interest (Ainley, Hidi & Berndorff, 2002; Krapp, 1999). Whilst situational interest can be easily created in the classroom, the challenge of ensuring sustained individual interest over longer periods of time can become more complicated. Interest falls under the category of intrinsic motivation. It is therefore important to provide a classroom environment that would nurture intrinsic motivation in learning (Phillip & Lindsay, 2006).

There are certain factors found in the classroom that can be coupled with encouraging intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learners. Factors such as student dependence, teacher-directed learning and competitiveness are associated with extrinsic motivation, whilst self-directed learning, learner-centred classrooms, student independence and non-competitiveness are associated with intrinsic motivation (Clinkenbeard, 1994). Looking at South African classrooms today, there is a lack of learner-centeredness (Makoelle, 2012), and the prevalence of competitiveness (Hay & Beyers, 2011). Both teacher-centeredness and competitiveness are known to encourage extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation (Phillip & Lindsay, 2006). Examples of extrinsic motivators can either be financial, or non-financial. Non-financial reward examples are trophies, awards, certificates, and other forms of social recognition (Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014). Intrinsic motivators occur within a person and usually relate to doing tasks purely for enjoyment and internal satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Another aspect related to intrinsic motivation is self-regulated learning.

In education, the construct of motivation is used in conjunction with self-regulated learning, where self-regulation can be described as one's own conduct in order to achieve a goal (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). Motivation can affect both the process of self-regulated learning, and can also be the result of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2001). Learners who use self-regulated learning set better learning goals, implement more effective learning strategies, and exert more effort and

persistence in their work. When learners become masters of their own learning, it is known as self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 1990). An emphasis towards independence is required for self-regulation to occur in learners. Encouraging self-regulated learning should thus be the aim of schools as it produces consistent results with minimal outside effort, given that self-regulated learning does not rely on the coaxing and cajoling of learners by teachers and parents to complete tasks. Self-regulated learners take responsibility for their own learning (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). A significant aspect of self-regulated learning is that it forms part of the goal orientation of motivation.

4.3.2. Mastery and Performance Goals

Goals are inherently related to motivation in that human beings tend to be motivated by the positive effects that are anticipated upon the pursuit and achievement of goals that have been prearranged (Fryer & Elliot, 2008). It is within this goal understanding of motivation that Achievement Goal Theory is located. Achievement Goal Theory (Elliot, 1999; Dweck, 1986) is a framework used to explain and study academic motivation. It is situated within the goal orientation theory of motivation. The basic tenet of Achievement Goal theory is that individuals either have performance goals or mastery goals (Dweck, 1986). Performance goals are also known as ego goals and are associated with demonstrating one's superior competence, whilst mastery goals are linked with deeper, meaning-oriented learning (Fryer & Elliot, 2008). The result of performance goals is defined as meeting a normative standard. Learners who are mastery-oriented are interested in self-improvement and tend to compare their current level of achievement to their own prior achievement (Anderman, 2015). Mastery goals are defined as reaching absolute or intrapersonal standards.

In describing the two major branches of goals that are found within learners in the Achievement Goal Theory, Anderman (2015) argues that mastery and performance goals are each divided into approach and avoid goals. Learners who are mastery-approach oriented are genuinely concerned with mastering academic tasks, whilst mastery-avoid learners avoid misunderstanding the task. On the other hand, performance-approach oriented learners are interested in demonstrating that they are more competent than other learners whilst performance-avoid oriented students are interested in avoiding appearing incompetent or stupid.

The two types of goals outlined by Anderman (2015) are not always clear-cut and easily distinguishable. Goal orientations found within learners can be complex. Learners may have multiple goals simultaneously; thus it is possible for a learner to be both mastery-approach oriented and performance-approach oriented. As such

learners may genuinely want to learn and master the material but they might also be concerned with appearing more competent than others (Anderman, 2015). The complexity of the goal orientation might therefore present a dilemma for teachers in deciding what kind of classroom climate prevails that best allows for equal participation and learning for all learners.

Furthermore, some researchers have termed performance goals differently and refer to them as "extrinsic goals" (Anderman & Johnston, 1998). In defining an extrinsic goal, researchers identify the two main reasons that learners may engage in academic tasks: either to earn a certain reward or to avoid punishment (Anderman & Johnston, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 2005). In another method of conceptualising goals, learners' goals can be organised according to personal goals and classroom goals. Personal goals refer to learners' individual, personally held goals. However, classroom goal structures refer to the learners' beliefs about the goals that are emphasised in their classrooms by their teachers (Anderman, 2015). Learners' behaviour and goal orientation is thus linked to their perception of the goal structure within the classroom. Since the classroom climate can have an effect on the learners' goal orientations within themselves, it is worth exploring how competitiveness within the classroom resulting in visible rewards might affect the goal orientation of the learners.

Given that one of the aims of inclusive education is that every learner is not only present in class, but gets an opportunity to participate and achieve (Ainscow & Miles, 2009) it is preferable for teachers to encourage mastery rather than performance goals in their classrooms. When students perceive a classroom mastery goal structure, they believe that instruction in the class is characterised by emphasis on improvement, learning new material to a level of mastery, and self-comparison. However, when learners perceive a performance goal structure, they believe that the class is characterised by competition, an emphasis on grades and relative ability, and outperforming others. Anderman (2015) argues that a school can be perceived by learners as being mastery oriented wherein the culture of the school focuses on learning, improvement, and task mastery. Alternatively, if learners perceive the school as being performance-oriented, the culture of the school focuses on grades, achievement, competitiveness, and outperforming others. In South Africa, there is evidence that schools appear to have a performance-oriented, competitive culture where learners are rewarded for excellence in academic achievement (Watkins, et al., 2003). I now focus my attention on the use of rewards on motivation.

4.3.3. Motivation and Rewards

Rewards have long been the currency of schools (Cameron, 2001) despite a large

body of literature questioning their widespread use. A substantive amount of literature exists showcasing the negative effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998; Deci & Ryan, 1985). However, there have been some studies showing little or no difference in the intrinsic motivation of children notwithstanding rewarding them (Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Eisenberger & Cameron, 1996; Bettinger & Slonim, 2007). Despite the tensions surrounding the issue of visibly rewarding learners and its effects on their intrinsic motivation, it is accepted by nearly all researchers that there are negative aspects to the rewarding of learners, but differences ensue as to the extent of the negative effects, and in the type of conditions these negative effects occur. According to Cameron (2001), rewards have different effects under different moderating conditions.

There is evidence in the literature indicating that rewards are inherently harmful in any and all conditions and should be avoided (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Kohn, 1994), whilst other researchers argue that rewards can increase motivation and performance in certain settings, provided rewards are used in a certain way and arranged carefully (Cameron & Pierce, 1994) and there is evidence in the literature indicating no effect of rewards on intrinsic motivation (Bettinger & Slonim, 2007). Furthermore, Cameron (2001) believes that teachers nearly always reward learners to shape successful performance and to recognise student accomplishment. She further argues that most of the studies carried out by Deci, Koestner and Ryan (1999) have focused on reward systems that are not characteristic of those rewards given in the classroom, thus it is not possible to extrapolate the findings to the classroom. However, the difference in reward effects depending on settings referred to by Cameron (2001) is not of particular significance to my study. Given that I am looking at rewards from an inclusive education perspective, my primary concern regarding rewards is the possibility of exclusion regarding rewards irrespective of where they are given. Settings therefore do not matter; whether in the classroom or at special ceremonious functions in the school hall, or mentioned in the media. For this study, I have chosen to focus on rewards given for academic achievements only and have excluded awards given for sporting achievements.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that is not common in the South African schooling setting to reward all learners for achievement. Based on a study on Italian undergraduate students, Paola, Scoppa and Nistico (2012), found that rewarding all learners is not always feasible, nor is it meaningful. The most common form of rewarding learners is that one has to be the winner of the competition, or be amongst the stipulated number of winners (Paola, Scoppa & Nistico, 2012). However, it is not often the case that all

learners are the winners, and if the entire class is rewarded, then it is not seen as meaningful enough to impact the learner/s. The situation regarding which learners to reward and when to reward learners can be further explained by Ryan, Mims and Koestner's (1983) three categories of task contingencies:

- **Task non-contingent rewards:** refers to rewards that are given for simply participating. There is no task engagement required.
- **Task-contingent rewards:** requires completing or doing a specified task or activity before receiving a reward.
- **Performance-contingent rewards:** requires performing an activity well, matching a standard of excellence, or surpassing a specific criterion (for instance doing better than half of the other participants).

From the types of rewards outlined above, only the first category, task-noncontingent rewards have no effect on the intrinsic motivation of learners (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 2001). The second and third categories however have been used to control the behaviour and actions of learners. The third type of reward manifests the strongest level of control, as learners are not just expected to complete an activity before being rewarded, but also to outperform others. Thus, there is a strong tendency for these two latter categories to undermine the intrinsic motivation of learners (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999). The discussion continues with the various types of rewards and its effect on learners.

4.3.4. Stereotypes and Motivation

Learners' beliefs about intelligence are not only related to the goal orientation of learners, but also to the creation of stereotypes within the classroom. Dorling (2010) refers to this as IQism, which can be a self-fulfilling prophesy. When learners believe that intelligence is incremental and malleable, they are likely to endorse mastery goals, however, when learners believe that intelligence is fixed, they are likely to adopt performance goals (Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Dweck & Leggett,1988). Stereotypes can be created in a number of ways, but in a schooling situation, classifying and labelling learners is commonly related to the perpetuation of stereotypes (Aronson, Fried & Good, 2002). The general climate of the classroom will have an effect on how learners perceive themselves and their abilities (Reay, 2017; Reay & Williams, 1999; Dweck & Leggett,1988).

Stereotypes in high school settings can contribute to exclusionary behaviour such as bullying resulting in low self esteem (Kellow & Jones, 2008) as well as poor

mathematics achievement (Keller, 2002), delinquent behaviour (Devine, 1998) and school dropouts (Aronson & Steele, 2005). In studies highlighting academic performance along racial lines in the classroom, negative stereotypes about black American learners were directly related to their underperformance in tests (Aronson, Fried & Good, 2002). As a result, learners can be at risk for experiencing "stereotype threat" (Steele & Aronson, 1995) which can impair both academic performance in learners and their psychological engagement with academics. Belief about intelligence (Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good & Dweck, 2006) is the basis for teachers' conceptualisations of academic talent and giftedness and it is usually the academically talented learners that are visibly rewarded at reward ceremonies. Thus my argument moves on to the way academic talent is conceptualised at school, the latent messages that are sent out to learners regarding talent, and the meanings created for learners as a result of these conceptualisations.

4.4. Academic Talent

The primary focus of visibly rewarding learners is the recognition of academic talent. Academic talent can be conceptualized in a variety of different ways (Sternberg, 2019; Richards, 2015; Dweck, 2006; Slavin, 1991). Giftedness was traditionally viewed as being fixed, innate and uni-dimensional that is a rare talent possessed by the exceptional few (Sternberg; 2019; Richards, 2015). With a heavy reliance on psychometric testing, using the intelligence quotient (IQ) as basis of identification, academic talent was positioned as an innate ability (Richards, 2015). Very early definitions of academic talent were seen as hereditary, but were problematic as the research indicated that the heritability of intelligence varied by social class, with lower social classes indicating less evidence of intelligence (Sternberg, 2019). Critique of these traditionally held beliefs about intelligence and academic talent are that it is limiting, restrictive and quantifiable (Olszewski-Kubilius, Subotnik & Worrell, 2015; Richards, 2015).

Academic talent can be viewed as a social construct with an environmental basis (Richards, 2015). Historically, Sternberg's Triarchic Theory was the first to oppose the psychometric approach to intelligence, favouring a cognitive approach instead. According to Sternberg (1985, p.45) human intelligence can be defined as a "mental activity directed toward purposive adaptation to, selection and shaping of, real-world environments relevant to one's life". Sternberg's theory comprises three aspects: componential, experiential and practical, indicating a move towards conceptualizing intelligence in terms of the experiences and environments that the learner has been exposed to and has accumulated over time. Later research indicates that there is

clearly more to giftedness than intelligence – it includes cognitive abilities, achievement, motivation, and engagement and expertise within a particular area (Sternberg, 2019).

Multidimensional perspectives on academic talent tend to be more culturally sensitive advocating a broader view of intelligence (Richards, 2015; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Conversely, it can be argued that conceptions of giftedness include creativity, domain-specific abilities such as mathematical or verbal reasoning ability, and non-cognitive characteristics such as motivation (Olszewski-Kubilius, Subotnik & Worrell, 2015). However, in the field of giftedness studies, definitions have changed as research progressed and new knowledge is produced. Current conceptions of giftedness emphasise that giftedness is developmental in nature, with incremental phases of change. These changes over time begin at identified potential, and move to competency to expertise to creative productivity, artistry, or eminence (Olszewski-Kubilius, Subotnik & Worrell, 2015).

In South Africa, academic talent has been used politically to entrench discriminatory beliefs. Appel (1998) argued that using IQ testing in definitions of academic talent within the socio-political interests of certain individuals in South Africa could promote notions of superiority of certain racial and ethnic groups, namely that white learners are stronger than black learners academically. Richards (2015) notes that the local literature has also evolved in accordance with international trends. The literature of the 1980's that focused on the giftedness construct mirrored the ideological traces of apartheid (Appel, 1998; Richards, 2015). Issues such as socioeconomic background, access to resources and quality of schooling received were largely ignored during the apartheid years. Today however, a gradual shift towards more inclusionary definitions of academic talent and giftedness embrace areas such as creativity, leadership ability and personality attributes. Academic talent in the South African context has thus been identified by Richards (2015) as having three characteristics: an environmental basis, a multidimensional construct and contextual variability.

The traditional conceptualisation of giftedness and talent are presented as two separate, distinct concepts (Richards, 2015). Giftedness implies the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities that "place an individual at least among the top ten percent of age peers" (Gagné, 2004, p.120). Talent on the other hand, indicates outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities, skills and knowledge in at least one field of human activity, also placed within the top ten percent of age peers (Gagné 2004). Furthermore, Slavin (1991, p.68) distinguishes

between “high achievers”, referring to the top 33% of learners, and “gifted” learners, referring to the top 3-5% of learners in any grade.

The construct of giftedness has been outwardly rejected by some researchers (Dorling, 2010; Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Römer, 1993; Sapon-Shevin, 1987). Giftedness has been criticised as a narrow definition that influences the exclusivity of recommended policies and practices, thereby resulting in elitism (Sapon-Shevin, 1987; Dorling, 2010). Elitism refers to a dominant group within a system that advocates the idea of some being more authoritative and powerful than others (Dorling, 2010). In an elitist system, there must be a subjugated group, usually the majority, who are dominated by a small number of elitist individuals. Sapon-Shevin (1987) argues that gifted education programmes should be open to all students, and not the recommended three to five percent of students per school, believing that all students can benefit from such programmes.

Also negating the notion of giftedness as essential for outward talent is the concept of deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2008; Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Römer, 1993). Deliberate practice describes the phenomenon where all children, who are given opportunities to engage in effortful activities, can display characteristics once believed to reflect innate talent but are actually the result of intense practice over a minimum period of ten years (Ericsson, 2008). Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993, p.367) refer to this reflection of so-called innate talent as “expert performance”. The fundamental notion behind deliberate practice is that any learner can display excellence provided opportunities are given for them to do so, and not simply those that are naturally talented or gifted. Proponents of inclusive pedagogy (Makoelle, 2012; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Ravet, 2011; Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2008) have long argued that learning opportunities should be provided to all learners in the classroom, and no difference should exist allowing some learners to get greater access to the curriculum than other learners, thereby limiting their epistemological access to the curriculum.

Whilst school prizes and awards are usually in place to create positive sentiments around the recognition of giftedness, a label itself which has been known to create animosity among peers (Phillips & Lindsay, 2006), it is noted that schools are effectively catering for the wellbeing of what Gagné (2004) describes as the top ten percent of age peers. Subsequently, ninety percent of age peers are left out of the recognition process. The question of fairness is thus raised by the visible rewarding of these top ten percent of learners at schools. Based on an inclusive approach in the classroom, the idea of recognising and celebrating the achievements of only ten percent of learners is deeply flawed and inequitable (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse,

2017; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Slee, 2011).

The way learners perceive their own intelligence influences the way they learn (Dweck & Master, 2007) and what motivates them to learn (Dweck, 2015). When learners believe that their intelligence is fixed, they subscribe to the entity theory of intelligence and that they are either born with a high IQ or a low IQ (Dweck & Master, 2007). Thus, learners believe that if they had to put in much effort into their learning, then they are not very smart. Conversely, learners who subscribe to the incremental theory of intelligence believe that they can learn how to be better learners, thus motivating themselves to be self-regulatory learners (Dweck, 2015). This can be termed the growth mindset (Dweck, 2015) where learners know that they learn as they grow, and their intelligence develops and increases as they go along through their schooling years. Research by Yeager and Dweck (2012) showed that learners who believe or are taught that their intellectual abilities are qualities that can be developed (as opposed to qualities that are fixed) tend to show higher achievement across challenging school transitions and greater course completion rates in challenging courses such as mathematics.

Regardless of how talent is conceptualised, however, at school level, distinctions are made and boundaries are drawn regarding learner ability. Teachers classify learners into groups based on assumptions about their abilities, and tailor their provision accordingly (Reay, 2017; Mijs, 2016; Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011; Lu, 2010). Streaming or tracking learners refers to the method of assigning pupils to classes based on their overall attainments. The streamed classes are used as the teaching units for all subjects with the result that the overall attainments of all pupils in different classes can be clearly ranked (Lu, 2010). According to Hamilton and O'Hara (2011), broad-banding is frequently found in high schools, and is based on a similar premise as setting but with use made of much broader ranges of ability. Thus, an imagined top, middle and lower achieving group of pupils would be split in terms of top and upper middle in one class and lower middle and lower in another (Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011). Referred to as the "tyranny of ability discourses", Hamilton and O'Hara (2011) argue that ability groupings are a world-wide school problem, and many countries are dealing with the inequities surrounding the use of restrictive ability groupings and its attendant affect on teaching and learning, curriculum content and teacher expectations (Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011). Learners in lower sets are labelled as being of lower ability and in addition to lowering their aspirations, are provided with a less challenging curriculum, poorer teaching and are known for disruptive behaviour (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). Furthermore, there is a predominance of particular groups within the lower sets such as boys, ethnic minorities and children with low socio economic status

backgrounds (Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011). The stratification of learners into ability groups can result in the exclusion and marginalisation of learners, particularly those that do not fall into the higher bands of the set groups (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017; Mijs, 2016; Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, Gagné (2004) states that talent can be identified and measured in any occupational field by looking at the top ten percent of outstanding performers. If Gagné's logic had to be applied at high schools, it would mean that ninety percent of learners do not make the criteria to be included amongst the talented. Given that the literature shows evidence that teachers prefer teaching homogenous groups of higher ability learners (Brown, 2017; Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011; Lu, 2010; Reay,1998), it would inevitably mean that much of the teacher attention would be focused on the learners who are brighter, and most likely to participate in the lesson. This has the propensity to create an elitist environment at schools, which is in direct contrast to the aims and ideals of inclusive education. Accountability as a result of neoliberal, market-related influences on schooling is often the reason that the practice of streaming, setting and broadbanding takes place (Brown, 2017; Mijs, 2016; Reay, 1998). Among the greater challenges to the implementation of inclusive education is the presence of the neoliberal culture (Chong & Graham, 2017; Grimaldi, 2012; Slee, 1998) within which schools find themselves globally, including South African schools (Mathebula, 2018).

4.5. Neoliberalism

The historical roots of neoliberalism can be traced back to the 1970s as a political, macroeconomic doctrine that heralded a shift away from government-controlled power towards private enterprise, or the "market" being in control of various social structures within a country (Ferguson, 2010). Neoliberalism can be described as an ideology, mode of governance, policy package, economic model or paradigm that rose to prominence in the 1980's built upon the classical liberal ideal of the self-regulating market (Steger & Roy, 2010). In the last four decades, neoliberal reforms have often been critiqued for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons include sluggish economic growth and high unemployment as well as reducing the role of the state in favour of privatisation and decentralisation (Ferguson, 2010). Neoliberalism has also been criticised for being all about money, showing a "blatant disregard for the traumatic social consequences which arise from the imposition of unfettered market-logic to the international realm" (Williams & Taylor, 2000, p.22).

In South Africa, neoliberalism became apparent when the ANC-led government adopted fiscal policies in the early years. According to Williams and Taylor (2000), it was because most of the old apartheid bureaucrats were retained in the new cabinet, dispensing advice and prescribing neoliberal policies that would retain the economic power in much the same way as the white government did during the apartheid years. Such policies were presented as the only sensible and socially neutral policy option for South Africa at the time, stymieing genuine debate by delegitimising and ridiculing alternative positions (Williams & Taylor, 2000). As a result, the adoption of neoliberal policies and principles has exacerbated poverty and inequality, and increased the concentration of wealth in the hands of the privileged few. Neoliberal policies go beyond the domain of the economic and the political, and have affected educational policies too. To this end, Mathebula (2018, n.p.) calls for the "curtailing of the impact of neoliberal ideology, governmentality and public policies that repress and attack individual liberty in post-apartheid South African schools".

4.5.1. Neoliberalism and Education

The current neoliberal agenda that pervades educational systems throughout the world has encouraged a market-like approach to the way schools function and perform (Akabor, 2019). Neoliberal principles occur in schools through the creation of "school markets" which are supported by policies that distinguish between schools through the promotion of private schooling options and the development of methods of comparison, such as standardised school assessments, whilst elements such as parental choice and competition are seen as progressive and an indication of how well schools are performing (Ball, 2003). At an international level, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) compares the achievements of 15-year olds in mathematics, reading and science across 75 countries as of 2015 (Chong & Graham, 2017). In England, for example, manifestations of neoliberal policies can be seen in the measuring of children's performance at ages seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen, through standard tests and publication of the results in performance tables (Black-Hawkins, Florian & Rouse, 2017).

Similarly, until 2015, South African schools used the Annual National Assessments was used to measure learners' performance at grades three, six and nine. The results of these examinations and tests indicate which schools are considered performing, and which are considered underperforming by the Department of Education (DoE) and interventions by the DoE then follow for schools that are identified as underperforming (Heystek & Terhoven, 2015). Given that accountability is another neoliberal principle

that major decisions hinge upon, the ANA results were used against teachers and school principals holding them accountable for how little or how much the learners knew, and had learnt. Statistics arising from grade 12 or matriculation examinations are also used for the purpose of accountability. The label of underperforming or "failing" school has a negative impact on the morale of teachers and can lead to more time being spent on reporting on what they do, rather than actually doing it (Heystek & Terhoven, 2015). There is thus pressure placed on schools at risk of being labelled "underperforming" should their matric pass rate remain very low. As a result of heavily administrative reporting by schools for the sake of accountability, less time is spent on actual teaching within the classroom (Heystek & Terhoven, 2015).

4.5.2. Neoliberal notions of "success"

Neoliberal notions of success are based essentially on a competitive schooling system where learners are organised in an academic hierarchy and success is not available to all (Grimaldi, 2012). For instance, in New Zealand, a competitive market-model of education means that state schools engage in advertising and image-management, with the result that school pride, academic excellence and the maintenance of high standards are seen as strong markers of success (Ballard, 2003). In explaining how UK schools frame the term 'success', Benjamin (2003, p.106) argues that the biggest fiction perpetuated by schools today is "that anyone can be 'successful' while also legitimating the reality that, in a competitive system, 'success' cannot be available to all." This is an example of the way in which neoliberal market-based ideas make their way into the realm of schooling. Success is based on attainment within the parameters of a three tier system: "dominant", "consolation" and "really disabled" (Benjamin, 2003). The hierarchy maintained by schools ensures that learners experience different versions of "success", whilst the parents believe that any learner who enters the school has a chance at experiencing the dominant version of success (Benjamin, 2003). In the "dominant" discourse, success looks to the imagined bright future of high-status, highly paid jobs and a plethora of choices. The consolation discourse produces the subject 'student' in accordance with her curricular/examination performance measured against her previous personal record, but for whom the dominant version of success is inaccessible. The 'really disabled' discourse of success is out of the mainstream, normative version entirely: the primary goal is personal/social development and not curricular progress (Benjamin, 2003). A similar situation can be found in South African public schools, where the vast majority of learners have access to education, but do not all get to experience success in their education, nor get a quality education that could provide meaningful changes to their lives. As argued by Mathebula (2018, no

pagination), “neoliberal state education sits uneasily with the right to education, but fits easily with the ideals of competitive elitism.”

The effects of neoliberal policies on education are still inherent in South Africa. The NSC, or National Senior Certification (matriculation) results offer marketability options for many ex-model C secondary schools. Using number of A’s and 100% learner pass rates as markers of academic excellence, evidenced by smiling photographs of top learners with their achievements, these images can be found in national newspapers after matric results are released. In addition, Minister Angie Motshekga hosts annual award ceremonies to reward the top 30 matric learners in the country. Minister Motshekga further stated that the country should celebrate the 2019 matric pass rate of 81.3%, improving from last year's 78.2% (Sobuwa, 2020, 7 January). The fanfare in the media regarding Basic Education Minister Motshekga’s celebration of matriculation results is an example of the value of visible rewards attached to academic achievement in South African schools.

If learners went to functional, good, fee-paying schools (Spaull, 2015), then matric results provide a summative assessment of twelve years of schooling, and is key to the future post-school options available. It can influence decisions regarding acceptance at tertiary institutions and can either help or hinder the learners’ life path after school. Given that matric results are a common benchmark to determine functional from dysfunctional schools (Spaull, 2015), it can be concluded that matric exams and results serve many functions. As cautioned by Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017), summative assessment information that is used to serve too many purposes, such as judging teachers or taking decisions about the quality of schools for high stakes purposes can distort learning and teaching and diminish the potential of assessment to support learning.

According to the neoliberal standards agenda, a level of consistency and similarity is required in its construction of highly successful students (Slee, 1998). For instance, at various levels during the course of the 12-year schooling programme in England, each and every school takes standardised tests (Benjamin, 2003). The results of these tests are used as the only measure of success; no consideration is given to the contextual factors that might affect the outcomes. There is an implication that the curriculum can be made to assess everyone and with the correct teaching, every student’s needs can be correctly addressed, measured and if necessary, remediated (Benjamin, 2003). The neoliberal agenda ensures that schools are preoccupied with outdoing each other in terms of these test results and in doing so; vie to attract the right kind of parents that

will enrol their children as future cohorts of the school. Thus the idea of success in the current neoliberal system can be likened to a "sorting machine" for the rest of the students' life (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Similarly, Ballard (2003) discusses the way that families seek a positional advantage for their children in terms of employment and social standing, believing that such an advantage can be obtained from sending their children to a more successful school. Similarly, in South African schools, particularly those state schools that were previously labelled "Model C" schools, which were only accessible to white learners during the apartheid era tend to be in great demand. Fataar (2009) has pointed out that historically black neighbourhood schools were "woefully underfunded" and were thus not schools of choice to most parents. Tikly and Mabogoane (1997) point out that historically white, ex-Model C schools remain the only meaningful choice open to many black parents. Spaull (2015) argues that poverty and low quality education in South Africa go hand in hand. The re-articulation of race and space in post-apartheid schooling has been extensively explored by Gulson and Fataar (2011), and sheds light on the effects of neoliberal schooling in the Western Cape region. Matric results can be linked to the socio-economic background of the learner, creating a complex situation that mostly results in perpetuating past inequalities. In this regard, Mathebula (2018) urges that our collective struggle continues for an equal education that liberates rather than domesticates those less fortunate than others.

Whilst post-apartheid legislation ensures that learners of all races have access to ex-Model C schools (South African Schools Act of 1996), dependent on availability of space, and on one's location of the neighbourhood in question, in reality the situation might be completely different to what the policy dictates. Depending on particular schools within South Africa, language policies, exorbitant costs of school uniforms, unsubsidised travel costs as well as humiliating fees exemptions procedures still stand in the way of access to quality schooling for many previously disadvantaged learners (Spaull, 2015; Spreen & Vally, 2006). School choice thus becomes a matter of who can afford what, and who lives within a geographical space that has adequate facilities or provides for the needs of the learners at schools (Gulson & Fataar, 2011).

In terms of the ways in which neoliberalism has worked itself into our schools, Mathebula (2018) has argued that this agenda or "governmentality" interprets learners' failure or success in society purely on their individual attributes, with no consideration given to socio-economic inequalities. Mathebula (2018) further notes that millions in South Africa can be denied their right to education as a result of the neoliberal agenda. However, schools can oppose this neoliberal agenda by beginning to question

traditional school practices that do not necessarily contribute to quality education for all learners enrolled at the school. For instance, the awards/rewards culture promoted by many South African schools is a part of schooling that is not regulated by departmental policy from the Department of Basic Education, but rather remains the domain of internal school policy, and differs per individual school. Thus schools can find ways in which they can interrogate and rework their own policies to become more inclusive.

4.5.3. Neoliberal principles versus Inclusive values

Given that the neoliberal discourse is focused on providing good choices by maintaining standards and competitiveness according to an economic rationale, it stands in sharp contrast with the principles of social justice and equity at schools (Black-Hawkins, Florian & Rouse, 2017; Grimaldi, 2012; Spreen & Vally, 2006). The current situation of competitiveness, elitism, stratification and labelling that are inherent in a neoliberal schooling system form part of the neoliberal framework. As stated by Brown (2017, p.400), a central critique of neoliberal education policy is "its view of learning not as a social endeavour, but rather as a focus of individual achievement and progression". On the other hand, an inclusive school culture is premised upon collaboration, cooperation, participation for all, the sharing of information for the benefit of all, and an openness and willingness to reflect and respond, to be dynamic rather than static, and to remove any possible barriers to learning (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Norwich, 2014; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Furthermore, the use of learner collaboration within groups at schools greatly benefits their inclusivity when inclusive education is framed as participation (Frykedal & Chiriac, 2018). Equality of opportunity, equity, human rights and democracy are concepts associated with inclusion at schools (Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2018; Black-Hawkins, Florian & Rouse, 2017; Nilholm, 2006). Collaboration rather than competition is necessary for inclusion (Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2018). An essential aspect of actualising inclusion in group work is to develop conditions that support mutually respectful interactions (Frykedal & Chiriac, 2018; Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2018).

In terms of functional state schools, South African schools are faced with a tug-of-war situation – on the one hand there are educational policies promoting inclusion, equality and learner collaboration that must be implemented. On the other hand, the functional schooling system that does exist, is competitive, run like a business and is focused on outperforming other schools in terms of academic results. Competitiveness with regards to academic results is seen as necessary by both independent and state

schools in order to attract a specific type of learner (or more importantly, the parent) from a middle class background as future cohorts of the school.

It is based on the tensions between inclusive education and neoliberal schooling and the complex situation that South African schools find themselves in, that I argue for the questioning of practices such as rewarding learners. In a schooling system underpinned by values that are consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education, it is inconsistent to have competitiveness and hierarchical reward structures within schools. Although there is no data available in the literature, ceremonious award functions and the distribution of symbolic rewards/awards occur at many of the functional, often better-resourced state and independent schools throughout South Africa.

In a report on the condition of Gauteng's inclusive education implementation over the last two decades, Walton (2014) recommends that in order to improve their support of learning, schools should ensure that competitiveness does not result in the exclusion and marginalisation of learners who experience barriers to learning. Walton (2014) refers specifically to the level of competitiveness prevalent amongst high schools, such that learners who might affect the averages of the school are excluded from exams in an attempt to maximise the school's matric pass rate and maintain their lofty rankings. Given that a significant number of South African schools have a strong culture of awards and rewards, it is not uncommon for schools to exclude and deny learners the option of writing their matriculation examinations under the school's name, for fear of failure that would translate into schools losing their reputation for a '100% matric pass rate'.

4.5.4. Meritocracy

Meritocracy is a word used to refer to an elite group of people whose social progress is based on ability and talent rather than on class privilege and wealth (Mijs, 2016). It could refer to leadership positions given to able and talented persons, or it could also refer to a system in which such persons are rewarded and advanced (Mijs, 2016). Michael Young (1958) coined the term *meritocracy* and defined it as the sum of remunerations an individual could acquire by virtue of their ability and effort (i.e. IQ plus effort) rather than due to their family's wealth or social class origin. Young (1958) predicted that with the rising of meritocracy, those unable to make it through education – such as a large number of clever working-class students – would be rejected from school and would hence have limited opportunities for a good occupation. In addition, the emergence of a new exclusive social class, who would possess high educational credentials, would discriminate against older, well–established classes (Young, 1958).

“In this way, education started being regarded as a passport to the labour market and an avenue *par excellence* for upward social mobility.” (Themelis, 2008, p.428). On the whole, meritocracy seems fair, and is at odds with previous methods of using social class and family wealth to bestow societal goods upon people. In other words, true meritocracy theoretically means that children from any social class background can have the opportunity to get as far in education as their abilities can take them and go through the avenue of education to any occupation in the labour market (Themelis, 2008). However, this is not the case in reality, and meritocracy is argued as being responsible for inequalities in society (Mijs, 2016; Themelis, 2008; Saunders, 2006; Ball, 2003).

Although meritocracy is better than nepotism and other previous methods of selecting leaders from amongst the wealthy (Young, 1958), meritocracy is still challenging as it appears to reorganise patterns of advantage and disadvantage in society. Mijs (2016) argues that meritocracy is problematic because of three reasons. Firstly, educational institutions in practice significantly distort the ideal meritocratic process; then opportunities for merit are themselves determined by non-meritocratic factors; and finally, any definition of merit must favour some groups in society while putting others at a disadvantage. When put together, Mijs (2016) states that these three conclusions give reason to understand meritocracy not just as an unfulfilled promise, but as an unfulfillable promise. This is because learners who enter school, or the meritocratic race, do so from a position of unequal allocation: natural ability, talent, physical condition and attractiveness are all part of the fortune of birth. Thus if the starting position is not one of equality, it is unjust to claim equality in a meritocratic educational system. Children of more affluent and well-educated parents are significantly more likely to end up in higher standard classrooms than children of low-educated parents with equivalent academic talents (Themelis, 2008). Themelis describes the process of meritocracy with education as “education started being regarded as a passport to the labour market and an avenue *par excellence* for upward social mobility” (2008, p.428).

In Britain and elsewhere, the debate about meritocracy through education has received widespread attention in the past few decades whilst the main issues in question are the increasing inequalities and the strengthening of a rigid social hierarchy (Reay, 2017; Themelis, 2008; Saunders, 2006). Themelis (2008) argues that the British system of social selection is based on principles of achievement through education. This means that if middle-class families secure a better quality education and increased educational qualifications for their children, then privileges ordinarily associated with class origin are now attributed in new ways (Reay, 2017; Themelis,

2008). Instead of passing on wealth to their children, middle-class families endow them the 'know-how' of success in a competitive social structure through putative meritocratic mechanisms, such as education (Themelis, 2008). Similarly, Saunders (2006) argues that the middle class manage to secure for their offspring the same class position because their children are equally able and motivated. Apart from concerns regarding the IQ tests upon which the assessment of ability rests, Saunders' (2006) argument provides a justification to social class inequalities and relative class mobility, which is manifested by the 'fittest' and ablest getting a better share of the resources available in a social system. Following Saunders' understanding of meritocracy, the naturalisation of unequal rewards is compatible with a competitive, market-driven society. Thus meritocracy fits well within the neoliberal education system that is found in many schools today.

In order to avoid the 'naturalisation of inequality' (Ball, 2003) the discussion of merit, equality of opportunities and education needs to be located in a progressive social justice debate. In this regard, Themelis (2008) argues that inequalities are not there to be fairly distributed or legitimately confronted; their role is to rank people according to criteria of economic efficiency and fitness to the competition spirit, which is prevalent in Britain today. Comparisons can thus be made to the case of South Africa. Apartheid ensured the legally-sanctioned racial oppression, disenfranchisement, and segregation of brown people, and matric results still reflect – rather than disrupt – racial and class divides (Mathebula, 2018; Spaull, 2015). Whilst there is evidence of changing times and changing communities, these are not sufficient despite nearly 25 years of post-apartheid schooling (Mathebula, 2018). There is still much to be done to reflect a disruption in racial and class divides with respect to educational provision in South Africa (Spaull, 2015). It is clear that practices and processes at schools need rethinking, so that inequalities are not perpetuated.

As pointed out by Themelis (2008), the celebration of any success in reducing inequalities should only be followed by a further commitment to displace the very logic and generating force that produced them in the first place. I argue that visible rewards can be used as a vehicle for meritocratic ideals in South African schools. Similarly, Young (2001) has argued that "education has put its seal of approval on a minority, and its seal of disapproval on the many who fail to shine from the time they are relegated to the bottom streams at the age of seven or before". The approval and disapproval referred to by Young can be seen at school's prize-giving ceremonies at schools in South Africa. The kinds of achievement and talent that are considered

valuable, or not valuable, and the extent to which they are valuable are arranged hierarchically, further perpetuating divisions and notions of difference.

4.5.5. Meritocracy and Visible Rewards

Visible rewards itself may not be unequally or unfairly undertaken on the part of schools, but it might potentially create conditions that sustain inequalities at schools. This is because rewards allow learners to receive preferential treatment. In the current organisation of education, some learners are "smiled upon, actually and metaphorically" as Slee (2011, p. 42) states, they are able to enrol without fuss and they find the culture and organisation of the classroom complements the disposition of their family life. In this way, these learners are easily given educational opportunities and their participation within the classroom is automatically increased. Making reference to family background and availability of resources, Slee futher describes the privileged learners as those that "receive their lessons, their learning is often augmented by family resources… and they stride across the graduation stage as school and family enter into a mutual celebration of success." (2011, p. 42). The picture of privilege painted by Slee (2011) is not unknown in South African schools. But this is clearly not the case for every learner. Slee (2011, p.173) states that schools need to reinstate value to those who have not been valued by schools or in schools, and proposes that schools can be communities that "recognise and represent others who have been shunned by building rich learning communities of difference". It is the learners who are likely not to be the award-winners or the high achievers at schools, and are most likely to experience educational exclusion.

In a society dominated by social class related privilege, together with norms and values that legitimise and maintain the status quo, the playing fields are not level for all learners in South Africa. Questioning the practice of visible rewards leads us to question a system of rewards based on merit that might be used to determine candidates for post-school scholarships, for university entrance, for job opportunities, forging the life paths of learners beyond their schooling careers. Meritocracy seemingly provides the 'infrastructure' that allows those who have the abilities to move up to higher positions since rewards are allocated according to their achievement and not on factors such as race, gender and social class. In other words, the idea propagated in a meritocratic society is that one can work his/her way out of their low social class position if they are able and motivated enough. On the other hand, it can be argued that meritocracy is associated with intolerance. Cargile, Mao and Young (2019) argue that an ostensibly fair system that disproportionally rewards one group suggests that others are undeserving and "less than". As stated by Brown and Tannock (2009) those

defined as the ‘best’ are disproportionately rewarded, devaluing everything other than ‘top’ performance. This has inevitably impacted on education policy and practice, and demands a rethinking of education theory, goals and principles, particularly issues of equality, opportunity, inclusion and fairness (Brown & Tannock, 2009).

The expectation that educational reforms uphold the ideal of the maximisation of human potential, carries the assumption that the ablest students are selected, thus making irrelevant one’s social origins and other family privileges, such as wealth or social networks (Themelis, 2008). However, as this discussion thus far has shown, the reality is far different to the ideals of meritocracy as it was originally intended. I argue that visible rewards cannot be merely viewed as a “simple and beneficial system” to quote an SMT member from this study. Rather, visible rewards come from the perspective of those who are already in positions of privilege. As beneficiaries of advantage in an unequal system, the adherence to norms and values designed to maintain power and opportunity for the select few learners who win them, such learners and their families would be determined to protect what they consider to be their fate. As debated by Cargile, Mao and Young (2019), meritocracy is an ideological belief linked to prejudice.

Providing an understanding of practices such as visible rewards gives us an important resource to enable reflection on underlying attitudes and the tools with which to embark on a process of change and struggle for social justice. This study endeavours to develop the still limited research on rewarding and awarding learners in South Africa for academic achievement. The learners’ perspectives in particular contribute insightful evidence to draw on in the understanding of hegemonies at schools and the resultant consequences. As Themelis (2008) has succinctly argued, the spirit of meritocracy, seems to have triumphed, although the actual meaning of the term has been radically distorted in order to fit the purposes of a polarised and inherently unequal, competitive system of rewards and social ranking.

4.5.6. Competitiveness at schools

The attitude of society towards innate intelligence is closely correlated with its levels of inequality at schools (Dorling, 2010). The basis of this argument is premised on the idea of a cycle of inequality and elitism. Whilst in the past it was argued that inequality occurred as a result of conceptualizing intelligence as innate (Richards, 2015), Dorling (2010) argues that it is actually competitiveness at schools that feeds into the idea that those with innate intelligence are valued. In identifying children as being gifted and talented, notions about different limits for different children are perpetuated (Sapon-

Shevin, 1987). Thus schooling becomes a place where achievement targets for children are identified early on in their schooling careers, and teachers pass on information about ability levels and capabilities as the children progress into later years. By the time learners are in high school, they themselves identify with the stereotypes that have been placed upon them (Dorling, 2010).

Furthermore, a competitive schooling environment means that learners are placed into two distinct camps: the winners and the losers. Kohn (1992) argues that encouraging competition at schools puts learners up against each other, teaching them from a young age that in order for them to win, others must lose, justified by the laws of nature. By encouraging the winners versus losers' culture, schools are creating an environment that inadvertently discourages the teaching of values such as cooperation, collaboration and empathy (Kohn, 1992). This competitiveness further extends to the school system as a whole and includes the wrongful use of grades and test scores to classify and stream children (Kohn, 1992). Given that this is a school-wide practice; individual teachers are bound by school policy to adhere whether they might individually disagree with the practice or not. Thus it is the culture of the school that needs reformation.

In Walton's (2014) report on the condition of Gauteng's inclusive education implementation over the last two decades, she recommends that in order to improve their support of learning, schools should ensure that competitiveness does not result in the exclusion and marginalisation of learners who experience barriers to learning. Walton (2014) refers specifically to the level of competitiveness prevalent amongst high schools, such that learners who might affect the averages of the school are excluded from exams in an attempt to maximise the school's matric pass rate and maintain their lofty rankings. Whilst Walton (2014) does not specifically mention the practice of visibly rewarding learners in her review, reference is made to the unhealthy competitive nature of high schools as being a source of exclusion for learners. Visibly rewarding learners is a manifestation of a competitive culture as it encourages, supports and rewards learners for outdoing their peers. As a result, the school potentially creates elitist hierarchies by lauding the success of a small group of learners to whom importance is given, to whose voices are heard, whilst simultaneously sending out the silent message that those that do not meet the minimum criteria for the school's standards of receiving visible rewards may be excluded or made to feel less academically talented, or less significant in the life of the school. It is when learners do not see importance in others or in themselves; they are experiencing marginalisation (Messiou, 2012). Furthermore, there are learners that Slee (2011)

refers to as “smiled upon”, which are those that are given privileges and opportunities based on teacher judgement. Following Slee’s argument, teachers are partly responsible for withholding opportunities and limiting the participation of all learners – in using their discretion, their decisions might have far-reaching implications for learners’ lives beyond school. As Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017, p. 27) explain, inclusivity be achieved when “the importance of participation in classroom activities is privileged over judgements about what students can and cannot do.” Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017) further argue that individual needs can be met without pre-determining who can do what.

In arguing for a less competitive schooling environment, Watkins et al. (2003, p.193) posit that “a school culture that displays honour rolls and rewards the top students at prize givings is likely to…undermine classroom teachers’ attempts to foster intrinsic motivation.” Among the findings from Watkins et al. (2003) study at two Gauteng schools aimed at looking for motivational differences between learners of varying ethnicity, it was found that creating a learning environment that encourages interest and hard work might lead to higher quality learning outcomes. Higher quality learning outcomes for all learners is in line with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. It is also worth noting that schools promote the idea to all learners that any one of them can win awards if they work hard enough, yet teachers know that this is largely untrue: different versions of “academic success” exist for different learners. The table below shows a comparison of competitive versus inclusive values:

Table 3: Comparison between competitive values and inclusive values

Competitive values:	**Inclusive values:**
Focus is on outperforming others	Focus is on participation, creativity and active engagement for all
Recognition is reserved for the few learners seen as academically successful	Focus is on all learners being recognised as worthy
Promotes labelling and the stratification of learners into levels of ability: e.g. high ability and low ability	Does not outwardly distinguish between learners depending on ability levels.
Results in stereotype threat that can be damaging to self esteem	Is concerned with the wellbeing and belonging of all learners
Promotes performance goal structure	Is aligned with mastery goal structure
Promotes elitism and inequality	Is rooted within social justice and equity
Can create conditions that result in exclusion and marginalisation of some learners	Is a never-ending process involving the progressive discovery and removal of limits to participation and learning for all learners

Attitudes and beliefs about education centre around bell curve thinking (separating learners into high, average and low abilities)	Rejects the idea of bell curve thinking, instead believing that all children can learn, participate and achieve.
Epistemological access, and therefore participation and achievement, limited to those that are identified via abilities	Epistemological access, participation and achievement available to all learners regardless of any categorisation/labelling

4.5.7. Benefits of competition

Competition is not a wholly negative concept however. Evidence exists that competition within a group setting (also referred to as tournaments) could be beneficial to learners, and foster an element of fun and light-heartedness within schools (Kristensen, Troeng, Safavi & Narayanan, 2015). Similarly, Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) makes provision for schools to have constructive competition that can be used in ways to enhance schooling experience rather than cause harm and diminish the purpose of education. When competition is used in a ruthless manner that encourages students to win despite all odds, it becomes harmful (Kristensen, Troeng, Safavi & Narayanan, 2015). It is therefore up to the school to use competition cautiously and with keen awareness to reduce any exclusionary effects that competition may have on the education of all learners. Given that competitiveness forms part of the school culture, a brief discussion of school culture is provided below.

4.6. School Culture

School culture can be understood as occurring in multiple layers, where all layers are not easily visible or instantly recognisable. With regards to the attitudes and beliefs at schools, McMaster's (2015) research into the three levels of culture at schools offers a significant model for understanding the hidden curriculum as well as visible rewards. Using the following pyramid, McMaster (2015) shows how cultural manifestations at schools occur. At the first level, it is the artefacts and practices that are at surface level, or what is on display and easily visible to all. The middle layer reflects the expressed core values of the school culture, and manifestations can be seen in the way people talk at school. The lowest level reflects the deepest level of school culture. At the individual level, the assumptions on which culture is based can be found. These are not easily articulated or clearly expressed.

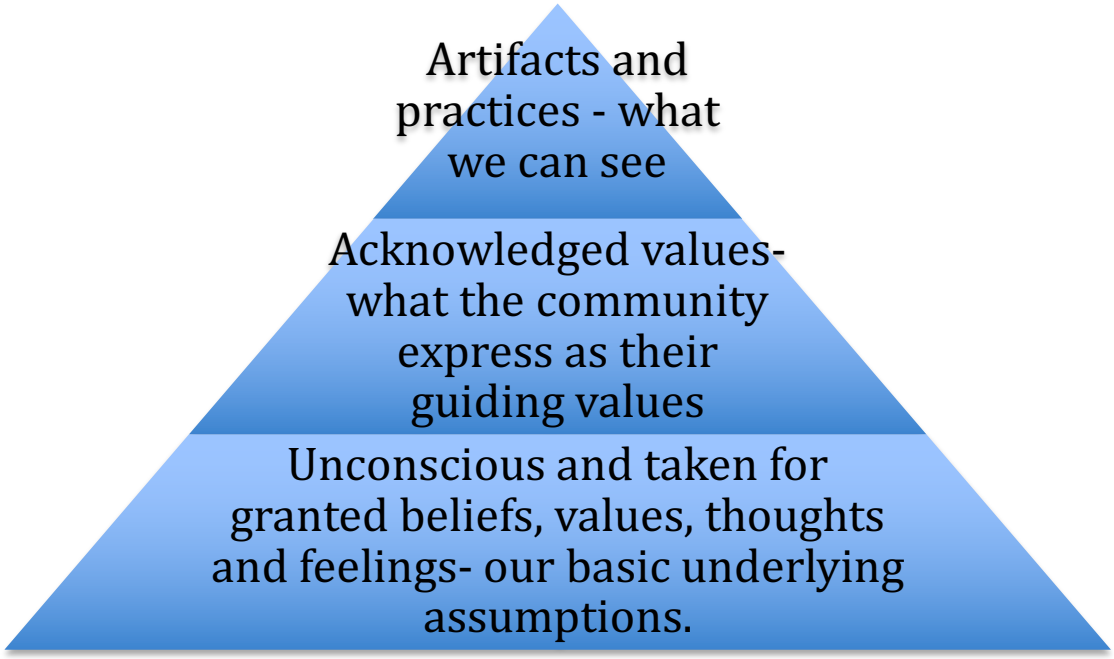


Figure 5: Levels of Culture (McMaster, 2015)

Using the figure on levels of culture above, visible rewards fits into the highest level of the pyramid, as artefacts and practices that we see (McMaster, 2015). In describing visible rewards as a cultural part of school, this is manifested by symbolic items such as differentiated clothing, trophies, badges, scrolls and other items of cultural significance that are of value only within the school itself. Outside of that school environment, the items have no worth, meaning or significance. For instance, should the badges, trophies and differentiated clothing be taken into or worn at another school, they would be meaningless and might even result in shame and embarrassment for the learner. The second level of culture is the acknowledged values, or what the school community express as their guiding values (McMaster, 2015). These are seen in the overt messages and slogans that the school values and prides itself on. These explicit messages set the tone for the dominant culture of the school. For instance, if the school is known for its academic achievements, then the school motto or slogan (sometimes in Latin) might state that excellence in achievement is of value. The lowest level of culture is covert and reflects the dominant culture of the school, as experienced by the learners within the school (McMaster, 2015). This could be reflected in the way award-winners are treated, and how valuable visible rewards are to the learners, and how many learners are motivated by and work towards these visible rewards. At the lowest or deepest level of culture, the hidden curriculum is found at schools.

4.6.1. The Hidden Curriculum

Taking into consideration that South African schools are aligned with an explicit

curriculum, which is currently known as Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement or CAPS. Outcomes are well-publicised either via the school's website, or in the case of state institutions, by the Department of Education. I will explore the concept of the curriculum that is not explicitly displayed, referred to as the hidden curriculum.

With regards to the responsibility of the school, the following three points are noted. Since schools purport the success of learners, therefore it is the responsibility of the education system, and by implication schools, to create the conditions for all learners to achieve success (Vayrynen, 2003). In terms of policy documents, Education White Paper 6, (DoE, 2001) proposes that schools should change attitudes and environments to minimise barriers to learning and extend quality education to all. In a schooling environment that lauds the successes of some learners and not of all, it is almost insincere for schools to claim that every learner matters, or that every learner is important. The actions of the school, via the hidden curriculum, convey more than the written values and spoken words from teachers, principals and other members of school administration (Bowles & Gintis, 2002).

The hidden curriculum can be defined as including everything at school that is not academic but has important influences on the academic outcomes of learners (Rahman, 2013; Alsubaie, 2015). Tacitly implied, the hidden curriculum becomes apparent in the values, principles and practices that learners are expected to intuitively respect and follow (Vayrynen, 2003). A hidden curriculum refers to the unspoken or implicit values, behaviours, procedures, and norms that exist in the educational setting (Alsubaie, 2015). Both Vayrynen (2003) and Rahman (2013) argue that the hidden curriculum must be given some consideration by schools. Not only does the hidden curriculum emphasise to learners the knowledge that is most valued, and the behaviours and practices that are considered appropriate, but it also reflect values, practices and worldviews of the dominant culture of the school. Hidden expectations, skill sets, knowledge, and social process can help or hinder student achievement and belief systems (Alsubaie, 2015).

The attitudes and beliefs that teachers implicitly attach to learning and teaching embodies the hidden curriculum. Brantlinger (2004) argues that learners who are 'othered' or who are found on the fringes of school life should instead be entitled to fair portions of resources and respect and have the right to access the general curriculum and be part of the comprehensive school community. In South Africa, Meier & Hartell's (2009, p.185) study on cultural diversity at schools shows that although some formerly white schools with conservative histories have achieved significant levels of racial desegregation, "many formerly white schools have an excluding hidden curriculum around…. power of leadership, pragmatism of Afrikaans communities, school ethos

and culture and the working class character of the school." Similarly, Chrisholm (2004) notes that many schools, especially those in the rural areas, stream learners – officially on the grounds of language, but officially on the basis of race and class. Often learners who are included into mainstream schools find themselves positioned as guests in a system that claims to welcome them, with conditions of the school's ability to support them attached to their stay (DoE, 2009).

These observations suggest the ways in which school structure and culture are used to propagate a hidden curriculum that is essentially exclusionary. The assumption is that if learners want to attend these schools, they must abide by the school's rules and regulations, amongst which are hidden forms of discrimination against learners who do not share the school's linguistic, class and/or cultural norms (Meier & Hartell, 2009). In this regard Walton (2013) notes that even where formal access to schools and schooling has been achieved, access to the social environment of schools is not guaranteed. Thus the hidden curriculum perpetuates a covert, dominant culture at schools, and indicates a level of hegemony at school.

Using the hidden curriculum, educational systems socialise children differently and in such a way as to reinforce the characteristics and expectations of their respective social classes (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). This prepares children for the occupations they will engage in when they complete school and join adult society. In doing so, however, Bowles and Gintis (2002) posit that schools legitimise the inequalities of the social hierarchy of capitalism by rewarding those who succeed. This notion ties in with the neoliberal reforms that are currently found at school (see sub-section 4.5. for more on neoliberalism). Differing levels of society are seen as being a natural state of affairs even to young children in the schooling system, who are immersed in the school culture and familiarised with the hidden curriculum found within. In giving different treatment to different students, therefore, this view of the hidden curriculum posits that educational systems either reinforce or modify the self concepts and aspiration of students so that students at the top of the hierarchy envision elite or powerful positions in their futures while those at the bottom of the hierarchy envision themselves in lower class roles (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Rewarding learners publicly with ceremony and fanfare is thus a means by which this hierarchical system is perpetuated. Learners quickly realise who is most valued at school, and what type of achievements are required in order to access these privileges.

The focus on the hidden curriculum as perpetuating inequalities appears in the literature. Using a qualitative study focused on the way in which Aborigine learners in an Australian secondary school, Rahman's (2013) research aimed at exploring the

ways in which the hidden curriculum allows the dominance of some (white) learners whilst disadvantaging other (Aborigine) learners. Similarly, it can be argued that a competitive, hierarchical schooling structure that encourages visible rewards forms part of a hidden curriculum that South African learners are inducted into. Hoping to make schools inclusive whilst maintaining a school structure based on hierarchical ideologies will not allow for the successful implementation of inclusive education (Meier & Hartell, 2009). As such, visibly rewarding learners might adversely affect learners who are not explicitly made aware that a certain level of exclusion is a necessary step in recognising the achievements of selected learners. In investigating how inequalities might be perpetuated at South African schools, it is informative to consider school practices that form part of the hidden curriculum, and question the wisdom behind using practices that might inadvertently exclude learners.

4.7. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it appears that the goals of inclusive education may not always align with the practices associated with schooling today. The goal of White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) is to extend quality education to all based on the ideals of equity, social justice, democracy and participation, but the culture of schools appear to be aligned with a competitive system – itself a manifestation of the neoliberal schooling model. Visibly rewarding learners embodies the promotion of the successes of some learners, but not all. From the reward literature, much of the findings indicate that learners most positively affected by rewards were those that were high ability whilst low ability learners seem to be indifferent to rewards. Therefore, not all learners respond favourably to rewards, despite teachers' beliefs that rewards motivate learners to increase their performance at school. In addition, the hidden curriculum that is tacitly experienced by learners might not be consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. It seems then, that despite a decade of inclusive education research, very little attention has been given to exploring the competitive nature of schools in South Africa. Given that there is a paucity of literature on rewarding children in South Africa and its relation to the aims and ideals of inclusive education, this study sought to respond to the gap in the literature using the perspectives of the learners, parents, teachers and SMT members regarding the criteria, processes and procedures of visibly rewarding learners.

Chapter 5: Methodology

"Social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and each ones' outcomes are affected by the actions of others."

(Johnson & Johnson, 2002. p. 4)

5.1. Introduction

As indicated by Johnson and Johnson (2002) in the quote above, social interdependence refers to the ways in which people relate to each other in the pursuit of common goals. Given that this study is concerned with the practice of visibly rewarding learners at two high schools in Gauteng and its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education, this quote highlights the importance of the people around us. Several categories of participants were involved in this study, namely grade 11 learners, grade 11 teachers, members of the SMT and the parents of the grade 11 learners at each of the two schools.

In this mixed methods critical realist study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in two phases. The first phase was quantitative and the second phase was qualitative. In the previous two sections, a theoretical framework and a review of the literature was undertaken. In this chapter, I discuss the reasons for my choices relating to the methodology of the research. This includes the research approach, research design, sampling methods, data collection methods, ethical considerations, points of interface (mixing) and data analysis. Finally, I elaborate on triangulation in this study and outline the processes followed to ensure validity and rigour.

5.2. Ontological and epistemological approach

The ontological and epistemological position that I have taken is aligned with critical realism. A full exploration of critical realism appears in chapter 3.

5.3. Research Design

When deciding upon a design for this study, I found that the best way to answer my research questions was to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, commonly known as mixed methods. This is because my study was not only scrutinizing the practice of rewards, but also how rewards related to the learning of all, which is the ultimate goal of inclusive education. In order to understand visible rewards,

I had to first establish that there was indeed an issue with the practice of visible rewards amongst the learners and parents themselves. This could best be done by survey, therefore I began the study with a questionnaire for both the learners and parents. Then I could concentrate on elaborating on the practice of rewards. Given that the actual practice of visible rewards is reliant on thick descriptions to illustrate its intention and significance, and the various ways in which schools reward their learners, it lends itself to qualitative research. MacMillan and Schumacher justify the use of qualitative studies when research may potentially contribute to both theory and practice, stating that "Qualitative studies can provide a detailed description and analysis of a particular practice, process or event" (2010, p. 320). In this case, the detailed descriptions would be those that relate to the way visible rewards are experienced by learners, teachers and school management.

Using quantitative methods to establish a basis for my study before using qualitative methods to elaborate, expand on, corroborate and confirm the initial inferences meant that I had to undertake the study sequentially. I chose to implement a learner survey and a parent survey in the first quantitative phase of the study. Choosing mixed methods was an ideal choice because it maximised the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods, and deepened understandings in ways that using mono-methods could not (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). For example, qualitative methodology alone could not have provided a large data source of participant values and attitudes the way the surveys did, and quantitative methodology alone could not have provided the richness and depth that I had gleaned from the interviews.

This study is both descriptive and explanatory. It examines new or little known phenomena, contributes to existing literature by building rich descriptions and provides suggestions for future research (Tellis, 1997). Descriptive studies answer questions of what, where, when and how; explanatory studies address questions of why, illuminating on what the observed patterns imply (Babbie, 2008). The main research question guiding this study was:

> ***In what ways is visibly rewarding learners at high schools consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education?***

followed by two sub-questions,

- *How do the criteria, processes and procedures of visibly rewarding learners promote or hinder the participation and achievement of all?*
- *What are the attitudes and beliefs of key stakeholders at high schools that drive or challenge the practice of visible rewards?*

Overall, the main research question is a “how” question, and is best answered qualitatively. My choice to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer each of the research sub-questions came after much deliberation about participant size as well as the most effective means of gathering a large enough sample to provide me with sufficient data. The first research sub-question was best answered by quantitative methods, given that the participant groups were large. For instance, a total of 473 grade 11 learners were handed out questionnaires. Using qualitative methods to collect data from such a large group would not have been possible given the time constraints I had to work within. Survey research is probably the best method available to the social researcher interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2008). Therefore, quantitatively providing the participants with a survey of pre-determined attitudes and beliefs corresponding to this research question was an efficient technique. The second research sub-question was best answered using qualitative methods. Therefore, I had chosen to use semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews to answer this research question. The thick descriptions provided by the qualitative interviews provide richness and depth (Patton, 2002). In layering the realities of the various participants, it became clear that visible rewards are highly nuanced and at times conflicting phenomena.

5.4. Mixed Methods

According to Creswell (2015, p.2), mixed methods research is defined as “an approach to research in the social, behavioural, and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to better understand research problems”. Mixed methods designs are also defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) in a single study or programme of inquiry (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie &Turner, 2007).

In terms of what constitutes mixed methods studies is a matter that is not entirely agreed upon (Creamer, 2017; Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015, Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Quantitative and qualitative research are not polar opposites, but fall on a continuum with points that overlap at the centre (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), overcoming their own distinct weaknesses (Creswell, 2015). Whilst quantitative research is often criticised for being small, non-

representative samples with anecdotal results, qualitative research is questioned for its inability to explain why or how an intervention failed or succeeded (Creamer, 2018).

I have chosen mixed methods for this study because it allows for a fuller, more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of visible rewards. As Mertens (2010) states, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can offer multiple lenses simultaneously to achieve alternative perspectives that are not reduced to a single understanding. For the first phase of the study, I used quantitative methods to gather data in order to determine the learners' and parents' values, beliefs and attitudes towards rewards, participation and achievement. In the second phase of the study, I used qualitative methods to gather data from the learners in focus groups, the teachers and the school management.

This study not only investigated the various ways in which schools reward learners and the reasons they do so, but also determined its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. As such, I had extracted data from a variety of sources, including the learners, the teachers, the school management and the parents, resulting in a complex, yet comprehensive study. As pointed out by Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017, p. 122), "mixed methods designs are characterised by their complexity". A multilevel mixed design is more complex ontologically as it involves multiple levels of reality (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). A similar research that employed mixed methods explanatory two-phase design is Deasy, Coughlan, Pironom, Jourdan and McNamara's (2014) study on the psychological distress and coping processes amongst higher-education students in Ireland. It was stated that the use of a mixed methods design, large sample and high response rate were the main strengths of the study (Deasy, et al., 2014).

As I was specifically looking for data that would not only describe but also explain, I required levels of data to allow me to achieve this purpose. Macmillan and Schumacher (2010) recommend mixed methods research as it provides more comprehensive data than mono methods. In this regard, Johnston and Onwuegbuzie (2010, p. 18) argue that mixed methods research "recognises the existence and importance of the natural or physical world as well as the emergent social and psychological world that includes language, culture, human institutions, and subjective thoughts." Johnston and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) argument is relevant for the critical realist underpinning that I have chosen for this study, creating a perfect fit between mixed methods and critical realism.

5.4.1. Sequential Mixed Methods Designs

Mixed methods studies occur in three major variants (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). These three types are equal-status mixed research, qualitative-dominant mixed research and quantitative-dominant mixed research. In equal-status mixed research, equal prominence is given to both the quantitative and qualitative components, whilst qualitative- and quantitative-dominant mixed methods offer priority in the respective methods as suggested by the name. In phenomenological mixed methods research, priority is given to the qualitative element (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In sequential mixed method designs, the initial quantitative phase allows for orientation towards the phenomena and helps to identify participants for the next qualitative phase so that information rich participants are sought (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). An example of such a study is the research into rural workers' experiences of back pain carried out by Dean, Hudson, Hay-Smith and Milosavljevic (2011) that used a preliminary questionnaire prior to their phase of qualitative phenomenological analysis. In using the strengths of one method to help inform the other, Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie argue that the strength of quantitative research was to identify common aspects of a phenomenon, whilst the secondary phenomenological phase drew on interpretative phenomenological analysis (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). Sequential mixed designs also can be applied when conducting what Chen (2006) conceptualises as theory-driven evaluations, via the following two strategies, namely switch strategy and contextual overlaying strategy. Switch strategy refers to when qualitative methods are first applied to illuminate programme theory of stakeholders and then quantitative methods are used to assess the theory. Contextual overlaying strategy occurs when qualitative approaches are used to collect contextual information for facilitating the interpretation of quantitative data or for reconciling findings. I have employed a contextual overlaying strategy in this study to facilitate the interpretation of the initial quantitative data: first, I undertook a quantitative approach to assess to obtain original data on a little known concept, and then I undertook a qualitative approach to facilitate the interpretation of the initial quantitative data.

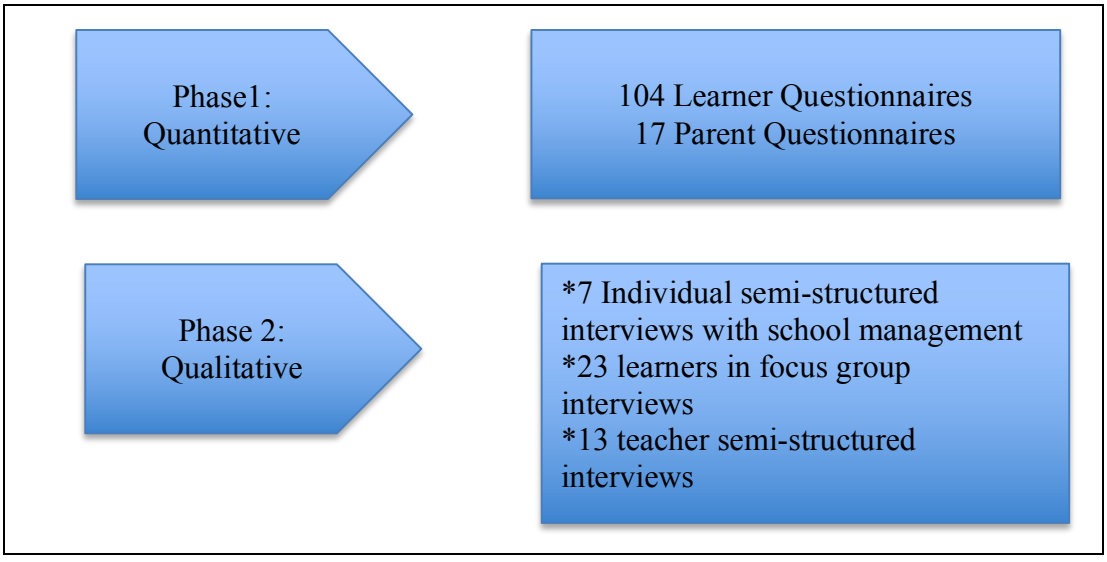
Sequential designs are best suited to studies where the quantitative and qualitative components are not equal in weight, and data are collected sequentially in phases, in which the first phase informs the second phase. When the emphasis is greater on the qualitative, then the term is indicated in capital letters, for example QUAL. When the emphasis is lesser on the quantitative, this is indicated by the use of small letters, for example, quan. The inverse thus applies to studies that have a greater emphasis on QUAN and lesser emphasis on qual. These designs provide a summary of both sets of results with a discussion on how the second phase confirmed or expanded on the

first phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The mixing thus occurs in the interpretation. The two types of sequential designs are Sequential Exploratory Designs, and Sequential Explanatory Designs. In a Sequential Exploratory Design, the qualitative strand helps to develop or inform the quantitative strand and to connect the data between the two phases, such as in instrument design, theory building or testing. The emphasis usually is on QUAL, but equal or QUAN are possibilities (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The mixing occurs in the interpretation of the results – (QUAL → quan). Variables of interest are usually uncovered by the QUAL part of the study. The second phase would be the quan phase, which is used to develop the tool from the results obtained in the first phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

5.4.2. Sequential Explanatory Design

In a Sequential Explanatory Design, an alternative would be the explanatory design *(*quan → QUAL*)*. One would start off with a quantitative method to test theories or concepts, then follow up with qualitative methods with a small group of participants to explore the issues further (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The quan → QUAL design is a qualitatively driven sequential design (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). My study followed a Sequential Explanatory Design. From the outset, the rationale for choosing a mixed methods design is that my research questions could only be answered partly by quantitative and partly by qualitative methods. Creswell (2012) argues that selecting a mixed methods design is an option when neither method used in isolation would be sufficient to effectively address the nature of the problem. The two phases of my study are illustrated below:

Table 4: Phases in Sequential Explanatory Design



My initial choice of using a sequential explanatory design was both developmental and confirmatory. By using the quantitative data, I was able to identify the participants for the next phase and the extent to which the learners and parents perceive visible rewards and could then formulate questions interrogating the thinking behind the practice of visible rewards. The second phase thus consisted of focus group interviews as well as semi-structured interviews. Given that the learners had indicated that visible rewards motivated them in the questionnaire, I had asked both the learners and teachers more in-depth questions about being motivated by visible rewards. These findings will be discussed in more detail in the Findings chapters (see chapters 6, 7 and 8).

Sequential explanatory designs involve different stages. The data is first collected and analysed in a quantitative form, as with a two-phase embedded design (Creswell, 2007). One of the limitations of sequential mixed methods is that the instruments used in the second stage of data collection cannot be completely known prior to the initial stage being complete as the second stage is dependent on the first (Barnes, 2012). For this reason, the questions posed to the teachers at in the semi-structured interview phase differed slightly from the initial protocol that was conceptualised at the start of this study. My initial questions did not focus on the motivational aspects of visible rewards on learner achievement, but after receiving the learner questionnaire responses, I had changed the teacher protocol to include a question on how visible rewards motivate learners to achieve.

In order to understand the inclusion and participation of all learners, for the second qualitative phase, I was looking for a mix of learners: award-winners and non-award-winners, willing to share their opinions about the visible rewards system at school. Thus this sequential explanatory design is an example of a multi-strand mixed design: the first phase is exploratory, whilst the second phase is confirmatory (Barnes, 2012). The choice of a mixed-methods study can further be justified as it has been purposefully selected for developmental mixed methods. In terms of developmental mixed methods, Macmillan and Schumacher (2010, p.542) describe it as using “the results of one method to develop or inform the sampling and techniques for the second method.” At the end of the learner questionnaire, I had invited participants to participate in a focus group interview, providing them with my email address should they be interested in sharing more about their visible rewards experience.

In addition to using the quantitative surveys to identify information-rich participants for the next qualitative phase, the survey provided direction to the questions later used in the study, during the learner focus group interviews as well as individual semi-

structured interviews with teachers and school management. Learners who consented to the focus group interview were given a second opportunity to provide a deeper understanding of their experience of visible rewards at school. Qualitative methods are necessary to deepen the descriptions of the participants (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), providing the thick descriptions required to elucidate phenomena. Following Barnes' (2003, p.10) argument that "the extent and complexity in inclusive education research is not fully captured when using quantitative research methods alone", choosing a sequential explanatory design in inclusive education research was necessary to provide an in-depth understanding of visible rewards.

5.4.3. Limitations of using Mixed Methods Designs

Limitations in using mixed methods include the complexity involved in creating the design, such research is also resource-intensive (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). Although mixed method designs are challenging to plan and conduct and involves careful planning to describe all aspects of the research such as study samples for quantitative and qualitative portions, timing of each portion, and plans for integrating data during analysis, they provide rich opportunities in terms of answering the research questions. In this study, I was very careful about the timing of my research, as I had only been granted permission to gather data in the second and third terms by the GDE (between April and September of 2018).

Another limitation is that it is possible that the researcher requires skills that may not be their area of expertise (Creswell, 2012). Data analysis in mixed method studies is often a challenging phase for many researchers who are usually faced with synthesizing quite different types of data (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). In terms of my own expertise, my strength lies in the qualitative phase of the study. For this reason, I sought assistance with regards to the quantitative data analysis. I enlisted the help of a statistician for the quantitative analysis phase of the study, however the synthesis and final interpretation of the results are my own.

5.5. Sampling

Sampling of both site and participants was purposeful and homogenous in this study. Homogenous sampling refers to the sites and/or group of people who possess a similar trait or characteristic (Creswell, 2012). In this study, homogeneity in sampling would be sites: two co-ed English medium high schools as well as homogeneity in the participants: grade 11 learners, grade 11 teachers, school management, and the parents of grade 11 learners. Purposeful sampling also allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomena (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010) and might give

voice to “silenced” people (Creswell, 2012).

In selecting the groups of participants, I took into consideration the school practice and symbolic significance of the practice of visible rewards, and deliberately sought the perspectives of various stakeholders, including the parents. Banks (2000) suggests that groups in power, generally professionals, largely determine what are the accepted practices for those with less power, such as parents. This is particularly relevant in the study, as I obtained the views of the learners and parents, whose voices are often not given much attention in the research literature. In addition, the purposeful sampling of learners who have had experiences of visible rewards, either as award-winners or not, what Creswell (2012) refers to as “information-rich” participants were of crucial importance to this study, without which the phenomenon of visible rewards cannot be fully explored. Given that this study had a total of 141 participants comprising various stakeholders at school, it is necessary to fully explicate the sampling techniques and strategies used. Sampling techniques used in this study fall into the category of nested sampling as well as multi-level sampling, both of which will be explained below.

5.5.1. Nested sampling designs

Nested sampling designs represent sampling strategies that facilitate credible comparisons of two or more members of the same subgroup, wherein one or more members of the subgroup represent a sub-sample of the full sample (Onwuegbuzie, & Leech, 2007). I had employed a nested sampling technique for the learner focus group interviews so that I could acquire in depth information from interviewing a sample of learners (23 focus group participants) from the full sample of grade 11 learners that completed the survey (104 participants). This is an example of a nested sampling design, where the interview data from the smaller sample of learners represents the larger sample of grade 11 learners. A similar study with a nested sampling design was undertaken by Hicks, Lin, Robertson, Robinson and Woodrow (2001) to understand the clinical dilemmas that shape medical students' ethical development, a mixed methods study with both questionnaire survey and focus group interviews were used. After surveying 108 clinical students, four focus group interviews with 20 students in total were held (Hicks, et al., 2001). The design of Hicks, et al. (2001) study is significant as it matches the sequential mixed methods design of my study. In addition, the number of participants of Hicks, et al. (2001) study closely correlate with the number of participants in my study, as I had surveyed 104 learners and undertaken four focus group interviews with a total of 23 learners.

Furthermore, I used a sub-sampling technique to enhance the understanding of visible rewards and to better understand its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive

education. The goal of sub-sampling is to obtain a sub-sample of cases from which further data can be extracted (see Figure 6 below). Sub-sampling often takes the form of theoretical sampling, which involves the sampling of additional people, incidents, events, activities and documents, in order to develop emergent themes; to assess the adequacy, relevance, and meaningfulness of themes; to refine ideas; and to identify conceptual boundaries (Charmaz, 2000). For the sub-sample, I used the perspectives from the grade 11 teachers, the SMT and the grade 11 parents. I needed these additional perspectives to allow me to fully situate the initial learner perceptions of visible rewards with that of their parents as well as the intentions from the school. Thus I could ascertain its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education.

The flow chart below shows how the nested sampling design worked towards an improved understanding of the phenomenon of visible rewards. Patton (2002) states that qualitative and quantitative data can be fruitfully combined to elucidate complementary aspects of the same phenomenon. In this way, interviewing learners in a nested sample from the full sample of learner questionnaire respondents allowed me to expand on the richness of the data, or as Patton (2002; p. 558) states "put faces on the numbers and illuminate the stories behind the quantitative data".

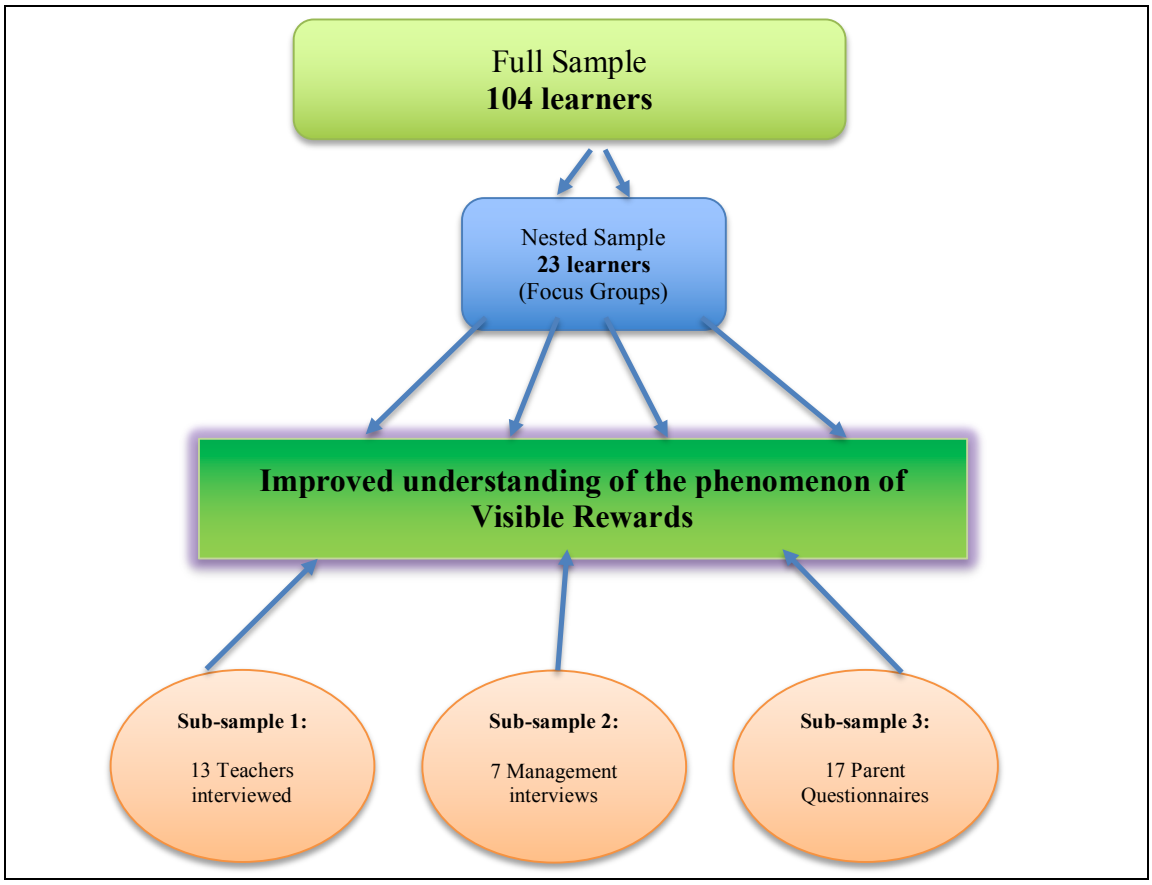


Figure 6: The flow of a nested sampling design

Nested sampling designs are most commonly used to select key informants, who are selected from the overall set of research participants, and often generate a significant part of the researcher's data (Onwuegbuzie, & Leech, 2007). In this way, the voices of key informants (which were the voices of the 23 learners in my study) help the researcher to attain data saturation, theoretical saturation, and informational redundancy.

Findings from key informants are generalised to the other non-informant sample members (Onwuegbuzie, & Leech, 2007). Therefore, the voices of the key informants are used to make both internal statistical generalisations and analytical generalisations. Based on learners' own indications from the survey, learners fit into one of the following categories in the table, rendering them either award-winners or non-award-winners.

Table 5: Categories of Learner Respondents

Category	Description of respondent in relation to Visible Rewards
1	Learners who were award-winners consistently throughout their schooling careers and were current award-winners; and Learners who won awards in their earlier high schooling years, but no longer won awards by grade 11.
2	Learners who had never won awards

In terms of the representation of the key informants that participated in the focus group interviews, there was a good mix of the categories, providing a range of views. The extent to which it is justified to generalise the key informants' voices to the other study participants primarily depends on how representative these voices are (Onwuegbuzie, & Leech, 2007). As a result, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) caution qualitative researchers to make careful decisions about their choices of key informants. Failure to make optimal sampling decisions could culminate in what some researchers refer to as key informant bias (Maxwell, 2005). I have tried to work around this issue by ensuring that the learner focus group comprised the learner categories listed in the table 5 above. Furthermore, where the bias appears to skew the report, the category that the learners fall in has been made explicit in the reporting of the survey results (see chapter 6, findings from quantitative phase).

5.5.2. Multilevel Sampling Designs

Given that the participants in this study included a variety of people within a hierarchy, namely learners, teachers, SMT members and parents, they can be categorised into

a multilevel sampling design. Multilevel sampling designs represent sampling strategies that facilitate credible comparisons of two or more subgroups that are extracted from different levels of study (Onwuegbuzie, & Leech, 2007). Due to the learner and teacher samples representing some form of hierarchy, the sampling schemes and sample sizes used for the lower-level and upper-level samples or sub-samples typically are not uniform. In this study, 141 participants participated in total, 104 learners, whilst the total number of teachers that participated in semi-structured interviews is 13, with 17 parents and 7 SMT participants. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007, p.249) argue that "because students represent the lower-level sample/sub-sample and their teacher(s) represents the upper-level, it is not uncommon for the voices of several students to be compared with the voice of one teacher."

Although my initial plan was to select teachers via purposeful sampling, upon going into the field, this was not possible. Not all the teachers that I would have ideally liked to interview from each school could participate either due to their availability or willingness, thus teachers were selected via convenient sampling. The principal sent an email out to all the grade 11 teachers, and those who agreed to participate were interviewed.

5.5.3. Site Sampling

Given that this study is concerned with examining the intention and impact of visibly rewarding learners, it was imperative that the selected schools had a culture of rewarding learners for excellence in academic achievement. The sites selected for this study were academically strong schools with a reputation for producing excellent matric results. Thus the two English-medium co-ed public ordinary high schools were purposefully selected for their culture of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement. According to Creswell (2012), purposeful sampling is used so that people or sites can best help us understand our phenomenon.

Walking on the campus of the two selected schools provided a clear indication that they were established, well-resourced public schools. The campuses were similar in that they were spacious with well-tended gardens, manicured lawns, brown-brick buildings, with sports fields, tennis courts and swimming pools, as well as benches shaded under large leafy trees. The two schools chosen as research sites in this study are often represented in the media as being among the 'top public schools' in Gauteng, commonly referred to by the term ex-model C. Each school is known in its respective city as being a school with a good reputation for academic excellence, and is sought-after by parents in terms of enrolment figures. School A had 1473 pupils enrolled in

2018, of which 245 were in grade 11. School B had 1325 pupils enrolled in 2018, of which 228 were in grade 11.

Table 6: School enrolment figures 2018

	School A	**School B**
Total enrolment 2018	1473	1325
Gr 11 learners in 2018	245	228
Gr 11 teachers 2018	11	10
Senior Management Team (SMT) members	4	4
Principal	1	1
Location	Gauteng	Gauteng

The two schools selected were deliberately sought for this study as they included student diversity with respect to gender, race and social class. The schools had a wide range of learners of different socio-economic status despite being located within the leafy suburbs in the Gauteng province. The enrolment figures of 2018 as provided by the respective schools are given in the table above. Using these figures as a guide, 300 learner questionnaires for each school were printed. After liaising with the school, it was decided that it would be best for the register class teachers to hand out and collect the learner survey. Register classes refer to first class that learners report to in the morning, and register teachers are commonly tasked with handling administrative duties pertaining to the learners.

5.5.4. Undertaking the survey

Disseminating the consent forms and surveys was the first step in the data collection process. In order to lessen the load on the register class teacher, I had prepared all of the packages to be handed out. I began by requesting the number of learners in each register class from the school receptionist, then bundled the learner consent forms and learner questionnaires in large brown envelopes to be handed out by the respective grade 11 register class teachers. Each brown envelope had a cover note to the register teacher regarding the time-frame for returning the consent forms together with the completed questionnaires. The register class teachers had explained the purpose of the study to the learners and emphasised the importance of the consent forms. The learners were given three weeks to complete and return the survey to their register

class teachers. At the end of the three weeks, the teacher that liaised with me at School A said the response was not as good as has expected (she had only received 24 completed questionnaires), so she had asked for a few more weeks to remind the learners to complete the surveys. Six weeks later, I had received a call from School A to pick up 51 completed questionnaires and consent forms.

At school B and 53 completed questionnaires and consent forms were received within three weeks. No additional time was asked for, and I was given a call to come and collect the completed forms and surveys from the school receptionist. I received a total of 104 learner completed questionnaires from both schools. From the outset, I was expecting that realistically only 15-25% of the sample learner population was likely to return the completed questionnaires, and was satisfied with a 22% response rate. I had deliberately not chosen an online questionnaire option so as not to exclude any learner that might not have internet access. I made this decision after discussions with the teachers I liaised with at each of the two schools, who advised printing out the forms for the learners.

5.5.5. Participant sampling

There were multiple groups of participants involved in this study at each of the two selected schools. These can be categorized as follows:

1. grade 11 learners,
2. teachers of the grade 11 learners,
3. school management (comprising heads of department, deputy principal, and the principal), and
4. parents of the grade 11 learners.

The table below shows the distribution of participants per school in phase 1 and phase 2 of the research.

Table 7: Number of participants per phase in each school

	School A	**School B**
Phase 1: Quantitative		
Grade 11 Learners	51 learner questionnaires received	53 learner questionnaires received
Parents	6 questionnaires received	11 questionnaires received
Phase 2: Qualitative		

Grade 11 Learners	8 learners in focus group 1 4 learners in focus group 2	6 learners in focus group 1 5 learners in focus group 2
Teachers	7 x grade 11 class teachers covering the teaching of the following subjects: Mathematics, English, Afrikaans, Life Sciences, Technology, Life Orientation, Maths Literacy	6 x grade 11 class teachers covering the teaching of the following subjects: Mathematics, English, Study Skills, Life Sciences, Business Studies, Technology
School Management	1 principal	1 principal
School Management	1 deputy principal	1 deputy principal
School Management	2 HOD's	1 HOD
Total number of participants 141	68 participants	73 participants

5.5.5.1. Grade 11 learners

Grade 11 learners were purposefully selected for this study because they would have been familiar with the practice of visible rewards, having had four years of experience at high school level with award ceremonies and related tangible artefacts such as badges, trophies, honour board listings and certificates. Apart from being "information-rich participants" (Creswell, 2012, p. 206) grade 11 learners were also very aware of the pressures to achieve academically, with their matriculation exams looming in the following year of school. By this eleventh year of schooling, the learners were well-positioned to consider the possibilities of visible rewards impacting on their future lives outside of school. Regarding the gender of the learners that responded to the survey, 1 learner chose not to disclose their gender, 32 learners identified as boys and 71 identified as girls.

Once the completed questionnaires were in my possession, I identified the grade 11 learners who had agreed to participate in a focus group interview. The grade 11 learners who had participated in the survey had indicated on their open-ended questions whether they wanted to participate in the second stage of the study or not. Thereafter, I had taken steps to organize two learner focus group interviews per school. For the interviews, I had arranged with the teachers at each school respectively. These took place in a classroom after school hours, and I had arrived with some snacks for the learners given that it was the end of the school day. All the interviews were audio-recorded for in order for them to be transcribed at a later stage.

Each learner was asked to provide the first letter of their name before responding to the questions, thus making the job of transcribing easier. The focus group interviews took no longer than an hour, the shortest was 24 minutes and the longest was 47 minutes. At school A, the learner focus group interviews comprised 8 learners (5 girls and 3 boys) for the first group and 4 learners (all girls) for the second group. At School B, the learner focus group interviews comprised 5 learners for the first group (3 girls and 2 boys) and 6 learners (3 girls and 3 boys) for the second group. A total of 23 learners (15 girls and 8 boys) participated in the focus group interviews from both schools. The outnumbering of girls to boys is discussed in the gender section in the next chapter.

5.5.5.2. Teachers of the grade 11 learners

Given that teachers are involved in the decision-making procedures and processes of visible rewards and are well aware of the learners' participation and achievement in the classroom, the teachers' perspectives were integral for a better understanding of visible rewards and their consistency with inclusive education. I had chosen semi-structured interviews as a data collection method for the grade 11 teachers. The teachers who were selected for the semi-structured interviews taught grade 11 learners and were thus a homogenous group. At School A, seven grade 11 class teachers were interviewed. This included teachers who taught the following subjects: Mathematics, English, Afrikaans, Life Sciences, Technology, Life Orientation and Maths Literacy. From School B, six grade 11 class teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. This included teachers who taught the following subjects: Mathematics, English, Study Skills, Life Sciences, Business Studies and Technology. The teacher that was my liaison person at each school helped me set up the semi-structured interviews with the grade 11 teachers by speaking to them and emailing them regarding available times. I had followed the grade 11 teachers' lead and had arranged their interviews at a time most suitable for them. All the teacher interviews took place at their respective schools, and were audio-recorded in order to make them available for transcription. The teachers' interviews ranged from 24 minutes to 49 minutes in length. A total of 13 teachers were interviewed at both schools.

5.5.5.3. Senior Management Team (SMT) members

The SMT members at each of the schools comprised heads of department, deputy principals and the principal. The principal and deputies at school B were not teachers of the grade 11 learners, but they were involved in the decision-making policies and processes for awarding visible rewards to all learners in the school. Thus the management team and the principal were individually interviewed using semi-

structured interviews to gather information about their role in determining recipients for visible rewards. In School A, four SMT members were interviewed, whilst three members were interviewed at School B. A total of seven semi-structured individual interviews was undertaken at both schools. All the interviews took place at their respective schools, and were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. The SMT members' interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 51 minutes in length. A total of seven SMT members were interviewed.

5.5.5.4. Parents of the grade 11 learners

The parents as participants in this study were the parents of the grade 11 learners. According to Creswell (2012), homogenous sampling refers to certain groups of people that share a characteristic and this group of parents has been purposefully selected, as their contribution to the study provides depth and understanding to the grade 11-learner participant sample. In addition, the voices of parents are useful to unearth the attitudes and beliefs regarding visible rewards and to ascertain whether they shared a philosophy of inclusion with the schooling community. The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) encourages the use of parent participants in any attempt at school reform. This is a significant factor in creating inclusive schools, as the parents are not often consulted in the development of school policy. Mertens (2010, p.303) refers to established practices as "cultural facts" that are often accepted without challenge until the voices of affected individuals have the opportunity to articulate their experiences and express their perspectives. Therefore, the parents' comments in this study provided insights to the researcher that can be used in future endeavours of school reform. According to the Index for inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) provision for parents' input should also be made.

Parents of the grade 11 learners were asked to complete a questionnaire with 12 closed questions and one open-ended question to provide information regarding visible rewards. Only one parent per grade 11 learners' household was invited to complete the questionnaire. The response rate from the parent survey was rather low: I received 6 completed surveys from School A, and 11 surveys from School B. Of the parents that responded, 14 were mothers and 3 were fathers. The fact that mainly mothers were respondents to this study's survey is not uncommon. Similarly, Kimelberg (2014) found that mostly mothers responded to her call for parent participants in her study on cultural capital and school choice. In their research on the effects that mothers' work has on educational systems and the ways in which inequalities of educational opportunities are reproduced, Griffith and Smith (2005) point out that that decisions concerning school choice and the daily management of

educational activities tend to fall primarily on mothers. Therefore, the minority of fathers as participants in this survey is not surprising.

5.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations such as informed consent, voluntary participation, guaranteeing confidentiality, anonymity and freedom from harm were strictly adhered. Given that participants of the focus group interviews were minors; they were asked to use only the first letter of their names to ensure anonymity when being audio-recorded. Participants were made aware when being audio-recorded that the study was for research purposes and that participating in such an activity is entirely voluntary (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). Consent that is both informed and ongoing as proposed by Kellett (2010) was employed. A letter providing details of the research, informing future participants of their roles as well as the duration of the study and the option to opt out at any time was sent out to all possible participants: the principal, the managerial staff, the teachers as well the grade 11 learners and their parents. Kellett (2010, p.23) maintains that "before individuals can give their consent they need some understanding of what is involved and exactly what they are consenting to." The information letter contained information outlining the details of the data collection as well as my contact details including my cell phone number, and that of my supervisors as well. A copy of the information letters can be found in Appendix A – D.

Conducting research with children presents new challenges, most notably the challenge of the problematic ethical issues due to their ages. Given that the learners were in high school, they were presumably under the age of eighteen years old, thus still legally minors requiring parental consent. Lewis posits that although inclusive research involving child participants is conducted "in valid and reliable ways, it is more problematic than is often recognised" (2005, p.215), referring to, inter alia, ethical considerations such as guaranteeing anonymity in small samples, obtaining assent from the child in addition to the parent's consent, issues of confidentiality and trust, as well as the possibility of the researcher initiating intrusion in children's social lives at school. As such, all interviews were undertaken after school hours, at a time suggested upon by the learners. During the first phase of the study, learners were made aware that they may only participate in the survey if they had submitted a consent form with their parents' signature giving them permission to participate.

During this study, the confidentiality and anonymity of each participant, whether adult or child, was strictly guaranteed. Each participant received a letter requesting him or her to participate in the research study (see Appendix C and D). This clearly states

that participation was entirely voluntary and that there would be no consequences for declining to participate. It was also clearly stated that no reimbursement of any sort would be provided to participants in the study. Lastly, the participants were made aware that all data and interviews will be kept in a safe place and as per Kellet's (2010) suggestion, destroyed three to five years after the completion of the study. The surveys are currently stored in a locked cupboard in my home and will be destroyed after five years. With regards to the documents that were used for reference and to provide background knowledge of each school's reward policies, I had requested the school's policy on prize-giving from the deputy heads at each school. These were graciously given to me, for use in this study. The information contained in these documents were not sensitive, and were available to all teaching staff, parents and learners of the respective schools. With respect to using the 'Academics' page of the school's website, this was publicly available to all. The website pages and school documents cannot be disclosed in order to protect the identities of the respective schools.

Participants who were audio-recorded were made aware that audio recordings were to take place and consent to be included in the audio recording would be requested from their parents. Other ethical considerations I observed were related to my own awareness of the way participants are interviewed so that they do not feel coerced or forced to answer questions (Allan & Slee, 2008). Another ethical consideration was the consideration given to learners who may not have had parents. The legal guardian or primary caregiver of the learner was invited to participate in the questionnaire. In the interests of protecting the schools' identities, no images of webpages are included in this thesis, as the websites have the school logo's marked onto the pages. I ensured that the teachers' names do not appear anywhere in this document and where possible have redacted any reference to the school. For instance, a school nick-name or casual reference to the area or suburb mentioned by staff members or learners in the interview stage was redacted in the transcriptions.

5.7. Data Collection

Data collection took place at the two purposefully selected high schools in the Gauteng region. As mentioned previously, I personally hand delivered 300 printed copies of the learner questionnaire as well as 150 parent questionnaires at each of the two schools. As per the suggestions of the teacher at each school who was assigned as my point of contact, the register teachers then distributed the learner surveys to their register classes. The parent surveys were kept at the school's reception and an email was sent out by the school to the parents inviting them to participate in the parent surveys that were available for collection and completion at the schools' reception. I had placed a

clearly marked collection box in the school office for the parents to drop-off their completed surveys.

Given that a fair response rate is considered to be 20% from surveys (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010), I was satisfied with the response from the learner questionnaire of 22%. Unfortunately, the parent questionnaires did not get a good response, with only 11 returned at School A, and 6 returned at School B. In hindsight, the poor parent response could have also been due to parents not coming in to school to fetch their children, and thus not passing by the office to collect the survey forms. Similar to the learner surveys, when consulting with the school, the decision was made not to use online surveys so as not to exclude parents who did not have internet access.

5.7.1. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection period took place during the first and second terms of 2018. Multiple data collection instruments were selected for use. These include questionnaires to survey the learners, questionnaires to survey the parents, a set of focus group interviews for a nested sample of grade 11 learners, semi-structured individual interviews for the teachers and each of the SMT members. One of the benefits of using multiple forms of data collection instruments is that the sources of data add to the validity of the data (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). Below is a table of the total number of data collection instruments that were used in this study.

Table 8: Total Number of Data Collection Instruments at schools

Participant	**Quantitative**	**Qualitative**	**Total number of data collection instruments received (includes both schools)**
Learners	Survey	4 Focus Group Interviews	104 surveys; 4 x learner focus group interviews
Teachers	_	Semi structured interviews	13 teachers individually interviewed
Parents	Survey	-	17 questionnaires
SMT members	_	Individual Semi structured Interview	5 individual interviews
Principal	_	Individual Semi structured Interview	2 individual interviews

5.7.2. Surveying via Questionnaire

Phase one of the study took place by means of surveys via questionnaire for the grade 11 learners and their parents. Survey research occurs when the researcher selects a

sample of respondents from a target population and administers a questionnaire to collect information (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). Given that surveys are often the only means of obtaining a description of traits, beliefs, attitudes, and other characteristics of the population, Macmillan and Schumacher (2010) posit that doctoral students commonly administer surveys. Taking into consideration that my third research question is concerned with the attitudes and beliefs that drive or challenge visible rewards, it was imperative that I unearthed these perceptions first. Surveying the learner and parent participants allowed for attitudes and beliefs of visible rewards to be established from their perspective.

Surveying via questionnaire is an efficient method to obtain maximum responses (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010) by providing relevant information that assisted in answering my research question. Given that time is an especially precious resource for grade 11 learners, conducting a survey was a logical choice. Copies of the questionnaires for the grade 11 learners and their parents can be found in the Appendices (see Appendix E and Appendix F).

5.7.3. Development of the Learner Questionnaire

The first section (Section A) of the learners' questionnaire began with the first three questions relating to the demographics of the participant, including gender, race, and having personal experience of winning awards/experiencing visible rewards. The next eight questions related to attitudes and beliefs regarding visible rewards. Some of the inclusive education themes covered in the questions that were formulated were attitudes towards motivation, participation, feelings of exclusion, competitiveness as being valuable, existence of clear hierarchies with preferential treatment for some, and perceptions about the existence of rewards/prizes/awards at the school.

The attitudes and beliefs towards visible rewards are randomly positioned as statements. The items were worded such that they contained positively worded statements. A five-point Likert-scale was used to allow the respondents to indicate their preference for each of the statements presented. These ranged from a. strongly agree to e. strongly disagree. (See Appendix F).

In developing Section B of the Learner questionnaire which dealt with the participation, achievement and goal structure within the classroom, I used the themes from the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) and statements from the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) to formulate questions. The first dimension, or dimension A as it appears in the Index, was of "creating inclusive cultures". Dimension A consisted of 13 statements, of which the following nine were

taken and adapted for use in the development of my questionnaire statements as well as to inform my interview protocols. I have indicated in brackets which statements correspond to the questions in survey, and which statements correspond to the focus group interview. There are overlaps in that some survey questions corresponded to more than one statement.

- Everyone is made to feel welcome
- Students help each other
- There are high expectations of all students
- Staff, governors (school managers), students and parents share a philosophy of inclusion
- Students are equally valued
- Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school
- The school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination
- Lessons encourage the participation of all students
- Students learn collaboratively

Taking into consideration that not all the indicators in the Index for Inclusion were relevant to the practice of visible rewards under investigation in this study, I used other sources such as the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) in addition to relevant inclusion literature to assist in shaping my questionnaire statements and developing my interview protocols. The Participation Framework is divided into four sections: participation and access, participation and collaboration, participation and achievement and lastly, participation and diversity. Access refers to learners being present, collaboration refers to learning and working together, achievement refers to supporting everyone's learning and diversity refers to the recognition and acceptance of all learners. The statements that I had used from the Participation Framework were:

- maintaining the dignity and respect of all learners,
- policies and practices encouraging students to use each other as a resource for learning,
- valuing and rewarding a range of achievements,
- certain forms of achievement that are more highly valued than others,
- policies, practices and interactions that reinforce barriers to achievement of some individuals

Learners also had an open-ended question at the end of their survey, which was "Any

other thoughts?" There were 32 learners in total who responded to the final open question with detailed information regarding their personal experiences with visible rewards. It is from this open-ended question that I gathered my information-rich participants as key informants in the second phase of the study, which was the learner focus group interview. A total of 23 learners opted to participate in the focus group interviews.

5.7.4. Development of the Parent Questionnaire

The parents' questionnaire began with the first three questions relating to the demographics of the participant, including gender, race, and having personal experience of their child winning awards/experiencing visible rewards. The next 12 questions related to attitudes and beliefs regarding visible rewards. Some of the inclusive education themes covered in the questions that were formulated concerned attitudes towards incentives at school, fairness of visible rewards, collaborative learning, competitiveness as being valuable, feelings of exclusion relating to invitations to award ceremonies, family pride with regards to visible rewards, publicised versus individualised rewards, norm-referenced tests and perceptions about the existence of rewards/prizes/awards at the school. (See Appendix G).

Parents were surveyed with a questionnaire that differed slightly from those given to the learners, the main differences were that whilst learners were asked to provide information relating to the classroom, such as the mastery goal structure, the ways in which their dignity was being upheld, their participation in visible rewards, and their motivation. Parents were asked to provide information on their own pride in their child's efforts as well as the family pride resting on the child's visible rewards. In addition, it illuminates the attitudes and beliefs underlying the practice of visible rewards, illustrating that such values prevail in wider society and are not just found within the school. This relates to the first step towards creating inclusive cultures, which is to ascertain the values, attitudes and beliefs found within the school community. Each questionnaire would not have taken parents longer than 15 minutes to complete. An option for parents was provided at the end of the questionnaires, allowing them to contact me should they wish to share more information. None of the parents contacted me to share further information, but 7 parents responded in detail to the open-ended, final question in the survey composing their own responses with regards to visible rewards.

5.7.5. Limitations of Survey research

There are several limitations to employing survey research. For instance, respondents

may lie when completing surveys due to social desirability (McLeod, 2014; Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010; Babbie, 2008). When analysing the data, I have been aware of this, and have therefore tried best to give all facets a fair hearing. For the parent questionnaire, respondents were given an open question to provide further information not asked in the questionnaire. Furthermore, Hamilton and O'Hara (2011) state that it is very difficult to achieve a good number of returns, and even then it is likely that those who feel strongly for or against the topic are those most likely to respond. In the case of the parent questionnaires, it was likely that the parents who were negative towards visible rewards were likely to have responded, but this cannot be known for certain.

In addition, the language of a questionnaire should be appropriate to the vocabulary of the group of people being studied. Therefore, McLeod (2014) suggests that the researcher must change the language of questions to match the social background of respondents' age / educational level / social class / and ethnicity. With regards to limitations of using questionnaires in research, many do not feature high as a priority and participants may forget to complete them, which affects the number of respondents (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). In addition, questionnaires provide limited information as the questions are commonly close-ended, thus the researcher may not fully understand what the respondent may have wanted to articulate, given that the response options are limited (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, the questionnaire was developed so that one open-ended question was provided at the end to allow the learners and parents an option to provide more information should they wish. Given that this study had a follow up of learners' questionnaire responses with learner focus group interviews, I was able to get further information from the learners beyond the questionnaire.

5.7.6. Focus group interview schedule

Four focus group interviews were undertaken with the grade 11 learners. The purpose of the focus group interview was to provide depth from information-rich participants, and allow for multiple voices to be heard within a single interview. Given that the groups of grade 11 learners were homogenous in that they are all learners of the same grade, they did differ slightly as some were current award-winners, and some had won awards in the past. According to Creswell (2012) focus group interviews are best undertaken with a homogenous group. Due to learners being interviewed separately from the teachers, it was more likely that the "respondents will enrich each other's perspectives" (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.363). This is because learners would have had the freedom to provide their perspectives without the presence of teachers in the room.

An audio-recording device was used during the focus group interviews to ensure

reliability by reducing human error when relying solely on memory and written notes. The learner focus group interview schedule comprised five open-ended questions. This allowed the respondents to provide as much information of their lived experience regarding visible rewards as possible. Attitudes and beliefs regarding the practice of visible rewards were probed. The questions formulated in the focus group interview are based on the theme of "creating inclusive cultures" in the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Copies of the focus group interview protocol can be found in Appendix I.

The first questions learners were asked was whether they felt that visible rewards were important to them. The next question was about the ways in which the school awards/rewards them particularly how they have experienced visible rewards. This was important to establish their own experiences of winning awards and how they felt about it. The next question was about awareness of the criteria, processes and procedures involved in choosing award winners. This question shed more light on the ways in which schools award learners, and the way the reward system works. Then learners were asked about the possibility of being rewarded for hard work when they narrowly miss the criteria for rewards. This question aimed at establishing whether the learners felt that the school encouraged a system that recognised the achievements, hard work and effort of all learners. The last question was an open-ended question about rewarding learners that they feel is important, but that I have not asked about.

Parents were not offered the option of a focus group interview. This is because it was logistically unviable and time-consuming to gather together a group of parents who have very different schedules, for a focus group interview. The limits on my time as a doctoral student also affected the amount of data I could collect and analyse within the three-year period. Given that I was a recipient of scholarship funding; my study was restricted to the maximum of three years of full-time study.

Creswell (2012) cautions that conducting focus group interviews can be challenging if the researcher does not control the interview discussion. In this regard, I asked each interviewee to state the first letter of their name before each response, so that they can be identified during the transcription phase. The data emanating from the focus group interview was content analysed to determine emerging themes.

5.7.7. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken individually with the teachers and the SMT members. Given that the individual interviews with teachers and school managers were semi-structured, the questions were not strictly formulated. The

interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding into the rationale of visibly rewarding learners, the criteria processes and procedures used, the attitudes and beliefs of key stakeholders as well as its effects on the participation and achievement of all learners. Leedy and Ormond posit that individual interviews "yield a great deal of useful information" (2008, p.146). In their study of teacher perceptions of student collaborations, Pathak and Intratat (2012) used semi-structured interviews because it provided a flexible technique for small-scale research, and their participant sample was 10 teachers. This method seems to provide more useful data when the sample size is relatively small and allows for thematic analysis of the qualitative data (Pathak & Intratat, 2012). In a structured interview, detailed questions are formulated before the interview. In contrast, "semi-structured interviewing starts with broad and more general questions or topics" (Arksey and Knight, 1999, p.5). When preparing for semi-structured interviews, only topics and sub-topics are identified rather than specific questions. Specific questions emerged during the exploration of these topics and sub-topics with the participants. For instance, during the teacher interviews, one teacher mentioned the particular processes of choosing learners to be visibly rewarded had changed, which prompted me to ask for elaborations on the changes and why such a change occurred. See Appendix H and J for interview teacher and SMT interview schedules.

At School A, 7 teachers, 2 HOD's, 1 deputy principal and the principal were interviewed. At School B, 6 teachers, 1 HOD, 1 deputy principal and the principal were interviewed. An interview schedule was used to structure the interview, and is attached as Appendix F. However, the questions were used as a guide, to allow the participant to provide their own perceptions and speak freely on the topic of visible rewards. In some interviews not all questions were asked, depending on how the participant responded. I had probed the preferred goal structure in classrooms, and when the interviewee asked for further information, I mentioned that it should ideally be mastery goals that are associated with deeper, meaningful learning and not performance goals, which are associated with superficial, rote learning. Among the aims and ideals of inclusive education is that all learners are given opportunities to participate meaningfully, and the questions asked to the teachers and school management were in relation to this.

The use of individual interviews contributes to the in-depth nature of this critical realist study, which has been designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants. Some of the limitations of interviews are that they are costly and time-consuming (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). In addition, there is the interviewer bias

that the researcher needs to be wary of (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). Here, the use of the audio recording device was used to assist in curbing interview bias.

5.8. Data Analysis

Data analysis of each phase took place separately, and then the results of each were mixed and synthesised to draw the final conclusions. In this study, I used inductive processes together with deductive processes. Inductive processes, which Macmillan and Schumacher (2010, p.367) define as "moving from specific data to general categories and patterns", were used to identify overlapping patterns. Deductive processes were used with the quantitative, numerical data. Patton (2002, p. 557) cautions that researchers using mixed methods "to investigate the same phenomenon should not expect that the findings generated by those different methods will automatically come together to produce some nicely integrated whole." At times the qualitative data appeared divergent from the quantitative data component. The data were analysed and reported within the larger context of schools in Gauteng, while still preserving the subgroup of analyses of traditionally under-represented groups, such as learners and parents. Special attention was given to interrogating bodies of knowledge that have become institutionalised as established concepts of recognition and reward practices that are determined by groups that traditionally have power in our society (the teachers and SMT members).

5.8.1. Quantitative Analysis

The data extracted from the surveys was predominantly quantitative, and was analysed using descriptive statistical methods. These were carried out by a qualified statistician enlisted for the purposes of this study. Descriptive statistical analysis methods applied in the study are frequency analysis where the number or percentage of respondents choosing a particular Likert Scale response was the main emphasis. Data was further analysed using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as a way of establishing how respondents of different demographic categories differed in their response patterns. The demographic categories used in the ANOVA were the parents and the learners, and the award-winners and the non-award winners. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis appear in the next chapter (chapter 6). An example of the ANOVA indicating learner responses appears in Table 9 below.

Table 9: The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Disagree	10	9.6	9.6	14.4
	Somewhat agree	34	32.7	32.7	47.1
	Agree	36	34.6	34.6	81.7
	Strongly agree	19	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

5.8.2. Qualitative Analysis

After data were collected following the field work (both the focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews), and all the audio recordings were transcribed into written segments, coding of the interview data took place. Thematic content analysis methods were used to examine the data from the 43 interviews. Creswell (2012) identifies four different types of themes that can be used, among which are 'multiple perspectives' which were used in this study, as there are four different groups of participants: the grade 11 learners, their parents, the teachers and the school management. Initial coding of the data was then collapsed into categories of similarities, which then allowed themes to emerge, in what Creswell (2012, p.238) refers to as "layering the analysis". This describes the way minor themes and major themes were subsumed within broader themes.

Qualitative researchers believe that context affects the meaning of events and context often varies for different subgroups (Onwuegbuzie, & Leech, 2007). For this reason, comparing subgroups is a technique that has the potential of helping researchers to maximise their understanding of phenomena (Onwuegbuzie, & Leech, 2007). In this study, I have compared the responses from the following subgroups: teachers and parents, award-winners versus non-award-winners, management versus teachers, and parents' responses versus their children's' responses. The results did appear conflicting at times, especially the responses between the parents and the learners. The teachers and learners surprisingly did have many commonalities, especially with regards to a prevailing performance-based goal orientation rather than a mastery-based one.

Qualitative research usually follows three phases: the generative phase, the interpretive phase and the theorising phase (Connolly, 2003). The generative phase forms the first level of analysis, which is the careful examination of the data sentence-by-sentence, and word-by-word. This is also called the open coding phase. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.62) describe this phase as "the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are

asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data". It is through this process that one's assumptions and others' assumptions about phenomena are explored and questioned, leading to new discoveries (Strauss & Corbin,1990). To begin with, interview data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet to systematically record responses from all the participants. At first, I familiarised myself with the data by reading the interview transcripts, reading the responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaires, reading through and comparing the policy documents and website pages, as well as listening to the audio recordings. As I read through the transcripts, I underlined and highlighted potential items of interest, and made comments and on little sticky notes, using different coloured paper for the different participant groups. Reading the data as data means reading the words actively, analytically and critically, whilst thinking about potential meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Then I generated initial codes from the data, identifying and labelling items potentially relevant to the research question. Examples of codes I generated are "fear/anxiety of not living up to expectations" (learners' interview), "negative effects on learner identity" (learners' interview), "creates pressure to achieve" (learners' interview), "learners deserving awards, but not achieving them" (teachers' interview), "value for money for parents" (deputy head's interview). Undertaking thematic analysis is an iterative process. Upon multiple readings of the data, some codes were generated from the participants' language (pressure to achieve), and others were derived from my own theoretical understandings of inclusion (negative effects on identity). An example of the qualitative analysis can be found in Appendix M, which is an extract from one of the learner focus group interviews.

The second level of analysis is the ordering of the codes thematically. The shift from the coded notes toward the development of themes is the first step in the process of data management (Connolly, 2003). Going back and forth between the identified categories and the data itself is an iterative process that ensured I fully captured the essence of the participants' perspectives. The hardest group to categorise was the teachers, as the viewpoints were diverse when compared between each school. When the data sets were fully coded, I began placing similar codes together, and some patterns and conceptual categories emerged following preliminary examination of the data.

Data were synthesised and categorised to identify common themes and patterns of information that I collapsed into conceptual categories that addressed the research questions and the multiple layers of meaning attached to visible rewards. With multiple readings and analysing the data, I had used a numbering system to collapse smaller themes into larger themes, of which I had eventually ended up with four broad themes.

These are expanded upon in chapter 7. In general, frequency counts of the data were not used since the information obtained, especially among the principals, deputies, and teachers who have specialised roles and knowledge, and each participant group's response differed, and did not always converge. However, for the learners, frequency counts were used to determine the nature of incidents reported, particularly the data that was unexpected, such as family pressure/stress experienced by learners when working towards visible rewards, as well as claims of unfairness of the reward process/inconsistent application of criteria. A minimum of 3 counts was required to contribute to a theme. For instance, under "inconsistent criteria/processes of visible rewards", three different incidents were noted from learners' experiences. Although each learner's experience was unique, it did point to the problematic ways in which the criteria were applied. Some outlier codes were excluded as they appeared in a single count. An example of an excluded code is the judgement by one girl in the focus group interview who said that learners did not work hard to be knowledgeable academically, but rather worked only for the prize. Since no other learners had mentioned this, I did not make a separate category for this.

The third level of analysis is the theorising phase, and the identified categories are now ready to merge into theoretical explanations. At this stage of the analysis, the role of Social Interdependence Theory was significant, as I looked for the identified categories and their relation to the ways in which competitiveness at school (from the data) had been experienced amongst the learners, teachers and parents. Then I compared these to the effect on the inclusivity of all. The figure below provides an example of the development of themes to the collapsing into conceptual categories and linking it to a theoretical explanation from the learners' interviews of rewards.

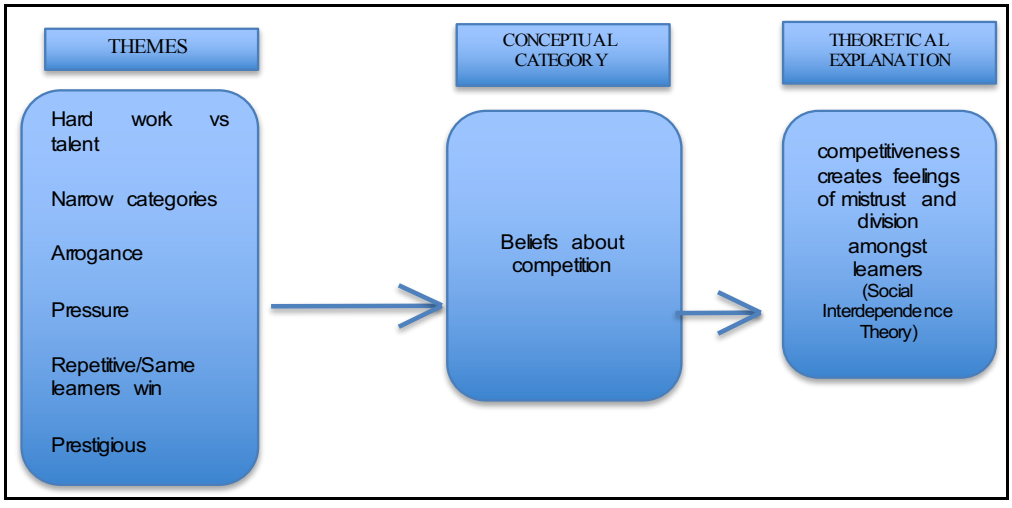


Figure 7: Reducing themes to categories and linking to research

5.8.3. Point of interface (mixing of the data)

The point of interface is crucial to a mixed methods study and refers to the point where the individual data strands are mixed (Creswell, 2016). According to Creswell (2016), the point of interface can take place at the following four points and can occur at more than one point:

- Interpretation of results
- Data analysis
- Data collection
- Sequential Design (one leads to the next)

In this study, there are multiple points of interface of the data strands. At the beginning of the study, I chose to use a sequential mixed methods design, using the quantitative phase to assist me to gain participants for the qualitative phase. Later on, after each of the different strands of data were analysed, during the interpretation stages, I mixed the data again. When mixing the data, a number of strategies can be used. Creswell (2016) outlines four mixing strategies that are common to mixed methods research. These are:

- Merging the two strands
- Connecting from analysis to collection
- Embedding the one within a larger design or procedure, and
- Using a framework (theoretical programme) to bind together the data sets.

I used three of the strategies above – I embedded the quantitative stage within the qualitative, I merged the two strands at the interpretation stage, and I used a framework to bind together the data sets. These mixing strategies have been useful especially when enriching the themes developed from the qualitative stage. Using a critical realist framework assisted me in the merging process, as I examined the data in three layers. The critical realism framework also allowed for the nuances of the data to be shown without losing perceptions from the multiple perspectives. Some of the broader themes that emerged from the data were “the positive aspects of visible rewards”, “the negative aspects of visible rewards”, “visible rewards and motivation”, and “the need for learner recognition”. A joint display of the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study can be found in the next chapter. Joint displays refer to a single figure that presents both the quantitative and qualitative findings side-by-side. Joint displays illustrate integration of the quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2016).

In describing the use of samples and sub-samples, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) posit that these tend to be conditionally related which affects the data analysis. The

relations between samples and sub-samples is that once one level is selected (e.g. students), then the other is automatically selected (e.g., the students' teacher(s). Despite that, the relationship is between the multilevel samples, when comparing the samples and sub-samples, the researcher should examine whether meaning extracted from one sample or sub-sample can be reciprocally translated into the meanings of the other samples and sub-samples (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Because of the hierarchical structure of the samples and sub-samples, hierarchical qualitative analyses could be considered, such as those described by Onwuegbuzie (2003) that include the extraction of "meta-themes," which represent themes at a higher level of abstraction than the original emergent themes. For my study, I have used qualitative analyses techniques to provide these over-arching meta-themes, which are "the positive aspects of visible rewards", "the negative aspects of visible rewards", "visible rewards and motivation", and "the need for learner recognition".

5.8.4. Use of Joint Displays

The integration of the quantitative and qualitative data is important to a mixed methods study. Integration is an intentional process by which the researcher brings quantitative and qualitative approaches together in a study (Guetterman, Fetters, & Creswell, 2015). According to Guetterman, Fetters and Creswell, (2015), data integration at the analytic and interpretation level has been done primarily in two ways:

(1) by writing about the data in a discussion wherein the separate results of quantitative and qualitative analysis are discussed, and
(2) by presenting the data in the form of a table or figure, a joint display, that simultaneously arrays the quantitative and quantitative results.

A joint display is defined as a way to "integrate the data by bringing the data together through a visual means to draw out new insights beyond the information gained from the separate quantitative and qualitative results." (Guetterman, Fetters, & Creswell, 2015, p.555). Although integrating mixed methods data in the discussion is well established, the use of joint displays in the process of analysis and interpretation has not been explained clearly in the literature, despite the fact that they are increasingly seen as an area of innovation for advancing integration (Guetterman, Fetters, & Creswell, 2015). Joint displays provide a visual means to both integrate and represent mixed methods results to generate new inferences. Researchers use joint displays to enhance interpretation of the integrated quantitative and qualitative data (Guetterman, Fetters, & Creswell, 2015). A joint display of the quantitative and qualitative data appears in chapter 8, in the discussion of the integrated findings section.

5.9. Validity and Rigour

Validity in quantitative research occurs internally and externally, and refers to the quality of the the research design, data collection, data analysis, and/or data interpretation stages of the quantitative research process (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). Rigour in academic research refers to the strategies used for enhancing the quality of qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002). Rigour enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). In and of itself, mixed methods has methodological issues contributing to the rigour of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixed methods research has its own validity in what Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006, p. 51) refer to as “legitimation”. Legitimation refers to the difficulty in obtaining findings and/or making inferences that are credible, trustworthy, dependable, transferable, and/or confirmable, leading to the problem of integration. According to Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006, p. 54) “The problem of integration motivates us to ask questions such as the following:

1. Is it misleading to triangulate, consolidate, or compare quantitative findings and inferences stemming from a large random sample on equal grounds with qualitative data arising from a small purposive sample?
2. How much weight should be placed on quantitative data compared to qualitative data?
3. Are quantitatively confirmed findings more important than findings that emerge during a qualitative study component?
4. When findings conflict, what is one to conclude?

These questions are the issues I had to grapple with throughout the data analysis and interpretation stages. The last two questions have been especially relevant to me; given that I have had a fair amount of conflicting data arising from the qualitative component as opposed to the quantitative. Thus it has been a long, iterative process before I concluded my findings. Similarly, Shapiro (1973) described in detail her struggle to resolve basic differences between quantitative and qualitative in her mixed methods study of educational evaluation in classrooms, eventually concluding that the two types of conflicting data were as a result of measuring different things. Although she began with greater trust in the quantitative data, Shapiro (1973) eventually believed that the most useful information came from the qualitative data. Similarly, I found that some learner responses to the questionnaire did not match the interview data. For instance, learners were asked if they had felt excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards and badges are handed out, to which the majority of the learners responded in the negative. However, the

detailed descriptions provided in the focus group interviews indicated instances of exclusion. In my study, the context was important: 66% of the learners who responded to the questionnaire were award-winners. From the questionnaire, parents were mostly negative to the view that public rewarding systems provided a good incentive for learners to perform well. Yet focus group interviews with learners revealed that learners felt pressurised by their parents to win awards.

5.9.1. Researcher bias

One of the barriers to credible qualitative findings arises from the suspicion that the analyst has shaped findings according to predispositions and biases (Patton, 2002, Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). For this reason, I have been careful not to allow my own bias as an inclusive education researcher to shape my findings. I have made a conscious effort to let the data speak for itself, maintained mostly inductive methods of analysis and kept going back and forth with the data and the literature to ensure accurate representation of the findings.

In addition, working together with a supervisor ensures that the researcher does not present data that has been incorrectly interpreted as well as safeguarding against fabricated data. The supervisor thus performs the function of an external audit, which Creswell (2012, p. 260) describes as “the services that a researcher obtains from an individual that is outside the study to review different aspects of the research, providing written communication about the evaluation of the study.” In this instance, my supervisors have offered constructive feedback at regular intervals, adding valuable contributions to the final thesis.

5.9.2. Triangulation

One of the ways to ensure that the research has been carried out with rigour is to use triangulation. Triangulation methods occur in four streams (Patton, 2002). These are:

1. triangulation in methods – reconciling qualitative and quantitative data,
2. triangulation of qualitative data sources – which is to compare and cross-check the consistency of data derived at different times and by different means within qualitative methods,
3. triangulation with multiple analysts – by making use of multiple analysts within the same study,
4. theory triangulation – which involves using different theoretical perspectives to look at the same data.

In this study, the most relevant forms of triangulation are the first and the second streams as outlined above. Given that this study is a mixed methods study, there are both quantitative and qualitative data, thus triangulation of the learners interviewed corroborated with the quantitative findings in some instances but not in others. For example, the parent surveys suggested that the parents did not see the value in the visible rewards system, however this was divergent with the learners' perceptions of the pressure put onto them by their parents to win awards. On the other hand, learners reported that award-winners are not treated the same as non-award winners and this was reconciled in the focus group interview data, which further elaborated on the difference in treatment depending on one's award-winning status or not. In addition, the multiple forms of qualitative data allowed me to triangulate within my data sources. I had used the internal school policy documents regarding the visible rewards policies as a contextual referent. These documents corroborated with the various ways in which the learners and teachers had perceived the procedures and processes to manifest at their schools. Thus there was no divergence indicated in the criteria and the reward policy documents.

5.10. Conclusion

This chapter reported on the methodological choices of the study and provided justifications for a mixed methods study. In this mixed methods critical realist study, data was collected in two phases. The first phase was quantitative and the second phase was qualitative. The research approach, research design, sampling methods, ethical considerations employed, data collection methods, points of interface (mixing) and data analysis were elaborated upon. Finally, an outline of the processes followed to ensure validity and rigour were discussed. The next chapter presents a discussion of the quantitative findings.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Findings and Discussion

"No one is recognised for the small achievements in their lives. Children who are smart are shown to be better than everyone else and the learners who try and work hard to achieve their best are shunned."

(Gr 11 learner, School A)

6.1. Introduction

This study is concerned with the practice of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement at two high schools in Gauteng and its consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. In the previous chapter, I provided the methodological aspects of the study with justifications for the mixed methods design of this study. This study was undertaken in two phases, the first phase was the quantitative stage with surveying via questionnaires for the learners and parents, followed by the second stage of qualitative data collection, consisting of learner focus group interviews, individual semi-structured interviews with teachers and SMT members at the two chosen high schools. The previous chapter followed the chronological order in which the data collection and analysis process took place, and began with a discussion of the quantitative data. The purpose of this chapter is to report on and discuss the qualitative findings of the study. Thereafter, I discuss these findings in relation to Social Interdependence Theory as well as related inclusive education literature.

6.1.1. A note on award-winners and non-award-winners:

Initially, when I had conceptualised the research questions, I had worked on the assumption that in order to understand the findings, it was important to know whether the learners were award-winners or not. In the end, the decision to differentiate between award-winners and non-award-winners in the reporting of the research was carefully considered. As I progressed with the study, my beliefs regarding labelling and inclusive education were in conflict with the need to provide as much contextual detail as possible in understanding the perspectives of the learners given that as award-winners, they are construed as people with privilege, and for non-award-winners, they would feel excluded. For the most part, I made reference to 'learners' and did not highlight any separation in their award-winning status. However, where learners' comments related to acknowledgement of their own privilege, and their beliefs about value/merit, I did make a distinction between the two. I found that in such cases,

understanding the context of the learner added richness and meaning to their perspectives. Whilst there was a clear pattern in some of the findings in the separation of the award status of learners, for the most part, the findings indicated that it did not matter. Finally, whether learners were recipients of visible rewards or not, all learners at school had experienced award ceremonies and prize-givings and thus all experiences by the grade 11 learners that participated in the study are considered.

6.2. Quantitative Findings

This section starts by presenting an analysis of the demographic data of the two samples involved in the quantitative phase of the study. i.e. the parents' sample and the learners' sample. It then proceeds to present a descriptive statistical analysis of the responses from the questionnaires from these samples. Descriptive statistical analysis methods applied in the study are frequency analysis where the number or percentage of respondents choosing a particular Likert Scale response was the main emphasis. Data was further analysed using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as a way of establishing how respondents of different demographic categories differed in their response patterns.

6.2.1. Demographic and General Information

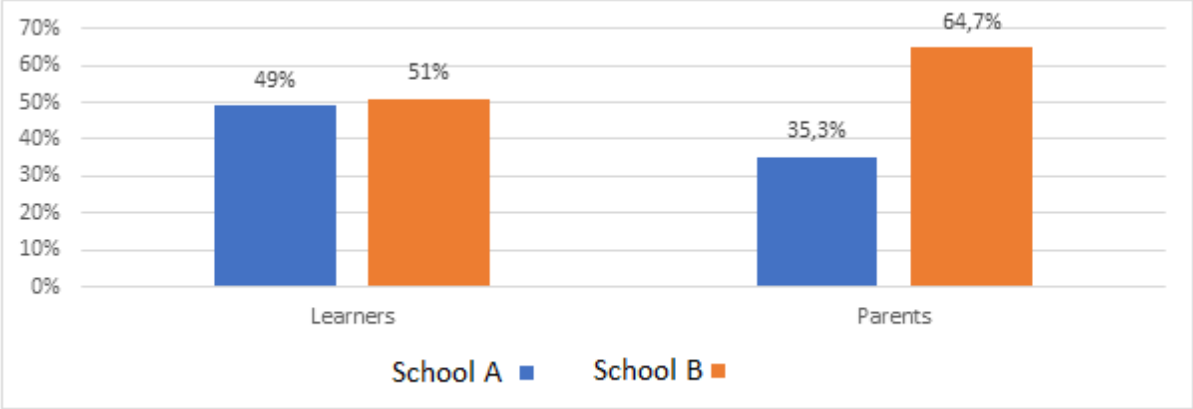
This section presents the demographic and general information on the learner and parent samples. This includes the location, gender and race of each sample. Location refers to where the sample orginated from, either School A or School B.

6.2.1.1. Location

The study was conducted at two locations, School A (blue) and School B (orange). The graph below shows the percentages of participants from each school. The learners' sample consisted of 104 learners from two high schools – School A and School B. Fifty-one (51) learners or 49% of the sample came from School A and 53 learners or 51% of the learners' sample came from School B. Although the suburbs were in two completely different parts of Gauteng, the schools were similar in the learner sample representation. The parents' sample consisted of 17 participants, 6 parents or 35.3% from School A and 11 parents or 64.7% from School B. A higher representation of the parents' sample originated from School B. Possible explanations for this could be a higher parental involvement rate in School B, or that the communication regarding the parents' questionnaire was enhanced with a tighter

network of parents who had children in grade 11, given that 10 mothers and 1 father had responded from School B.

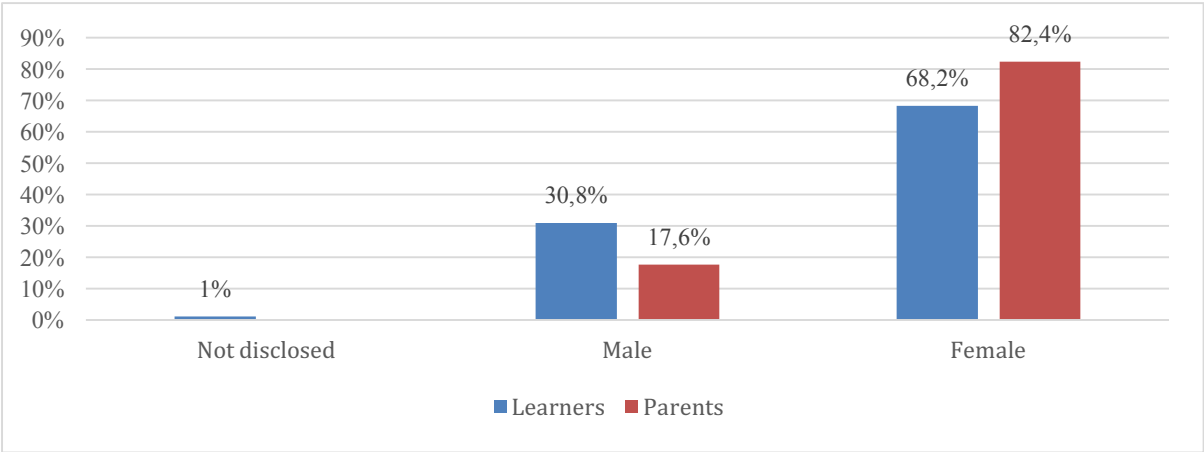
Figure 8: Sample distribution by location



6.2.1.2. Gender

Figure 9 below shows the distribution of the two samples (parents and learners) by gender. The categories provided were male and female only, perhaps showing an oversight on my part, given that one learner chose not to disclose their gender. By gender, 1 learner or 1% from the learners' sample chose not to disclose their gender; 32 learners or 30.8% of the learners' sample were male and 71 or 68.3% were female. In the parents' sample, there were 3 males making 17.6% of the sample and 14 females who made 82.4% of the sample. An overwhelming majority of learners, 68.3% were female in this sample. The greater representation of females could be attributed to the general trend of female learners outperforming males with respect to winning academic rewards at school (Jalava, Joensen & Pellas, 2014).

Figure 9: Sample distribution by parent or learner category



6.2.1.3. Race

Given that much of the South African literature on inclusive education is focused on racial differences (Majoko & Phasha, 2018; D'Amant, 2012; Meier & Hartell, 2009) I asked learners to indicate their race on their questionnaires. It must be noted that this study is premised on the UNESCO definition of inclusion, which is based on education for all, thus does not focus on racial differences. Figure 10 below shows the sample distribution by race for both learners' and parents' sample groups. The red bars indicate parents, whilst the blue bars indicate learners. There were 34 learners of African race, representing 32.7% of the learners' sample and 39 learners who were classified as white, representing 37.5% of the learners' sample. Coloureds and Asian races each made up 8.7% of the sample (9 learners each) and 13 learners chose not to disclose their race. Amongst the parents, 2 or 11.8% were African, 7or 41.2% White, 1 or 5.9% Coloured, 5 or 29.4% Asian and 2 or 11.8% did not classify their race.

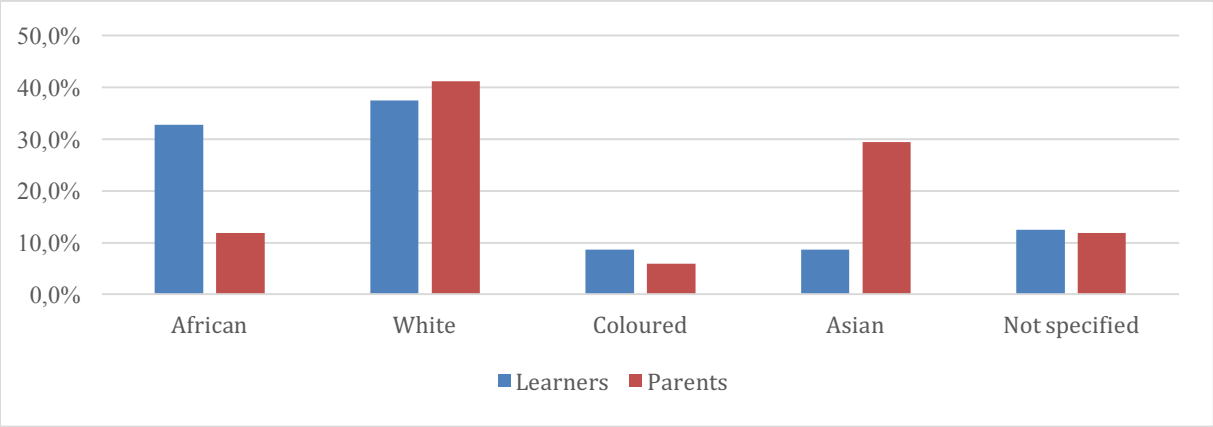


Figure 10: Sample distribution by race

6.2.2. Descriptive Analysis of Statements

The descriptive analysis of statements from the study generally followed the questionnaire sequence though some statements were grouped alongside similar-themed statements. Statements that were identical in the learners' and parents' sample were grouped and analysed together for comparative purposes. For questions that were distinct among the samples, learner responses were presented in the first part of the analysis and parents' responses were presented afterwards (in a different section).

6.2.3 Award-winners and non-award winners

Amongst the statements that were presented to learners, the statement, ": I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school" was an important independent variable. This statement was to be used to assess whether attitudes and perceptions of learners who have won or never won prizes or awards differed. Figure 11 below shows how learners responded:

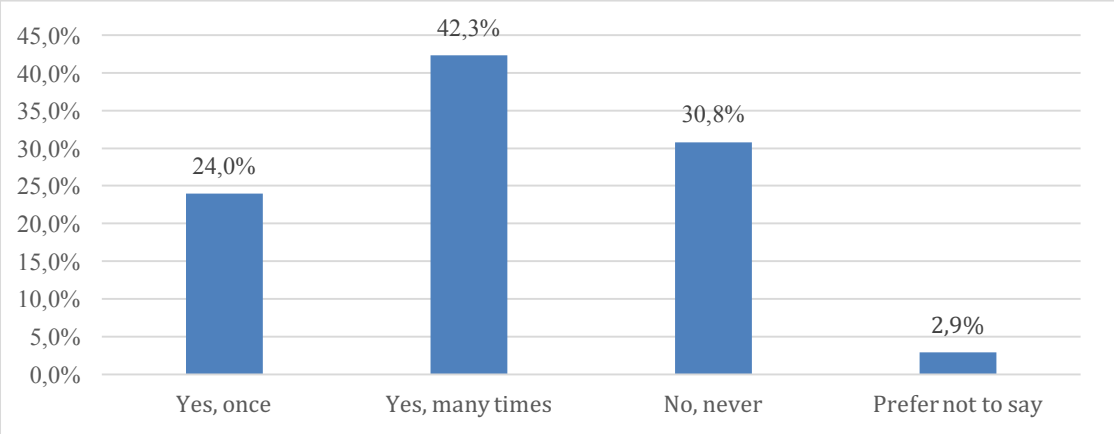


Figure 11: I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school

Twenty-four percent (24%) of the sample stated that they had won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school once, 42.3% many times and 30.8% never. The remaining 2.9% preferred not to respond to this statement. Most of the learners interviewed had therefore won at least one prize/award during their schooling years. The same statement was put to parents, with the difference that the parents were expected to state whether their child or children had ever won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during their years at high school. Their responses are captured in Figure 12 below. Amongst the parents, 29.4% had a child or children who had won an award once, 35.3% more than once, 29.4% never while 5.9% did not specify their response. It can be concluded that a greater number of parents had a child/ren who had won a prize/award compared to those who did not.

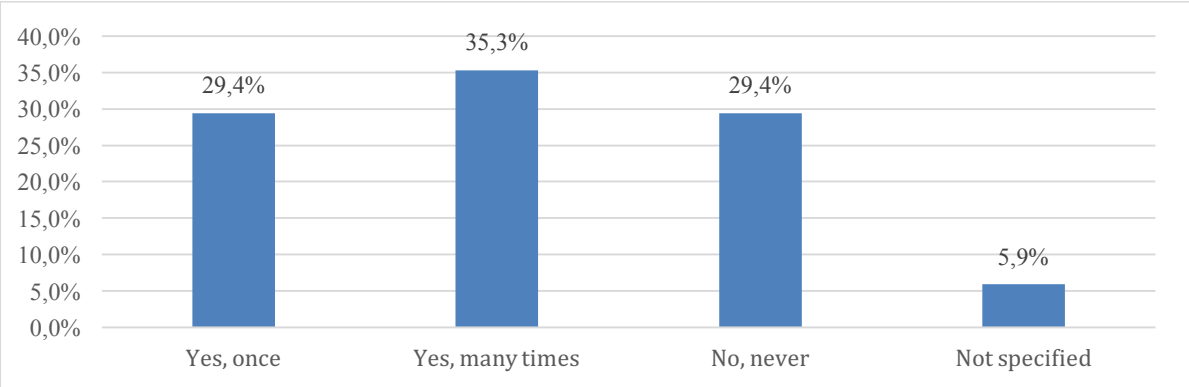


Figure 12: My child/ren won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school

6.2.4. Public rewards and learner achievements

Learners were presented with the statement, “Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work hard and put in extra effort”. Their responses are shown in Table 10 below. The learners responded as follows: 0% strongly disagreed; 1.9% disagreed; 14.4% somewhat agreed; 51.9% agreed and 31.7% strongly agreed with the statement. This shows that a large number of learners are positive to the view that rewarding systems motivates learners to work harder.

Table 10: Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work hard and put in extra effort

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Somewhat agree	15	14.4	14.4	16.3
	Agree	54	51.9	51.9	68.3
	Strongly agree	33	31.7	31.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

On a related statement, i.e. *“Publicly rewarding learners at school for performing well in tests/exams provides a good incentive to increase academic achievement for my child”* 29.4% of the parents strongly disagreed; 47.1% disagreed; 17.6% somewhat agreed, 5.9% agreed and 0% strongly agreed. These results are further shown in Table 11 below. In comparison to the learners, most parents were negative to the view that public rewarding systems provided a good incentive for learners to perform well.

Table 11: Publicly rewarding learners at school for performing well in tests/exams provides a good incentive to increase academic achievement for my child

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	29.4	29.4	29.4
	Disagree	8	47.1	47.1	76.5
	Somewhat agree	3	17.6	17.6	94.1
	Agree	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

6.2.5. Fairness of the public rewarding process

Learners were presented the statement, “The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised”. Table 12 below summarises their responses. On the fairness of rewarding systems at their schools, 4.8% of the learners strongly disagreed that they were fair, 9.6% disagreed, 32.7% somewhat agreed, 34.6% agreed and 18.3% strongly agreed. More learners therefore seem to be positive of the fairness of rewarding systems at their schools than those who are negative. With

a significant 32.7% “somewhat agreeing”, it can also be concluded that a large proportion of the learners do not have a full conviction that the system is fair.

Table 12:The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Disagree	10	9.6	9.6	14.4
	Somewhat agree	34	32.7	32.7	47.1
	Agree	36	34.6	34.6	81.7
	Strongly agree	19	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

When presented with a similar statement, parents reacted as follows: 17.6% strongly disagreed; 41.2% disagreed; 23.5% somewhat disagreed; 17.6% agreed and 0% strongly agreed with the statement. These results are shown in Table 13 below. The results show that parents are overwhelmingly negative about the fairness of the school rewarding systems. Although there was some indication that learners’ beliefs on the aspect of fairness of awards/rewards were slightly negative, the parents’ beliefs appeared to be intensely negative.

Table 13: I believe that the awarding of prizes is done in a manner that is fair and just at my child’s school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Disagree	7	41.2	41.2	58.8
	Somewhat agree	4	23.5	23.5	82.4
	Agree	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

6.2.6. Learner rewards – same groups of learners

The learners’ questionnaire contained the statement, “The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for top marks”. To this statement, learners responded as follows: 1.9% strongly disagreed; 7.7% disagreed; 30.8% somewhat agreed; 29.8% agreed and 29.8% strongly agreed. Most learners (mode – somewhat agree) agree, but without full conviction that the same groups of learners are always chosen for awards. Overall, learners are positive to the statement, pointing to the fact that the rewarding systems seem to benefit the same group of learners. This is in contrast with learners’ beliefs in the previous statement with regards to indications of fairness of awards. Learners’ indicated that the same group of learners were winning awards, but in an earlier statement, the majority of the

learners indicated that the rewards/awards system was fair. Table 14 below shows how the learners responded.

Table 14: The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for top marks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	9.6
	Somewhat agree	32	30.8	30.8	40.4
	Agree	31	29.8	29.8	70.2
	Strongly agree	31	29.8	29.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

6.2.7. Inferential Tests

Inferential tests done on the data were the Welch's One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This test was aimed at testing whether there was any significant variance in the means of the respondents on the various statements they were presented with. In other words, did persons of different races, genders and locations respond to the statements in a significantly varying way. The independent variables for the tests were thus the location, the gender and the race. Another test where the independent variable was either one was a parent, or a learner was also done. The statements that were presented to the sample were treated as the dependent variables in both samples. For ANOVA to produce trustworthy results, three major assumptions must be met by the data under analysis. These are normality, independence and homoscedasticity. The analysis starts by proving that the data met these three assumptions before proceeding to the actual analysis.

6.2.7.1. Assumptions of ANOVA

This sub-section assesses the data from the two samples for normality, independence and homoscedasticity. These assessments were done for both the samples.

6.2.7.2. Test for normality

A major assumption of ANOVA is that the data to be analysed must be parametric in nature or must conform to a normal distribution pattern. Kurtosis, Skewness and Standard Deviation were the three tests that were concurrently done to assess the distribution of the data i.e. if it exhibited a normal distribution. Data that exhibits a normal distribution has the following parameters: a Kurtosis score of 1, a Skewness score of 1 and a Standard Deviation of 1 (McNeese, 2016). However, data that whose

Kurtosis, Skewness and Standard Deviation lie close enough to these parameters can still be classified as normally distributed and parametric tests that include ANOVA can produce reliable results depending on this data. Wagner and Gillespie (2018) state if the sample data falls in the below parameters, it can be classified as normally distributed.

- Kurtosis of up to 3
- Skewness between scores of -1.9 to 1.9
- Standard Deviation close to 1

In the sample, the data mostly met the above conditions. Table 15 below shows the Kurtosis, Skewness and Standard Deviations on the dependant variables from the sample (preliminarily determined as all the statements that were responded to by the respondents except the demographics and the question whether one or one's child had ever won a prize at school). The data met or was very close to the classification by Wagner and Gillespie (2018). For the parents' sample that Standard Deviation ranged from 0.8 to 1.004, the Skewness from -1.320 to 0.654 and the Kurtosis from -8.4to 2.041. For the learners' sample, the Standard Deviation ranged from 0.725 to 1.290, Skewness from 0.237 to 0.238 and the Kurtosis from 0.469 to 0.472. The data therefore fell within the -1.9 to 1.9 range which classifies it as normally-distributed. It therefore met the normality assumption of ANOVA.

Table 15: Test for Normal Distribution (Normality)

	Parents Sample		Learners Sample	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
Std. Deviation	0,800	1,004	0,725	1,290
Skewness	-1,320	0,654	-0,798	1,165
Std. Error of Skewness	0,550	0,550	0,237	0,238
Kurtosis	-.0,841	0.204	-1,049	1,864
Std. Error of Kurtosis	1,063	1,063	0,469	0,472

6.2.7.3. Assumption of independence

The assumption for independence was guaranteed through the sampling methods and procedures. Each case (i.e. each respondent, for both the parents and learners' sample) was randomly and independently selected. The selection of one case to participate in the study did not influence the selection of another. This assumption was therefore met.

6.2.7.4. The test for Homoscedasticity

The test for homoscedasticity (homogeneity of variance) for the two samples came out negative on some statements and positive on others when a Levene's test was conducted to assess this assumption. Using the Levene's test, any data with a significance level below the 5% level of significance ($p<0.05$) would have failed the test for homoscedasticity. This is because this test works on the null hypothesis that the independent variables (gender, race, location) across which the dependent variables (in this study, the statements) have the same variance. Any significance level above 5% ($p>0.05$), results in the rejection of the null hypothesis and the assertion of the assumption homogeneity of variance. Responses indicated homogeneity of variance across independent variables as they had Levene's Test scores of score of $p<0.05$. Data therefore mostly met the assumption of homoscedasticity and could therefore be analysed using ANOVA. The results of the Levene's test are shown in Appendix K and L.

6.2.7.5. ANOVA tests on independent variables

As highlighted earlier, One-Way Anova tests were conducted across the studies independent variables versus the dependent variables. The independent variables were location/school, gender, race, award-winners and non-award winners.

6.2.7.6. Analysis of learner responses by school

A One-way ANOVA test was done on the learner's sample to test for variances between responses of learners from School A and and learners from School B. On the 20 similar statements presented to the learners from the two centres, The Welch's t-test showed that 4 out of the 20 statements were different in a statistically significant way. Table 16 below presents the statistically significant results in the differences in statements.

Table 16: Leaners ANOVA by Location

		Sum of Squares	ANOVA df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognized	Between Groups	6.992	1	6.992	6.667	.011
	Within Groups	106.969	102	1.049		
	Total	113.962	103			
Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school	Between Groups	4.462	1	4.462	4.381	.039
	Within Groups	102.878	101	1.019		
	Total	107.340	102			
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school	Between Groups	3.265	1	3.265	5.039	.027
	Within Groups	66.081	102	.648		
	Total	69.346	103			
My teacher lets us know who gets the highest marks on a test in front of the whole class	Between Groups	15.973	1	15.973	10.484	.002
	Within Groups	155.402	102	1.524		
	Total	171.375	103			

The statistically significant statements arising from the ANOVA were:

- The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised (F=6.667, p<0.05).
- Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school (F=4.381, p<0.05)
- I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school (F=5.039, p<0.05)
- My teacher thinks mistakes are okay as long as we are learning (F=10.484, p<0.05)

A descriptive test done as a post hoc test (further test to drill down the differences) of the One-way ANOVA test showed how the above differences came about. Table 17 shows the mean scores from School A and School B on the 4 statistically significant differences.

Table 17: ANOVA by Location: comparison of means

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised	School A	51	3,25	1,16	0,16	2,93	3,58	1
	School B	52	3,75	0,86	0,12	3,51	3,99	2
	Total	103	3,50	1,05	0,10	3,30	3,71	1
Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school	School A	51	3,65	0,96	0,13	3,38	3,92	2
	School B	52	3,23	1,06	0,15	2,94	3,53	1
	Total	103	3,44	1,03	0,10	3,24	3,64	1
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school	School A	51	1,61	0,78	0,11	1,39	1,83	1
	School B	52	1,94	0,83	0,11	1,71	2,17	1
	Total	103	1,78	0,82	0,08	1,62	1,94	1
My teacher thinks mistakes are okay as long as we are learning	School A	51	3,84	0,88	0,12	3,60	4,09	2
	School B	52	3,44	1,09	0,15	3,14	3,75	1
	Total	103	3,64	1,01	0,10	3,44	3,84	1

On the statement, "*The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised"* School B had a higher mean score of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 1.16 (x=3.75, SD =0.86). School A had a lower mean of x=3.25, SD=1.16. This shows that learners at School B had a stronger positive view that prizes were awarded fairly at their school than those from School A.

On the statement “Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school”, learners from School A had a higher score (x=3.65, SD=0.96) indicating this sentiment was stronger at this centre than at School B which had a score of x=3.23, SD=1.06. Learners at School B showed a stronger sentiment that they would prefer it if there were no prizes at school than those at School A. The former had a score (x=1.94, SD=0.83 and the latter (x=1.61, SD=0.78). Despite the differences, both means were generally low indicating a low inclination to have prizes/awards terminated.

Learners from School A had a better mean of x=3.84, SD=0.88 than those from School B (x=3.44, SD=1.09) on the statement, *“My teacher thinks mistakes are okay as long as we are learning”.* This means School A learners viewed their teachers as being more accepting of mistakes made during learning than those from School B.

6.2.7.7. Parents responses by school

Unlike with the learners’ sample, the parents’ sample from School A and School B did not show any statistical significance when the One-Way ANOVA was applied. The parents’ questionnaire had 13 statements, 12 of which were treated as dependant variables for the tests. In all the 12 statements, there were no statistical significant relationships between the location, either at School A or School B (treated as an independent variable) and the statements (independent variables) that met the $p<0.05$ significance level threshold set for the study. Conclusively, the views and perceptions of parents do not differ by location in a statistically significant way in the case of School B and School A. Please see Appendix K for the detailed statistical tables showing these results.

6.2.7.8. Learner responses by gender

A One-Way ANOVA conducted to assess statistically differences between male learners and female learners on the administration of rewarding systems in learning at School B and School A yielded two statistically significant differences. These are shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18: ANOVA by Gender

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school	Between Groups	9,50	2	4,75	4,85	0,01
	Within Groups	97,84	100	0,98		
	Total	107,34	102			
My teacher points out those learners who get good marks as an example to all of us in class	Between Groups	17,12	2	8,56	5,95	0,00
	Within Groups	143,75	100	1,44		
	Total	160,87	102			

The statistically significant differences were on the following statements: “Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school “with a score of (F=4.85, P<0.05) and “My teacher points out those learners who get good marks as an example to all of us in class” with a score of F=5.95, P<0.05). A descriptive analysis test to drill down the above results yielded in Table 19 below.

Table 19: ANOVA by Gender comparison by means

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school	Not Specified	1	4.00	.	.	.	.	4	4
	Male	32	3.88	.942	.166	3.54	4.21	2	5
	Female	70	3.23	1.010	.121	2.99	3.47	1	5
	Total	103	3.44	1.026	.101	3.24	3.64	1	5
My teacher points out those learners who get good marks as an example to all of us in	Not Specified	1	.00	.	.	.	.	0	0
	Male	32	3.78	1.008	.178	3.42	4.14	1	5
	Female	70	3.29	1.276	.152	2.98	3.59	1	5
	Total	103	3.41	1.256	.124	3.16	3.65	0	5

On both statements, male learners had higher scores (x=3.88, SD=.942) on the statement “Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school” and “My teacher points out those learners who get good marks as an example to all of us in class” (x =3.78, SD=1.008). Females had lesser mean scores of x=3.23, SD=1.026 on the first statement and x=3.29, SD=1.276 on the second. The results therefore show that male learners had a stronger view that competing with other learners for rewards/awards/prizes was a good thing in comparison to female learners. Male learners also believed that their teachers use learners who get good marks as examples to the rest of the class.

6.2.7.9. Parents responses by gender

Like location, the gender of the responding parent did not result in statistically significant differences in responses i.e. responses were not different as a result of gender. None of the relationships between 12 statements that were viewed as the dependent variables and gender as an independent variable yielded a statistically significant score on the One-way ANOVA test. All tests resulted in a score where p>0.05. It can therefore be concluded that gender of the parent does not influence one’s perception on the rewarding intentions, impacts and systems applied in the schools.

6.2.7.10. Learner responses by race

By race, there was no statistically significant differences amongst learners on the intention and impact of visible rewards as school-wide practice in the two high schools.

On all the 20 statements designed to measure learners' perceptions on the administration and impact of rewards, there were no statistically significant differences on the mean responses i.e. all the noted differences were above the 0.05 significance level (p>0.05). This observation invites the conclusion that learners of all races represented in the two samples did not differ much in the ways they perceived the rewarding intentions, impacts and systems applied in the schools.

6.2.7.11. Parents responses by race

By race, there were statistically significant mean differences amongst the represented races on the statement, "I believe that prizes, certificates, awards and badges provide a good indication of how well my child is doing in comparison to others."

Table 20: ANOVA by race - Parents

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I believe that prizes, certificates, awards and badges provide a good indication of how well my child is doing in comparison to others.	Between Groups	6,32	4,00	1,58	4,99	0,01
	Within Groups	3,80	12,00	0,32		
	Total	10,12	16,00			

The ANOVA test score of this statement was F=4.99, P<0.05. Table 20 above and Table 21 below further analyses these racial differences. The highest mean on this statement was recorded amongst the Coloureds' racial group with a mean of 4 and a standard deviation of 0 (x=4, SD=0). They were followed by Whites (x=3, SD=.577), African (x=2.5, SD=.7) and those who chose not to specify their race (x=2.5, SD=0.707). These results mean that coloureds had the strongest view that prizes, certificates, awards and badges provide a good indication of how well their child was doing in comparison to others, followed by Whites and then Africans and those who had not specified their race. It must however be commented that one person of the Coloured race was represented in the parents' sample meaning that their opinion alone indicates a 100% view on this group.

Table 21: Further analysis of ANOVA by race - Parents

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
I believe that prizes, certificates, awards and badges provide a good indication of how well my child is doing in comparison to others.	African	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
	White	7	3.00	.577	.218	2.47	3.53	2	4
	Coloured	1	4.00	.	.	.	.	4	4
	Asian	5	1.80	.447	.200	1.24	2.36	1	2
	Not specified	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
	Total	17	2.59	.795	.193	2.18	3.00	1	4

6.2.7.12. Learners' Variance: Award winners and non award-winners

Using the statement, "I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school" as an independent variable for the purposes of

testing its variance with other statements. The statistically significant results of this test are shown in Table 22 below.

Table 22: One-Way ANOVA: I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Location	Between Groups	2.663	3	.888	3.805	.012
	Within Groups	23.327	100	.233		
	Total	25.990	103			
Gender	Between Groups	4.251	3	1.417	6.867	.000
	Within Groups	20.634	100	.206		
	Total	24.885	103			
The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be	Between Groups	15.227	3	5.076	5.141	.002
	Within Groups	98.735	100	.987		
	Total	113.962	103			
The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for	Between Groups	9.832	3	3.277	3.341	.022
	Within Groups	98.082	100	.981		
	Total	107.913	103			
I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards,	Between Groups	13.495	3	4.498	3.856	.012
	Within Groups	116.659	100	1.167		
	Total	130.154	103			

Statistical significance at a 5% level of significance $p<0.05$ was noted in the following variables/statements in the statements and variables shown in Table 22 above. A further descriptive analysis of the above results was conducted to detect the key sources of these variances.

- Location ($F=3.805$, $p<0.05$)
- Gender ($F=6.867$. $P<0.05$)
- The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised ($F=5.141$, $p<0.05$)
- The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for top marks ($F=3.341$, $p<0.05$)
- I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out ($F=3.856$, $p<0.05$)

These variances are further discussed below.

6.2.7.13. Award winners and non-award winners by school

There were statistically significant differences on the response to whether one had ever won a prize/award or not. ($F=3.805$, $p<0.05$). Descriptive analysis shows that this difference stemmed from the fact that learners from School B had significantly higher frequencies on the “Yes, once” and “Yes, many times” responses – 30% and 51% respectively, while School A had very low frequencies on these responses comparatively as shown in Figure 13 below.

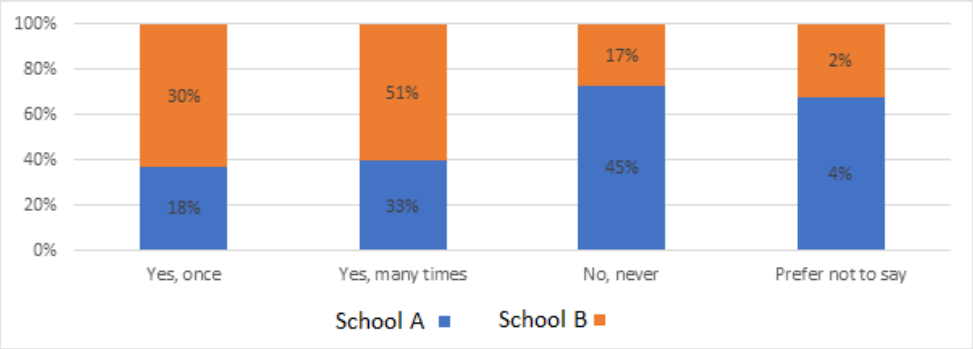


Figure 13: Descriptive analysis of School A vs School B variance

Learners from School B therefore had a higher chance of getting awards in comparison to those from School A. This was also confirmed by comparison of the school's reward policies: School A had a lower number of award categories than School B. Thus learners at School B had more awards available to them increasing their chances of winning an award.

6.2.7.14. Award winners and non-award winners by gender

The One-Way ANOVA tests also showed that there were statistically significant differences on the statement, "I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school" by gender ($F=1.417$, $P<0.05$). The figure below explains this variance further.

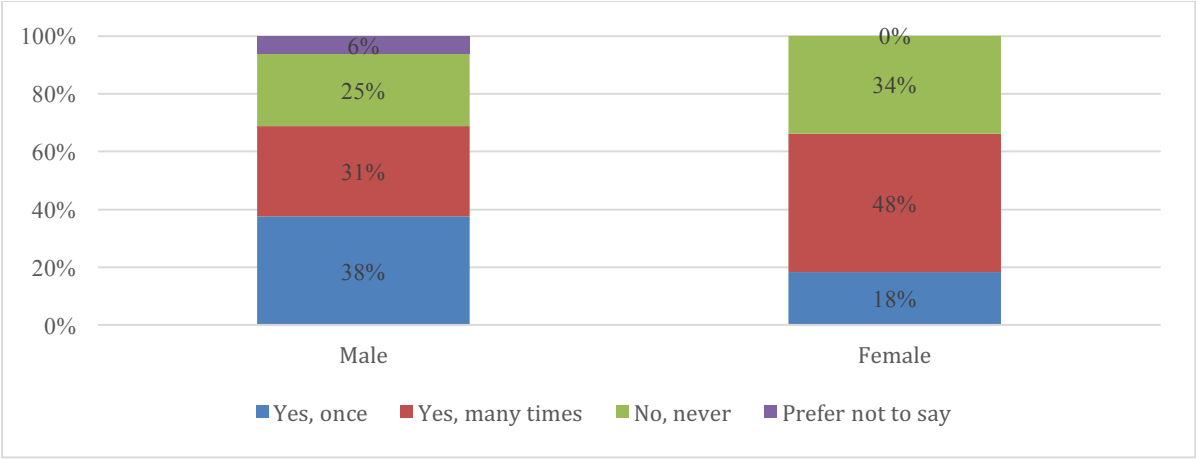


Figure 14: ANOVA by gender -"I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school"

A comparatively high number of male learners (38%) had won awards once compared to a low 18% amongst female learners. Female learners dominated significantly on the response category "Yes, many times". There were also more female learners (34%) who had never won awards/prizes compared to 25% male learners. The variance can therefore be explained by the fact that more female learners are associated with

winning awards/prizes more than once and not winning awards/prizes at all (respectively) than male learners.

6.2.7.15. Award- winners and non-award winners' perceptions

Taking the statement "I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school" as an independent variable (award winners/non- award winners) and the other statements on the learners' questionnaires as dependent variables, One-way ANOVA results showed statistical significance between the independent variable and the three statements below:

1. The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised (F=5.141, P<0.05)
2. The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for top marks (F=3.341, P<0.05)
3. I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out (F=3.856, P<0.05)

Using descriptive statistics to further analyse the differences in responses between winners and non-winners, the following truths were revealed as shown in Table 23 below:

Table 23: Comparison of Means - Winners/Non-winners

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognized	Yes, once	**25**	**3,32**	0,99	0,20	2,91	3,73
	Yes, many times	**44**	**3,95**	0,86	0,13	3,69	4,22
	No, never	**32**	**3,09**	1,17	0,21	2,67	3,52
	Prefer not to say	**3**	**3,33**	0,58	0,33	1,90	4,77
	Total	**104**	**3,52**	1,05	0,10	3,31	3,72
The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for top marks	Yes, once	**25**	**3,76**	1,05	0,21	3,33	4,19
	Yes, many times	**44**	**3,59**	1,04	0,16	3,27	3,91
	No, never	**32**	**4,16**	0,88	0,16	3,84	4,47
	Prefer not to say	**3**	**2,67**	0,58	0,33	1,23	4,10
	Total	**104**	**3,78**	1,02	0,10	3,58	3,98
I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out	Yes, once	**25**	**2,80**	1,00	0,20	2,39	3,21
	Yes, many times	**44**	**2,30**	0,95	0,14	2,01	2,59
	No, never	**32**	**3,13**	1,29	0,23	2,66	3,59
	Prefer not to say	**3**	**3,00**	1,00	0,58	0,52	5,48
	Total	**104**	**2,69**	1,12	0,11	2,47	2,91

To the statement, "The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised" (F=5.141, p<0.05), learners who had won prizes or awards many times scored the highest mean (x=3.95, SD=0.86). This shows that prize winners held the strongest perception that there was fairness in the awarding of prizes. Those who had never won prizes had the lowest mean (x=3.09, SD=1.17) indicating they least agreement with the statement.

To the statement, “The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for top marks” ($F=3.341$, $p<0.05$), learners who had chosen “No, not all” to the statement, “I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school” had the highest mean score ($x=4.16$, $SD=0.88$). This shows that this group of learners mostly agreed that prizes and awards are generally won by the same groups of learners. Learners who “prefer not to say” whether they had ever won or not had the lowest mean ($x=2.67$, $SD=0.58$) meaning they agreed least with the statement. To the statement, “I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out” ($F=3.856$, $P<0.05$), learners who had never won a prize/award at school had the highest mean score ($x=3.13$, $SD=1.29$) indicating that they agreed the most with the statement. Learners who had won prizes many times felt least excluded with the lowest mean of $x=2.30$, $SD=1.29$. It can be concluded that whether a learner had won a prize/award/badge before or not influenced their perceptions on the fairness of the awarding systems, on the inclusivity of new prize winners and on the inclusivity of awards ceremonies.

6.2.7.16. Parents’ Variance: Award winners and non-award winners

Taking the statement “My child/ren has won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during their years at high school” as the independent variables of interest and taking all the other statements as dependent variables, One-Way ANOVA tests revealed statistical significance between this statement and following:

- Working together in teams is more useful for my child than competing with peers to win an individual prize, certificate, award or badge ($F=5.260$, $P<0.05$)
- I am extremely pleased/proud when my child wins prizes, certificates, awards and badges ($F=4.206$, $P<0.05$)
- I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my child’s school ($F=4.764$, $P<0.05$)
- I would prefer it if my child's school focused on recognising effort in a private, individualized way rather than publicly rewarding top marks with prizes, certificates, awards and badges ($F=7.332$, $p<0.05$)

These are shown in Table 24 below.

Table 24: Comparisons of means - Parents versus Learners

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Working together in teams is more useful for my child than competing with peers to win an individual prize, certificate,	Between Groups	8.902	3	2.967	5.260	.014
	Within Groups	7.333	13	.564		
	Total	16.235	16			
I am extremely pleased/proud when my child wins prizes, certificates, awards and badges.	Between Groups	3.882	3	1.294	4.206	.028
	Within Groups	4.000	13	.308		
	Total	7.882	16			
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my child's school	Between Groups	7.304	3	2.435	4.764	.021
	Within Groups	6.133	12	.511		
	Total	13.438	15			
I would prefer it if my child's school focused on recognizing effort in a private, individualized way rather than	Between Groups	9.982	3	3.327	7.332	.004
	Within Groups	5.900	13	.454		
	Total	15.882	16			

Further assessing the above variances, parents whose child/children had won many prizes/awards many times had the second highest mean score (x=2, SD=.632) indicating that they mostly agreed with the statement that they were proud or pleased by their child/ren's winning of awards. Only one parent from the sample had not specified their preference to the winners/non-winners' statement thus pushing the mean score of this category to (x=3, SD=0.00). Parents with child/ren who had won awards were therefore positive, proud and excited about their child/ren getting such prizes, as indicated in Table 25 below.

Table 25: Further analysis of Parental Response

						95% Confidence	
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Bound	Upper Bound
I am extremely pleased/proud when my child wins prizes, certificates, awards and badges.	Yes, once	5	1.40	.548	.245	.72	2.08
	Yes, many times	6	2.00	.632	.258	1.34	2.66
	No, never	5	1.20	.447	.200	.64	1.76
	Not specified	1	3.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	17	1.65	.702	.170	1.29	2.01
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my child's school	Yes, once	5	4.20	.837	.374	3.16	5.24
	Yes, many times	6	4.33	.816	.333	3.48	5.19
	No, never	4	5.00	.000	.000	5.00	5.00
	Not specified	1	2.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	16	4.31	.946	.237	3.81	4.82
I would prefer it if my child's school focused on recognizing effort in a private, individualized way rather than publicly	Yes, once	5	3.60	.548	.245	2.92	4.28
	Yes, many times	6	3.50	.837	.342	2.62	4.38
	No, never	5	4.40	.548	.245	3.72	5.08
	Not specified	1	1.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	17	3.65	.996	.242	3.13	4.16

Parents who selected the response "No, never" to the statement, statement "My child/ren has won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during their years at high school" showed the strongest agreement and affirmation (x=5, SD=0.00) to the statement, "I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my child's school". While those who did not specify their response had the least agreement judging by the lowest mean (x=2, SD=0.00). Parents whose child/ren had never won a prize or award felt strongly against the awarding processes and would prefer it did not exist.

Parents who selected the response “No, never” to the statement, statement “My child/ren has won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during their years at high school” also showed the strongest agreement and affirmation (x=4.40, SD=0.548) to the statement, “I would prefer it if my child's school focused on recognising effort in a private, individualised way rather than publicly rewarding top marks with prizes, certificates, awards and badges.” Those who did not specify their response had the least agreement judging by the lowest mean (x=1, SD=0.00). Therefore, it can be deduced that parents whose children did not win awards preferred individualised rewards rather than rewards given at public ceremonies.

6.2.7.17. Parents’ ANOVA by school, gender and race

There were no statistically significant differences by location, gender and race of parents on the statement “My child/ren has won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during their years at high school”.

6.2.7.18. Parents versus learner perceptions

The data collection tool presented five statements that were similar to both the parents’ and learners’ samples. These five statements were also subjected to ANOVA tests to determine the extent to which the mean responses varied between the parents and learner samples: in other words, how learner perceptions differed from those of parents. These five common statements were:

1. Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work hard and put in extra effort
2. The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised
3. Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school
4. I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out
5. I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school

Table 26 below presents the test results on the One-Way ANOVA Welch’s test conducted to meet the above goal.

Table 26: ANOVA - learners versus parents

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work hard and put in extra effort	Between Groups	66.579	1	66.579	119.834	.000
	Within Groups	66.115	119	.556		
	Total	132.694	120			
The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognized	Between Groups	17.921	1	17.921	16.394	.000
	Within Groups	130.079	119	1.093		
	Total	148.000	120			
Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school	Between Groups	13.625	1	13.625	13.445	.000
	Within Groups	119.575	118	1.013		
	Total	133.200	119			
I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are	Between Groups	14.218	1	14.218	12.112	.001
	Within Groups	139.683	119	1.174		
	Total	153.901	120			
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school	Between Groups	50.474	1	50.474	70.474	.000
	Within Groups	85.229	119	.716		
	Total	135.702	120			

In all the five statements, the above test statistics and levels of significance show that the differences between the parents' sample and the learner's sample were statistically significant across all the statements, i.e. they had a significance level $p<0.05$. Post Hoc tests through the comparisons of means further show how these differences came about.

Learners had a larger mean score of x=4.13, SD=.72 on the statement *"Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work hard and put in extra effort"*. Parents had a lower score of x=2, SD=.87 on the same statement. This shows that learners hold a much stronger view that rewarding learners is tests and examinations worked as a motivational factor in academic performance than that held by parents. Parents therefore believe that there are other latent factors that can motivate learners to work harder in school, such factors being stronger than rewarding systems. These are shown in Table 27 below.

Table 27: Comparison of Means - Learners versus Parents

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work hard and put in extra effort	Learner	104	4,13	0,72	0,07	3,99	4,28
	Parent	17	2,00	0,87	0,21	1,55	2,45
	Total	121	3,83	1,05	0,10	3,65	4,02
The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to be recognized	Learner	104	3,52	1,05	0,10	3,31	3,72
	Parent	17	2,41	1,00	0,24	1,90	2,93
	Total	121	3,36	1,11	0,10	3,16	3,56
Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school	Learner	103	3,44	1,03	0,10	3,24	3,64
	Parent	17	2,47	0,87	0,21	2,02	2,92
	Total	120	3,30	1,06	0,10	3,11	3,49
I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out	Learner	104	2,69	1,12	0,11	2,47	2,91
	Parent	17	1,71	0,77	0,19	1,31	2,10
	Total	121	2,55	1,13	0,10	2,35	2,76
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school	Learner	104	1,79	0,82	0,08	1,63	1,95
	Parent	17	3,65	1,00	0,24	3,13	4,16
	Total	121	2,05	1,06	0,10	1,86	2,24

On the statement, *"The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my (or my child's) school and prize-winners deserve to be recognised"* learners also had a higher score of x=3.25, SD=1.05 in comparison to the parents' x=2.41, SD=1.00. Learners therefore have a stronger view that the rewarding and awarding system in schools was fairer than what the parents think. Basing on the Likert Scales applied in the data collection process, parents are more on the "Disagree" option which was recoded with a 2 while learners are more on the "Somewhat agree" level or response option.

Learners also scored a higher mean than their parents on the statement, *"Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school"* with a mean score of x=3.44. SD=1.03 compared to the parents' score of x=2.47, SD=0.87. This finding points to the conclusion that parents and learners differ on the benefits of competition amongst learners. Learners have a stronger perception that such competition is good for their performance while parents seem to share a weaker view on this aspect. This particular test can be read in conjunction with the score from the statement ", *"I would prefer it if my child's school focused on recognising effort in a private, individualized way rather than publicly rewarding top marks with prizes, certificates, awards and badges."* The parents' total mean score on this statement was recorded as x=3.65, SD=0.996 compared to x=3.30, SD=1.06 on the statement "*"Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school".* This shows that parents' value individualised rewarding in comparison to public ceremonies.

Parents felt more excluded than learners at prize and award giving ceremonies as shown by the mean score on the statement, *"I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out".* They scored a lesser mean score of x=1.71, SD=0.77 compared to x=2.69, SD=1.12 of the learners. The results show that learners felt excluded from the award and prize giving ceremonies if they themselves were not getting honoured, but their parents felt the exclusion more strongly than the learners did. The negative sentiment of being left out was much stronger on the parent than on the child or children even if the latter also felt left out.

Both the parents and learners were presented with the statement, *"I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school".* Parents had a higher mean score of x=3.65. SD=1.00 and learner, x=1.79, SD=0.82. This shows that parents have a stronger positive sentiment that there should be no awards and prizes that are publicly distributed at schools than the learners. The learners who seem to agree with this view are very factional hence the low mean of 1.79 (SD=0.82). This came as no surprise since in the tests above, parents showed stronger negative

perceptions and sentiments on the fairness of the rewarding system, its exclusionary effects, its effects on motivation learners to work harder. Parents seem to prefer individualised and private rewarding to public rewarding and recognition ceremonies hence their strong negative views on public ceremonies.

As a cautionary note, the results of the ANOVA comparisons between parents and learners might have been affected by the difference in sample sizes. The parents sample had 17 participants compared to the learners' sample that had 104 participants. A unique view by a single parent could easily represent a 100% frequency and this would drive the mean of such a view upwards.

6.2.8. Discussion of the ANOVA findings

The data analysis showed that learners are positive that rewarding systems motivates them to work harder. Parents on the other hand, were mostly negative to the view that public rewarding systems provided a good incentive for learners to perform well. A greater number of learners were positive of the fairness of rewarding systems at their schools. In contrast, most parents were overall negative about the same fairness issue.

At first glance, it appears that most learners seem to disagree that rewarding systems made them feel excluded at prize awarding ceremonies, however, this must be read in context that the majority of the participants, 66% identified themselves as award-winners and would thus be invited to award ceremonies. Similarly, the data showed that most of the parents did not feel excluded from reward ceremonies, however, there was a sizable number of parents that felt excluded from such ceremonies. Of the parents, 64.7% had identified their children as being award-winners.

Learners shared the sentiment that award-winners and non-award winners were not treated equally. Learners felt that award-winners got more attention on school media than those who did not. Learners indicated that teachers showed a greater preference for and gave more attention to learners who won prizes and awards. Learners also indicated that teachers also rewarded individualistic work and did not give any recognition or rewards to successful group work. Teachers were however reported by learners to be tolerant of mistakes during the learning process and encouraged comprehensive learning rather than just the memorisation of learning material.

The results show that a significantly large proportion of learners would prefer prizes, certificates, awards, badges at their schools. On the other hand, parents have a stronger preference of seeing the rewarding system depart than the learners. Overall

parents, especially those whose child/children had never won an award/prize, did not agree that there were important life lessons that were learnt from competition amongst learners. Parents also did not feel that learners who won awards worked very hard and deserved the recognition they received. The parents believed that learners could get rewards they did not deserve and that that prizes, certificates, awards and badges did not provide a good indication of how well a child is doing in comparison to others. Parents preferred private recognition to both public recognition and they preferred the recognition of group efforts.

On the ANOVA, the views and perceptions of parents do not differ by location (School A or B) and gender. The results show that male learners had a stronger view that competing with other learners for a prize was a good thing in comparison to females. Male learners also believed that their teachers use learners who get achieve well academically as examples as opposed to female learners. By race, coloureds had the strongest view that prizes, certificates, awards and badges provide a good indication of how well their child was doing in comparison to others, followed by whites and then Africans and those who had not specified their race.

6.2.9. Report on findings without statistical significance in the ANOVA

Not all questions in the learner questionnaire were statistically significant in the ANOVA. The following findings were statistically not significant in terms of variance within learners, (School A/School B; award-winners/non award-winners) however, some insight into the rewarding and participation of learners within the classroom is provided. The following three questions, numbered 16, 17, 18 in the learner questionnaire will be discussed. In order to facilitate reporting, I have collapsed the 5-point Likert scale into 3 options. 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' were collapsed into "Agree", 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' were collapsed into "Disagree", and I used the 'Somewhat Agree' to describe learners who were "not entirely sure".

Table 28: Question 16 Learner Questionnaire

Question 16.	My teacher recognises us for trying hard, by rewarding us with small rewards in class, not just in assemblies. (E.g. Extra time outside, parties end of term, no homework for the day, etc.).							
	Award Winner		Non-Award Winner		Did not specify		Total %	Total n=
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=		
Agree	17%	12	28%	9	0%		**20%**	**21**
Disagree	61%	42	50%	16	33%	1	**57%**	**59**
Not sure	22%	15	22%	7	67%	2	**23%**	**24**
Grand Total	100%	69	100%	32	100%	3	**100%**	**104**

The first question to be discussed is “My teacher recognises us for trying hard, by rewarding us with small rewards in class, not just in assemblies (E.g. Extra time outside, parties at the end of term, no homework for the day, etc.)” as indicated in Table 28 above. For this question, 57% of learners disagreed with the statement, 20% agreed, and 23% of learners were not entirely sure. This indicates that a significant number of learners did not believe that teachers recognised their efforts with informal, smaller rewards. Given that 20% of learners agreed, it could also indicate that smaller, informal rewards were experienced by a small number of learners, and not commonly experienced by the majority of the learners. This finding sheds some light on how learners are rewarded out of the formal visible rewards framework. It appears that informal rewards are not commonly experienced by the learners. In addition, learners showing their disagreement could be expressing their feelings that only certain achievements are valued and rewarded. However, the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) indicates that valuing and rewarding a range of achievements encourages learner participation within the classroom. The Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) indicates that learner participation can be compromised when certain forms of achievement that are more highly valued than others. The data indicated that learners are aware that certain forms of achievement that are more highly valued than others, and that not all efforts are recognised and rewarded. According to the literature (Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2018; Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017; Booth & Ainscow, 2011), this would have a bearing on the level of learner participation within the classroom.

Table 29: Question 17 Learner Questionnaire

Question 17.	My teacher encourages us to work in groups often, and he/she rewards the whole group when we work well							
	Award Winner		Non-Award Winner		Did not specify		Total %	Total n=
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=		
Agree	9%	6	16%	5	0%		**11%**	**11**
Disagree	74%	51	59%	19	67%	2	**69%**	**72**
Not sure	17%	12	25%	8	33%	1	**20%**	**21**
Grand Total	100%	69	100%	32	100%	3	**100%**	**104**

For the question, “My teacher encourages us to work in groups often, and he/she rewards the whole group when we work well”, as indicated in Table 29 above, 69% of learners disagreed with the statement, 11% agreed and 20% were not entirely sure. This indicates that most learners did not believe that they were given group work often, and that rewards were not given to groups of learners. In terms of the significance to

the inclusive education literature, this finding shows that collaboration in groups is seldom a technique used by teachers. It also indicates that rewards are not given to groups of learners, suggesting that rewarding at school is reserved for individualistic efforts. Thus it can be deduced that classroom participation also does not commonly take the form of group interactions. In terms of the literature on inclusive education and collaboration, it is widely agreed that learners should be seen as resources for learning (Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2018; Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Therefore, encouraging group interactions within the classroom where learners share ideas, work and discuss together increases participation. Similarly, Social Interdependence Theory's collaborative model, or positive interdependence, emphasises the use of group learning activities (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), thereby promoting group participation and more positive learning outcomes for all. This finding sheds some light into the dynamics of the classroom and way in which learners participate in the lesson.

Table 30: Question 18 Learner Questionnaire

Question 18.	My teachers tells us how we compare with other learners in the class in front of everyone and I look forward to the time she gives us to shine in front of our friends							
	Award Winner		Non-Award Winner		Did not specify		Total %	Total n=
	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=		
Agree	4%	3	19%	6	0%		**9%**	**9**
Disagree	64%	44	53%	17	33%	1	**60%**	**62**
Not sure	32%	22	28%	9	67%	2	**32%**	**33**
Grand Total	100%	69	100%	32	100%	3	**100%**	**104**

For the third question, "My teacher tells us how we compare with other learners in the class in front of everyone, and I look forward to the time she gives us to shine in front of our friends", as indicated in Table 30 above, 60% of learners disagreed with this statement, 9% agreed, and 32% were not entirely sure. Given that a large proportion of learners disagreed with the statement, it can be concluded that learners did not enjoy being compared to their classmates publicly, or have their marks called out publicly. A significant number of learners (32%) were not entirely sure, perhaps not willing to admit that they do in fact enjoy the public comparison, but feeling that it might not be appropriate to admit it. Given that 67% of respondents identified themselves as award-winners, it could explain the number of learners that agreed to an extent, but were not entirely sure about how they felt regarding comparisons made publicly. The data indicated that most of the learners did not enjoy public comparisons. These could be associated with negative feelings such as inadequacy and a lack of privacy. This

finding can be associated with the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017), where maintaining the dignity and respect of all learners is imperative to encouraging participation within the classroom. Since a large number of learners disagreed with this statement, it can be concluded that their dignity could be infringed upon by public comparisons of their abilities. The theme of participation and rewards as discussed from these three questions is further explicated by the responses received to the open-ended question. The analysis appears below.

6.2.10. Analysis of the open-ended question in learner questionnaire

The last question (Q23) of the learner questionnaire was open-ended, simply asking "Any other thoughts?". Out of the 104 respondents, 32 learners responded to the question. The responses to this question were analysed using thematic analysis. The common themes that emerged from the open-ended question could be understood as contradictory. Whilst learners acknowledged that rewards did provide motivation and rewards encouraged learners to achieve and work hard, negative feelings as a result of not being visibly rewarded such as feelings of failure, inadequacy, despondency and insufficient support from teachers were also mentioned.

It is clear that many learners are not wholly satisfied with the visible rewards system, and had expressed their concerns regarding the way visible rewards manifested at school, and how they perceived their experiences of rewards, whether they won them or not. From the analysis of the responses, it can be concluded that learners believed in the motivational power of visible rewards, but found the criteria and processes of the rewards system to be narrow and unrealistic. They also felt that visible rewards should recognise learners who work hard to improve their achievements. There was an indication that some learners were bitter that their hard work was seldom recognised, whilst others who won awards did so with (what they perceived to be) very little effort. The following statements show their dissatisfaction with the way visible rewards take place:

> *"Rewards do encourage you to work hard, but some of the awards are hard to achieve, leaving some learners out, making them feel bad, leaving them discouraged to achieve more."*

> *"I believe that the rewards system should be more broad, awarding learners in all categories and in their best abilities. If a learner gets 65% average, and he/she shows improvement all the time, they should also be awarded."*

"I think learners should be regularly awarded, even for small improvements, it just makes them want to work harder. Not everyone can get awards easily"

Open-ended questions also revealed that learners experienced feelings of dejection, unimportance, and exclusion within the classroom, because they were not amongst the high achievers. They expressed a desire to experience recognition for their abilities, but knew that they were excluded from the rewards system.

"I feel that learners who have in-between marks are left out, nobody really cares."

"There are many people who try, but awards are given to the same people all the time, it is so demotivating. Everyone would like some recognition at some point."

Open-ended questions also showed that learners were aware of hierarchies at school based on ability groupings. They labelled themselves disparagingly as being stupid if they were not part of the so-called smart class. Learners also perceived superiority and egotism from those who were considered smart.

"Schools makes it obvious who the smart classes and the stupid classes are. Many people feel they are no good in the stupid class, but the people in smart classes act like they are better than others."

"I feel awards are necessary to those who don't have self-motivation. But then I also see learners that receive awards acting arrogant, looking down on others."

Learners were sensitive to their privacy being violated as they felt embarrassed when their marks were revealed publicly. Some expressed indignation in response to public comparisons about their abilities, which they believed showed them as inferior.

"Many times the teachers will read our marks out loud in front of everyone, and my friends and I feel embarrassed, like we are not good enough."

"Some of us can't wait to leave because we are constantly told how well others are doing. All we want is to be individuals without feeling someone else is more important than us."

There was clear indication that learners felt teachers could do more to make them feel included within the classroom, and requested time from their teachers for extra support, and for opportunities to work in groups. The data indicated that teachers treated learners who were not high-achieving with lesser importance and did not focus much attention on them. A number of learners felt neglected and believed that their support needs were not met by the teachers.

> *"Teachers should focus on groups of learners rather than individual learners and encourage those who need support."*

> *"Pupils that are struggling academically do not get support and sometimes feel stupid"*

> *"A lot of students feel like they are failures"*

Learners indicated that high achieving learners were given superior treatment not available to themselves. It was apparent that some learners were provided basic dignities of being addressed by name, and not all learners were treated equally.

> *"Teachers should strive to know every learner's name in their class, not only those that get 90% or those that are failing."*

Given the number of negative comments received in the open-ended question (30 out of 32 contained negative statements), it can be concluded that there are many unhappy learners who feel invisible at school. The comments covered rewards, schooling and teaching, and shed light on the perception of learners. Even before the focus group interviews could be undertaken, there was already an indication from the questionnaire data thus far that not all learners were likely to be motivated to participate and achieve to their fullest potential. An application of Social Interdependence Theory to the data thus far shows that there is evidence of individualistic goal achievements, where there is no correlation between learners and their goals are unrelated to the goals of others. Learners' feelings of irrelevance and of invisibility in the classroom show manifestations of this individualistic mindset. With reference to South African schools, Volmink (2018, p.9) states that "Learning is social, and much of the learning difficulties experienced by learners…rise out of fear, alienation, discomfort, mistrust and low expectations. Schools that are not inclusive are hotbeds for such phenomena, leading to poor performance." Given that learning is social, it is imperative that learners

feel that they belong, and feel safe to participate without being made to feel ashamed of their own knowledge or what they bring to the lesson.

It was interesting to note that most learners did not respond in the first person singular to the open-ended question. Words such as “pupils”, “students”, “those who need support”, “people who need support”, “people who try”, “some learners”, and pronouns such as “them”, “us” and “we” indicated that there was stigma attached to learners who did not win awards, or who needed support. Leaners appeared to be embarrassed or unwilling to admit that they needed support, and referred to these issues in a more generalised way, without taking ownership of themselves having such experiences. This also indicates the resultant attitudes and beliefs regarding the categorization and labelling of learners and their participation (or lack of) in the classroom. Väyrynen and Paksuniemi (2018, p.149) state that amongst the core values of inclusive teaching are that “participation means engagement and meaningful learning experiences for all students” and that the “teachers’ expectations are a key determinant of student success, hence high expectations are critical.” There is some indication from the learner comments to the open-ended question that teachers did not appear to have high expectations of all learners, and that the teachers’ influence on the learners’ self esteem and subsequently their learning potential, was not positive for all learners. This finding is similar to other studies that have found experiences of learners negatively impacted by teacher expectations of them (Reay, 2017; Lu, 2010; Hamilton & O’Hara, 2011; Reay & Williams, 1999). Learners described their experiences of visible rewards in more detail during the focus group interviews.

6.2.11. Conclusion

The aim of the first phase of quantitative surveying via questionnaire was to assess and obtain original data from learners and parents of the little-known phenomenon of visible rewards. In addition, the purpose of the learner survey was to possibly find information-rich participants for the next qualitative phase. The learner and parent surveys provided rich information on their own, and confirmed that there were indeed exclusionary aspects to the practice of visible rewards. This confirmation was required in order to probe the practice of visible rewards further. The next step involved learner focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews with teachers and SMT members. These are explored and discussed in more detail in the qualitative data which appear in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Qualitative Findings and Discussion

"We're only rewarding 20 out of 300 in assembly…in a way it is good, because there's only 20. ***They ARE the elite****."*

Teacher, School A

7.1. Introduction

A voluminous amount of qualitative interview data was generated from the learners, teachers, and the SMT. The qualitative findings were informed by the strands of data derived from 43 participant interviews. Of these, 23 were learner participants in focus groups, and semi-structured individual interviews with teachers and SMT members. A number of concerns were raised when learners were asked for any additional comments. I had 32 qualitative responses from the final open-ended question of the learner questionnaire and a further 6 from the parent questionnaire. These responses were analysed qualitatively, using thematic analysis. Although this was qualitatively analysed, the analysis appears at the end of the previous chapter. A full explanation of the qualitative data analysis process appears in chapter 5 (see sub-section 5.8.2.).

After generating initial codes from the data, I identified and labelled items potentially relevant to the research question. Examples of codes I generated are "fear/anxiety of not living up to expectations" (learners' interview), "learners deserving awards, but not achieving them" (teachers' interview), "value for money for parents" (deputy head's interview). Undertaking thematic analysis is an iterative process and required multiple readings of the data. Going back and forth between the identified categories and the data itself was necessary to ensure that I fully captured the essence of the participants' perspectives. When the data sets were fully coded, I began placing similar codes together, and some patterns and conceptual categories emerged following examinations of the data. Four main themes emerged from the qualitative data and are explicated below, with references from the sources of the data in which the findings were derived. The four themes are:

1. Criteria and Processes
2. Ability and Talent
3. Motivation
4. Competitiveness

It must be noted that although the quotations below are used to illustrate the sub-theme in question, there could be overlaps within a single quotation. For instance, streaming and labelling seem to have overlapped, and these are explicated in theme 2 below.

7.2. Theme 1: Criteria and Processes

This theme of criteria and processes consists of the fairness and consistency of principles used in judging standards, the hierarchies present within the reward criteria, the percentage categories for rewards, the rigidity and flexibility of the reward criteria, and the processes involving staff members in the school's decision to reward learners. The criteria and processes that resulted in visible rewards were experienced differently depending on whether staff were teachers and/or SMT members. When asked about the criteria and processes of choosing award-winners, and whether it was possible to reward for effort, most teachers at School A said it was not possible to reward for effort, but that is why they have a diligence award.

There were committees in existence for the decision-making regarding award criteria, but for some award categories, such as behaviour related categories, all teachers participated in the process of choosing winning learners by means of a vote in the staff-room. The findings indicated that some but not all teachers were involved in the process of decision-making, depending on their membership of the awards committee. It is clear from each of the school's policy documents on visible rewards that learners are not part of this decision-making process. Whilst there are criteria available for a variety of pre-determined awards, there is also the option of teachers being able to nominate learners whom they feel deserve an award. This implies that the policies make provisions for teacher input and is not quite rigid as the school policy indicates. One teacher explained the process thus:

> *"There are committees who make these decisions, and then it gets published; this is the criteria for the rewards. So personally I am not involved in it and don't know much about it. But I do know, if I want to nominate a learner then the criteria for that award is available to me. Then I fill in a form that gets sent to Mr. Chair of the Committee…"*
>
> Teacher, School B

Another teacher at School B commented on the secret ballot vote for some of the major awards requiring all the teachers' input. She had indicated that in the past, there was an open system of voting by show of hands, but that had changed to a secret ballot. Whilst she did not give reasons for the change, it can be deduced that there might have been problematic situations arising from the open voting system. With regards to the criteria and whether it was fair and equitable, one SMT member believed that regardless of the criteria, it would not be a flawless system, as criteria resulted in judging. Inevitably, there would have to be exclusions. She said that:

"*Whatever criteria you use; it always has flaws"*

HOD, School A.

The criteria and processes used for deciding awards were not always explicit or arrived at in a methodologically sound manner, according to some learners. This has led to scepticism amongst learners and parents that the process and decisions are not consistent and thus could be discriminatory to some. The findings indicated that not all learners believed that the rewards criteria were consistent, or fairly applied. One learner described his experience of being excluded from the Coloured Blazer pathway of achievement, as he had joined the school at the beginning of grade 10. The achievements from his previous school in grade 8 and 9 were not recognised by his current school. In order to participate in the "coloured blazer" pathway of academic achievement, one must achieve an A aggregate consistently every year from grade 8 to 11. The learner is then awarded the coloured blazer in the matric (grade 12) year.

At my previous school (township in the East Rand) I was the top student and won awards all the time. Since I came here I won two awards, but I was told that my A's from my previous school are not recognised and I cannot work towards a coloured blazer."

Learner, School B

Another learner felt extremely disappointed that she was never rewarded visibly despite having the same aggregate as the learner who had always won, which made her question the fairness of the system. According to her understanding, she too should have received an award, since they had the same aggregate. Her extract:

"It's very challenging… I have a seventy-five and he also has a seventy-five, and he is going up, it's like what am I not doing? And then I recall: okay in grade ten you were there, in grade nine you were there, in grade eight

you were there, is your name now engraved into the system or are you actually really working?"

Learner, School A

The findings also indicated that teachers considered those learners who met the criteria to be awarded as top achievers and hard workers, whilst non-award winning learners were considered lazy, bitter and envious. This finding fits resonates with Mijs (2016) argument of legitimising meritocracy and situating blame within the victims when they did not achieve.

I feel like it's almost, they deserve to be there. The kids at the bottom, I think it's a little bit of envy being not being able to push themselves, or for maybe not having the support systems that the kids have in that top hierarchy. Ok, so why am I not able to achieve that grade? I think they do judge each other and judge their circumstances."

Teacher, School B

In the extract above, the teacher alluded to some learners not having "support systems" and "circumstances" that award-winners have. Her reference to learner background is poignant. This teacher's extract implies that the school's reward criteria and processes clearly favoured learners who had access to a particular kind of support that was not available to all learners. In South Africa, it is a widely accepted fact that socio-economic status has a bearing upon learner achievement (Mathebula, 2018; Fataar, 2009; Meier & Hartell, 2009). Whilst teachers believed that the rewards system is fair, given that the school offered extra lessons for free to all learners, learners did not perceive this in the same way. Learners mentioned that some learners go for extra tuition paid for by their parents, to ensure that they produce excellent results, and alluded to this having an effect on the provision available in the classroom. One learner clearly felt that greater participation could be achieved in the classroom, and had this to say:

"*Not all of us can go for extra lessons after school [paid for by parents]. Teachers should elaborate on the work students don't understand as it affects us when we write things like literature essays. Allocate us seats around the top scholars so we can get assistance, bettering us in the long run."*

Learner, School B

The learner's reference to more collaboration with learners who were academically talented indicated that he was aware of the ways in which other learners could assist him in his own learning. This fits well with the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) that learners should be encouraged to use each other as a resource for learning. He also alluded to the fact that his family could not afford private tutoring that he knew other learners obtained. This highlights the disparities within household income where the availability of resources for bettering educational outcomes were limited amongst the lower income groups. Again, congruence can be drawn amongst this finding and that of Mijs (2016) argument that all children do not have the same starting points in life and that any system based on merit is bound to be unfair to some.

Furthermore, teacher beliefs and attitudes towards the hierarchies at school within learners is accepted as natural order of society, and is even perceived as being fair. This alludes to the prevalence of hegemonic ways of being; and what the majority of teachers felt was perfectly normal and not unusual. The following statement by a teacher at School B indicated the "fairness" of the hierarchy as she believed that the learners work hard to get there:

> *"I think if I looked at it last night (at the academics' awards ceremony), the hierarchy is fair according to the way they work and how hard they work."*
>
> Teacher, School B

In contrast, learners at School A felt overwhelmingly that the criteria for visible rewards were too narrow, and that their hard work went unrecognised. Some learners felt excluded by the system:

> *"No one is recognised for the small achievements in their lives. Children who are smart are shown to be better than everyone else and the learners who try and work hard to achieve their best are shunned."*
>
> Learner, School A

Learners also felt that the rewards criteria need to change to include more individualised awards to recognise talents and exceptional circumstances that they felt are currently being ignored, such as perseverance and renewed motivation to work despite obstacles.

"*There needs to be more individualised awards, for example, someone should be awarded for persevering despite repeatedly being knocked down by bad marks, or by being rejected from teams over and over again; they should be awarded for trying and despite their downfalls, continuously going back and trying again."*

Learner, School A

In addition, there appeared to be different rewards for different learners. At School A, there are less formal rewards such as this informal reward (details omitted to protect anonymity). This is a reward for learners who have increased their overall subject marks by 10% from one term to the next. The teachers felt that this was an excellent reward for "low achieving learners". One teacher made reference to these less formal rewards as follows:

"Yes for those weaker kids I think because they never get recognised so this was such a big deal to go (details removed) and it really, really worked."

Teacher, School A

In order to ensure that the learners' awards were worthy and valuable, teachers believed that it was better to recognise a smaller number of learners' efforts as opposed to a larger number. Furthermore, some teachers believed that such learners deserved to be treated differently; referring to them as the elite, indicating that their outstanding achievements justified the inequity. She saw nothing wrong with describing learners as being superior to other learners. As Brantlinger (2004) states we endorse inequities at schools by allowing and legitimating inequalities and stratifications.

"We're only rewarding 20 out of 300 in assembly…in a way it is good, because there's only 20. ***They <u>ARE</u> the elite****."*

Teacher, School A (her emphasis on ARE)

Learners knew that even within the awards there was a hierarchy, and that not all awards were given equal prominence. Some learners were vocal about wanting change. They felt the unfairness and the lack of dignity, and indicated their desire for all awardees to be treated equally. In addition, there was a lack of meaningfulness of the improvement award based on other learners' perceptions of the award. The following extract illustrates the hierarchy:

"It can't just be that I walk up on stage and…you improved, well done and walk off. It should be treated with the same regard. So improving must be treated in the same regard as being in top twenty so that it feels you are just as good."

Learner, School A

In terms of the criteria for visible rewards, overall the teachers mostly felt it was fair, and did not see any issues arising from such. However, a few teachers as well as some members of the SMT did express concerns with the rewards/award process and felt it could be sending out the wrong message to learners: one that did not foster long-term values, nor a mastery goal structure. In terms of the entire staff agreeing to a school-wide practice, there is similar evidence of staff divided in their responses from Hamilton and O'Hara's (2011, p.720) study on ability groupings, where it was noted that "tensions were present in the responses of some of the head teachers" indicating that not all the head teachers agreed but were bound to follow the school's policy. The following extract indicates the principal's concern of the rewards culture, and of the superficial nature of extrinsic rewards:

"I think my biggest concern is that the learners are only going for the material reward, such as the coloured blazer, and not actually seeing life's journey that it is… um, school is just the very beginning of the journey…"

Principal, School B

Learners at School B were appeared mostly positive towards visible rewards as opposed to learners at School A. In contrast, teachers at School B expressed their misgivings about greater number of awards available to learners. Teachers at School B felt that awards were too easy to win, making reference to the 65% and 70% merit certificates. There is thus evidence that the school made attempts to include more learners in the reward system, but as a result, the reward was perceived to have lost its value. One teacher said the following:

"Awards have become cheapened. Now any learner can win an award"

Teacher, School B

The findings also indicated that the learners were well aware of the "middle awards". These awards were merit certificates that were given to learners achieving 65% averages, 70% averages and 75% averages at School B. Some learners, however, found them embarrassing, and deliberately underachieved to avoid being invited to the

awards assemblies for a “middle award”. This finding shows how difficult it is to maintain the dignity of learners, yet still reward some and not all. Here, it is worth mentioning Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017) assertion that the dignity of all learners is maintained in an inclusive education classroom. One teacher explained the shame and embarrassment experienced by learners within the classroom as follows:

> *“And if you had to read marks out in class the anxiety that that child that didn't do so well feels is sometimes even greater than that. So those children just under achieve to stay under the radar because we only invite a certain amount of people.”*
>
> Teacher, School B

This finding elicits one of the reasons why the criteria for rewarding learners is problematic. Whilst the school attempts to encourage inclusion by including more learners in the awards programme, the result is negative behaviour from learners as they deliberately work against the system to avoid being embarrassed in front of their higher achieving peers. In addition, the level of anxiety faced by learners is severe enough to cause deliberate under-achievement in avoidance of their perceived public shame. Thus, in light of Booth and Ainscow’s (2002, p. 39) Index for inclusion, where “the school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination”, it is clear that learners do not want to be patronised, nor do they find it acceptable that they are receiving a pity award. It seems then that the school is at a dilemma. On the one hand, they would have to reward convincingly and truthfully, and on the other, reward in a way that does not exclude learners from participating in the visible rewards system. Given the school’s policies, criteria and processes for awards, this was clearly not possible. Furthermore, it was clear from the schools’ reward policies that learners do not have any authority or input into the rewards processes and criteria, nor do they have any influence on decision-making with regards to rewards. These are solely determined by the SMT, respective committees and teachers at each school. The next theme to be discussed is the learners’ ability and talent.

7.3. Theme 2: Ability and Talent

The theme of ability and talent comprised the teachers’ fixed ability mindset, their labelling of learners, the school’s streaming of learners academically, and the visible rewards system that provided recognition of some talents and the exclusion of others, such as creativity. Teachers’ conceptualisations of learner ability and its effect on the learners’ deep-rooted need for being recognised and valued, left many learners feeling

as though they are obscure as a result of not being visibly rewarded. A significant number of learners felt that they were not recognised for their efforts, their talents and their achievements via the visible reward system at their schools. Learners had specifically mentioned their creative talents that did not form part of the academic achievement. They also believed that the school's conceptualisations of what was worthy of being rewarded as excluding a large amount of hidden learner talent. With regards to recognising a diverse range of talents, most teachers felt that the visible rewards system was fair, and believed that learners had inherent weaknesses that did not allow them to achieve higher marks. Most teachers and SMT members also believed that learner abilities were fixed, and unlikely to change. The following excerpt, a teacher from School A, felt that teachers should be making accommodations for and lowering their expectations of "achievement" and thus reward accordingly for what she referred to as low-achieving learners:

> *"Academically, the previous class were quite weak, but they would get rewards for, I would reward them for a sort of lower level, but even then that reward would only be within the classroom. Some kids are a 60, a level 60 class, and unfortunately the teachers would have to adjust. But not everyone does adjust."*
>
> Teacher, School A

Whilst the extract above indicates that the teacher did respond to the learners' need for being recognised, it is her attitude towards the fixed ability of learners that is likely to result in exclusionary behaviour. From the above extract, the teacher believes that an entire class is capable of achieving no higher than 60%; she referred to them as "a level 60 class". This also indicates the practice of streaming that was taking place at the school. Furthermore, it highlights the dangers of labelling learners according to their abilities being fixed. In using language such as "class were quite weak", "lower level" "some kids are a 60" and "a level 60 class" as demonstrated in the extract above, the teacher implied that learners' abilities were fixed. Further, her use of "lower level" indicated that her beliefs regarding ability as lying on a spectrum of high, average and low, and where the majority lie in the middle/average region, is known as bell-curve thinking, and works against inclusion. Yeager and Dweck (2012) found that learners perform better at school when they know that their abilities can be developed over time (growth mindset). Similarly, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue that teachers need to reject bell-curve thinking in order to enact inclusive pedagogies in the classroom.

Although most teachers appeared to have a fixed ability mindset, using language that indicated such, there were some teachers that saw shortcomings within that perspective. One teacher spoke of academic talent as a rare gift that was commonly recognised within the visible rewards system, whilst acknowledging that teachers wrongfully expected good results from all learners, then considered lazy those learners that did not show evidence of desired results. This teacher believed that more learners should be applauded for their hard work, and their efforts at doing their best:

> *"Talent is a gift, and a very fortunate gift, but we tend to look at the 60% and say you can work harder, you could do more, instead of saying wow, that is fantastic!"*
>
> Teacher, School A

The extract above demonstrates how teachers used percentages in reference to learner ability, and labelled them as such. This could possibly be attributed to the emphasis on percentages in terms of achievement by learners at school. Many criteria for awards are indicated by learners achieving a certain percentage in order to qualify for the visible reward. Teachers knew that learners were labelling themselves as a result of being academically streamed and then visibly rewarded (or not). Reay and Williams (1999, p.346) found similarly in their study of adolescent school children that formation of their identities strongly correlated to their assessments in class such that when they performed poorly, their perceptions of themselves were that of "failures", and of "nobodies". Reay and Williams (1999, p.348) state that "Students have always informally assessed their own academic performance and that of their peers". Similarly, Hamilton and Brown (2005, p.48) found that "exam success or failure can be integral to how they [learners] see themselves and how institutions and individuals such as teachers attempt to define them."

The following extract from a teacher indicated the effects of streaming:

> *"I think because of the way we stream academically in certain subjects; they will label themselves the dumb class. I think it's as a result, um even though it's not a spoken about thing but maybe because I'm teaching Life Orientation there is a lot of discussion, the kids feel comfortable saying things like that so they will label themselves, the clever class versus the dumb class."*
>
> Teacher, School A

Streaming, or tracking and broad-banding, is clearly a practice that reinforces inequality and works against inclusion (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017; Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011). The teacher's candid reference to streaming with reference to visible rewards corroborates with the research literature on the subject. Hamilton and O'Hara (2011) argue that ability groupings are a world-wide school problem, and many countries are dealing with the inequities as a result of restrictive ability groupings and its effect on teaching, learning, curriculum content and teacher expectations. The labelling of learners by and of themselves points to the acceptance of such labels. The harmful effects of labelling and it is associated with lowered school attitudes (Mijs, 2016; Hamilton & O'Hara, 2011) and poor identity formation (Reay, 2017; Reay & Williams, 1999, Reay, 1998).

With regards to recognising talent and effort put in by learners, it was noticed by learners and teaching staff as well as some members of the SMT, that greater recognition of learners' hard work was an area that schools could improve upon. This appeared overwhelmingly in the learner focus group interviews, as a sore point for the learners'. The following extracts indicate the learners' feelings:

> *"I think that it's important that people should get awarded for what they've done because people do work very hard and some people work harder than others, but the standards that are expected for getting that award are very high."*
>
> Learner, School A

And

> *"It's quite a high standard to reach and not everyone is capable of going to that extent."*
>
> Learner, School A

Similarly, one of the SMT members' echoed the learners' statements and agreed that recognition was not being given for the hard work and effort that the learners were encouraged to display. There was an indication that the system was not fair, and that learners were being betrayed by the system that is built upon recognising hard work and effort. One HOD had this to say:

> *"So it's maybe taking a child for example who doesn't fare well in a lot of subjects but in another subject they are doing well [but not winning awards] because they are passionate, they're talented, they're working hard. What is their award? Where's their recognition?"*
>
> HOD, School A

In addition, one of the deputy heads felt that innate talent and abilities were being rewarded, and this was problematic. She knew that learners were being excluded from being visibly rewarded, yet they had worked extremely hard and deserved to be recognised for their efforts. It is interesting to note that the way talent is conceptualised by teachers is based on outdated ideas of abilities being fixed and innate. This idea has been challenged in the literature over the years. New conceptualisations are a multidimensional construct, take into account creativity and have an environmental basis with contextual variability (Richards, 2015). The Deputy Head had said the following:

> *"Now that is what my issue is. We are sometimes rewarding for innate ability. So yes, we award the top students, and yes rightly so…but I think at the same time, we tend to forget those children who are, in their own way, trying to achieve their very own measure of ability. We have to keep on reminding ourselves that there are these other children who are equally deserving of recognition and we let them fall by the wayside."*
>
> Deputy Head, School A

From the above quote, it is apparent that members of the school management are aware of the possible unfairness of visible rewards for some learners, but chose not to do anything about it. On the other hand, some teachers did not agree with the practice of visible rewards, and believed that learners were not being rewarded for their hard work, nor were they being rewarded for reaching their full potential. One teacher had this to say:

> "*The person who gets 60% does not ever get awarded for that achievement, whereas that achievement to get there has required so much of hard work. Effort to reach your final potential we don't award, sadly… "*
>
> Teacher, School B

Learners also believed that their hard work often went unrecognised. The findings indicated that learners would prefer being awarded in a way that recognised their own talents and hard work. The following are some examples:

> *"I know it's a good thing that the school gives out diligence awards but they don't give it to a lot of people and there are some people who work very hard and don't get noticed."*
>
> Learner, School A

And

> *"Another award that schools could have is most improved or when people improve by a lot so from year to year, from term to term, they improve by say even by ten percent, that's a huge improvement on anyone's part and I think schools should recognise that."*
>
> Learner, School B

Furthermore, learners at both schools felt that visible rewards did not include creativity and other accomplishments that did not fit into the categories already specified by the school. This resulted in the learners believing that the school did not know the full extent of their individual talents and capabilities. Learners felt that recognition should be given that included all types of creative talent and a variety of skills:

> *"In our generation right now we are very open minded, students are not only academically gifted but culturally gifted, more skills gifted, you know, more creative, I sit with students in my school, in my class who are way more creative than I am; I feel like they need to be rewarded to a point where, academics doesn't actually mean more than creativity, you know what I mean?"*
>
> Learner, School B

Similarly, learners felt that award-winning changed the dynamic of their friendships, and that learners felt they were no longer on the same level once their friends won awards. There appeared to be a level of disconnect between learners, an imaginary status level that separated them, changing their relationships. The following extract illustrates this:

> *"I know watching from the side-lines, watching my friends get academic colours, it's not the greatest feeling in the world because you feel you're at a lower level. You can't talk to them about your academics, like they get colours and you don't, you feel like you're not in the same wavelength as them so you can't talk to them about this stuff, so that's disheartening"*
>
> Learner, School A

Many learners felt that the school could and should be recognising their hard work, and that the current ways in which schools attempted to recognise their efforts was insufficient, as most learners who worked hard were not given recognition for their efforts. Learners felt it was unfair that some learners were recognised yet others were

not. Overwhelmingly, nearly every learner that participated in the focus group interviews expressed a desire to experience recognition for their efforts. The next theme to be discussed is Motivation.

7.4. Theme 3: Motivation

The theme of motivation comprised learner motivation, the lack of motivation, learner rebelliousness, learner demotivation as well as the use of motivation by teachers for classroom behaviour. Most teachers interviewed believed that without rewards, learners would not have any reason to work, or achieve higher marks. Thus teachers believed in the power of extrinsic motivation. The findings did not indicate any evidence of teachers fostering intrinsic motivation in their learners. Many teachers also believe that learners are motivated by rewards. Subsequently, award-winners are seen as self-motivated. One teacher had this to say:

> *"Those kids at the top of the hierarchy, they work really hard. They come and ask questions, millions of questions, they have it on a piece of paper, their questions. They are self-motivated and they are not scared of peer pressure."*
>
> Teacher, School B

A small number of teachers admitted that not all learners were motivated by rewards/awards and that whilst it worked for the stronger learners, it did not work for all. When asked why they felt it was important to reward/award learners, teachers believed that learner participation was increased by the use of visible rewards:

> *"We need to reward them, otherwise we might not get that participation*."
>
> Teacher, School A
>
> *"Yeah, it's a way for us to say thank you and we recognise you, and we're proud of you."* Teacher, School A

However, intrinsic motivation seemed to surprise teachers at School A. Another teacher spoke about learners being intrinsically motivated when they discovered the joy of learning. Whilst she acknowledges that the learners appeared motivated to learn, what surprised her was the learners did not require any sweets/external motivators. Her excerpt appears below:

"This last lesson, I taught my grade tens and they quite weak but they understood the topic. And I said, OK guys, the bell's gone, you can go have a break. And all of them sat down and just worked. I didn't even say. I was like, are you all OK? And then I got ma'am, we understand this, so we want to do it. As soon as they get something that motivates them to want to do it. So you don't even have to give them a sucker or fizzer or sticker. For weaker learners, it's 'I actually understand this, so I want to do it..."

Teacher, School A

She spoke about learners that were internally motivated because they were deeply engaged with the topic and she seemed genuinely taken aback by their interest and engagement, especially as they were what she referred to as "weaker learners". Similarly, Geduld (2017) found in her study at a township school with South African teachers that they had referred to the use of intrinsic motivation by learners. This finding is also relevant to promoting learner participation and achievement. As stressed by Dweck (2006), given that learner motivation is strongly correlated with achievement at school, the teachers' understanding of motivation in learners is important for academic success.

Most of the learners who participated in the focus group interviews expressed their agreement that visible rewards motivated them to achieve, and that learners required that impetus to achieve. Examples of these appear below:

"For me it's very important that schools have a reward process because I feel like lots of people are pushed, for example, receiving a 70 and because they can get a reward when they receive an 80, they are pushed by either themselves or their friends or family pushing them positively to receive the next symbol, and they can get an award for it."

Learner, School B

And

"I think it's very important because it motivates us to do better. So if one of your friends or your oldest sibling has received higher marks and is getting recognised and receiving awards for it, you would want to do so yourself as well"

Learner, School B

The findings showed that visible rewards for academic achievement were also seen as important to motivate the academically inclined learners, given that sporty learners had

many opportunities for recognition. There appeared to be a need by the school for academics to be granted the same appeal as sporting awards. This is illustrated in the extract below:

> *"I also believe that in our school, academics is not something that is valued very highly as opposed to sports, so I think having, giving the kids a motivation to achieve academically would have a positive effect because kids in sports are rewarded so well compared to academic kids."*
>
> Learner, School A

But some learners were also acutely aware of the transient state of being an award-winner. The stakes were high: one would either be euphoric if one won, or despondent if one did not win the award. It was entirely possible not to receive any recognition, even if one's marks were exceptionally good. The complexity arising from rewarding the Top 10 or Top 20 learners in the grade is that the benchmark is not fixed. Learners cannot know with certainty if their marks are good enough to be rewarded the top of the grade, and struggle to work towards a goal that they cannot clearly conceive of. In the same vein, they must be wary of others competing for the same spot, and thus must determine who they competing against. The following are some examples from award-winners:

> "*I think it's very important, it motivates us to achieve, yeah. But also on the flip side, it's disappointing when you don't get the reward, because you do try and you work so hard, but still don't make it to win…"*
>
> Learner, School A

Also,

> *"I also feel when we do get rewards, yes it does motivate us but then eventually, as soon as you like drop once and then you just get tired of improving again because you feel as if you're never going to get back to the top. You're just… (others saying yeah in background) and it's like going to be a disappointment to yourself, your peers, your parents"*
>
> Learner, School A

Not all learners believed that the rewards system was meaningful and worth working for. The following extract is from a learner who is often in the Top 10 at her school, but feels highly pressurised to achieve, and does not agree with being extrinsically motivated to achieve. She appeared to be intrinsically motivated and considered awards to be a competitive and stressful endeavour.

"I don't actually think it's that important. And it doesn't mean anything because if your marks are improving, it should be you against yourself and shouldn't be you against other people. I just feel like it's too much of a competition and it's too much of pressure for no reason."

Learner, School A

Similarly, some learners found it repetitive and pointless and appeared to have a disengagement with the rewards system.

So at this point I don't think it's motivating at all because some of us just sit in assembly to clap hands…I'm sorry to say that; I know they work very hard, I'm not saying it's a bad thing, but awards in general… I'm saying at this point it's very tiring to just sit down and not get awarded for anything."

Learner, School A

Whilst acknowledging that her peers worked hard and that awards in itself is not a negative concept, the learner above appeared fed up with the visible rewards system. She mentioned being there simply to applaud award winners, and that she found it tiresome. Clearly, the awards had no relevance to herself.

Most learners were extrinsically motivated to achieve at school, and the visible rewards system served the purpose of providing the incentive that they desperately sought in order to get recognition for their achievements. This could also be due to their understanding of what merit is, and of value inherent in the rewards system, and a recognition of their own privilege as being award-winners. Beyond the symbolic reward, awards were a currency likely to open up further opportunities for them.

"*But I want to just say like, ok, I've achieved. Like, can someone also just recognise that I have achieved it?"*

Learner, School B

The findings indicated that learners who won visible rewards were granted more opportunities than those who did not. The visible and tangible evidence of being an award-winner was immediately recognisable to prospective university scouts for instance, simply by looking at the scrolls on their school uniforms, or by their use of different coloured clothing. The rewards were visible and symbolised a high achieving learner, there was no need for the outsider to even ask the learner a question, as they wore evidence of their achievements on a daily basis.

"Award-winners get that on their uniform, so a different colour blazer or scrolls or badges and that then presents them to outsiders as this person who can do these things and for a prospective university applicant that's very good because someone who is from that university sees you they can scout you and the same for jobs and that kind of thing so it's brilliant for those who achieve, they get all these opportunities in the world but for those who don't they kinda left behind by quite a bit."

Learner, School A

Acknowledgement by teachers was however given to the majority of learners who appeared unmotivated by visible rewards and for whom awards had no meaning. Some teachers spoke about learners who appeared bored and disengaged at award ceremonies, and who believed that visible rewards were simply unattainable and not meant for them.

"I think academic rewards motivate the academic kids, but it might have the opposite effect in all the other kids."

Teacher, School A

And

"At the Top 20 assemblies those that are getting the awards are always, you know, obviously very happy, but for the rest of the school they're moaning; this is taking too long; they're not really interested. I do get the feeling that they feel it's unattainable."

Teacher, School A

Learners felt that many awards were repetitive with the same learners being rewarded year after year. This left them demotivated to try working towards awards. One learner said he felt visible rewards was not worth working towards because he knew he had no chance of winning. This finding is echoed in the motivation literature as well. Deci and Ryan's (1985) study on causality orientations also showed that the impersonal orientation was associated with an external locus of control (i.e., the belief that one cannot control outcomes) and with self-derogation and depression, implying a negative relation to general well-being. The learner's excerpt appears below:

"I feel like since we are in our adolescent years, teenagers it creates...I don't know if it's jealousy or hatred which I feel like it doesn't allow you to focus on your studies because you're just like I'm not gonna bother to study because I know the same constant people are getting the awards so then why must I try."

Learner, School B

Another learner also questioned the repetitiveness of the award-winners. He had this to say, using a pseudonym “Mr Chair” for a learner that he says always wins awards and he found this demotivating, and that he knew he would be on the same level as “Mr Chair”. This appears to impact on the social cohesion experienced by learners, and within Social Interdependence Theory, is indicative of negative interdependence, which is harmful for the learning of all. Given that learning is a social process, the interconnectedness between learners, educators and communities of learning, which provide a positive environment which in turn positively affects self-worth, self-belief and achievement (Volmink, 2018).

> *“Mr Chair is my friend… I’m working but yet I’m in his shadow. I’ll work but I’ll always be lower than Mr Chair. Within the hierarchy, within everything…”*
>
> Learner, School A

Learners also felt that the prize-givings tended to be pointless by this stage of their schooling careers. One learner commented that she had seen the repetition from grade 8 to her current grade 11 year. She appeared resigned as she mentioned the post-school scholarships available to award-winners in addition to their visible rewards. This indicates how being visibly rewarded at school is an example of the hidden curriculum, as learners are able to correctly predict other benefits that are afforded to visibly rewarded learners. The hidden expectations, skill sets, knowledge, and social processes can help or hinder student achievement and belief systems (Alsubaie, 2015). This learner’s extract appears below:

> *“In grade eight, we saw who got into top twenty, grade nine it was the same, grade ten there was no change, grade eleven, now we know. We know who’s going to get scholarships in varsity, we know who is gonna get everything, we know who is in prize giving, we just know.*
>
> Learner, School A

Previous award-winners reported feelings of disappointment and disengagement from the rewards system when they no longer won awards. One learner felt that rewards did not motivate him, due to his negative experiences with rewards in the past. His extract appears below:

> *“I know it is cliché to believe how good rewards and awards are, but I have had a bad experience with it and I don’t like it at all.*
>
> Learner, School B

Apart from demotivation, the findings indicated that there was evidence of rebelliousness towards the visible rewards system. As noted by an HOD at School A, who pointed out that depending on the group of friends a learner had, there was a sub-culture of rebelliousness or non-acceptance of awards – that some learners did not want their friends to start winning awards, since it did not fit in with the image of their peer group. The following is an extract:

> *"There are certain social groups that would tease a friend if they got an academic award because it's seen as uncool and it's probably just a little bit of mob mentality because none of the group is that way inclined. But that would cause the one child that is inclined to really do well academically, choose not to do so because they would be ridiculed by the peer group."* HOD, School A

This finding can be likened to group cohesion arising from Social Interdependence Theory. Social-psychological theories of social interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 2005) offer an account of positive peer relationships and achievement. Thus, the more positive the relationships among group members, the more members will strive to conform to group norms. If a group is achievement oriented, then the more members of a cohesive group will tend to achieve academically. If a group is *not* achievement oriented, then members of a cohesive group will tend not to achieve academically. The kind of negativity within the peer group mentioned in School A above is indicative of negative peer relationships.

Rewards were not just used for academic achievement, however. The findings indicated that visible rewards were used as part of a behaviour management strategy. At School B, the deputy head referred to learners receiving merit points for their top achievers' certificates. These merit points could then be used to offset demerit points received for minor misdemeanours at school. She explained it as follows:

> *"So there's two things they can do with their academic merit points. One is they can use their merit points to offset their demerit points. But not all demerits. Some demerits are what we call misdemeanours. So it's things like you might have been late for class once or you didn't do your homework or you'd left your book at home. So you can work that off, and use your academic merit points for those…"*
>
> Deputy Head, School B

Similarly, at School A, teachers believed in the power of extrinsic rewards on behaviour and said she used it often. In contrast, learners had mentioned that rewards for group work in class were not common, indicating that good behaviour was worthy of rewards but little value was attached to group work by teachers. This teacher spoke about using smaller rewards to encourage good behaviour in the classroom. Her excerpt appears below:

> *"From my experience, it really has adjusted many of my classes to behaving more than what they would have because of the incentive, the promise of something they could get if they behaved well…"*
>
> Teacher, School A

The following learner appeared resentful as she spoke about the rewards system. Later on, she had mentioned learners experiencing mental breakdowns, but made no specific reference to herself. The data indicated that working towards visible rewards was immensely stressful for learners. This is echoed by Hamilton and Brown (2005) in their study of Scottish high school learners and exams: learners endured the pressure, which meant having to deal with stress, but there was a reluctance on the part of young people to own this. The excerpt below illustrates the learner's stressful condition:

> *S: Also now, I feel like everyone that had been getting straight A's and now suddenly get a 70 in grade 11 term 2, and people are like breaking down just because they got a 70.*
> ***Shakira: When you say breaking down, you mean crying?***
> *S: Ja! Mental breakdowns. That's the standard that people set for themselves, and I feel like it shouldn't be like this.*
>
> Learner, School A

The occurrence of learners' experiencing mental breakdowns can further be attributed to the age of the learners. As adolescents, the development of learners' identities are closely related to their achievements (Reay, 2017). As a result, learners perceived the lack of recognition by the school as a negative message to themselves. Such a message was never intended to be sent to them by the school, however, Messiou's (2012) caution that marginalisation often results in exclusion should be noted. Disappointments can easily result in demotivation, lack of engagement and participation, or more harmful and deviant behaviour (Hamilton & Brown, 2005). As adolescents, the mental health of learners is crucial, and learners had earlier mentioned the pressure and anxiety upon them to perform well academically by their parents and teachers. A similar finding was noted by Geduld (2017) in her study of township schools in South Africa, where parents were noted to pressurise their children to work hard to break the poverty cycle. The next theme to be discussed is competitiveness.

7.5. Theme 4: Competitiveness

Competitiveness as a theme encompassed the award-winning culture prevalent in both the schools, the rivalry, jealousy, arrogance and negative behaviour that learners experienced amongst each other, the desperation felt by learners as they re-visited their exam marks and requested either re-marking, or moderation by an HOD, the anxiety and stress felt by the learners when expectations were not met, and the pressure placed on them by their families' and the school to achieve well. The findings indicated that both schools had a competitive environment. School A had a policy of rounding up percentages to next level, E.g. A 69% would be rounded off to a 70%, and a 79% would be rounded off to an 80%. It would appear then that the school made some attempt at offering encouragement of awards, and greater participation in the rewards system via the rounding of the nines policy. However, not all teachers agreed with their school's policy, indicating the prevalent attitudes and beliefs towards inclusivity:

> *"but personally I don't agree with it. In terms of like academic awards, we would need maybe an 80, but if we've been rounding, rounding, rounding…does that child really deserve the award? Deserve to have the 80? No. That's how I feel…"*
>
> Teacher, School A

Efforts to make awards more inclusive at School B included allowing learners to peruse through their exam papers. Learners may request to have them moderated with the possibility of increasing their percentages, which in turn could mean meeting the criteria to be visibly rewarded. The Deputy Head at School B indicated that the HOD's were responsible for moderating scripts. However, not all teachers agreed with the practice of allowing learners to request a remark or a re-moderation of scripts. One teacher had this to say:

> *"I don't think it's fair that learners get to choose to go looking for marks. They should accept that they've either done well or not."*
>
> Teacher, School B

Learners felt that award-winners tend to be highly competitive, and as a result, were arrogant and condescending towards non-award winners, believing they were superior to the rest. Learners appeared begrudging of the privilege and preferential treatment that award-winners were recipients of.

> *"And people that get the awards are very arrogant. They think they are better than everyone else. It's also because the teachers treat them differently."*
>
> Learner, School A

The findings indicated numerous references by learners of teachers treating visibly rewarded learners differently. These are the learners that Slee (2011) refers to as being "smiled upon". Learners felt that award-winners were treated differently to non-award winners in that they were respected more, and appeared to be treated as the elite. This preferential treatment was not limited to teachers and school management, but even by other learners in the school. The learners thus viewed each other either as winners or losers, and treated them accordingly. Thus there was a clear hierarchy between those that were visibly rewarded and those that were not. The following extract illustrated this:

> *"If you always go up on stage, now you're automatically higher on the hierarchy. The teachers see you a bit more different and it's very clear, it's very visible, the treatment between us and the teachers very different, as soon as you are the one who is called up a lot on stage, we normally see, from principal to teacher to other learners themselves…you kinda get that, a little bit more respect type of thing."*
>
> Learner, School A

The competitive culture at school created discomfort in some learners' minds. They felt it was unethical and boastful to show off prized learners' achievements to others who may not come from similar backgrounds as themselves. The reference to "opportunities" alluded to learners' awareness of the link between socio-economic status and resources required to achievement and thus rewards. The following extract indicates this:

> *"Showing off your prize pupils in front of other pupils who do not achieve to that level is incredibly disheartening to the people who work really, really hard but just cannot reach that because of other factors maybe they just*

aren't as motivated, or that they don't have the opportunities to do so…"

Learner, School A

Some learners displayed a sense of fairness and maturity amongst themselves believing that it was insensitive to show off their achievements, and that it was in poor taste to have learners who were not winning awards attending ceremonies just to celebrate those that were visibly rewarded and of no relevance to themselves or their own achievements.

"Yeah, it is nice to get recognition for something you've worked for, but with all the people sitting and watching…isn't that good, yeah. It should be done in front of your parents, we shouldn't be showing off to everyone basically. Like people shouldn't be there just to clap for you."

Learner, School A

Learners reported losing friends when they no longer featured amongst the award-winners, and mentioned that awards could create divisions amongst friends, as winners thought themselves superior to the rest of the learners. They also reported disdain from award-winners on what they considered to be less-important awards, such as awards for behaviour as opposed to awards for academic excellence. The following extract illustrate this:

"I want to add our school has a diligence award and many people mock it thinking oh you get an award for working hard and that's one of the best awards that we get because people get awards for doing the best of their ability."

Learner, School B

The findings indicated that learners felt highly pressurized by their parents to achieve. One girl spoke of her family situation being stressful when she did not meet the high expectations her mother had set out for her. This indicates that the culture of competitiveness went beyond the school borders, and is reflected in the home too, as indicated by the disappointment and negativity she experienced when she fell short of her mother's expectations. Her extract appears below:

"Like my mum puts a lot of pressure on me to do well. And then when I don't like make her expectations, home life is a bit…. you know… awkward…because my report wasn't as good as she expected so she was a bit disappointed and that made me feel bad about myself."

Learner, School A

The findings also indicated that parental pressure and competitiveness amongst parents caused them to become pushy with regards to the achievement of their own children. Some parents demanded higher marks from the teachers. One teacher said the following:

> *"We've had a couple of parents who've tried to push us, they're on 79, let them get an 80, and you can't, you know, if you've got 79, you've got 79. You haven't got 80."*
>
> Teacher, School B

Although parental pressure was noted by the staff as well as the learners, the parents themselves showed an overall negative view to awards and rewards, which was gleaned from the quantitative data. The following extract further illustrates that parental pressure is especially prevalent at School B:

> "*Because they also, a lot of parents, you know, a lot of parents push their children beyond where it's actually fair to push them."*
>
> Deputy Head, School B

The use of visible rewards that validated neoliberal notions of success were hinted upon by members of the SMT at both schools. The following are two extracts:

> "*It's really not a marketing thing, it's more to reinforce the value of the brand that I think it's important to the parents. I think for them it's also very nice to see that their child is happy, accepted and succeeding on a path, because all of these parents, rightly so, they want to know"*
>
> Deputy Head, School B

Visible rewards are clearly an indication of a "good" school, which ties in with neoliberal notions of success. School pride in academic achievement was apparent from the SMT members' interviews. Some of the excerpts appear below:

> *"I mean, isn't that why they've chosen a good school, and isn't that why they [the parents] want give their children a head start in life…"*
>
> Deputy Head, School B

"I think it's easier for them when they have to pay the fees, to come up with the money because they know they're getting something valuable. And that is a marketing, or a market-related principle, but it will hold true with any product that you're offering."

Principal, School B

Learners felt that they were constantly comparing themselves to others and that this resulted in feelings of inferiority and disappointment in themselves. Teachers were also aware of the competitiveness within the schooling environment, and spoke about how award-winning learners tried to outdo the performance of their peers. This indicated that learners see each other as rival competitors, and the practice of visible rewards appeared to promote individualistic performance rather than group efforts. Learners' capacity to direct their own learning, and to support each others' learning, may be particularly under-utilized as may be the potential for the teaching staff to support each others' development (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Framing knowledge as a resource from which inclusion can be realized, Booth and Ainscow (2011) argue that there is a wealth of knowledge available within a school about what impedes the learning and participation of learners, which is not being used optimally. Thus a collaborative learning environment is essential to allow learners to support each others' learning and look to each other as resources for learning.

The above finding indicated that visible rewards are not positive for all learners. In light of Johnson and Johnson's (1989) Social Interdependence Theory, where the learners' outcomes on learning (their participation and achievement) are correlated to the ways in which learners associate with each other in class: positively, negatively or an absence of interdependence. Positive interdependence is associated with cooperative ways of working towards goal achievement, negative interdependence is associated with competitive goal achievement and an absence of interdependence is associated with individualistic efforts at goal achievement. Of the three classroom situations that could possibly occur, the one that is correlated to inclusive pedagogy is the cooperative or positive interdependence. Learners are able to reach their goals with other learners with whom they are cooperatively linked in goal attainment. However, the testimonies provided by the learners indicate that there is a clear hierarchical structure at school, that privileges some over others, and provides opportunities for some learners but not for all learners and that does not promote group learning nor reward group efforts. These findings show that schools not only promote a competitive environment via visible rewards, but that most of the teachers and SMT members think that the practice of visible rewards is a fair representation of real life. Competitiveness inherently

teaches the values of getting more than others, beating and defeating others, seeing winning as important and believing that opposing and obstructing the success of others is a natural way of life. Individualistic experiences inherently teach the values of a commitment to one's own self-interest and the view that others' well-being is irrelevant. Using a values-based understanding of inclusive education, the competitiveness at schools can be aligned with competitive efforts and individualistic efforts of Social Interdependence Theory. As a result, schools are inadvertently promoting an exclusionary environment that is designed to benefit some learners but not all learners.

Social interdependence theory predicts that cooperative goal structures will result in higher achievement than will competitive or individualistic goal structures. Because cooperative goal structures tend to result in promotive interaction for learners (thus providing the assistance, information, and resources needed to achieve their mutual goals), whereas competitive and individualistic goal structures result in oppositional or no interaction, respectively, it may be expected that cooperative goal structures will result in higher achievement than will competitive or individualistic. This is aligned with the values associated with inclusive education as adapted from the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) and The Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017).

Values such as collaboration, cooperation, information-sharing, fostering mutually sustaining relationships, viewing learner differences as resources to support learning, overcoming barriers to participation for particular learners, and assisting one another are synchronised with inclusive values. Schools that promote competitiveness, hierarchies, and treat learners differently based on their award status are inadvertently perpetuating a hidden curriculum. According to Meier and Hartell (2009), a hidden curriculum could result in the exclusion and marginalisation of learners. The way in which the rewards and awards culture has infiltrated our schools point to an overzealous preoccupation with winning, and appears to have eroded our sense of fairness and justice to the learning of all learners in our schools. The perspective of the learners in this study resonates with Walton (2013, p.1182): "The attitudes and opinions of a group of high school learners suggests that much still needs to be done to ensure that the experience of school is affirming and supportive for all."

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings and discussion of the qualitative data arising from learner focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews with teachers and SMT members, in relation to the inclusive education literature and to Social Interdependence Theory. The next chapter integrates the quantitative and qualitative

findings using critical realism, and ends with a joint display of the data.

Chapter 8: Discussion of integrated data strands

"When we acknowledge that reality is layered, we can see something can exist at one level and manifest at another level in unique and unpredictable ways."

Roy Bhaskar (1978, p.7)

8.1. Introduction

Bhaskar's quote above reflects the essence of layered realities. The probing of the practice of visible rewards has thus far demonstrated how schools reward learners for academic achievement with good intentions, but there are layers of lived experiences that indicate otherwise. The perspectives of learners, of parents, of teachers and school management have been explored quantitatively and qualitatively. Now the data will be integrated. In this sequential mixed methods study, the data was first integrated at the design stage, as the first quantitative phase informed the qualitative phase. Then the data strands are integrated again at the interpretation stage, which is reported on in this chapter. Creswell (2011) refers to the point of interface of the data, which is where the actual mixing of the data strands occurs. Integrating the findings allowed a more complete understanding and explanation of the social settings within which visible rewards are found. Despite the complexity of the findings and the large amount of data generated from this study, there was clear indication that rewarding learners for academic achievement in the manner in which it is done at the two schools is challenging at various levels.

8.2. Using a Critical Realist Framework

Before presenting the joint display of the data, however, I present the analytical tools used. The first tool is the analytical framework derived from Archer's Social Theory, and the second represents the aims and ideals of inclusive education.

Table 1: Analytical framework derived from Archer's Social Theory (from Chapter 3)

School-wide Practice of Visible Rewards	
Empirical	Visible and tangible ways in which learners are rewarded for academic achievement
Actual	Events taking place at the school that would result in rewards (empirical layer) above, regardless if learners experience these events or not.

Real	**Cultural mechanisms**	**Structural mechanisms**	**Agential mechanisms**
	Exploring the attitudes and beliefs surrounding visible rewards by the SMT, by the teachers, by the learners and by the parents and an embodiment of inclusive values using Social Interdependence Theory	Exploring the school's criteria, processes and procedures that result in the awarding of visible rewards to learners and an embodiment of inclusive values using Social Interdependence Theory	Exploring the way teachers and learners in the study responded to structural and cultural constraints and how their responses are an embodiment of inclusive values using Social Interdependence Theory

The following table forms part of the analytical tool that contains the embodiment of inclusive values as derived from the literature on the aims and ideals of inclusive education and the use of Social Interdependence Theory, presented from a Critical Realist perspective. This table helped me to identify the codes that were related to cultural elements, structural elements and agential elements. Archer (2002) refers to this as separating the "parts from the people". The cultural elements related to those statements dealing with broader societal expectations and relations at a group level, the structural elements related to those statements relating to the institutional setup or the policies of the school whilst the agential statements refer to those statements that related to the way individuals related to each other at an individual level. In addition, I used the following table as a comparison or benchmark of what inclusion, participation and achievement for all ideally should look like. I was thus able to identify themes that were relevant and discard those that did not relate to inclusivity. As a result, the research focused on inclusion, and related concepts of participation, achievement, values, attitudes, beliefs and practices.

Table 2: Aims and ideals of Inclusive education (from Chapter 3)

AIMS AND IDEALS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REALIST PERSPECTIVE		
Cultural Statements	**Structural Statements**	**Agential Statements**
Everyone is made to feel welcome	Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school	Students help each other
There are high expectations of all students	The school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination	Staff collaborate with each other
Staff, governers (school managers), students and parents share a philosophy of inclusion	Rewarding a range of achievements	Lessons encourage the participation of all students

Maintaining the dignity and respect of all learners	Policies and practices encouraging students to use each other as a resource for learning	Students learn collaboratively
Certain forms of achievement that are more highly valued than others	Policies, practices and interactions that reinforce barriers to achievement of some individuals	Students are equally valued

8.2.1. Data from Quantitative analysis

The aim of the first phase of quantitative surveying via questionnaire was to assess and obtain original data from learners and parents of the little-known phenomenon of visible rewards. In addition, the purpose of the learner survey was to possibly find information-rich participants for the next qualitative phase. The learner and parent surveys provided rich information on their own, and confirmed that there were indeed exclusionary aspects to the practice of visible rewards. This confirmation was required in order to probe the practice of visible rewards further. The quantitative data had been through an initial stage of data analysis before the qualitative data collection began, and then a second stage of analysis after the qualitative analysis, when the data was integrated, or mixed.

Two thirds of the learners identified themselves as award-winners, and this was taken into consideration when understanding and making sense of the data. From the learner and parent surveys, the data provided evidence of visible rewards taking place, learners' attitudes and beliefs towards awards, and an indication of group classroom participation and teacher encouragement towards learners. Out of the open-ended question from learners and parents, I had received 39 responses in total (32 from learners, and 7 from the parents). From all the quantitative data, I had gleaned the following inferences:

1. More girls win awards than boys
2. Rewards provide motivation to achieve
3. Negative effects on learner identity
4. **Learners do not feel excluded by rewards**
5. Group work not encouraged, nor rewarded
6. **Teachers focus on high achievers and low achievers, middle band is ignored**
7. **Teachers allow mistakes and encourage understanding**
8. Bitterness in learners who no longer win awards

9. Learners experience lack of dignity/privacy
10. **Parents do not believe in worthiness of visible rewards**
11. Parents feel excluded from reward ceremonies

These inferences were largely corroborated and understandings were deepened and with a few exceptions, were triangulated by the qualitative interviews. On the other hand, the **four** statements that appear in **bold** above were the exceptions. The first statement, **Learners do not feel excluded by visible rewards**, was what I had gleaned from the questionnaire data. However, the focus group interview data did not match the questionnaire data. When learners were asked to talk about their experiences of winning awards in the focus group interviews, many of them described how they felt excluded from the visible rewards programme, and that the criteria were too narrow, and did not take into account their creativity and other talents. Not a single learner appeared wholly positive about awards. There could be two explanations for this. Firstly, the learners were part of a focus group and more likely to echo their peers' statements, or provide information that was consistent with the rest of the group. Then, it is possible that learners in the initial survey were responding to any time that they had won awards, which means they could have been award-winners in the past, but not current award-winners. Thus there was no corroboration of that inference.

The next two statements, **Teachers allow mistakes and encourage understanding** and **Teachers focus on high achievers and low achievers, middle band is ignored** were difficult to make sense of, because they appear to be contradictory. This was corroborated by the qualitative data. In the qualitative findings, judging from the learners' accounts as well as the teachers' statements, there was a significant amount of evidence in the data of exclusionary attitudes such as beliefs towards learners who did not win awards and learners who deserved to win awards. It is also highly probable that learners who answered the questionnaire referred to different teachers, and not the same teacher when answering. As such, the data appeared conflicting, but could simply have been measuring different things for different teachers.

The last statement, **Parents do not believe in worthiness of visible rewards**, did not corroborate with any of the other given accounts by learners, teachers and SMT staff. Whilst the questionnaire data indicated that parents believed that visible rewards were not a true reflection of their children's' abilities, and that visible rewards were not important to them, the qualitative data showed otherwise. Learners reported feeling stressed due to parental pressure to win awards. Teachers and SMT members accounts also mentioned parents who pushed their children to win awards, and who

were difficult when their children did not win awards. However, the parent sample was very small (17 parents) and therefore not enough to be generalizable to all the grade 11 parents. After I had completed the qualitative analysis, I subjected the quantitative data to another round of analysis, this time with the 4 themes derived from the qualitative analysis. I took these 12 different statements and categorised them using the four themes: a) Criteria and Processes, b) Ability and Talent, c) Motivation and d) Competitiveness.

8.2.2. Data from Qualitative analysis

Using Table 2 that appear in sub-section 8.2. above, I classified and separated the learners' statements from the focus group interviews and open-ended responses from the quantitative, into the categories in Table 2. Using these categories of the cultural, the structural and the agential, I explored patterns of meaning that I had initially identified as being important and relevant to the research question, from the Participation Framework and the Index for Inclusion. Then I had collapsed the categories, and identified four broad themes. Although I had separated the themes, they are inter-related and might overlap or intersect at times, and are linked to the practice of visible rewards. The themes are:

1. Criteria and Processes
2. Ability and Talent
3. Motivation
4. Competitiveness

Criteria and processes are listed alongside each other, for one cannot exist without the other and both refer to the structural setup of visible rewards. This theme consists of all the details involving learner participation in the rewards programmes: what they needed to do in order to win awards, what the categories for rewards were, their feelings regarding the categories and the beliefs and attitudes perpetuated by visible rewards with regards to learner abilities, labelling and bell-curve thinking.

Ability and talent refers to the ways in which learners felt they were recognised or not, and was deeply connected to the learners' need for positive feedback on their efforts and achievements. Recognising and rewarding ability and talent appeared problematic. At first glance, recognition and rewarding are seen as the same concept; they are two different but related concepts. The notion of recognition refers to being given acknowledgement for one's efforts, whilst rewarding provided recognition to the

"best" achievements according to specific criteria. For award-winning learners, mostly they believed they got the recognition they deserved. However, those learners that did not win awards, or had won awards in the past but no longer won awards, felt disappointed and rejected from reward ceremonies. In addition, they felt that they are unrecognised for the talents they possess, which are hidden from others because they are not recognised for them. Teachers' and learners' beliefs about ability and talent recognition and how they felt they should be recognised are discussed in this theme.

Motivation refers to the learners' reasons for working towards visible rewards as well as the school's incentive programme that aimed at motivating academic achievement. Whilst some learners felt motivated by visible rewards, a significant number of learners were indifferent, rebellious and even demotivated towards visible rewards. This theme provides a discussion of the ways in which teachers felt visible rewards motivated learners to achieve, and learners' beliefs regarding the public nature of visible rewards.

The last theme was competitiveness. It was derived from the learners discussing their comparisons to each other as well as the pressure that their families placed on them to outperform others and win awards. Competitiveness as a theme in the study also encompasses the hierarchies and stratifications that arose from the competitive environment within which visible rewards were found. These four themes appear in the table below, together with a total of 23 categories that appear underneath it.

Table 31: The four main themes identified from the qualitative analysis with the 23 categories elaborated under each theme.

Four themes with related categories from Qualitative analysis			
Criteria/Processes	**Ability and Talent**	**Motivation**	**Competitiveness**
• Hierarchies (of learners, of visible rewards) • Fair/objective process • Narrow categories determined by SMT • Hidden Curriculum • Hegemonic Ways of Being	• Fixed ability of learners • Bell-curve thinking • Award-winners deserving of privilege • Unrecognised hard work and talents • Laziness as seen in non-award winning learners • Labelling learners • Effects on learner identity	• Motivation to achieve • Learner disengagement in rewards • Sub-culture of rebellion towards award-winners • Behaviour management • Learner demotivation • Living up to parents' expectations	• Competitive school culture • Parental pressure to perform • Natural order of society • Socio-economic status and access to resources • Focus on advantages for some over well-being of all

8.3. Joint Display of the Data

In chapters 6 and 7, the qualitative and quantitative findings have been explicated and linked back to the data sources. Here, the quantitative results are discussed with the qualitative findings and are integrated to create a joint display of the data. With regards to displaying the findings together, Guetterman, Fetters and Creswell (2015) state that a joint display is necessary in a mixed methods study to enhance interpretation of the integrated quantitative and qualitative data. I used a critical realist framework to present the integrated data in a joint display of both quantitative and qualitative data strands. The following table is filled out with the findings and they appear together in the table below. Here all three levels appear as a joint display of the findings derived from both the quantitative and the qualitative: questionnaire data and interview data. There are now five findings listed on the joint display document.

Given that this study is underpinned by critical realism, reality is viewed as stratified and differentiated. Critical realism allowed for the investigation's focus (the inclusivity of visible rewards) to be reconciled at the intersection between the various levels or layers of social reality (award-winners, non-award winners, teachers, parents, SMT). In order to understand the layers of reality manifested by visible rewards, I used an analytical tool (see table below) derived from Archer's Social Theory. In the left hand column, this tool encapsulated the three levels of reality, which are the **empirical**, the **actual**, and the **real,** with each layer emergent from the one preceding it. Then, the columns under the **Real** are further divided into the mechanisms that are related to structure, culture and agency. Thus the framework below is separated into those occurring at the **cultural mechanisms** (attitudes and beliefs of society), the **structural mechanisms** (the actual reward systems as enacted by the school) and the **agential mechanisms** (the effects on the learner/teacher/parent). The framework appears below, using the separation of culture, structure and agency.

Table 32: Joint display of Findings

Joint Display of the findings: School-wide Practice of Visible Rewards	
Empirical	Visible and tangible ways in which learners are rewarded for academic achievement
	Rewarding learners for academic achievement at public award ceremonies for the presentation of tangible awards such as badges, scrolls, honour board listings, items of clothing and certificates. Promoting excellence in academic achievement, recognising hard work and talent, motivating learners to achieve. Publicising award-winners via school website and other print media.
Actual	Events taking place at the school that would result in rewards (empirical layer) above, regardless if learners experience these events or not.

	Committees responsible for setting awards criteria, decision-making for the practice of visible rewards, their aims and responsibilities, number of times the committee meets, and who may be elected on the committee. Non-negotiable framework with pre-determined criteria. Tests and exam marks submitted for rewards consideration. Meritocratic system of rewards/awards. Award pathways for learners that achieve the minimum requirements over the number of stipulated years.		
Real	**Cultural mechanisms**	**Structural mechanisms**	**Agential mechanisms**
	Finding 1: Reward criteria and processes are problematic for learners		
	• Narrow criteria • Hidden curriculum • Dominant culture • loopholes in the Visible Rewards	• Not everyone deserves recognition • Limited participation in class • Inconsistent application of criteria	• Predictable winners, therefore repetitive • Unclear distinction: hard work and academically gifted • Individualistic competition • Public rewards embarrassing • Creativity overlooked
	Finding 2: Visible rewards are not meaningful to all learners		
	• School pride • Hierarchy of subject awards • value-for-money for parents • Negative effects on learner identity • Culture of competitiveness • Parental Pressure • Disappointment: high expectations not met.	• Greater opportunities for award-winners • Prestige • Symbolises excellence • Neoliberal notions of success • Long-term implications: future post-school avenues of learning; world of work.	• Award-winners are treated differently • Ceremonies important for winners, but are otherwise worthless to rest • More girls win awards than boys • Award-winners give up social life • Struggle with anxiety to perform well • Visible reward system too competitive
	Finding 3: Visible rewards promote discriminatory behaviour and attitudes		
	• Belief in fixed ability of learners • Labelling learners • Bell-curve thinking • Award-winners are smarter and work hard • Award-winners deserve more opportunities • Fair, objective and equitable system	• Hierarchy maintained by stratifying learners (ability groups, access to privileges, epistemological access, lack of fair opportunity) • Streaming takes place from grade 8. • Group work not encouraged • Teacher focuses on high achievers and low	• Rewards not indication of work ethic. • Not all learners felt it was fair/equitable. • Exclusions based on decimal points • Broken friendships from winning awards • Arrogance of award-winners. • Learners dignity not maintained

		achievers, the middle band is ignored	
	Finding 4: Visible rewards can result in motivation or indifference		
	• Incentive encourages hard work • Promotes good behaviour • Natural order of society • Learners are externally motivated • Some knowledge more valuable than other.	• Simple beneficial system for all. • Learners know that their hard work is recognised visibly, publicly and tangibly. • School provides extra support for learners to improve • Pre-determined categories and awards pathways determined by the SMT	• Learner Disengagement • Learners become demotivated • Creates discontent withmarks • Bitterness in learners • Reductionist: does not take into account the journey

8.4. Discussion of Finding 1: Reward criteria and processes are problematic for learners

The first finding is that reward criteria and processes are problematic. Within the cultural mechanisms, learners overwhelmingly felt that one's award-winning status had an effect on their identity, and who they were and how they were treated by teachers in the school depended on the awards they won. Many learners' felt that their hard work and talents go unrecognised as the criteria for being visibly rewarded was narrow, and did not take into account a broad range of talents. Learners felt that creativity was always overlooked in awards, as all awards are based on results from tests and exams. There was reference made by the teachers that awards can only be prestigious if they are limited numbers handed out; thus alluding to the existence of the hidden curriculum (Vayrynen, 2003; Meier & Hartell, 2009; Alsubaie, 2015).

Most awards criteria and processes are determined by tradition at school, and this was suggestive of the hegemony prevalent in the school. Some teachers reported their frustration as learners found loopholes in the Visible Rewards system; it was possible to be rewarded for doing "easier" subjects, for instance choosing Maths Literacy instead of Mathematics, thereby qualifying for an award for a less-demanding subject. The indication in the data regarding poor mathematical choice is highlighted in the 2012 HSRC report: students do not seem to be using information about their prowess in mathematics to make appropriate subject choices, perhaps because they do not receive enough accurate feedback at school about their mathematics performance (Reddy, Van der Berg, Van Rensburg & Taylor, 2012).

Most teachers (but not all teachers) felt that only learners who have met the criteria for awards in their respective subjects deserve recognition, not those who have worked hard but failed to meet the criteria. Participation was limited to those who can and do make the awards criteria, especially for long-term award programmes (such as Academic Colours/Coloured Blazer pathway). Some learners felt that there was an inconsistent application of criteria for learners transferred into the school: previous awards were not always recognised. Learners felt that the processes of selecting award criteria was an undemocratic process: there was no room for learner input in terms of award categories, nor was there a choice to have ipsative assessment (working against bettering one's own personal best). The idea of ipsative assessment has been suggested in recent research as a possible intervention for bettering assessments and grading (Jacobs & Greliche, 2017). Learners felt that rewards were predictable and repetitive as the same learners win awards repeatedly. Learners also felt that there was an unclear distinction between hard work and being academically gifted. Learners were vocal about their beliefs that visible rewards were not an indication of work ethic.

Learners also pointed out that there was no recognition for group efforts, and that awards were based on individualistic competition. The feelings of mistrust and negativity towards fellow learners was an indication of the negative interdependence, or a negative correlation among learners and their goal achievements. This is because learners looked at each other as competitors, and thus knew that in order to win certain awards, they would have to outdo their peers. The data indicated that learners believed other learners stood in their way, and they could not win awards because someone else is better than them, and this situation has been repeated such that learners have become disillusioned about winning awards. Finally, not all learners wanted to be rewarded publicly, as they felt it is embarrassing to go up on stage. It is unclear whether the school or teachers considered the possibility of going up to collect an award embarrassing for a learner, as it was only mentioned by learners, whilst teachers considered visible rewards to be a matter of school pride.

8.5. Discussion of Finding 2: Visible rewards are not meaningful to all learners

The second finding is that visible rewards are not meaningful to all learners. Teachers mentioned that in visibly rewarding learners, they were developing school pride. Visibly rewarded learners represent the excellence in educational provision by the school, and thus maintain the school's distinctive reputation. In addition, visible rewards manifests as value-for-money for parents that chose their respective school, and the meaningfulness of the awards were related to neoliberal concepts of deserved merit and

success. Learners felt that there was a clear hierarchy of subject awards, some awards are more “valuable” than others. For instance, the Mathematics award was considered valuable versus the diligence award, which was always mocked by other learners. Therefore, the prestige is given to the award itself rather than the award-winners. It symbolises excellence in academic provision of the school. Learners felt that award-winners were higher on the hierarchy: they were automatically treated differently to non-award winners. Learners reported that the opportunities for learners who are award-winners are greater: inter-school participation, olympiads, learners selected to represent the school on special days.

With respect to the award ceremonies, they were seen as important for winners, but are otherwise worthless to the rest of the learner population. Learners who did not win awards felt they are only there to applaud award-winners; it lacked any meaning for themselves. Other learners admitted feelings of jealousy and envy towards award-winners. These negative feelings are also a manifestation of negative interdependence as outlined by Social Interdependence Theory when learners are placed in a situation of negative interdependence, they display oppositional interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). This finding clearly indicated that there is a lack of cooperation and collaboration between learners, and that destructive negative feelings might be brewing beneath the surface. Furthermore, the data indicated that even if learners are unwilling to be a part of the rewards programme or find it irrelevant to themselves, they have no choice but to attend ceremonious assemblies that took place during school hours as compulsory attendance was part of school policy. These ceremonies differed from other awards evenings with special invites for winners only.

In addition, working towards visible rewards is stressful for learners. All the participants interviewed alluded to a culture of competitiveness prevalent in the school. Award-winning learners are desperate to win awards and engage in behaviours such as reviewing exam marks, or asking HOD to moderate an exam paper. In addition, teachers and learners noted the pressure on learners by parents and the school to achieve. Award-winners mentioned the stress of facing disappointment (parents, themselves and teachers) when high expectations were not met. Award-winners appeared to believe in neoliberal notions of success: Visible rewards are pathways to attainment of numerous benefits, (university entrance, out-of-school opportunities, better job/life post-school). As such, rewards appear to have long-term implications, of sorting learners into future post-school avenues of learning and the world of work. Learners revealed that as award-winners, they must give up their social life, and they were unable to strike a balance between studying and socialising. Learners also

mentioned their own struggles with anxiety to perform well given that stakes are high and they face stiff competition. Many learners described the visible reward system as unhealthy competition. Overall, the findings indicated that visible rewards at school did not result in positive effects for all learners, and is negatively related to the aims and ideals of inclusive education. The findings thus indicated that negative interdependence occurred within the classrooms of the schools, and that learners did not feel connected to each other in ways that promoted the learning outcomes of all learners. Furthermore, the lack of evidence of group work and rewards in groups indicated that teachers preferred individualistic situations, or no interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In the absence of positive interdependence, Social Interdependence Theory reaffirmed what inclusive educationists have been arguing for: collaboration, cooperation and sharing of information in order to promote the learning and participation of all learners.

8.6. Discussion of Finding 3: Visible rewards promote discriminatory behaviour and attitudes

The third finding is that visible rewards promote discriminatory behaviour and attitudes. Overwhelmingly, the SMT members and teachers believed in the fixed ability of learners, and clearly indicated that learners who had never won awards before are not going to start winning awards now. There was evidence of bell-curve thinking amongst the teachers and SMT members: not all learners can learn nor are they all going to achieve well, and it is completely normal and natural. As a result, they referred to learners depending on their ability status (low achieving, average, high achievers).

Consequently, learners also engaged in labelling other learners according to their abilities, and made references either to themselves or others as being part of the smart/dumb class. A number of learners believed that those who won awards are naturally smarter/more talented, and this did not necessarily indicate that they work harder. As such, learners themselves subscribed to a fixed belief in learner ability. According to Yeager and Dweck (2012) this has a direct effect on learner achievement, and learners who believe in fixed abilities have lower assumptions of their own abilities, resulting in lower achievement.

Some SMT members felt that visibly rewarded learners deserve to be treated better and given more opportunities, and that visible rewards make achievements in academics' desirable. The notion of hierarchies within schools is indicative of a

meritocratic society (Mijs, 2016), and affects the participation of learners who are afraid of being wrong, or of feeling embarrassed when sharing their knowledge (Reay, 2017). Some learners felt that they did not get opportunities to interact with their peers much, as there was a clear hierarchy between learners who were considered talented or high-achieving. Learners further reported that teachers did not value nor reward group work or collaborative work within the classroom environment. Again, negative interdependence is highlighted, as per Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), where it is perceived that the goals of some learners are not related to the rest of the learners achieving the same goal. Furthermore, the lack of value given by teachers to cooperative efforts, with a clear preference for competitive and individualistic efforts, is an indication that teachers' beliefs in cooperative or collaborative efforts do not result in the same outcomes as competitive efforts. This can be linked to the acceptance of neoliberal notions of success.

Nearly all the teachers and SMT members felt that visible rewards were part of a fair, objective and equitable system. This was attributed to the award-winners' names that were generated by the computer, and not individual teachers, and in cases where teachers had to vote, it was done by secret ballot. One HOD mentioned that streaming takes place from grade 8 at her school, but that it is not a topic that was openly discussed. Not all learners felt that awards were fair or equitable citing that in some cases exclusions were based on a decimal point difference for selected awards, or sometimes non-winners had the same aggregate as winners but were not rewarded. Learners were reported to become arrogant once they are award-winners. It appeared from all the evidence in the qualitative findings that there was a hierarchy maintained at school by stratifying learners (ability groups, access to privileges, epistemological access, lack of fair opportunity) and this is in direct contrast to the aims and ideals of inclusive education (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017; Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

8.7. Discussion of Finding 4: Visible rewards can result in motivation or indifference

The fourth finding is that visible rewards develop motivation or indifference in learners. Learners appeared to be externally motivated, but for the exception of two girls in one focus group who reported that they did not work for awards and award did not matter to them, the rest of the learners did not reveal any indication of an internal motivation to achieve. Teachers and SMT members believed that visible rewards provide an incentive that encourages hard work and it was a simple beneficial system that works for everyone. In addition, they believed that visible rewards promote good behaviour in the classroom.

Both principals were of the belief that visible rewards presented the natural order of society: not everyone gets rewarded in life, and learners need to know that. Again, there is evidence of neoliberal influences, and meritocratic ideas of merit and success (Mijs, 2016). Learners that appeared indifferent towards the rewards system believed that some knowledge was considered more valuable than others, and resigned themselves to this being a fact of schooling.

Teachers believed that learners knew that their hard work is recognised visibly, publicly and tangibly by visible rewards, and if learners did not receive an award, then they knew it meant they need to work harder in future. Some SMT members believed that visible rewards were a motivation to all as the school made extra efforts to provide extra support for learners to improve their marks (extra lessons, mentoring system, etc.). Some teachers mentioned that the visible rewards system was what they had to abide by, and that awards pathways and categories were pre-determined by the SMT and reward/award committees.

Other learners spoke of their disengagement with visible rewards, that it motivated award-winners only, and learners who did not win found visible rewards irrelevant. Some learners who were disillusioned by awards due to missing the criteria to be rewarded, felt embittered towards the awards programme and stated they no longer found it motivating. In addition, previous award-winners in earlier years who had stopped winning in later years, became demotivated learners. Some of the award-winners revealed that engaging with other award-winners creates discontent in marks that they might otherwise be satisfied with, had they not known about higher marks.

Yet other learners expressed feelings of bitterness: for some, award-winning comes easily, whilst others work very hard but receive no recognition from the school for their achievements. As a result, learners felt that visible rewards tended to be reductionist: being rewarded did not take into account the journey and the hard work to get to winning the award, there is simply a reward for the end result, or highest mark.

8.8. A Critical Realist summary of the findings

Questioning the practice of visibly rewarding learners reveals an iceberg scenario. Whilst the tip of the iceberg could be likened to the actual visible and tangible reward, the underlying dangers not visible to the eye could represent the discriminatory practices, attitudes, beliefs and values at schools. A competitive environment is promoted by schools that visibly reward learners – as learners work towards their own goals of excellence in academic achievement, they will inevitably have to work against

their peers to win coveted awards. This is indicative of negative interdependence from Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). The schooling structure thus prioritises competition and individualism over cooperation (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), whereas cooperation and collaboration are the necessary elements for an inclusive school culture (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

According to Bhaskar (1978, p.7) "when we acknowledge that reality is layered, we can see something can exist at one level and manifest at another level in unique and unpredictable ways". This manifestation is what I have found with this study on visibly rewarding learners at high schools – what the school envisioned was different to what the learners actually experienced. At each of the levels of reality, there are experiences and dynamics that take place, as different groups experience the practice of visible rewards differently, and even within the same group of learners for instance, their experiences differ. In this vein, Cochran-Smith et.al (2014) argues that in her study of teacher education, critical realism offered an understanding as a complex system with multiple interacting parts and players that cannot be separated from one another without losing key aspects of how the system works and what makes it work in the first place.

It is this complexity that I have encountered in my study of visibly rewarding learners for academic achievement. By means of layered realities, this study reflected the experiences of visible rewards by the various stakeholders, such as the intention of employing visible rewards by the school (SMT members and teachers), versus the experiences of visible rewards by the learners, and their parents, versus a broader look at the impact of visible rewards on society and schooling as a whole (assumptions about learner ability, culture of competitiveness, privileging a small number of learners at the expense of the rest, sorting learners into future post-school avenues of learning, work and life, and neoliberal notions of success). As such, the findings of this study are similarly divided into layers of reality: the empirical, the actual and the real.

8.8.1. The Empirical, Actual and the Real

At the first, or **empirical** level, visible rewards are what we see or experience at the physical level with tangible objects. At this level, rewarding learners for academic achievement at public award ceremonies where a select group of learners are presented with badges, scrolls, honour board listings, differentiated items of clothing, trophies and certificates. The intentions of the school are represented by the events or ceremonies of the visible rewards and the symbolic items presented to the learners, signifying acknowledgement and recognition of their achievements. From the school's side, the findings indicated that the intention of embodying the practice of visible rewards is the

way in which the school promoted excellence in academic achievement, recognised and rewarded the learners' hard work and talent, and motivated learners to achieve in their academic endeavours.

At the second level, the level of the **actual**, events occur that result in what can be seen in the empirical. The events that occur at this level occur regardless of whether the learners experience them or not. Thus the level of the actual would refer to the documents detailing the criteria for learners to qualify for awards, the number of available awards, and the various types and categories of awards available to the learners. The layer of the actual would include the documented names of the learners who have had the highest marks in their respective subjects, and have therefore qualified to be awarded/rewarded at upcoming award ceremonies. It would be the learners who have completed the pathway of attaining an 80% average over four years and now qualify for the 'coloured blazer' award in their matric year. It refers to the process/es that must be followed in order to be recognised as the best learner in that respective subject. It would refer to the weighting of the final percentage during tests and exams which will ultimately contribute to determining the top learner in any subject.

At this level of reality, events are not easily changeable and flexible, and remain consistent. Thus the findings in this study at the level of the actual were found in the schools' reward/award policy documents, and statements on the school's website entitled "Academics". At the actual level, evidence is found of the highest level of academic benefits available for learners enrolled at the school. Given that this study is focused on academic achievement, my interest was focused on the Academics colours categories, which appear on a single page (the rest of the pages are devoted to sport and cultural colours).

I placed the following findings as a result of the thematic analysis at the level of the **real**. The intersecting levels of cultural, structural and agential levels at the level of the real represent all the unseen mechanisms that result in the layer above, which is the level of the actual, which in turn result in the empirical layer of being visibly rewarded for academic achievement. The findings in Table 13 below indicate the 23 categories of the findings at the level of the real. It represents the broad overview of the intersecting mechanisms underlying the practice of visible rewards. These mechanisms are discussed in greater detail below table 33.

Table 33: Themes arranged into the level of the real

Real	Cultural mechanisms	Structural mechanisms	Agential mechanisms
	• Motivation to achieve • Competitive school culture • Bell-curve thinking • Natural order of society • Parental pressure to perform • Fixed ability of learners • Award-winners deserving of privilege • Laziness as seen in non-award winning learners • Hegemonic ways of being	• Hierarchies (of learners, of visible rewards) • Labelling learners • Fair/objective process • Categories determined by SMT • Behaviour Management • Hidden curriculum	• Unrecognised hard work and talents • Socio-economic status and access to resources • Effects on learner identity • Learner disengagement in rewards process • Sub-culture of rebellion towards award-winners • Focus on advantages for some over well-being of all • Learner demotivation • Living up to parents' expectations

The first column in table above represents the cultural mechanisms, which are the attitudes and beliefs regarding visible rewards by parents, teachers, body of learners and SMT members. In looking at the cultural mechanisms, it was found that many of the attitudes and beliefs are inconsistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education.

Teachers' beliefs in the fixed ability of learners, attitudes towards privilege being well-deserved, visible rewards being an indication of hard work and non-award winners represent laziness, reflect an embodiment of values that do not allow for inclusive practices. Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2017) cite the belief in fixed ability of learners as being oppositional to inclusive education. Teachers believed that not all learners were capable of winning awards, and those that have never won awards would not begin to win awards at this stage.

Similar beliefs were embodied by the SMT members when they indicated that not all learners can learn in the same way. In unearthing this kind of thinking from the teachers and SMT members, patterns of behaviour that do not promote inclusivity are revealed. Furthermore, this finding can be seen in light of Booth and Ainscow's (2011, p. 39) Index for inclusion, where "students are equally valued". Having lower expectations of learners or labelling learners as such affects their beliefs of their own abilities negatively, leading to lower behaviour, as attested by teachers at the schools, who had referred to using rewards as a behaviour management strategy in their classes. When learners are said to be labelled as being of lower ability, they have depressed

aspirations and tend to suffer disruptive behaviour (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017). Furthermore, teacher attitudes towards the fixed ability of learners contradicts the indicator under the *Creating inclusive cultures* section in Booth and Ainscow's (2011, p. 39) Index for inclusion that "there are high expectations for all students". With regards to "everyone being made to feel welcome", the findings of this study indicate that teachers treat learners differently depending on their award status. Participation in the meaningful activities of the school are thus limited for those learners chosen by the teachers to participate, which translates into some learners being valued whilst others are not.

The level of the **real** is the deepest level of reality. Within the level of the real, there exists the mechanisms that drive or challenge the system of rewards. Given that I have explained the level of the real with the 4 major themes in the preceding pages, I have put all the elements together in a graphical image. Using Archer's Social Theory, I have illustrated the various factors responsible for underlying causal factors within the system of visible rewards.

The level of the **real** can be further divided into three systems or mechanisms: the cultural, the structural and the agential. **Cultural mechanisms** encapsulate the attitudes and beliefs surrounding visible rewards by various stakeholders at school: by the SMT, the teachers, the learners and the parents. These attitudes and beliefs are examined in light of their consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. The attitudes and beliefs are thus seen as a reflection or embodiment of inclusive values and practices. **Structural mechanisms** encompass the school's policies regarding visible rewards. The school structural mechanisms refer to the rules, criteria, processes and procedures that result in the awarding of visible rewards to learners. These policies, processes and procedures are examined in light of their consistency with the aims and ideals of inclusive education, which are thus a reflection or embodiment of inclusive values and practices. **Agential mechanisms** refer to the way individual people, or what Archer (1995, p.120) refers to as "individual actors" react to the structural and cultural mechanisms, which result in either transforming or reproducing the original structure. The individuals: SMT members, teachers, learners and parents responded to structural and cultural constraints of the visible rewards system, and the findings indicate how their responses are either consistent or inconsistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education.

8.8.2. Archer's Social Theory

Below is a representation of Archer's Social Theory, showing the how the social interaction of visible rewards creates intersecting domains of the cultural and structural which affect the identity formation of the individual agents, the learners. The cultural refers to the attitudes and beliefs held by all stakeholders at school (including learners) about visible rewards. These attitudes and beliefs manifest in actions by the principal, the deputy heads, the various heads of department, the teachers, the parents and the learners as a whole. These attitudes can be found in the various ways in which the school remains unchanged and perpetuates hegemony, regardless of the negativities surrounding rewards/awards, the practices continue for the perceived benefits and privileges that promotes interests and opportunities for a small number of learners. Furthermore, exclusionary attitudes and beliefs such as bell-curve thinking and fixed ability of learners, use of tests and exam scores to define learner ability, rigid interpretation of talents and abilities, labelling learners and a competitive school culture continue to exist. This is despite some teachers and most learners indicating their wish for change, and for their school to show signs of increasing participation and opportunities for learners.

The structural refers to the meritocratic system of rewards and awards. It encompasses the hierarchies within schooling and achievement, the criteria and processes, the policies that exist at schools forming the infrastructure for visible rewards. It is also the indicator of what good schooling is, and appears to be a guise of excellence, for learners and prospective parents. This can be seen by the learner references to the pictures and articles appearing on social media as well the local print media promoting the school brand.

The human agency refers to the impact on the learners, their actions and their behaviour, such as their indifference and demotivation towards the practice of visible rewards. In addition, the effects of visible rewards on their developing identities has been noted in the findings. Learners reported various ways in which visible rewards impacts on their lives, including the immense pressure to achieve, disengagement towards achievements at school, deliberately underachieving to avoid 'pity awards', the lack of social life as reported by award-winners and the exclusions faced by learners of not belonging to a group (either by winning awards where there is a sub-culture of not winning being the norm, or of not winning awards where the sub-culture is of high achievement). The diagram below shows these interactions between the three domains via the social interaction of visible rewards.

Archer's Social Theory – Morphogenesis/Morphostasis

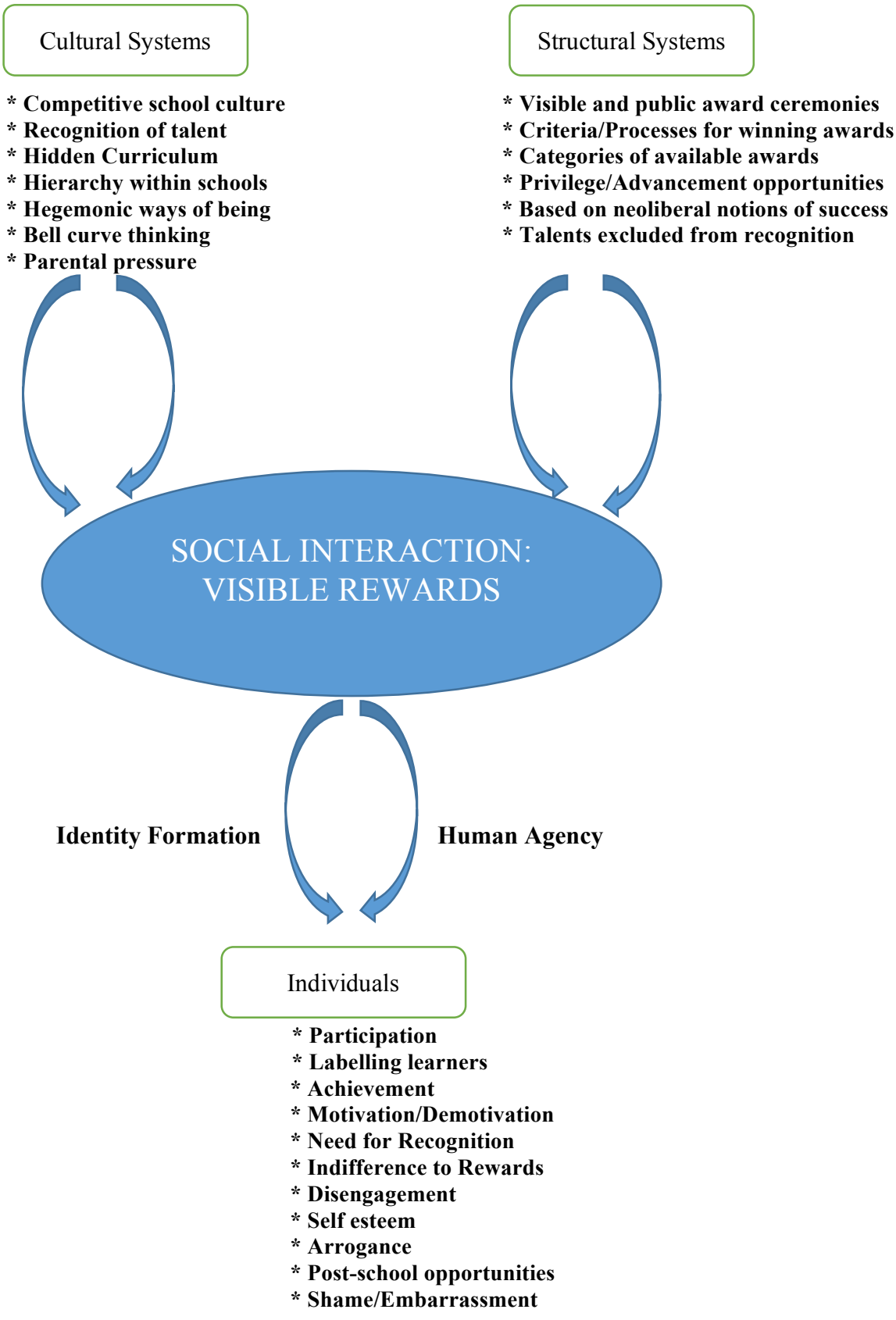


Figure 15: Archer's Social Theory – Morphogenesis/Morphostasis

Archer (2002)'s Social Theory predicts that a social interaction (Visible Rewards) results in either morphostasis or morphogenesis as a result of the cultural and structural elaborations and cultural and structural conditioning of that social interaction. With regards to individuals, the social interaction of visible rewards has an effect on identity formation as a result of effects of human agency. It can therefore be concluded that the social interaction of visible rewards in this instance resulted in morphostasis.

This means that despite the awareness that there are complexities and challenges with the practice of visible rewards, of which SMT members and other decision-makers are aware, there has been little change in the system. Although small attempts have been made to be inclusive (such as the rounding of the 9's policy in School A, or the broadening of award categories at School B) no attempts were made to engage with learners with regards to policy development. The evidence provided by some SMT members and teachers earlier in this chapter indicate that despite their acknowledgement of exclusions in participation and achievement of learners, the practice of visible rewarding learners continues at the school.

In explaining the results of morphostasis or morphogenesis, Archer (2002) refers to opportunity costs which are the resultant conditional influence: in morphogenesis those experiencing exigencies seek to eradicate them, whilst those experiencing benefits seek to retain them. Using this explanation, it can be concluded that the schools' practice of visible rewards, would be beneficial to the school for a number of reasons: school pride, excellence in educational provision, maintaining high standards, conforming to neoliberal notions of successful schools, and the continuation of tradition that is associated with the respective school.

My initial assumption that non-award winners would have more negative attitudes towards visible rewards, whilst award-winners would be more positive towards awards. However, the findings indicated that a significant number of award-winners hold negative views of award-winners, as well as the awards process. These included a lack of social life, parental pressure to achieve, high levels of competitiveness amongst learners, as well as negative feelings about themselves and others when their own personal expectations of winning awards were not met.

On the other hand, the parents (whether their children won awards or not) felt that the practice of visible rewards was not indicative of how well their children were doing, and they were not entirely convinced of its value but did see possible benefits with regards to their children's post-school life choices. It was these and other intricacies that were

reconciled by critical realism, allowing for the school-wide practice of visible rewards to be seen as generative mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion that exist independently of the perception of the learner, either as award-winner on non-award-winner.

It can also be considered a manifestation of what Scott (2007, p. 12) refers to as the "belief that objects and generative mechanisms in the world have causal powers, which may or may not be exercised, but still exist independently of human perception, or of the individual's ability to know them". This also explains the difference in perception of visible rewards by teachers and school management versus learners and parents versus learners. Most teachers and school management team members saw visible rewards as a beneficial way to motivate learners to achieve whilst few teachers voiced their discontent with the system, seeing possibilities of unfairness and the lack of recognition. The existence of learners' negative experiences associated with rewards did not occur to some teaching staff, who had only a positive, righteous view of rewards. This is indicative of the value of critical realism in recognising and accounting for the various ways in which different people perceive the visible rewards system. Critical realism for instance offers the explanation that simply because teachers did not know of the existence of unfairness, lack of recognition and other negative aspects of competitiveness, it does not mean such elements did not exist. It is simply a lack of awareness of those issues. Thus using a critical realist perspective provided a view of visible rewards by considering the cultural elements, the structural elements, as well as the agential elements that each individual could possibly act upon.

8.9. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the study, with a discussion in relation to inclusive education and critical realism. There were four main themes in this study: criteria and processes, ability and talent, motivation and competitiveness. Overall it was found that although many learners felt that visible rewards motivated them to achieve, there were a number of problematic aspects to the rewards system. The rewards system was also found to be promoting exclusionary attitudes and behaviour, resulting in feelings of disengagement, demotivation and indifference even by award-winners.

Learners pointed out inconsistencies between what the school claimed were rewards for hard work and effort, but what they perceived as lack of recognition or the exclusion of talents such as creativity from the rewards system. Learners also believed that competitiveness affected them negatively with undue pressure and anxiety. In addition, failures to achieve were attributed by the school to laziness and lack of effort, which

learners believed to be an unfair system that was not designed to recognise a broad range of talents.

Award ceremonies themselves were seen as irrelevant and tiresome to the learners who were there only to applaud award-winners. Furthermore, the public nature of visible rewards appeared to be embarrassing to some learners, as well as a source of disappointment when personal high expectations were not met, and awards were not won. However, all the learners who elected to participate in the focus group interviews were award-winners at some point, either past or present. Every learner in the focus group interview had pointed out flaws within the rewards system and some had made suggestions for improvement and called for broader criteria to promote the inclusion of creativity and other talents. It is thus apparent that the way schools currently reward and award learners needs rethinking in terms of inclusivity, particularly the participation and achievement of all learners.

Chapter 9: Summary and Recommendations

9.1. Introduction

In exploring the practice of visibly rewarding learners for excellence in academic achievement, this study probed a normal and taken-for-granted school practice in light of the need for participation and achievement of all learners. Furthermore, this study explored the procedures and processes used by schools in visibly rewarding learners. A sequential explanatory design was adopted for this mixed methods study to provide an in-depth understanding of the practice of visible rewards. This study was underpinned by a theoretical framework that included inclusive education, Social Interdependence Theory and critical realism. A review of the literature was conducted covering concepts such as visible rewards, neoliberalism, motivation and school culture. The sites selected for this study were two highly sought-after public ordinary schools in Gauteng. The participants selected for this study were drawn from the schools and included the grade 11 learners, the parents of the grade 11 learners, the teachers and SMT members.

The focus of the study was to examine the ways in which the criteria and processes resulting in visible rewards promote or hinder the participation and achievement of all learners, as well as to unearth the attitudes and beliefs of key stakeholders at high schools, namely learners, parents, teachers and SMT members that drive or challenge practice of visible rewards. Using a sequential mixed method approach, the study was undertaken in two phases. In the first quantitative phase, the learners and parents were surveyed via questionnaire. The second qualitative phase included focus group interviews with the learners, as well as semi-structured interviews with the teachers and SMT members. The findings are discussed in detail in chapters 6, 7 and 8. This chapter presents a summary of the study and makes recommendations for schools with respect to the practice of visibly rewarding learners. Firstly, this chapter presents a summary of the findings under the research questions. Secondly, it makes recommendations for schools with respect to the practice of visibly rewarding learners based on the key findings of the research. This is followed by a brief description of the limitations of the study. Finally, future research options are identified.

9.2. Summary of the Findings

The main research question that guided this study was “In what ways is visibly

rewarding learners at high schools consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education?" followed by two sub-questions, which were "How do the criteria, processes and procedures of visibly rewarding learners promote or hinder the participation and achievement of all?" and "What are the attitudes and beliefs of key stakeholders at high schools that drive or challenge the practice of visible rewards?". In this section, the answers to these questions are provided.

9.2.1. In what ways is visibly rewarding learners at high schools consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education?

The aims and ideals of inclusive education with respect to the participation and achievement for all are as follows: maintaining the dignity and respect of all learners, policies and practices encouraging students to use each other as a resource for learning, valuing and rewarding a range of achievements. In order to achieve this, the Participation Framework (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2017) further suggests that schools should reduce forms of achievement that are more highly valued than others; as well as policies, practices and interactions that reinforce barriers to achievement of some individuals.

Visible rewards were found to be an outward manifestation of a competitive school culture that is concerned with valuing and privileging learners deemed to have merit, therefore deserving of preferential treatment. Using multiple perspectives, this study found that visible rewards as a school-wide practice is inconsistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education in a number of ways, using the Index for Inclusion, (Booth & Ainscow, 2011), Participation Framework (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) and Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1989) as a basis for understanding the prevalence of competition over cooperation and collaboration.

Firstly, there is a disparity between the schools' competitive learning environment and the inclusive ideals of social justice, equal opportunity, and participation for all. Learners believed that their inability to win awards meant that teachers felt they were lazy and incapable which had implications on their sense of belonging even within peer groups. For award-winning learners, competitiveness at school resulted in stressful situations for them. Learners felt that the practice of rewarding learners perpetuates discriminatory beliefs and attitudes, which are known barriers of inclusive education.

Secondly, it was apparent that teachers did not have high expectations of all learners, and used language that indicated learners were of fixed abilities, and situated on a bell-curve with respect to their talents and their achievements. As a result, learners experienced a hierarchical structure within the school wherein learners were stratified

according to their achievements. This meant that some learners were privileged with opportunities that were unavailable to most.

Finally, a shared philosophy of inclusion was not apparent amongst the schooling community, consisting of learners, parents, teachers and school management (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Parents views on rewards and their relevance differed from that of the learners, which in turn differed from that of the teachers and school management.

9.2.2. How do the criteria, processes and procedures of visibly rewarding learners promote or hinder the participation and achievement of all?

Overall, the findings indicated that visible rewards at school did not result in positive effects for all learners, as awards were determined by criteria set by each school. The criteria of visibly rewarding learners was dependent on the decision-making of teachers and SMT members. School policies regarding rewards were internally formulated, thus each school had unique ways of rewarding learners. The processes and procedures of visibly rewarding learners was found to be problematic for learners. Learners believed that the criteria were too narrow, and that creative talents were excluded from recognition.

The findings indicated that learners overwhelmingly desired recognition of their hard work and efforts but that many of their talents went unrecognised by the rewards system. The findings indicated that the participation and achievement of all learners was hindered by visible rewards. Schools that visibly reward learners promote a competitive environment – as learners work towards their own goals of achieving, they will inevitably have to work against their peers. The application of Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) indicated that this situation is a manifestation of negative interdependence. Invariably, in order for some to be recognised as winners, there would have to be others who would have to be losers. This impacted on the participation and achievement of learners whether they were award-winners or not.

Participation: Although learners believed in the motivational power of visible rewards, the findings indicated that learners viewed their peers as rivals and had few opportunities to collaborate with each other with respect to learning within the classroom. Learners also believed that their participation in the classroom was curtailed by the practice of streaming learners, which appeared to be a resultant practice of visible rewards. Learners desired opportunities to work with higher achieving learners. Learners also believed that visibly rewarded learners were provided more opportunities to participate meaningfully in the life of the school.

The findings indicated from the leaners' experience, their rewards could not be transferred from school to school, therefore limiting their participation in the long-term rewards programmes available at their respective schools.

Achievement: As a result of visible rewards, the hierarchical nature of the school did not allow for a broad range of talents and efforts to be valued, recognised and rewarded. Not all learners believed that their achievements were appreciated and honoured by the school: learners were only given opportunities to celebrate their achievements provided it was aligned with the school's criteria.

Subsequently, this meant that learners felt disengaged by visible rewards; some learners rebelled against the practice of visible rewards, treating winners as outcasts within the social group. Furthermore, learners felt demotivated by the rewards system when they no longer made the criteria to be visibly rewarded, and found it pointless to achieve. The lack of transparent and clear demarcation for some awards, such as the award for the highest subject mark, was deemed unfair by learners.

9.2.3. What are the attitudes and beliefs of key stakeholders at high schools that drive or challenge the practice of visible rewards?

The practice of visible rewards was either driven or challenged by attitudes and beliefs of the key stakeholders. Key stakeholders in this study were identified as the learners, the parents, the teachers and the SMT members. As indicated in the previous chapter, using critical realism helped to account for the different participants at school and how they experienced visible rewards differently, at the levels of the empirical, the actual, and the real. Whilst learners indicated various factors that challenge the practice of rewards, most teachers and SMT staff believed that it was a fair system that rightly benefitted those that were rewarded. On the other hand, parents held mostly negative views with regards to the practice of visible rewards.

The following attitudes and beliefs were found to **drive** the practice of visible rewards.

The teachers overwhelmingly believed that visible rewards motivate learners to achieve. The findings indicated numerous examples of bell-curve thinking and of teachers' beliefs in the fixed ability of learners. Most teachers revealed that award-winners deserve to be treated differently and given more opportunities, indicating that there was a hidden curriculum which benefited some learners and excluded others and that this was considered normal and natural.

Teachers belief in learner motivation was focused only on extrinsic forms of motivation. The findings indicated that teaching staff did not seek to remove barriers to learning

and participation with respect to visible rewards, despite knowing about the possibility of their existence. Teachers also believed learners who were not visibly rewarded were lazy, unmotivated and low-achieving, situating the negative issues within the learner without questioning the system itself.

The SMT believed that visible rewards are a manifestation of school pride, and are markers of excellence in achievement. In rewarding and recognising learners' talents and hard work, they are upholding the school traditions and reputation for excellence. The SMT also believed that visible rewards were fair and beneficial to all. The findings indicated that the SMT believed that visible rewards provided an indicator to parents of "value-for-money" thus reinforcing their school brand. Most learners were of the belief that visible rewards motivated them to achieve. The practice of visible rewards is driven by competition between learners to achieve. Some learners believed that those who were visibly rewarded worked hard, whilst others believed they were naturally gifted/talented at academics. The findings indicated that parents pressurized their children to achieve and to be visibly rewarded at school.

The following attitudes and beliefs were found to **challenge** the practice of visible rewards.

Parents held strongly negative views towards the way visible rewards were currently in place. They felt excluded by the visible rewards system and did not believe in the fairness of the practice of visible rewards. Parents did not believe that visible rewards motivated their children to work harder at school, indicating that there were latent factors that motivated learners other than rewards. They also indicated a preference for individualised and for rewards to be presented privately rather than publicly. Although parents held negative views with regards to the practice of visible rewards, learners and teachers indicated that there was significant pressure placed on learners by parents to be visibly rewarded.

Visible rewards as a practice influenced other school practices and thus had a bearing on learners' epistemological access to lessons in the classroom, which was felt by the learners. Learners were subject to teacher beliefs about their abilities and knew that practices such as streaming were taking place. As such, the dignity of all learners was not maintained, and teachers did not believe that all learners were capable of learning and achieving. Not all learners wanted to be rewarded publicly. Some learners believed it was insensitive to boast about their achievements in front of the rest of the learners who were not award-winners. Learners desired a more individualistic rewards system, one that recognised their unique, creative talents and abilities. Other learners called for ipsative assessment (working against bettering one's own personal best).

Some learners viewed other learners as resources for learning, and requested opportunities to learn collaboratively.

9.3. Recommendations for Schools

In this study, the phenomenon of visible rewards for academic achievement has shown that although schools intend for rewards to motivate learners to achieve, there were instances in which the complete opposite had occurred. As such, the rewards system has proven to be inconsistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. Values such as collaboration, social justice, cooperation and learner-centredness appear to be missing from the rewards systems at schools. Consideration should therefore be given for incentive programmes at schools that involve groups rather than individuals. When selecting incentive programmes, schools should be cognizant of neither creating hierarchies nor rewarding learners individualistically. In reducing the mechanisms supporting academic competition, schools can encourage collaboration and cooperation, thereby creating environments that facilitate inclusive communities at schools. In particular, visibly rewarding learners via elaborate ceremonies using symbolic representations of academic achievement can be detrimental to the participation and achievement of all learners. This does not mean a reduction in the pursuit of excellence in academic achievement. Rather, the focus should be on prioritising the participation and achievement for all learners, where every learner is equally valued and the dignity of all learners is upheld at school. The ways in which we currently reward and award learners therefore needs revisiting. Teaching learners to value intrinsic motivation means a changing our focus towards mastery goals rather than performance goals. Perhaps adopting a more learner-centred approach might offer some ideas into more inclusive ways of rewarding learners.

In a more collaborative, or cooperative situation, the tournament or team reward structure outlined by Bigoni, Fort, Nardotto and Reggiani (2015) could be considered, such that the success of all is considered valuable and worthy of recognition, rather than the success of a few individuals. Thus the efforts towards higher achievement of the class would change from concerns about individual learners' success towards the success of the whole group before any awards can be given out.

The practice of visibly rewarding learners at our schools need to be questioned in light of their symbolism – not only of the academic achievement of the learners which in itself might have issues regarding the criteria and the processes. More broadly, questions need to be asked concerning rewards and awards as a meritocratic method of sorting society, and as an entrenchment of neoliberal values that privilege some and exclude others. There is some indication that reward ceremonies can be used to

realise social justice by rewarding a variety of categories of learners such that everyone wins a prize. Schools that reward ability and effort rather than social origin might substantially reduce the extent of social reproduction between generations of learners. On the contrary, schools that assist less talented and less motivated learners from advantaged backgrounds may increase social inequality and create barriers for academically able learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Re-examining the practice of visibly rewarding at schools can be a creative process that schools must engage in with all stakeholders, including the learners themselves. This process is not a simple task and could be introduced in stages. As noted by Engelbrecht, Oswald and Forlin (2006) during their use of the *Index for Inclusion* in Western Cape schools, the honest reflection on school cultures, policies and practices can be a painful process at times. Revisiting and rethinking the rewards/awards programme is a process that is necessary for schools if they wish to facilitate collaboration over competition, improving the environment for inclusion.

The removal of the current system of visible rewards might sound drastic, but it has the potential to make schools seriously interrogate competitive practices that they might consider benign and beneficial to a few, towards a school culture that is collaborative, cooperative and is genuinely concerned with raising achievement for all. Whilst there is little evidence in the literature of South African schools that follow this system of no rewards, alternative pedagogies such as Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio Emilia are known to be non-competitive environments that promote the learning of each individual learner without drawing attention to the achievement of others (Edwards, 2002).

A variety of possibilities exist for schools to rethink and reframe their rewards systems to enable schooling environments that are inclusive. Whilst this study focused on the taken-for-granted practice of rewarding learners visibly and publicly, there are many other practices that need questioning due to their possible exclusionary effects on the learning and participation of all. Identifying and dismantling these practices should be a priority for our schools in order to facilitate inclusivity.

9.4. Limitations of the study

This sequential mixed methods study contained multiple perspectives from four groups of participants. The limitations from phase one, which was the surveying via questionnaire of the parents and the learners was the significant difference in sample size: 17 parents responded, and 104 learners responded. Thus the sample size of the parent participants is too small to be generalised to the greater parent population. In

terms of the learner respondents, 66% of the learners identified themselves as award-winners, which had an impact on some survey responses, such as the willingness to end the practice of visible rewards. This was noted in the discussion of the findings (see chapters 6, 7 and 8).

With regards to limitations in the second qualitative phase, the learner focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews with SMT members and teachers provided a multitude of perspectives on the practice of visible rewards. As such, some of the participant narratives were dominant, and some were marginal. The challenge in the data analysis was to explore dominant narratives without ignoring minority narratives. Attempts were made to include the diversity in perspective and to report on different accounts of the same issue. Here the use of critical realism helped to explicate the diversity in perspective.

Another limitation is that of my own personal bias toward the research. As someone who had been a recipient of visible rewards and scholarships during my high school and university years, I am aware of my own privilege as a holder of “merit”. As such, opportunities for participation that are not available to others were available to me. It is possible that this could have impacted on how the research was conducted and how the participants responded to the research questions. I was aware of this fact, and requested the assistance of two others in transcribing and coding the quantitative data.

In addition, when undertaking the qualitative analysis, I endeavoured to encapsulate the participants’ perspectives accurately without imposing my own beliefs on their perspectives. In this regard, triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data also assisted in supporting my interpretations.

Yet another limitation is that this study was conducted at two schools that have a prominent, well-established culture of rewarding learners for academic achievement. Therefore, the findings arising from this study is not a reflection of all schools in South Africa. I had chosen to work within the province of Gauteng, as it is where I live. Even here, there are differences between the school cultures within Gauteng. Given that Gauteng is the business hub and wealthiest province in the country, there are differences between what schools in Gauteng are able to offer versus schools in other South African provinces.

9.5. Recommendations for future research

Probing the practice of visible rewards in South Africa is an area of scarce research. The findings of this study indicate that visible rewards are not consistent with the aims

and ideals of inclusive education. However, more research could possibly identify inclusive ways of rewarding learners.

Another possibility for future research is ipsative assessment (Mabry, 1999; Hughes, 2011). Ipsative assessment has been known to increase motivation in learners (Hughes, 2011), which addresses previous concerns about the reduction of motivation to learn in rewards based programmes.

More research could also be conducted on visibly rewarding learners in other provinces and how these would compare to results in Gauteng. In addition, more research on gender-based schools could also broaden understandings of visible rewards, as this study indicated that more girls won awards than boys (as is congruent with the literature on the issue of girls outperforming boys at schools).

9.6. Conclusion

The current neoliberal agenda that pervades educational systems throughout the world has encouraged a market-like approach to the way schools function and perform. Visibly rewarding learners appears to be a manifestation of this. The notion of rewarding learners for excellence in academic achievement is a taken-for-granted and expected practice in most South African schools. Although South African schools have come a long way from their historically shameful past, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on questioning the practices of schools that are taken for granted and considered normative and expected as part of schooling. From a social justice perspective, we must work towards undoing socially created and maintained differences in the way education takes place at schools. In this way, we can reduce and ultimately eliminate the perpetuation and privileging of some at the expense of others. In questioning and rethinking the traditional practice of visibly rewarding individual learners, we can perhaps attempt to reform our schools by chipping away at one of the last edifices of the school structure that are reminiscent of pre-1994 days. Thus, it is hoped that possibilities of creating school environments conducive to the implementation of inclusive education and prioritization of the participation and achievement of *all* learners can become realities.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

[Date to be filled in]

The Principal
(Schools name)

Re: Permission to Conduct Research at Your School

My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a PhD student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on unearthing the impact and intention of visibly rewarding learners at high school level and to discover to what extent the practice of visibly rewarding learners is consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. The title of my research is: ***The impact and intention of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at two high schools in Gauteng.***

Your school's involvement in this case study is of vital importance but is completely voluntary and refusal for your school to be involved or choosing to discontinue involvement during the study will not be held against your school in any way. I would however require your assistance in purposively selecting the grade 11 classes to hand out the questionnaires. This study is a sequential mixed methods study and data will be collected in a variety of ways: surveying the learners and parents, using a questionnaire, conducting two focus group sessions, one with 4-6 teachers and the other with the learners, individual semi-structured interviews with 3-4 managerial staff members, including yourself (the principal) and the SMT members. It would be greatly appreciated if you could assist in facilitating the process of privately contacting and meeting teachers as well as managerial staff individually to ensure that they are happy to participate in this project from the onset. Participants in this study include the learners from grade 11, their parents, the grade 11 teachers and the managerial staff.

Participation will require that two classes of learners each in grade 11 answer a simple survey of 22 closed questions, and one open-ended question. I shall send the parent questionnaire, which is 12 questions in length, home with the learners to be completed. The learner and parent surveys allows for the selection of possible interested participants for the learner focus group session as well as individual parent interviews. For the focus group interviews with the teachers and learners, I shall take handwritten notes as well as use an audio-recording device to record and later transcribe the interviews. All expenses incurred will be covered by myself. The data collection process will take place during the school term that is most convenient for you, however I would like to suggest either the first or second term giving me time to analyse and code the data thereafter. I do not intend interrupting any contact time neither will I interfere with the day to day running of the school.

The data will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings and therefore your schools name will never be divulged and all participant details will be strictly confidential. Please be assured that all participant's names and identities will not be mentioned at any point within the research report or any other academic publications. To ensure this confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used. All school participants may also refuse to participate; refuse to answer any questions in the interviews conducted; and may also choose to withdraw their consent at any time

during the research study without any negative consequences. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and no form of remuneration will be offered to participants.

All research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be completely destroyed within 5 years after completion of the project.
Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on (012) 658 0412 or 082 886 1636, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisors:
Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on (011) 717 3283 or via yasmine.dominguez-whitehead@wits.ac.za or Prof Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za

A summary of the research report and findings will be made available electronically upon finalization should you wish to receive one.

I look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,
Shakira Akabor

Principal: Acknowledgement of information sheet and proposed research study, "*The impact and intention of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at four high schools in Gauteng."*

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please acknowledge permission granted and receipt of the information sheet requesting permission to conduct research in your school.
You will be acknowledging that:
- Involvement is completely voluntary and selected participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw their consent at any given time without any negative consequences.
- You have read and understand the information sheet and acknowledge its contents.
- The school's name and participant's information will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity.
- Learners' and their parents' / guardian / caregivers' consent will be obtained before data collection begins.
- If upon entering the field it becomes evident that the participant's parents / guardian / caregiver is unable to read and or understand the information and consent forms, I undertake to have them translated at my own expense. Alternatively, I will arrange a home visit with a translator to ensure parents / guardian / caregivers are aware of what they are consenting to.
- The data collection process will not interfere with the day to day running of the school, nor will it interfere with the learners' schoolwork.
- It is envisaged that the research findings will be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings.

I, _____ (*Principal's full name*) acknowledge the information stated above and grant permission for Shakira Akabor to conduct research within _____ (*school's name)* in 2017.
Please provide details should you wish to receive an electronic summary of the research findings.
E-mail address: _____
Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION LETTER TO THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

[Date to be filled in]

The Chairperson of the SGB
(Schools name)

Re: Permission to Conduct Research at Your School

My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a PhD student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on unearthing the impact and intention of visibly rewarding learners at high school level and to discover to what extent the practice of visibly rewarding learners is consistent with the aims and ideals of inclusive education. The title of my research is: ***The impact and intention of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at four high schools in Gauteng.***

Your school's involvement in this case study is of vital importance but is completely voluntary and refusal for your school to be involved or choosing to discontinue involvement during the study will not be held against your school in any way. I would however require your assistance in purposively selecting the grade 11 classes to hand out the questionnaires. This study is a sequential mixed methods study and data will be collected in a variety of ways: surveying the learners and parents, using a questionnaire, conducting two focus group sessions, one with 4-6 teachers and the other with the learners, individual semi-structured interviews with 3-4 managerial staff members, including the principal and the SMT members. Participants in this study include the learners from grade 11, their parents, the grade 11 teachers and the managerial staff.

Participation will require that two classes of learners each in grade 11 answer a simple survey of 22 closed questions, and one open-ended question. I shall send the parent questionnaire, which is 12 questions in length, home with the learners to be completed. The learner and parent surveys allows for the selection of possible interested participants for the learner focus group session as well as individual parent interviews. For the focus group interviews with the teachers and learners, I shall take handwritten notes as well as use an audio-recording device to record and later transcribe the interviews. All expenses incurred will be covered by myself. The data collection process will take place during the school term that is most convenient for you, however I would like to suggest either the first or second term giving me time to analyse and code the data thereafter. I do not intend interrupting any contact time neither will I interfere with the day to day running of the school.
The data will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings and therefore your schools name will never be divulged and all participant details will be strictly confidential. Please be assured that all participant's names and identities will not be mentioned at any point within the research report or any other academic publications. To ensure this confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used. All school participants may also refuse to participate; refuse to answer any questions in the interviews conducted; and may also choose to withdraw their consent at any time during the research study without any negative consequences. There are no

foreseeable risks in participating in this study and no form of remuneration will be offered to participants.

All research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be completely destroyed within 3 – 5 years after completion of the project.
Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on (012) 654 2181 or 082 886 1636, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisors:
Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on (011) 717 3283 or via yasmine.dominguez-whitehead@wits.ac.za or Prof Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za

A summary of the research report and findings will be made available electronically upon finalization should you wish to receive one.

I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,
Shakira Akabor

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CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY: Acknowledgement of information sheet and proposed research study "*The impact and intention of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at four high schools in Gauteng."*

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please acknowledge permission granted and receipt of the information sheet requesting permission to conduct research in your school. You will be acknowledging that:

- Involvement is completely voluntary and selected participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw their consent at any given time without any negative consequences.
- You have read and understand the information sheet and acknowledge its contents.
- The school's name and participant's information will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity.
- Learners' and their parents' / guardian / caregivers' consent will be obtained before data collection begins.
- If upon entering the field it becomes evident that the participant's parents / guardian / caregiver is unable to read and or understand the information and consent forms, I undertake to have them translated at my own expense. Alternatively, I will arrange a home visit with a translator to ensure parents / guardian / caregivers are aware of what they are consenting to.
- The data collection process will not interfere with the day to day running of the school, nor will it interfere with the learners' schoolwork.
- It is envisaged that the research findings will be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings.

I, _____ (*SGB Chairperson's full name*) acknowledge the information stated above and grant permission for Shakira Akabor to conduct research within _____ (*school's name)* in 2017.
Please provide details should you wish to receive an electronic summary of the research findings.
E-mail address: _____
Chairperson's Signature: _____
Date: _____

APPENDIX C: INFORMATION LETTER FOR PARENTS: PARENT SURVEY

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Invitation for parents to participate in questionnaire and participant information letter

28 JANUARY 2018

Dear [Parent / Guardian / Caregiver]
My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a PhD student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on unearthing the impact and intention of visibly rewarding learners at high school level. The title of my research is: ***The impact and intention of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at four high schools in Gauteng.***
Visible Rewards **refers to the tradition of rewarding learners via badges, certificates, trophies, medals and honour board listings for academic achievement. I am investigating the use of such rewards and its impact on learners from an inclusive education perspective. Inclusive education is about educating all learners irrespective of difference, whether it is their abilities or background.**

I am hereby inviting you to participate in my study. You are receiving this letter as your child is in grade 11 and I have chosen to carry out a survey at your child's school with all grade 11 learners. Apart from the learner questionnaire, this study is also concerned with the views of the parents. Thus I am inviting you to participate in the parent questionnaire. Kindly note that only one parent need respond to a questionnaire per household. **Participation is completely voluntary** and there are no negative consequences should you choose not to participate. Participation will involve your answers to 16 questions in the questionnaire, and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.
In agreeing to your participation, please be advised that you will not incur any expenses. You will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way, nor will you be given any money for participating. You can be reassured that you may choose not to participate or choose to withdraw your permission at any time during the research study without any penalty of any kind.
The data will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings and therefore it is of utmost importance that your child's details as well as the school's details be kept confidential. In no way will your name and identity be mentioned at any point within the study or research report. Your individual privacy will be maintained at all times. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used to ensure that no-one would be able to recognise you in any publication or presentation arising from the research. A summary of the findings will also be made available after completion should you be interested.
I guarantee that all research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed within 3 – 5 years after completion of the project. Please complete and sign the attached consent forms and return it to me via your child's class teacher no later than **[DATE].**
Thank you very much for your help.
Yours sincerely,
Shakira Akabor

Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on 082 886 1636, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com . Alternatively you may contact my supervisors: Prof Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za or Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on dominguezwhitehead@gmail.com

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CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY
Research Project: THE IMPACT AND INTENTION OF VISIBLE REWARDS AT TWO HIGH SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG

Informed Consent Form: Parent Questionnaire

I, _____ (parent's full name) parent of _____ (learner participant's full name) [PLEASE PRINT]

☐ **am willing /** ☐ **am not willing**

to participate in the research project by completing a 15-minute questionnaire.

Please also indicate the following by circling your response:

- I have read and understand the “Invitation to participate in research questionnaire and participant information letter”: Yes / No
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that there are no negative consequences for choosing not to participate in this research: Yes / No
- I understand that this research project is not in any way connected to my child's academic marks and/or progress: Yes / No
- I understand that by providing full consent on this form I am accepting the invitation to participate in the questionnaire Yes / No
- I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time without any negative consequences: Yes / No
- I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any of the questions contained in the questionnaire: Yes / No
- I know that the researcher and supervisor will keep my information confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my child’s institution will not be revealed: Yes / No
- I understand that the questionnaire responses will be used as research data for academic purposes, and may be published in conference papers, journal articles or books: Yes / No
- I understand that my responses will be used anonymously at all times and I will not be identified in any research publications: Yes / No
- I understand that the questionnaire data will be kept securely in a locked office and will be destroyed within three to five years after completion of the research: Yes / No

Signature: _____ Date: _____
For clarification of any of the statements above, please contact me on shakira.akabor@gmail.com

APPENDIX D: INFORMATION LETTER FOR LEARNERS

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Invitation for learner to participate in questionnaire and participant information letter

28 January 2018

Dear Learner

My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a PhD student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on unearthing the impact and intention of visibly rewarding learners at high school level. The title of my research is: ***The impact and intention of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at four high schools in Gauteng.***

Visible Rewards **refers to the tradition of rewarding learners via badges, certificates, trophies, medals and honour board listings for academic achievement. I am investigating the use of such rewards and its impact on learners from an inclusive education perspective. Inclusive education is about educating all learners irrespective of difference, whether it is their abilities or background.**

I am hereby inviting you to participate in my study. You are receiving this letter as you are a grade 11 learner and I have chosen to carry out a survey at your school with all grade 11 learners. Given that you are under the age of 18 and you are considered a minor under the law, parental consent is also required. This is a survey by questionnaire and you are thus invited to partake in the research study. **Participation is completely voluntary** and there are no negative consequences should you choose not to participate. Participation will involve your answers to 24 questions in the questionnaire, and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. There is an option provided for you to participate further in the second phase of the research, within a learner focus group interview should you wish to.

In agreeing to your participation, please be advised that you will not incur any expenses and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way, nor will you be given any money for participating. This study will not affect your marks in any way. You can be reassured that you may choose not to participate or you may choose to withdraw your permission at any time during the research study without any penalty of any kind.

The data will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings and therefore it is of utmost importance that your details as well as the school's details be kept confidential. In no way will your name and identity be mentioned at any point within the study or research report. Your individual privacy will be maintained at all times. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used to ensure that no-one would be able to recognise you in any publication or presentation arising from the research. A summary of the findings will also be made available should you be interested.

I guarantee that all research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed within 3 – 5 years after completion of the project. Please complete and sign the attached consent forms and return it to me via your class teacher no later than **[DATE].** Thank you very much for your help. Your contribution to this study is highly valuable.

Yours sincerely, Shakira Akabor

Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on 082 886 1636, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com . Alternatively you may contact my supervisors: Prof Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za or Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on dominguezwhitehead@gmail.com

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CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY
Project: THE IMPACT AND INTENTION OF VISIBLE REWARDS AT TWO HIGH SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG

Informed Consent Form: Learner Questionnaire

I, _____ (learner participant's full name) [PLEASE PRINT]

☐ **am willing** ☐ **am not willing**

to participate in the research project by completing a 15-minute questionnaire.

Please also indicate the following by circling your response:

- I have read and understand the "Invitation to participate in research questionnaire and participant information letter": Yes / No
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that there are no negative consequences for choosing not to participate in this research: Yes / No

- I understand that this research project is not in any way connected to my academic marks and/or progress: Yes / No
- I understand that by providing full consent on this form I am accepting the invitation to participate in the questionnaire and will access it via the link below: Yes / No
- I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time without any negative consequences: Yes / No
- I understand that I will submit the questionnaire electronically: Yes / No
- I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any of the questions contained in the questionnaire: Yes / No
- I understand that my participation in the questionnaire (phase 1) does not oblige me to participate in the interview (phase 2): Yes / No
- I understand that I will indicate my willingness to participate in the interview (phase 2) in a response on the questionnaire: Yes / No
- I understand that when I indicate on the questionnaire my willingness to participate in the interview (phase 2) I will provide my personal contact details: Yes / No
- I understand that when I indicate on the questionnaire my willingness to participate in the interview (phase 2) I am making myself available to be selected for an interview: Yes / No
- I know that the researcher and supervisor will keep my information confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my institution will not be revealed: Yes / No
- I understand that the questionnaire responses will be used as research data for academic purposes, and may be published in conference papers, journal articles or books: Yes / No
- I understand that my responses will be used anonymously at all times and I will not be identified in any research publications: Yes / No
- I understand that the questionnaire data will be kept securely in a locked office and will be destroyed within three to five years after completion of the research: Yes / No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you ticked all the 'Yes' responses, you might be randomly selected, and I will contact you to schedule an interview. For clarification of any of the statements above, please contact me on shakira.akabor@gmail.com

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM PARENTS: LEARNER SURVEY

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Invitation for your child to participate in questionnaire: participant information letter

28 January 2018

Dear [Parent / Guardian / Caregiver]
My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a PhD student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on unearthing the impact and intention of visibly rewarding learners at high school level. The title of my research is: ***The impact and intention of the practice of visibly rewarding learners at four high schools in Gauteng.***
Visible Rewards **refers to the tradition of rewarding learners via badges, certificates, trophies, medals and honour board listings for academic achievement. I am investigating the use of such rewards and its impact on learners from an inclusive education perspective. Inclusive education is about educating all learners irrespective of difference, whether it is their abilities or background.**

I am hereby inviting your child to participate in my study. You are receiving this letter as your learner is in grade 11and I am inviting all grade 11 learners at your child's school to participate in my study. Given that your child is under the age of 18, parental consent is also required. This is a survey by questionnaire and your child is thus invited to partake in the research study. **Participation is completely voluntary** and there are no negative consequences should you or your child choose not to participate. Participation will involve your child's answers to 24 questions in the questionnaire, and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. There is an option provided for your child to participate further in the second phase of the research, within a learner focus group interview should your child wish to do so.
In agreeing to your child's participation, please be advised that you will not incur any expenses and your son/daughter will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way, nor will he/she be given any money for participating. Your child's marks will not be affected in any way. He/she will be reassured that he/she may choose not to participate or choose to withdraw his/her permission at any time during the research study without any penalty of any kind.
The data will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings and therefore it is of utmost importance that your child's details as well as the school's details be kept confidential. In no way will your child's name and identity be mentioned at any point within the study or research report. His / her individual privacy will be maintained at all times. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used to ensure that no-one would be able to recognise your child in any publication or presentation arising from the research. A summary of the findings will also be made available should you be interested.
I guarantee that all research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed within 3 – 5 years after completion of the project. Please complete and sign the attached consent forms and return it to me via your child's class teacher no later than **[DATE]**. Thank you very much for your help. Your contribution to this study is highly valuable.
Yours sincerely, Shakira Akabor

Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on 082 886 1636, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com . Alternatively you may contact my supervisors: Prof Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za or Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on dominguezwhitehead@gmail.com

CONSENT FORM: PARENTS ALLOWING THEIR MINOR CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY
Project: THE IMPACT AND INTENTION OF VISIBLE REWARDS AT TWO HIGH SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG

Informed Consent Form: Learner Questionnaire

I, _____ (parent's full name) parent of _____ (learner participant's full name)
[PLEASE PRINT]

☐ **am willing** ☐ **am not willing**
to allow my son/daughter to participate in the research project by completing a 15-minute questionnaire.

Please also indicate the following by circling your response:

- I have read and understand the “Invitation to participate in research questionnaire and participant information letter”: Yes / No
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that there are no negative consequences for choosing not to participate in this research: Yes / No
- I understand that this research project is not in any way connected to my learner’s academic marks and/or progress: Yes / No
- I understand that by providing full consent on this form I am accepting the invitation to participate in the questionnaire and will access it via the link below: Yes / No
- I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time without any negative consequences: Yes / No
- I understand that I will submit the questionnaire electronically: Yes / No
- I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any of the questions contained in the questionnaire: Yes / No
- I understand that my participation in the questionnaire (phase 1) does not oblige me to participate in the interview (phase 2): Yes / No
- I understand that I will indicate my willingness to participate in the interview (phase 2) in a response on the questionnaire: Yes / No
- I understand that when I indicate on the questionnaire my willingness to participate in the interview (phase 2) I will provide my personal contact details: Yes / No
- I understand that when I indicate on the questionnaire my willingness to participate in the interview (phase 2) I am making myself available to be selected for an interview: Yes / No
- I know that the researcher and supervisor will keep my information confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my institution will not be revealed: Yes / No
- I understand that the questionnaire responses will be used as research data for academic purposes, and may be published in conference papers, journal articles or books: Yes / No
- I understand that my responses will be used anonymously at all times and I will not be identified in any research publications: Yes / No
- I understand that the questionnaire data will be kept securely in a locked office and will be destroyed within three to five years after completion of the research: Yes / No

Signature: _____ Date:_____
For clarification of any of the statements above, please contact me on shakira.akabor@gmail.com

APPENDIX F: LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Grade 11 learner

Thank you for choosing to participate in this survey. The questionnaire below should take you no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Kindly choose the relevant scale and place a cross in the box to indicate your agreement/disagreement for each statement below.

Section A (Demographics and Attitudes/Beliefs towards Visible Rewards)

1. **Gender:** a. Male b. Female
2. **Race group:** a. African b. White c. Coloured d. Asian
3. **I have won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during my years at high school**
   a. Yes, once.
   b. Yes, many times.
   c. No, never.
   d. Other. Explain _____
4. **Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work hard and put in extra effort**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. **The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. **The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards, badges for top marks**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. **Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. **I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. **I feel that learners who win prizes, certificates, awards, badges are treated the same as those who don't**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. **I feel that learners who win prizes, certificates, awards, badges get more attention at school (for example in assemblies/on the school website/in school newsletter) than those who don't**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

SECTION B (Participation, achievement and goal structure within the classroom)

12. My teacher points out those learners who get good marks as an example to all of us

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. **My teacher thinks mistakes are okay as long as are learning**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. My teacher lets us know who gets the highest marks on a test

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. My teacher wants us to understand the work, and not just memorize it

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. My teacher recognises us for trying hard

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

17. My teacher encourages us to work in groups often

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

18. My teacher tells us how we compare with other learners in the class in front of everyone

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

19. My teacher gives us time to work together with other learners who know what we're struggling with

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

20. My teacher makes sure that we do not feel left out or unsure during the lesson

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

21. My teacher always calls on the smart learners more than other learners to respond to her questions

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. My teacher allows us to readily explore and suggest new ideas in class

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

23. All learners do really well in my class and get good marks.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

24. Any other thoughts?

_____

_____

_____

_____

*If you would like to share any other information with me and/or would like to participate in a focus group interview regarding the awarding of prizes that is not mentioned here, please contact me on shakira.akabor@gmail.com

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your response is much appreciated and very valuable to this study.

APPENDIX G: PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Grade 11 parent

Thank you for choosing to participate in this survey. The questionnaire below should take you no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Kindly choose the relevant scale and circle the letter to indicate your agreement/disagreement for each question below.

1. **Gender:** a. Male b. Female
2. **Race group:** a. African b. White c. Coloured d. Asian
3. **My child/ren has won a prize/certificate/award/badge for academics at school during their years at high school**
   e. Yes, once.
   f. No, never.
   g. Yes, many times
   h. Other. Please explain _____
4. **Publicly rewarding learners at school for performing well in tests/exams provides a good incentive to increase academic achievement for my child.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. **I believe that the awarding of prizes is done in a manner that is fair and just at my child's school**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. **Working together in teams is more useful for my child than competing with peers to win an individual prize, certificate, award or badge.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. **Competing with other learners for prizes and awards is a good thing and teaches my child beneficial life lessons**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. **I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out and we are not invited to these functions.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. **I feel that children who win prizes, certificates, awards, badges work very hard and deserve recognition for their hard work**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. **I am extremely pleased/proud when my child wins prizes, certificates, awards and badges.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. **I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my child's school**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. **I feel that the level of academic competitiveness at my child's school is rather low and would prefer a greater level of competitiveness.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. **I believe that prizes, certificates, awards and badges provide a good indication of how well my child is doing in comparison to others.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. **I would prefer it if my child's school focused on recognising effort in a private, individualized way rather than publicly rewarding top marks with prizes, certificates, awards and badges.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. **It is extremely important to me and my family that my child wins prizes, certificates, awards and badges.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. **Any other thoughts?**

_____

_____-

_____

*If you would like to share any further information with me by participating in a personal interview regarding the awarding of prizes, please contact me on shakira.akabor@gmail.com

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your response is much appreciated and is of great value to this study.

APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (TEACHERS)

1. How important is it to you that your school visibly rewards learners for academic achievement? (explain first what the term “visible rewards” encompasses)
2. How are learners awarded at your school for academic achievement? Can you please give me examples of some of the ways in which rewards take place?
3. What are criteria, processes and procedures involved in choosing award winners?
4. What happens to learners who miss the award/prize criteria by a mark or two, but have worked really hard to get there? (E.g. Achieving 79% instead of 80%)
5. Is it possible to reward learners for effort? Can you give me examples of ways in which this can be done?
6. Is it possible that awards could be detrimental to learners?
7. Do you believe that visibly rewarding learners is consistent with inclusive education? Consider the values of equity, social justice, democracy, participation for all?
8. Is there anything about rewarding learners that you feel is very important, but that I have not asked you about?

Thank you for your time and your valuable input towards this study.

APPENDIX I: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (LEARNERS)

1. How important is it to you that your school visibly rewards learners for academic achievement? (explain first what the term “visible rewards” encompasses)
2. How are learners awarded at your school for academic achievement? Can you please give me examples of some of the ways in which rewards take place?
3. Are you made aware of the criteria, processes and procedures involved in choosing award winners?
4. What happens if you miss the award/prize criteria by a mark or two, but have worked really hard to get there? (E.g. Achieving 79% instead of 80%)
5. Is it possible to reward you for effort? Can you give me examples of ways in which this can be done?
6. Is it possible that awards could be detrimental to you?
7. Do you believe that visibly rewarding learners is consistent with inclusive education? Consider the values of equality and participation for all?
8. Is there anything about rewarding learners that you feel is very important, but that I have not asked you about?

Thank you for your time and your valuable input towards this study.

APPENDIX J: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (SMT MEMBERS)

1. How important is it to you that your school visibly rewards learners for academic achievement? (explain first what the term “visible rewards” encompasses)
2. How are learners awarded at your school for academic achievement? Can you please give me examples of some of the ways in which rewards take place?
3. What are criteria, processes and procedures involved in choosing award winners?
4. Do you believe that deeper, meaningful learning and not superficial, rote learning is promoted by awarding learners for topping their grade, or outdoing their peers?
5. Is it possible to reward learners for effort? Can you give me examples?
6. Is it possible that awards could be detrimental to learners?
7. Is there anything about rewarding learners that you feel is very important, but that I have not asked you about?
8. To what extent does visibly rewarding learners fit in with the schools’ mission and vision statement?
9. How does visibly rewarding learners correspond with the overall culture of the school?

Thank you for your time

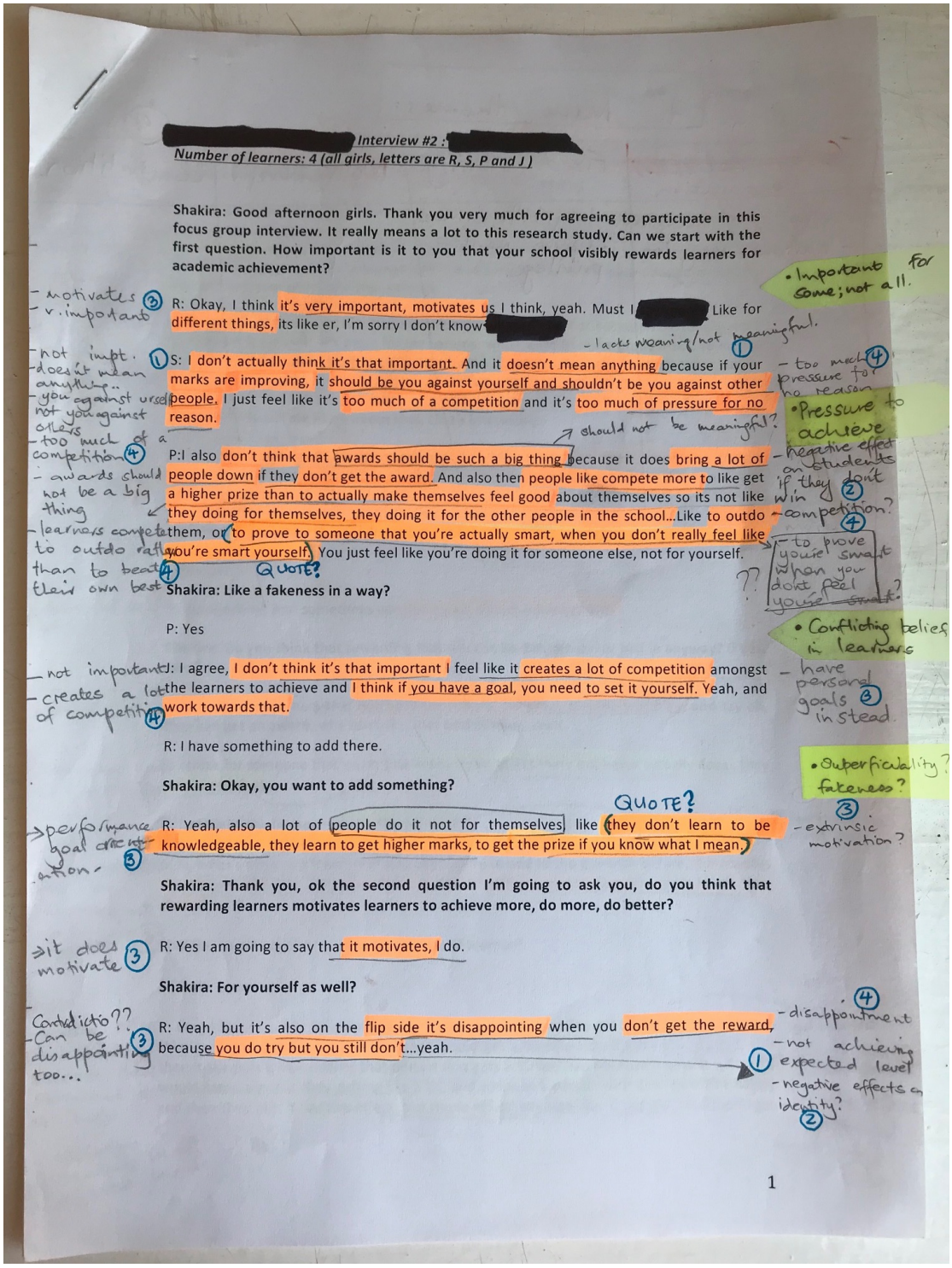
APPENDIX K: STATISTICAL TABLES LEARNERS

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Rewarding learners for performing well in tests/exams motivates learners to work	School A	51	4,18	0,74	0,10	3,97	4,38	2
	School B	52	4,08	0,71	0,10	3,88	4,27	2
	Total	103	4,13	0,72	0,07	3,98	4,27	2
The awarding of prizes is done fairly at my school and prize-winners deserve to b	School A		3,25	1,16	0,16	2,93	3,58	1
	School B	52	3,75	0,86	0,12	3,51	3,99	2
	Total	103	3,50	1,05	0,10	3,30	3,71	1
The same group of learners are always chosen to win prizes, certificates, awards,	School A	51	3,92	0,91	0,13	3,66	4,18	2
	School B	52	3,62	1,11	0,15	3,31	3,92	1
	Total	103	3,77	1,02	0,10	3,57	3,97	1
Competing with other learners for prizes is a good thing at school	School A	51	3,65	0,96	0,13	3,38	3,92	2
	School B	52	3,23	1,06	0,15	2,94	3,53	1
	Total	103	3,44	1,03	0,10	3,24	3,64	1
I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, ba	School A	51	2,78	1,08	0,15	2,48	3,09	1
	School B	52	2,63	1,16	0,16	2,31	2,96	1
	Total	103	2,71	1,12	0,11	2,49	2,93	1
I feel that learners who win prizes, certificates, awards, badges are treated the sa	School A	51	2,47	1,08	0,15	2,17	2,78	1
	School B	52	2,79	1,33	0,18	2,42	3,16	1
	Total	103	2,63	1,22	0,12	2,39	2,87	1
I feel that learners who win prizes, certificates, awards, badges get more attentio	School A	51	3,90	0,92	0,13	3,64	4,16	2
	School B	52	3,67	1,08	0,15	3,37	3,97	0
	Total	103	3,79	1,01	0,10	3,59	3,98	0
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my school	School A	51	1,61	0,78	0,11	1,39	1,83	1
	School B	52	1,94	0,83	0,11	1,71	2,17	1
	Total	103	1,78	0,82	0,08	1,62	1,94	1
My teacher points out those learners who get good marks as an example to all of	School A	51	3,24	1,21	0,17	2,90	3,58	0
	School B	52	3,58	1,29	0,18	3,22	3,94	1
	Total	103	3,41	1,26	0,12	3,16	3,65	0
My teacher thinks mistakes are okay as long as we are learning	School A	51	3,84	0,88	0,12	3,60	4,09	2
	School B	52	3,44	1,09	0,15	3,14	3,75	1
	Total	103	3,64	1,01	0,10	3,44	3,84	1
My teacher lets us know who gets the highest marks on a test in front of the whol	School A	51	2,73	1,27	0,18	2,37	3,08	0
	School B	52	3,48	1,20	0,17	3,15	3,81	1
	Total	103	3,11	1,28	0,13	2,86	3,36	0
My teacher wants us to understand the work, and not just memorize it	School A	51	3,82	1,05	0,15	3,53	4,12	1
	School B	52	3,73	1,03	0,14	3,44	4,02	1
	Total	103	3,78	1,04	0,10	3,57	3,98	1
My teacher recognizes us for trying hard, by rewarding us with small rewards in c	School A	51	2,51	1,16	0,16	2,18	2,83	1
	School B	52	2,37	1,28	0,18	2,01	2,72	1
	Total	103	2,44	1,22	0,12	2,20	2,67	1
My teacher encourages us to work in groups often, and he/she rewards the whole	School A	51	2,25	0,87	0,12	2,01	2,50	1
	School B	52	2,21	1,05	0,15	1,92	2,51	1
	Total	103	2,23	0,96	0,09	2,04	2,42	1
My teacher tells us how we compare with other learners in the class in front of ev	School A	51	2,18	0,91	0,13	1,92	2,43	1
	School B	52	2,40	1,00	0,14	2,13	2,68	1
	Total	103	2,29	0,96	0,09	2,10	2,48	1
My teacher gives us time to work together with other learners who know what we	School A	51	2,73	1,11	0,16	2,41	3,04	1
	School B	52	2,69	1,08	0,15	2,39	2,99	1
	Total	103	2,71	1,09	0,11	2,50	2,92	1
My teacher makes sure that we do not feel left out or unsure during the lesson	School A	51	3,24	1,09	0,15	2,93	3,54	1
	School B	52	3,15	0,89	0,12	2,90	3,40	1
	Total	103	3,19	0,99	0,10	3,00	3,39	1
My teacher always calls on the smart learners more than other learners to respor	School A	51	2,78	1,27	0,18	2,43	3,14	1
	School B	52	2,87	1,24	0,17	2,52	3,21	1
	Total	103	2,83	1,25	0,12	2,58	3,07	1
I feel that I am allowed to readily explore and suggest new ideas in the classroom	School A	51	3,14	0,96	0,13	2,87	3,41	1
	School B	52	3,02	0,98	0,14	2,75	3,29	1
	Total	103	3,08	0,97	0,10	2,89	3,27	1
I believe that all learners do really well in my class and get good marks, and nobo	School A	51	3,04	1,13	0,16	2,72	3,36	1
	School B	52	2,94	1,36	0,19	2,56	3,32	0
	Total	103	2,99	1,25	0,12	2,75	3,23	0

APPENDIX L: STATISTICAL TABLES PARENTS

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Publicly rewarding learners at school for performing well in tests/exams provides a good incentive to increase academic achievement for my child	Not sure	6	1.67	.516	.211	1.12	2.21	1	2
	Yes	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
	No	9	2.11	1.054	.351	1.30	2.92	1	4
	Total	17	2.00	.866	.210	1.55	2.45	1	4
I believe that the awarding of prizes is done in a manner that is fair and just at my child's school	Not sure	6	1.83	.753	.307	1.04	2.62	1	3
	Yes	2	3.00	1.414	1.000	-9.71	15.71	2	4
	No	9	2.67	1.000	.333	1.90	3.44	1	4
	Total	17	2.41	1.004	.243	1.90	2.93	1	4
Working together in teams is more useful for my child than competing with peers to win an individual prize, certificate, award	Not sure	6	2.83	.983	.401	1.80	3.87	1	4
	Yes	2	2.50	2.121	1.500	-16.56	21.56	1	4
	No	9	2.33	.866	.289	1.67	3.00	1	3
	Total	17	2.53	1.007	.244	2.01	3.05	1	4
Competing with other learners for prizes and awards is a good thing and teaches my child beneficial life lessons	Not sure	6	1.83	.753	.307	1.04	2.62	1	3
	Yes	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
	No	9	2.89	.782	.261	2.29	3.49	2	4
	Total	17	2.47	.874	.212	2.02	2.92	1	4
I feel excluded by ceremonies/assemblies in which prizes, certificates, awards, badges are handed out and we	Not sure	6	4.33	.516	.211	3.79	4.88	4	5
	Yes	2	3.00	1.414	1.000	-9.71	15.71	2	4
	No	9	2.78	1.202	.401	1.85	3.70	1	5
	Total	17	3.35	1.222	.296	2.72	3.98	1	5
I feel that children who win prizes, certificates, awards, badges work very hard and deserve recognition for their hard	Not sure	6	1.33	.516	.211	.79	1.88	1	2
	Yes	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
	No	9	1.78	.833	.278	1.14	2.42	1	3
	Total	17	1.71	.772	.187	1.31	2.10	1	3
I am extremely pleased/proud when my child wins prizes, certificates, awards and badges.	Not sure	6	1.33	.516	.211	.79	1.88	1	2
	Yes	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
	No	9	1.67	.707	.236	1.12	2.21	1	3
	Total	17	1.65	.702	.170	1.29	2.01	1	3
I would prefer it if there were no prizes, certificates, awards, badges at my child's school	Not sure	5	5.00	.000	.000	5.00	5.00	5	5
	Yes	2	3.00	1.414	1.000	-9.71	15.71	2	4
	No	9	4.22	.833	.278	3.58	4.86	3	5
	Total	16	4.31	.946	.237	3.81	4.82	2	5
I feel that the level of academic competitiveness at my child's school is rather low and would prefer a greater level of competitiveness.	Not sure	6	4.33	.516	.211	3.79	4.88	4	5
	Yes	2	4.00	.000	.000	4.00	4.00	4	4
	No	9	3.67	.866	.289	3.00	4.33	2	5
	Total	17	3.94	.748	.181	3.56	4.33	2	5
I believe that prizes, certificates, awards and badges provide a good indication of how well my child is doing in comparison to	Not sure	6	2.17	.753	.307	1.38	2.96	1	3
	Yes	2	2.50	.707	.500	-3.85	8.85	2	3
	No	9	2.89	.782	.261	2.29	3.49	2	4
	Total	17	2.59	.795	.193	2.18	3.00	1	4
I would prefer it if my child's school focused on recognizing effort in a private, individualized way rather than publicly	Not sure	6	4.33	.516	.211	3.79	4.88	4	5
	Yes	2	2.50	2.121	1.500	-16.56	21.56	1	4
	No	9	3.44	.726	.242	2.89	4.00	2	4
	Total	17	3.65	.996	.242	3.13	4.16	1	5
It is extremely important to me and my family that my child wins prizes, certificates, awards and badges.	Not sure	6	3.33	1.211	.494	2.06	4.60	2	5
	Yes	2	3.00	.000	.000	3.00	3.00	3	3
	No	9	3.67	.500	.167	3.28	4.05	3	4
	Total	17	3.47	.800	.194	3.06	3.88	2	5

APPENDIX M: EXAMPLE OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS



[redacted] Interview #2 : [redacted]

Number of learners: 4 (all girls, letters are R, S, P and J)

Shakira: Good afternoon girls. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this focus group interview. It really means a lot to this research study. Can we start with the first question. How important is it to you that your school visibly rewards learners for academic achievement?

R: Okay, I think it's very important, motivates us I think, yeah. Must I [redacted] Like for different things, its like er, I'm sorry I don't know [redacted]

S: I don't actually think it's that important. And it doesn't mean anything because if your marks are improving, it should be you against yourself and shouldn't be you against other people. I just feel like it's too much of a competition and it's too much of pressure for no reason.

P:I also don't think that awards should be such a big thing because it does bring a lot of people down if they don't get the award. And also then people like compete more to like get a higher prize than to actually make themselves feel good about themselves so its not like they doing for themselves, they doing it for the other people in the school...Like to outdo them, or to prove to someone that you're actually smart, when you don't really feel like you're smart yourself. You just feel like you're doing it for someone else, not for yourself.

Shakira: Like a fakeness in a way?

P: Yes

J: I agree, I don't think it's that important I feel like it creates a lot of competition amongst the learners to achieve and I think if you have a goal, you need to set it yourself. Yeah, and work towards that.

R: I have something to add there.

Shakira: Okay, you want to add something?

R: Yeah, also a lot of people do it not for themselves, like they don't learn to be knowledgeable, they learn to get higher marks, to get the prize if you know what I mean.

Shakira: Thank you, ok the second question I'm going to ask you, do you think that rewarding learners motivates learners to achieve more, do more, do better?

R: Yes I am going to say that it motivates, I do.

Shakira: For yourself as well?

R: Yeah, but it's also on the flip side it's disappointing when you don't get the reward, because you do try but you still don't...yeah.