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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is viewed as an essential aspect for national regeneration and progress; hence education is vital for human development. In fact education is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and its future. It is critical to reducing poverty and inequality. In South Africa, since 1994 the main focus of the Government and the country as a whole was aimed at transforming the government, civil society, education and the economy. In this regard, the Education system has undergone a dramatic change that is a single unified system was introduced on the principles of equity and redressing the formerly fragmented and racially divided education system. The South African Government introduced a No-fee schools policy that reached to the poor, orphaned and vulnerable children to attend school. "Yet performance levels are lower than in many other countries in the region. High levels of school attendance, gender parity in both primary and secondary education and pro-poor school policies are achievements that contrast with the poor quality of education" as outlined by (UNICEF, 2014, p.1).South African learners are faced with numerous challenges; the majority of learner's are lacking the culture of learning, most are de-motivated with lack of support from their communities and families. In addition, these children often experience a broken journey through school, interrupted by irregular attendance, absent teachers, teenage pregnancy and school-related abuse and violence. Hence it has an effect on the performance levels amongst learners. The statement of the problem and rationale for the study, aim and objectives of the study, the research question, the research methodology and limitations of the study as well as key concepts are defined in this chapter.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Literature reviewed confirms studies, which have demonstrated factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance amongst learners in South African Government Schools. Prior 1994, the educational system was segregated amongst racial groups. Bantu education was under financed and only educated a minority of the black community. According to Rehman (2008) the Bantu education system was set to spread out and cement the message of Apartheid over and above it limited education to black people in order for their children would not grow up and threaten White supremacy. Therefore, Post-Apartheid emphasized

mostly in addressing the past ills of racial segregation and social injustice. The Department of Basic Education (DoE) has devised various strategies to improve the quality of Education given to the South African citizen as well as improving learner achievements. Despite, these various strategies by the DoE as a department they are still facing numerous challenges in providing quality education to its learners. According to Spaull (2013, p.10), "Most South African pupils cannot read, write and compute at grade-appropriate levels, with large proportions being functionally illiterate and innumerate." The Annual National Assessment is used by the DoE to assess and provide regular data on learner attainment in order to inform on decision-making in the education system. UNICEF (2014, p.1) stated that "the 2011 assessments involved numeracy and literacy tests among six million foundation phase (grades 1 to 3) and intermediate phase (grades 4 to 6) learners at government schools. The findings revealed that the quality of teaching is poor, leading to low performance. The percentage of learners reaching a 'partially achieved' level of performance varied from 30 per cent to 47 per cent, depending on the grade and subject considered. Those attaining the 'achieved' level of performance varied from 12 per cent to 31 per cent." The researcher observed that some of the secondary school learners in the Duduza Township produce disappointing grades, are de-motivated especially those that are older than 18 years and often repeating a grade more than three times.

Reddy et al (2012, p.1) asserted "given the persistent pattern of low achievements scores for students from low-income households, the research and policy challenge is how to improve the schooling system to break this cycle of poor achievement in mathematics, as well as in other problem areas, namely, languages and science." Researchers have made emphasis on concentrating on the low achievements of Mathematics and Sciences subjects without considering other factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance of students who come from disadvantaged families. One may argue that Mathematics and Sciences are key areas of knowledge and competences as a strategy of human development and capacity building whilst the core essence of the factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory result amongst learners overall is ignored. The researcher undertook her study in the province of Gauteng, which is regarded as the most efficient province is providing quality education to its leaner's. According to Munch et al (2014, p.78) "the senior certificate examination results, commonly known as matric, provide an indicator for the functioning of the secondary school system, the schools and individual learner." The Matriculation pass rate of the Gauteng learners is amongst the highest in relation to the other eight provinces, the province achieved

a pass rate of 83.9% in 2012, 87% in 2013 and 84.7% in 2014. In the report, Twenty years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994-2014 (2014, p. 6) it is stated that "the province still experience a situation in which learners are being warehoused in grade 10 and, to a lesser extent, in grade 9 and grade 7. This implies that schools are deciding who is able to pass matric and holding back the learners whom educators believe are unlikely to pass." Therefore, most of these children that are held back are facing challenges in terms of grasping the concepts hence they tend to repeat school and they fail dismally. Furthermore, the report (2014) mentioned, "pedagogically this can be defended with the argument that if a learner is not ready for matric, it would be wrong to push that learner to grade 12 like a lamb to the slaughter." (p. 7). Thus, the number of children that are producing unsatisfactory results increase and the core of the problem are not addressed therefore, disadvantaging these children that are older than 18years.

In South Africa, many urban townships and rural communities are faced with poverty and the negative forces linked to it are hunger, illness, crimes, and violence. According to Statistics South Africa (2014), the poverty headcount in the country is 56, 8%. Poverty impacts negatively on the welfare of children. Hence high poverty levels influence unsatisfactory school performance amongst children especially if they come from communities with high illiteracy and unemployment levels. In addition some of the major problems facing South African education system which includes a shortage of teachers, under-qualified teachers, disappointing teacher performance which results in unsatisfactory learner standards and results. At government level, difficulties have been caused by failure of appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures, as most are confused by changing curricula without proper communication and training.

This study investigated the factors that are contributing to disappointing performance in government schools. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the quality of education and service delivery to our learners as well as planning and implementing strategies that can improve the context and quality education in Government High schools in the townships. In relation to social development, the study hopes to articulate that education contributes to social development; education is a human right hence for a country to develop there is need for interventions employed by the government to improve the quality of education and accessibility of education to all also fosters the social development process. The findings of the study might enable educators and social workers to address some of the challenges being

faced by the Department of Education and the recommendations will propose strategies to consider how to improve the delivery of basic education.

1.3 PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to explore factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance in Government schools in the area of Duduza Township, a community in the Eastrand, Gauteng. This emanated from the observation done by the researcher that majority of the learners in the area especially children in foster care placements were having challenges in completing their matriculation. The majority of the children were repeating grades and they seemed de-motivated. Therefore, this stimulated the researcher to understand the challenges being experienced by the learners and educators with regards to the current education system. There was need to understand the importance of social factors and how it affects these children in accomplishing their acceptable levels of performance. The researcher's observation, despite the schools improving on their results in recent years, a few of the learners obtained university entry and some of the children are still lagging behind to complete their grade 10s yet they are over age. In most cases the researcher noted that these children over age end up dropping from school and this result in unemployed hence increasing the pool of citizens that are unemployed without qualifications.

One can argue that there are gaps with regards to learner performance research studies; researchers have mainly concentrate on issues related to learner performance in Mathematics and Science subjects. Hence, social factors that affect learners or educators' well-being and education as a whole were not taken into account. This research concentrated on how social factors affect learners in achieving an acceptable performance in class especially learners in Government schools. The findings of this study could shed light on how to achieve quality education in comparable schools in the Department of Education.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research project adopted a qualitative research approach, which is described by Creswell (2003, p.147) "as being interpretive, exploratory and descriptive in nature." A multiple case study design was utilised in the research study. The case study design is popular in qualitative research as it allows researchers to obtain a wealth of descriptive information and to gain an insight and an understanding of the dynamics as to why individuals think, or behave, the way they do (Polit & Beck, 2008). Utilising a semi-structured interview schedule, the researcher conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with six key informants whom are principals,

educators and HODs of grade 10 to 12 learners. The researcher also utilised focus group discussions with 15 learners older than 18 years and in grades 10 to 12. A detailed description of the research methodology will be provided in chapter three of this report.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study utilised a relatively small sample since participants were recruited using purposive non-probability sampling. The research was supposed to be conducted on a sample of four schools but only three schools were available. The fourth school refused to give permission insisting that there were no children above 18years that are underperforming at that specific school. During data collection the researcher experienced challenges in time-frame, the data was collected late due to schools preparing for examinations hence they were not available this was a limitation. Focus group interviews were also utilised which results in data being compromised. English as a medium of instruction during the focus group discussion with learners was a limitation because they felt comfortable expressing themselves in their mother language.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Unsatisfactory performance

Unsatisfactory performance refers to learners obtaining marks below 30% in the National Senior Certificate Examination, and in that way fails the subject (Department of Education, 2003). In this study, unsatisfactory performance can be defined as academic achievement below the expected given age, intellectual capacity and schooling.

1.6.2 Quality education

Quality education can be defined as "the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values that society deems valuable – usually articulated in the curriculum." (Spaull, 2015 cited in the South African Child Gauge, 2015, p.34). Quality education comprises of learners that are healthy and willing to participate and learn, through the support of families and communities and living in safer environments. Quality education is guaranteed through the usage of trained teachers focusing on child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools. It is important to focus on skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce inequalities.

1.6.3 Outcome-based Education

The Outcomes-Based Education forms the basis of the curriculum in South Africa; it attempts to enable all learners to reach their full learning potential putting emphasis on Learning Outcomes to be achieved in fulfillment of the education processes. (Department of Education, 2003).

1.7 DIVISION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

This research report comprises five chapters.

Chapter One is a general introduction and description of the orientation of the study. In Chapter Two reviewed the literature on factors contributing to learners' unsatisfactory performance, theoretical framework that underpins the study, the link between social development and education, the current state of the South African education system and measures to address the challenges of poor performances are discussed. Thirdly, chapter Three provides a detailed discussion of the research methodology and ethical principles and considerations. The analysed data and research findings are presented in Chapter Four**.** The discussion of the research findings is blended with relevant literature. Lastly, Chapter Five highlights the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are growing fears among the general public, including academic, social and political circles about the deterioration of the quality of primary and secondary education in South Africa. This gradual decay is evident by the continuous poor performances displayed by learners in both primary and secondary schools, culminating into poor matriculation results. Thus, this study is an attempt to investigate factors contributing to learners' unsatisfactory performance in a bid to find solutions to avert the problem of poor performance that has plagued South African primary and secondary schools.

The primary aim of this chapter is to review pertinent literature regarding the topic under investigation, that is, to provide an empirical overview of the current state of South Africa's education system, its challenges as well as the theoretical framework underpinning this study. As part of this literature appraisal, the researcher will review previous research findings in line with the research questions, aims and objectives. The conceptual framework that guides this study will be discussed first and thereafter, a brief overview of the South African education system prior 1994 will be given due consideration. Bringing this historical background to the fore helps to shed light and thus, enhance our understanding of the contemporary challenges facing the South African education system.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are several theories that have attempted to critically appraise the multiplicity of macro systemic influences that impact on the psycho-social, emotional and cognitive world of learners, thus, influencing their academic performances. The following are some of them, namely: the ecological perspective, system theory, ecosystems theory, social learning theory, among others. Although, it is beyond the scope of this study to give a comprehensive overview of all the advanced theories, the researcher will, however, give primary attention to the ecosystem perspective as a theoretical concept chosen for this study.

It is also worth noting that this eco system approach resonates with the social development approach as both acknowledge the plethora of psycho social and economic factors that impact

on a learner to achieve and progress at school. This link will be discussed after the ecological systems theory has been given due consideration.

2.2.1 Ecological Systems Theory

This study postulates that the ecological systems model of Urie Bronfenbrenner which represents a useful theoretical framework in understanding the processes and interactions involved in a learner's achievement and performance. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is "an attempt to define and understand human development within the context of the system of relationships that form the person's environment" (Johnson, 2008, p.2). Bronfenbrenner (1986) propounds that the development of the individual is a culmination of many direct and indirect influences, which either facilitate or impede the individual's potential. This theory suggests that people's surroundings, be it home, school, work, church, neighbourhood, culture and government , all have significant influence and impact on the child's development (Donald, et al., 2010; Berk, 2007). It is further stated by Bronfenbrenner (1986) that the environment comprises five nested layers of systems which interact in complex ways, in a manner that can both affect and be affected by the person's development. These are Microsystems, Macrosystem, Mesosystem, Ecosystems and the Chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986,). The following is a discussion of these layers:

The Microsystem is defined "as the pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by a developing person in a particular setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 227). Johnson (2008) further adds that if this theory is applied to a school as the unit of interest, the microsystem would comprise students, parents and family members, administration, teachers, and the surrounding community as the micro system of the learner.

Bronfenbrenner's next level, the mesosystem comprises the linkages between microsystems. Just like microsystems, mesosystem also involves bi-directional influences between these various structures (Cole, Cole & Lightfoot, 2009; O'Neil, 2011). An example of the mesosystem can be seen in the interactions and dynamics between students and parents or rather the connections between family experience and school experience. Thus, this level helps one to understand the impact that parental expectations and influence have on the academic success or failure as well as behaviour of the child (Johnson, 2008).

The exosystem represents the larger social system, and encompasses events, unforeseen events, decisions, and policies over which the developing being has no control over it. The exosystem thus, exerts unidirectional influence that directly or indirectly impacts growth and well-being of a person. The exosystem of an individual school might comprise such structures as, for example, state regulations, local economics, district mandates, and local disasters (Johnson, 2008). The level of the exosystem includes the other people and places that the child may not interact with directly, but who still have significant influence or impact on her/him, such as the parents' workplaces, the extended family members, and the neighbourhood.

Bronfenbrenner (1986) describes the macrosystem as the one that involves the dominant socio-economic structures, the values, beliefs and practices that influence all the other social systems. This system is generally considered to exert a unidirectional influence on a person and the systems an individual live in that is the micro, meso, and exosystems as well. Johnson (2008) suggests that the macrosystem of a school is exemplified not only in the cultural, political, social, and economic climate of the local community, but that of the nation as a whole.

The chronosystem represents a period based dimension that affects the systems of all levels of the ecological systems. It refers to both short and long-term time dimensions of the individual over the course of a lifespan, as well as the socio-historical time dimension of the macrosystem in which the individual lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

Thus, this theory enhances one's understanding of academic performance or school progress as a phenomenon that is directly or indirectly influenced by wider social systems. It suggests that learners are either, directly or indirectly affected by these social systems and institutions, such as their families, school, immediate surroundings, social networks, friends, leisure, cultures, political systems, among others, which should be arguably taken into consideration when accounting for the learners' academic life. The interactions between the aforementioned social and political systems play a major role in determining the extent to which a learner performs in school. Thus, according to the ecological theory, the performance of a learner is inextricably linked to the characteristics of these social systems. Furthermore, the ecological theory not only helps in identifying the underlying causes of academic performance but also

assist in identifying targets for intervention. It is therefore, within this framework that this study seeks to investigate and understand the causes of unsatisfactory academic performance presented by learners in selected secondary schools in South Africa.

2.2.2 The Link between Social Development and Education

Since 1994, there has been a paradigm shift towards developmental social welfare in South Africa and in light of this development; social development has become an important concept in social welfare. Midgley (1995, p. 25), defines social development as "a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development". The aforesaid author argues that though, there are different theoretical perspectives underpinning social development processes, these highly contested interpretations of the social development process are fundamentally normative in that they echo different beliefs about which social development interventions are the most likely to accomplish the goal of promoting social development(Midgley, 2014). Education is viewed in this context as one of the major social institutions in the society and a major contributor to social development.

Developmental social welfare is underpinned by the rights based approach and this approach has been adopted by the South African Government. This also applies for education as everyone has the right to education as stipulated in Section 29 of the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution. "It declares that everyone has the right (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (as cited in Education for All (EFA, 2013, p.6).Education is believed to be a human need; it provides the means of socialization of the young and adult. Midgley (2014) suggests that the basic needs school reflects a preference for government intervention. Thus, these interventions employed by the government to improve the quality of education and accessibility of education to all also foster the social development process.

Education has been declared as a human right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and subsequent treaties established the right to education. According to United Nations (1990) stated that education is one of the five emergencies of human development and the others being health, nutrition and employment to mention a few. Therefore the programmes that are provided or policies that are being implemented should

impact on the quality of education provided to all. School social work services assist learners, parents and schools who experience psycho-social barriers within the context of learning environment, therefore, in order to overcome the barriers social work services are provided to the learners to reach their full potential.

Kemp (2013) outlined some challenges being faced in the South African educational system for instance there is a growing number of learners with social barriers to education and development, shortage of social workers at the Department of Education and limited guidelines or policy with regard to the appointment or practice of school social work services at National level. Social development is an approach that calls for purposeful intervention from the state through social policies and legislations which are protective and regulatory and these include eliminating the obstacles which hinder society from achieving equity and social advancement.

Midgley (1995) postulates that one of the roles played by the state in promoting social development is through the 'Basic Needs Approach' which gives the government a mandate to ensure that the social needs of its citizens are met. Therefore, education plays a vital role in order to pave to social development, education is a powerful tool to change. In order to provide the best service of education to our children there is need for good policies and strategies that can be implemented to provide quality education to our learners. Lombard (2005) highlights that social development approach invests in human capital, further stressing that education is an intrinsic part of human development, as it is through education and skills training that an individual is empowered to build and develop capacity to achieve his/her full potential.

2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

The ideological framework of the Bantu education has its origins in a manifesto crafted in 1939 by Afrikaner nationalists, grounded on a racist and paternalistic view that education for blacks was a special duty of a superior white race (Chisholm, 2001). This document advocated for separate schools based on race, the South Africa's "population groups"-whites, Africans, Indians, and coloureds. Chisholm (2001) adds that the so-called Christian National Education Policy of 1948 explicitly and implicitly placed different values on children of different colours and genders thus, perpetuating race stereotypes.

The apartheid education faced a barrage of criticism for instance; Makgato and Mji (2006) argue that education and training during the apartheid era was characterized by the underdevelopment of human potential. The black population bore the brunt of the Apartheid government's education system which was characterized by systematic segregation and unequal resource allocation. The apartheid government made sure that the white middle class children who attended church schools were subsidised and well-resourced however education for the majority black population was under sourced, poorly equipped and neither free nor compulsory (Christie, 2008). This notion is shared by Fleisch (2002) who contends that whereas mission schools emphasized cultivating the individual, apartheid schools extolled ethnic pride, racial identity, and separateness.

The apartheid era treated the black population as inferior, the few years of primary education was regarded as sufficient to prepare black people for labourer roles just to keep them out of the modern sector of the economy, thus, ensuring a steady supply of cheap labour, particularly for the agricultural, mining, and domestic service sectors (Christie, 2008). In line with this type of mentality, the Bantu education denigrated black people's history, culture, and identity thereby reinforcing and perpetuating myths and racial stereotypes in its curricula and textbooks. The Soweto uprising of June 1976 bears testimony to the then appalling unequal education system when African learners were brutally massacred for merely demonstrating against the enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at schools (Christie, 2008). The above background helps to unravel the historical causes that gave birth to the current educational system as we know it today. Thus, it can be argued that the contemporary challenges affecting the South African education system cannot be understood in isolation without acknowledging its historical past. The apartheid legacy caused indelible harm to education of black citizens that are to date still evident in the South African education system.

2.4 THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Although apartheid was dismantled, culminating into the birth of the country's first truly democratic elections in 1994, its negative effects persist in all aspects of South African society, including education. In a recent essay on the legacy of apartheid, economist Francis Wilson (2001) aptly observed and predicted that the destructive impact of the "Bantu Education" system brought about damage that will take decades and different generations to repair the effects. This legacy saw South Africa feebly struggling to design an education

system that would meet the needs of its new democratic nation with the influence of an increasingly global economic environment. The following discussion seeks to unpack the contemporary state of affairs of the South African, primary and secondary education system.

After 1994 the education system was restructured in order to bring some fundamental changes to the education policy putting emphasis on curriculum reforms that benefited all citizens and ensures that all people in South Africa have equal opportunities. This was done in order to address the apartheid injustices that saw public education spending notoriously skewed in favour of the white race. Kallaway (2002) argues that this new arrangement provides for greater state involvement in education which brought about the establishment of a system of mass education for Africans, something that the ANC had been advocating for two decades.

Accordingly, several pieces of legislation were passed by government; among others, the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 was enacted as law. One of the several functions of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996d) Section 34 (1) is that the state provides and ensures access to quality education for all citizens through this the state is redressing the past education inequalities amongst the races that suffered during the apartheid era. The General Education System Quality Assessment: Country report South Africa (2013. p.16) stated that "one of the most fundamental and controversial components of education policy of 1995 has been curriculum reform seeking radical ideological break from the past, Curriculum 2005, was drawn up with the explicit purpose of national building, promoting the constitution and fostering inclusive education." "The product was the new innovative, right-based national curriculum based on principles of "Outcome Based Education" that was generally well received by public" (The General Education System Quality Assessment: Country report South Africa, 2013, p.17).

However, despite the aforementioned reforms, the imbalances of the past are still haunting the present generation. According to the article on Centre for Education Policy Development (2014, p.1), "South Africa has a high cost, low performance education system that does not compare favourably with education systems in other African countries, or in similar developing economies."Although there have been some recent improvements in pupil outcomes, as well as some important policy innovations. Spaull (2013) argues that the picture that emerges constantly is both dismal and consistent; the majority of South African pupils

are significantly below in meeting the terms of the curriculum and the milestones expected in numeracy and literacy.

The Frederik WillemDe Klerk Foundation (2012, p.1) declared that "the South African education system is in crisis, ranked 133rd out of 142 countries in the world by the World Economic Forum." This is against the backdrop of the dismal performance witnessed in many high schools in South Africa. This view is shared by Spaull (2013) who also see South Africa having the worst education system of all middle-income countries that participated in cross-national assessments of educational achievement. The situation is appalled by the fact that the country is reported to have performed worse than many low-income African countries. Modisaotsile (2012) also concurs with the aforesaid assertion arguing that this flies in the face of the South African government's heavy investment in education which unfortunately and ultimately seems not to be paying dividends as anticipated.

There are various initiatives in South Africa whose primary purposes are to monitor the quality of education in the country. These initiatives enable researchers and policy makers to assess the level of achievement of different groups of pupils. Although most of these initiatives focus primarily on lower grades yet this research is about secondary school learners, it goes without saying that a good foundation lays a solid preparation for future success. Hence, failure of the secondary school learners cannot be understood in isolation and their foundation (primary education) has to be part of the picture. Thus, the discussion below will unpack the most important findings emerging from research initiatives (be it research with primary grades or secondary grades) in this respect. Unpacking the context will help to get a clear picture of the current state of South African primary and secondary school education.

2.4.1 The Annual National Assessments (ANAs)

The Annual National Assessments (ANAs), which are annual, nationally-standardized tests of achievement for Grade One to Six and Nine, are one of the most important policy developments which provide some standardized indication of learning and further allows the early identification and remediation of learning deficits (Spaull 2013). The aforesaid author further argue that "although the tests are marked and invigilated by teachers themselves, the 2011 ANAs were externally verified by the HSRC who re-marked a sample of scripts from Grades Three and Six. The 2011 tests showed that the vast majority of pupils in South Africa are seriously underperforming relative to the curriculum (p.14)."

Apart from the ANA assessments, South Africa also participates in the three main international tests of educational achievement namely; TIMSS, PIRLS and SACMEQ (Spaull, 2013).These tests provide a good measure of assessments on how South African pupils perform relative to earlier cohorts of South African pupils, and relative to other countries participating in these studies.

2.4.2 TIMSS 1995, 1999, 2002, 2011 – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (Grade Eight/Nine mathematics and science)

The TIMSS study, which tests mathematics and science, showed that the in Grade Eight mathematics or science achievement between 1995 and 2002 had not improved. Following on from this, it was decided that the international Grade Eight tests were too difficult for pupils in Grade 8. Hence, in 2002 both Grade Eight and Grade Nine pupils wrote the Grade Eight test, and in 2011 only Grade Nine pupils wrote the Grade Eight test. In comparison, of performance of Grade Nine pupils between 2002 and 2011 it revealed that the performance of these students had improved in maths and science resulting to approximately one and a half grade levels of learning (Spaull, 2013). However, the aforesaid author argued that there is no reason to celebrate given that in 2011 a third of pupils performed worse than guessing on the multiple choice items (i.e. no better than random). Furthermore, three quarters of Grade Nine pupils in 2011 were reported to have not acquired a basic understanding about whole numbers, decimals, operations or basic graphs (Spaull, 2013).

Given the above state of affairs, Makgato and Mji (2006, p.254), argue that "there is need for the country to embark on further scientific research with the primary goal of informing policy and driving transformation if South Africa is to become a mathematically and scientifically literate society that can participate competitively in the technologically advancing global village." The status quo currently shows that the country is far from the aforesaid proposed ideal.

Further studies by UNESCO and UNICEF (2005) whose objective was to monitor the continuous quality of basic educational programmes and to assess literacy and numeracy learning competencies paints a gloomy picture that clearly demonstrates the need for strategic intervention. In this study grades four learners from a number of African countries (Tunisia, Mauritius, Malawi, Zambia, Senegal, and South Africa) participated in the survey. From this survey, South Africa was ranked fourth with a reported average of literacy score of 48.1% and rated last with respect to numeracy, scoring 30.0% DoE (as cited in Makgato and Mji,

2006). It is no longer a dismissible fact or an overstatement in academic circles to declare that South African education system is in crisis and therefore, a nationwide concern. This assertion is affirmed by the fact that the country performed dismally in international academic tests.

For instance, of the 50 countries tested in grade 8 Mathematics and Science in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2003, South Africa came last. Again, out of the 40 countries tested in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) grade five reading and literacy test in 2006, South Africa came last (Spaull, 2013). In another international tests, The SACMEQ 2000 and 2007 – Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (Grade Six numeracy and literacy*)* SACMEQ II (2000) and SACMEQ III (2007), South Africa showed no improvement in Grade Six literacy or numeracy performance over the seven year period. In the SACMEQ of 2007, South African pupils ranked 10th of the 14 education systems, 2nd for reading and 8thfor mathematics, behind much poorer countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and Swaziland. The study found that 27 per cent of South African Grade Six pupils were illiterate since they could not read a short and simple text and extract meaning, with the proportion varying significantly by province: half (49 per cent) of all Grade Six pupils in Limpopo were illiterate, while only 5 per cent of pupils in the Western Cape were thus classified (Spaull, 2013).

The above scenario requires an investigation to ascertain the contributing factors that impact on learners' unsatisfactory performances. The recurrence of poor results, undoubtedly calls for measures needed to improve the quality of education and in particular results.

2.5 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO LEARNERS' UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES

The woeful performances of South African high school learners have given rise to an elevated focus on the quality of education in South Africa. Many educators, social and political scientists unanimously agree that the education system is in crisis and that there is need for urgent intervention to save the country from this quagmire. Thus, there have been attempts to ascertain the underlying causes to these unsatisfactory performances. As supported by the literature reviewed for this study, the factors that impact on learner performance stem from the following primary categories, namely: school related factors,

family related factors, socio-economic factors and inappropriate policies. The following is an elaborate discussion of some of the abovementioned factors.

2.5.1 Teacher motivation

Research has shown a correlation between learners' academic performance and the teacher's motivation. When teachers are satisfied and motivated to do their work, high productivity, low absenteeism and low turnover, less job stress and burn out might be experienced. Conversely, when teachers are not satisfied they may produce poor pass rates due to lack of zest, lack of passion and the necessary motivation to teach and perform. This notion is shared by Iwu, Gwija, Benedict and Tengeh (2013, p.840) who argue that "the school may face poor results if teachers lack the drive to prepare lesson notes and the enthusiasm to prepare the learning material." The Department of Education commissioned two separate surveys to ascertain what contributed to improvement in the performance of poor high schools which perform well in the Senior Certificate exams (Malcolm et al, 2000; Christie et al, 2007). The results of the aforesaid surveys showed that a sense of responsibility and shared enterprise, a culture of hard work, and high value attached to good performance were strongly evident throughout these institutions: principals were focused, teachers dedicated and pupils motivated. This in a way confirms the above notion that lack of teacher motivation produces undesirable results (Makgato & Mji, 2006).

2.5.2 Teacher content knowledge

For the majority of learners, teachers are the best resources learners have towards a better education (McNeil, 2004). Thus, teacher's professional development holds an important key for such learners. However, there is a shocking revelation that teachers themselves lack basic level content knowledge. This glaring revelation was witnessed by the analysis of the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). The SACMEQ in addition to testing Grade Six pupils, SACMEQ III (2007) also tested Grade Six teachers. The subsequent analysis of this SACMEQ III (2007) data showed that many South African mathematics teachers have below-basic levels of content knowledge, with high proportions of teachers being unable to answer questions aimed at their pupils (Spaull, 2013).Compared to other teachers in this group South African Grade Six mathematics teachers were reported to have similar levels of content knowledge to the average teacher in Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, while exhibiting substantial lower content knowledge

compared to teachers in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Tanzania. The same study further revealed that rural mathematics teachers in South Africa have significantly lower levels of content knowledge than rural mathematics teachers in Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

The same characteristics are exhibited by high school teachers. Stols et al (2007) tested a group of 27 secondary school teachers involved in a distance education course, and found that their mean score on a short test consisting of Grade 12 exam-type questions moved from 32.4% in the pre-test to 46% after the course. Presumably this group of teachers, self-selected for professional development, would be more highly motivated and therefore more knowledgeable than most. The authors concluded that if this is true, then the pre-test score indicates that the majority of South African high school teachers would be failing the SC exams. Stols et al (2007) further advised the urgent need to improve the knowledge of many teachers in both primary and secondary schools as this, unquestionably, has severe implications for the quality of education in South Africa. If data from these surveys are anything to go by then one can conclude that teachers are exhibiting "intellectual starvation" which inevitably perpetuates mediocrity thereby contributing to dismal academic performances. It is therefore extremely difficult to improve learners' performances achievement without seeking to address the mediocrity displayed by their educators.

2.5.3 The use of under-qualified and unqualified teachers

Linked to the teacher content level discussed above is the use of under- qualified and un-qualified teachers. This calibre of teachers is seen to be contributing to poor performances in schools. Again, this crop of teachers lack basic content knowledge resulting in poor teaching standards. The end result is a generation of teachers who perpetuate a cycle of mediocrity Doe (as cited in Makgato & Mji, 2006). The situation is dire in the field of mathematics and sciences where a vicious cycle is evident in which very few students graduating in this field; consider taking teaching as their profession. Resultantly, there will be undersupply of qualified science and mathematics teachers in schools, with some schools not offering these subjects at all (Makgato & Mji, 2006).

2.5.4 Parents/Guardians' Education background

A study conducted by Mbugua, Kibet, Muthaa, and Nkonke (2012) to investigate the contributing factors to learner's poor performance in mathematics in secondary schools in Kenya. The results of this study indicated that parents' education level or status also counts when explaining learners' performance. Conversely, if parents are not educated they may not be good role models for their children in academic matters. Spaull (2011) posits that the effects of this inadequate education mean that children of impoverished parents are likely to be poor themselves. The low level of educational attainment by parents implies that parents are not able to meaningfully assist learners with their home and school work. Thus, learners are left with little or no educational support except the school system (Bayat et al, 2014).

2.5.5 Parental Involvement in the activities of the school

Research has shown that when parents are involved in their children's school activities, children perform well academically. Parents have a distinct advantage as they provide a continuous positive influence, instil passion and zest for education, enhance and complement the teachers' efforts, they buy stationery and textbooks and assist in home works; all these enhance the learner's performances and achievement (Desarrollo, 2007). Davis-Kean and Eccles (2003) weigh in, adding that the collaboration between schools and families effectively promote a learner's school success, classroom behaviour and academic performance. Parental involvement has also been linked to learner's attendance, participation and a decreased likelihood of engaging in high-risk behaviours (Christenson et al., 2005; Hoover-Dampsey et al., 2005). Hence, when schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but in other aspects of life as well.

2.5.6 Inadequate resources

Lack of resources has been cited as a contributing factor to poor performances in schools. While this is true in many countries in the developing world, some scholars are not convinced that inadequate resources are a major contributing factor especially within the South African context. For instance, Spaull and Berg (2013) strongly argue that if one is to consider the tests conducted in 15 sub-Saharan African countries in 2007 by the SACMEQ, South Africa ranked 10th out of 15 for grade 6 reading and 8th for grade 6 Mathematics behind countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. This is despite the fact that South Africa has fewer pupils per teacher, better access to resources and more qualified teachers than these

countries. The aforementioned authors consider this to be paradox as the problem of poor performance in South Africa does not seem to be of scarcity of resources.

2.5.7 Condoning of learners to the next grade

It is deplorable that teachers ignore learners' academic challenges and condone them to the next grade even if there are visible signs of serious learning challenges that require the attention of educational psychologists. This researcher as a qualified social worker has noted this challenge during social work practice. As a social worker, one of my primary duties is to monitor placement and educational progress of children placed in foster care placements. Thus, during school visits, this researcher has noted that teachers are reluctant when approached to consider taking learners for educational assessment. Their argument is that doing so is time consuming, laborious and is an extra work for them as the Department of Education demands much from the teachers before they can grant permission for the learner to be assessed. This has seen teachers ignoring a significant learning problem and resorting to condoning learners to the next grade just to avoid the bulk of work that accompanies referring a learner for educational assessment.

The researcher is no alone in this regard as Bayat et al (2014) also noted the same in their study. The said authors noted that learners get promoted too easily and this has detrimental impact on their later scholastic performance and ability to navigate to different grades. This situation is further perpetuated by what the authors regard as an 'inappropriate policy' that states that a learner may only be held *'back once'* in an educational phase. This compels teachers to push learners to the next grade without them having mastered the necessary subject content and knowledge as per the curriculum (Bayat et al, 2014).

2.5.8 School management, leadership and accountability

School management and accountability is seen as crucial in enhancing both learner performance and the quality of education. This view is echoed by Spaull (2013) who asserts that without a principal who manages school resources efficiently and ensures that teachers are punctual at school and that they cover the curriculum and do assessments at an appropriate level, any policy intervention will achieve limited success. The author further stresses the fact that teachers need to be accountable to principals and principals to parents and the department of education. Bayat et al (2014) echo same sentiments, arguing that

leadership has profound impact on the quality of teaching and learning. This claim is substantiated by the survey which found that in approximately 60% of the underperforming schools, the relationship between the school management team and management was found to be tense and dysfunctional. Some principals were being accused of neglecting their duties and fail to rein in or discipline errant and unprofessional teachers (Bayat et al, 2014).

2.5.9 Overcrowding in classrooms

Research has found that overcrowding has negative impact on teaching and learning and that in most underperforming schools the teacher to learner ratio is 40 learners per teacher higher than the provincial recommended average of 29 learners per teacher (Bayat et al, 2014). Classrooms especially in some rural areas are reportedly overcrowded and teachers become overworked and the inevitable result of this is the decline in the quality of teaching and learning (Bayat et al, 2014). This is so because catering for high pupil numbers put more pressure on the teacher and even the school resources. This kind of environment is not conducive for teaching and learning as it affects the learner concentration, teacher's free movement in classroom monitoring learners, hence, making it extremely difficult for teachers to enforce discipline.

2.6 MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF POOR PERFORMANCES

The responsibility for education is shared by the Departments of Basic Education (DBE) and of Higher Education and Training (DHET). While the DBE deals with all schools from Grade R to Grade 12, and adult literacy programmmes, the DHET deals with universities, and other post-school education and training, as well as coordinating the HRDSSA- the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa(South Africa Yearbook 2013/14). As the primary custodian of primary and secondary schools, the DBE came up with some intervention strategies in order to address unsatisfactory performances in schools. The following are some of these programmes.

The DINALEDI Focus Schools Project- the intention of this project is to increase the number of learners studying mathematic and physical sciences in Grades 10- 12, and to facilitate the development of the capacity of learners in mathematics and physical science as well as to increase pass rates in these subjects. There is a strong focus on girls and those previously disadvantaged learners (Makgato & Mji, 2006).

***The National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA)* -** the NSLA was developed in 2004 by the department of education whose primary purpose is to integrate a number of different national, provincial and local initiatives into a comprehensive strategy meant to tackle the problem of underperformance at schools in South Africa. Under this programme, three strategic areas were identified namely: firstly, teachers with a focus on training, development and retention; secondly, the provision of learning and teaching support material and thirdly, increasing the time spent on actual teaching (Bayat et al, 2014).

The South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)-the (SASA) Number 84 of 1996 that gave the Head of the department of education the mandate to take all reasonable steps to assist the school grappling with the problem of underperformance. SASA is aimed at ensuring that all learners have access to quality education without discrimination, and makes schooling compulsory for children aged seven to 15. Despite this commendable effort, little has changed at underperforming schools (Bayat et al, 2014).

Language policy- in May 2013, the Department of Basic Education announced that all schools had to offer an African language to all learners from grades R to nine from 2014 because it was discovered that African languages were not enjoying the same development and utility as English and Afrikaans (South Africa Yearbook 2013/14). The department therefore made commitments to ensure that all African languages are equally developed and used by learners in the best interest of their learning and performance in their 12 years of schooling. In a way, this will help to enhance performance since the use of two languages (English and Afrikaans) as the medium of communication in schools is believed to be negatively affecting those speaking African languages. This was seen as impacting on performance. Thus, teaching people in their mother languages is seen as a remedy to this challenge.

The e-learning project- the Deputy Minister of Basic Education officially launched an e-learning project at the Sunward Park High School in Boksburg in March 2013, which became the first public school to transform learning into a fully digital platform. More than 1 200 learners from grades eight to 12 use this digital educational platform to log into the school portal and download the textbooks specific to that grade and subject (South Africa Yearbook 2013/14). This strategy helps to ameliorate textbook shortages as it enables learners to access

resource materials online and also help to deal with the learners' sole reliance on teachers for information or knowledge. This is a step in the right direction in addressing unsatisfactory performances in schools. Despite the above commendable measures to address the problem of poor performance and thus, the quality of education, this researcher still argues that the problem of unsatisfactory performances still persists.

2.7 KNOWLEDGE GAPS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTION

This review of literature has made it abundantly clear that South African education is in a state of a crisis that requires urgent intervention. To the researcher's knowledge, published studies to date, especially within the South African context have focused more on the viewpoints of many scholars without the backing of empirical evidence; that is, without exclusively focusing on the views of learners themselves who are the ultimate victims. Thus, there is need to conduct an in-depth exploration by means of semi structured interviews with learners to try and understand the problem from the view point of learners themselves.

This researcher further argues that the paucity of recent empirical study, coupled with the ongoing debate surrounding the topic under investigation creates knowledge gaps, making this topic worth of exploration. Accordingly, this study seeks to focus entirely on learners and explore their views regarding this daunting education challenge. To date, the intervention strategies in place have failed to yield desired results. Consequently, this calls for further exploration in order to come up with mitigation strategies to address poor performances in South African schools. Such a study is of strategic necessity in order to understand the underlying causes of continuous poor performance and in proffering pertinent intervention programmes and policies to address this educational challenge.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed literature pertinent to the study. The next chapter will discuss the research design and methodology as well as the ethical considerations to be applied to this particular study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology that was employed in this study namely the research approach and design, the study population, sample and sampling procedures, the research instrument, the methods of data collection and analysis as well as the trustworthiness of the research study. Ethical principles that were considered during this study are also discussed in this chapter.

3.2 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

3.2.1 Primary Aims and Secondary Objectives

The primary aim of this research was to explore factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance in Government schools in the area of Duduza Township, a community in the Eastrand, Gauteng.

The secondary objectives were

i. To explore the challenges experienced by grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years with the Basic Education curriculum within the South African context.
ii. To determine social factors hampering grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years to accomplish acceptable levels of performance.
iii. To investigate educators' perceptions about challenges influencing grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years to accomplish acceptable levels of performance.
iv. To explore with educators the current support systems available to assist grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years to accomplish acceptable levels of performance.
v. To elicit suggestions from both educators and grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years about strategies that might contribute to improving their performance in public high schools.

3.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What factors are contributing to the unsatisfactory performance of learners in Government High Schools in the townships?
- What strategies might improve the context and quality of education in Government High schools in the townships?

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research project adopted a qualitative research approach, which is described by Creswell (2003, p. 147), "as being interpretive, exploratory and descriptive in nature." A qualitative approach is a systematic and subjective approach that is used to describe life experiences and give them significance (Burns & Grove, 2009). It is argued that qualitative researchers always attempt to study human action from the insiders' perspective and the purpose of qualitative research is explained as exploring and describing and attempting to understand rather than explaining and predicting of human behavior from an insider's perspective or point of view (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher saw it feasible to choose this approach because it is concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals. Therefore, it is hoped that it will allow participants to share the factors that are contributing to their experiences and views on unsatisfactory school performance. Qualitative researchers' main aim is to understand, interpret and construct meaning from individuals' lived or subjective experiences, (Marlow, 2005).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted a multiple case study as a research design. A case study is explorative and descriptive in nature and provides opportunity for in depth analysis of a bounded system. The multiple case studies were drawn from three Government High schools in the township of Duduza, in the East Rand of Johannesburg. Babbie and Mouton (2001), a case study research design would provide the researcher with an excellent opportunity to achieve the aforementioned objectives. A multiple case study assisted the researcher to gain more evidence that is more compelling and robust. The approach and design allowed the researcher to explore and answer the 'what' questions which Fouche and Schurink (2011) see an exploratory study to be concerned with. In this study, the researcher obtained in-depth information on the factors contributing to unsatisfactory performance in Government schools from different groups of participants.

3.5 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The target population may be described as the entire group of individuals having the characteristics that interest the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Population "refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics" (Strydom, 2011, p. 223). Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The Duduza area has four Secondary schools that cater for the children within the area. The researcher selected three of the four schools that gave consent to the researcher to conduct the study. The study drew participants from three Government High schools in the community of Duduza Township in Gauteng. The study population consisted of learners, both genders in grades 10 to 12, older than 18 years, five learners where selected from each school. The key informant participants were six educators, either principals, teachers and/or Heads of Departments (HODs) from the three Government schools in the area of Duduza Township in Gauteng. The researcher utilised purposive non-probability sampling in selecting the schools and the 15 learners and six key informants. This type of sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researchers (De Vos, 2011).The criteria the researcher applied in selecting the participants were learners with unsatisfactory results older than 18 years who have repeated one grade. The sample was appropriate for the study in that it had a limited number of people whom were selected due to the specific criteria set. The participants were selected because they hold attributes or characteristics that appeared applicable to fulfill the purpose of the study. The criterion that was used in selecting the six key informants was that they had to be working at the particular school for at least three years. Two educators per school were recruited and selected to participate in the in-depth interviews. The criteria for learners were that they had to be learners in grades 10-12; they had to be older than 18 years of age, representing both genders and would have repeated grades more than once with unsatisfactory performance. Five learners per school were recruited and selected to participate in the focus groups, one focus group of five learners per school, a discussion was done per group. Participants both learners and educators spoke in the language that they were comfortable in hence semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in English and the native language of the participants.

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The researcher utilised two different research instruments, a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix C) to collect data from key informants and a focus group guide (see Appendix B) to facilitate the discussion amongst focus group members during the process of data collection. Fouché and Schurink (2011) suggest that semi-structured interviews comprises of open-ended questions which allow the researcher to probe so as to gain clarity or elaboration and it has more flexibility to both the researcher and the participant. This allowed the researcher to gather information on their views regarding factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance in Government schools in the area of Duduza Township, a community on the East Rand in Gauteng. The semi-structured interview schedule contained questions which were used as a guide and sequencing of the questions was not the same for every participant. However, it allowed for detailed and in-depth collection of data. A focus group discussion guide was used as a research instrument with learner participants. According to Gibbs (1997), focus group interviewing is particularly suited for obtaining several perspectives about the same topic. These instruments assisted the researcher to explore and elicit information to understand the factors and challenges that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance at school from the views of educators and learners.

3.7 PRE-TESTING THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Pre-testing is the administration of the data collection instrument with a small set of participants from the population, merely to ascertain certain trends (Neuman, 2006; Strydom & Delport, 2011). The semi-structured interview schedule was pretested on one key informant and two learners above 18 years in grade 10-12 was pretested using the focus group discussion guide for learners. These participants and their contributions were not included in the actual study. Thus, the research tools were pre-tested to establish the relevance and applicability of the research questions. The outcome of the pre-testing of the research instruments were that the questions were clear and participants understood them

3.8 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews were used to collect data from the six key informants. This method of data collection enabled the researcher to probe and gain clarity regarding the topic in question. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. According to Richard and Grinnell (1993), face-to-face semi-structured interviews have

flexibility and allow the researcher to probe and seek clarification and it also allows participants to openly share their views.

A focus group is described as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experiences to views on the topic that is relevant to the research study (Powell, 1996 cited in Gibbs, 1997). Focus group discussions were used with learner participants. Babbie and Mouton (2001) expressed that when using focus groups, the researcher should bear in mind the size of the group and number of groups you will facilitate. Five students per school were grouped into a group, and because the group was small, it enabled face to face interactions amongst all members of the group. Each participant contributed during the focus group session because the researcher used the round robin technique. This drew upon all participants' views, feelings, beliefs and experiences about the topic being investigated. Through interaction participants also asked one another questions which might have led to them re-evaluating and reconsidering their understanding of their own experiences (Gibbs, 1997). The researcher could also observe the non-verbal behavior during the group discussions which revealed something about the attitudes of the participants. Each focus group session lasted approximately 60 minutes and in the end, the researcher conducted three focus group sessions instead of four as planned with the learners. Reasons being the principal from the fourth school denied the researcher access stating that they do not have children above 18years that are underperforming. One of the disadvantages of using this instrument is that the researcher has less control over the data produced and some members of the group are more confident than others and able to articulate their views unlike the more quiet participants.

Data collection only began after gaining permission from the Department of Education (see Appendix F AND G), consent from the study participants (see Appendix H, I AND J) and after ethics clearance (see Appendix E) had been received. A participant information sheet (see Appendices A) and consent forms were provided to the participants. The researcher explained the nature of the study to the participants. The interviews and the focus groups took place at a venue that is conducive and convenient to the participants. The interview questions prepared in English and English was used as a mode of communication in collecting data. The researcher used an audio-tape recorder in all interviews and during focus groups and prior to the interviews and focus groups, the researcher obtained consent from the different participants for the use of tape recording (see Appendix D). The advantage of tape recording according to De Vos et al (2011) is that the researcher can focus on the proceeding of the

method of data collection and it also allows for the researchers to go back and verify the information at a later stage during the data analysis.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis is to transform the data into findings, and through the process bring meaning to the data collected. This is supported by Creswell (2003, p.190), who state that "the process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image." According to Babbie (2007, p. 378) qualitative data analysis is the "…nonnumeric examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships". Qualitative research data can be analysed using different methods which are conceptualising, coding and memo writing. Conceptualising is one way that a researcher organises and makes sense of data into categories on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features. According to Struwig and Stead (2007, p. 169) coding can be described "as making use of codes which are attached to various themes." Therefore, codes are used to study brief actions, interview transcripts of participants and the participation of people in a setting in order to gain understanding. Creswell (2003) outlines several steps that can be followed in the process of qualitative data analysis and these will be explained in detail. The first step is to organise and prepare all raw data which was collected. Hence, the researcher transcribed all interviews, typed field notes as well as scanning of material that was collected. Secondly, the researcher has to read through all the data. Therefore, the researcher carefully read and re-read all the data that was collected and reflect on the overall meaning of the data pertaining to the factors that were contributing to unsatisfactory performance in public high schools in the black community of Duduza. Thus, the researcher understood the general ideas of participants and their perceptions regarding the study. The third step is for the researcher to do a detailed analysis for coding and making use of Tesch's eight step method of analysing data. Through coding of data, the researcher identified topics that emerged from the information provided and organised them into sections. The fourth step is to use the coding process to generate a detailed description of the participants as well as categories or themes for analyses. Thereafter the information was put into themes and subthemes by the researcher and it was presented in the qualitative narrative. Lastly, the researcher understood and made meaning of the data and this was done through comparing information gathered from finding of the study with the literature reviewed.

3.10 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The researcher utilised Guba's guidelines to ensure trustworthiness in the research study. Trustworthiness is described by Polit and Hungler, (1999, p.470) as cited by Frood (2007, p. 38) as "a term used in the evaluation of qualitative data, assessed through criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability." (This is supported by the view of Struwig and Stead (2007) who explains validation which is similar to trustworthiness. Therefore, the following were the criteria considered in ensuring the trustworthiness of the research, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.10.1 Credibility

Fenton and Mazulewicz (2008, p.1) define "credibility as the degree to which the results represent the original data." Therefore, credibility implies if the researcher has confidence in the "truth" of the findings, this ensures validity of the research and trustworthiness of the study. According to De Vos et al. (2011), triangulation is one of the strategies used to increase the credibility of a qualitative study. In this study triangulation was accomplished through in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups sessions with two different groups of participants and the different groups' responses were verified by comparing it to one another. Credibility was ensured through referential adequacy which refers to the fact that interviews and focus group sessions were audio-taped and the researcher also kept some notes.

3.10.2 Transferability

De Vos et al. (2011, p. 420) argue that transferability is when "the researcher asks whether the findings of the research can be transferred from a specific situation or case to another". Hence, transferability can be described as the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalised to the broader population. Purposive sampling was used as a sampling procedure and this implies that within a similar context it is likely that some of the findings might be transferable. Guba and Lincoln (1984) cited in Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 277) suggested "thick description as a strategy for transferability". The researcher explored the different factors in depth and was provided with sufficient and detailed information relevant to the context which will be presented in the report

3.10.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the reliability of the research data collected. According to Fenton and Mazulewicz (2008, p.1) dependability also implies "the quality of the research as a whole for example data collection and analysis." Devault (2014) argues that reliability is dependent upon validity and this in turn refers to the credibility of the research study. Therefore, dependability is a qualitative alternative where the assumption is that the social world does not change hence when the study is repeated in the same context with the same participants, the results would not change (De Vos, et al, 2011). It focuses on consistency implying to whether the findings would be consistent if the enquiry were replicated with the same participants or in a similar context. To ensure dependability within the study the researcher used overlapping methods for instance focus group discussions and individual interviews hence this allows the study to be repeated.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability can be defined as "a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected" (Lincoln & Guba (cited in Fenton &Mazulewicz, 2008).Thus confirmability ensures a degree of neutrality or the extent in which the finding of the study are shaped by participants not the researcher's bias or interest. The researcher should be objective rather that subjective in the data analysis and findings. Guba and Lincoln (1984) cited in Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggested a confirmability audit that is an adequate trail should be left to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by inquiry. Therefore, the researcher used raw data that is written field notes, documents, recorded audiotapes, theoretical notes and process notes which are available to ensure confirmability. The researcher further attempted to ensure confirmability by safeguarding against attaching pre-conceived ideas or own perceptions to the experiences of the participants. This was achieved through maintaining neutrality, avoiding being judgmental and being mindful while becoming closely involved with the participants' experiences.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A variety of codes of ethics have been formulated by professional societies to underpin the various ethical issues. Although a code of ethics exists, it is still the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that he/she conducts research in a responsible and professional manner. Prior to commencing the study, the researcher submitted the research proposal to the

University's Ethics committee to obtain ethical clearance. The researcher carried out the study after obtaining approval from the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), protocol number H15/06/43. The researcher submitted a letter to the Research Unit at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) for permission to conduct the research study in the schools in Duduza area. Permission was received from GDE (see Appendix F AND G). During the research process the researcher was mindful of the following ethical issues.

3.11.1 Voluntary participation

The participant information sheet was given and explained to participants to inform them about the research study (see Appendix A). Babbie and Mouton (2001) argue that no one should be forced to participate in any research study. Therefore, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. The participants were informed that there were no incentives attached to participating in the study. Participants were informed that they have the right to refrain from answering any questions that they do not feel comfortable to answer. Before commencing the interview, the researcher discussed with the participants the contents of the participation information sheet and consent form to ensure if they have understood the contents of the consent form.

3.11.2 Informed consent

Obtaining informed consent from participants was the next ethical principle the researcher attended to. Informed consent is described by Babbie (2007, p. 64), "as a norm in which subjects base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved." Obtaining informed consent implies that all possible information should be communicated to all parties concerned. The researcher ensured that all participants read and understood the contents of the participant sheet before giving consent. The researcher emphasised to the participants that participation is voluntary hence no incentives were attached to participating. Written consent was obtained from participants to partake in the study and also to tape-record the interviews and focus group discussions. To ensure this the researcher requested every participant to show their consent to participate in the research project through participants' signing the informed consent forms. All the participants were older than 18 years hence no need for parental consent

3.11.3 Avoidance of harm

It is the responsibility of the researcher to take precaution and prevent participants to be harmed physically or emotionally during the course of the research study. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 522) stated that "social research should never injure the people being studied regardless of whether they volunteer for the study or not." Therefore, the researcher needed to safeguard participants against any danger that may affect them during the research. The researcher divulged all the necessary information beforehand to the participants as part of the obligation to protect participants form both physical and emotional harm. In doing so the researcher thoroughly informed participants about the potential impact or effects of the investigations. Hence, the researcher explained to participants that they could withdraw from the study should they feel uncomfortable at any time. And also the researcher arranged free counseling to participants should they feel upset or distressed after they participated in the research study.

3.11.4 Anonymity

Anonymity is defined as of unknown name, of unknown authorship (Concise Oxford Dictionary). Babbie (2007) expressed that anonymity will be guaranteed if neither the researcher nor the readers of the research findings can identify a given response with a given respondent. Therefore, anonymity within the individual interviews was observed in that the collected data was not identified to individual participants and their identities were protected during the data analysis and reporting process, through the use of pseudonyms. The researcher noted that anonymity could not be guaranteed during the focus group discussions due to the participants were aware of their group member's names and grades. Therefore, the researcher emphasised on anonymity of data. With regards to data analysis of focus group discussions participants were identified using their pseudonyms and the number of group their participated in. Anonymity in focus group discussions was not guaranteed due to the researcher had to link the individual responses with the participants' identities with the certain group.

3.11.5 Confidentiality

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines confidentiality as 'spoken or written in confidence; charged with secrets. Therefore, confidentiality is an adherence to privacy. The clearest concern in the protection of subjects' interest and wellbeing is the protection of their identity especially in the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Confidentially was upheld by the

researcher and anonymity was maintained by the discretion of names. The researcher made sure to notify participants that during the process data will be shared amongst the researcher and supervisor. Hence, maintaining confidentiality of information collected from the research participants the researcher was the only one who could identify the responses of the participants. The researcher made effort to prevent anyone outside of the project from connecting individual participants with their responses.

3.11.6 Deception

Corey et al. (1993) in De Vos et al. (2011) describes deception as withholding information or offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation of subjects. Therefore, the researcher did not mislead the participants either through or verbal instructions, actions or aspects of setting. The researcher was honest and provided all necessary information and clarifications to all participants for them to make informed decisions. The participants were informed that there would be no benefits (monetary, goods or service) attached to participating or not participating in the study.

3.11.7 Participants' access to research findings

A summary of the study's key findings was made available to participants. The researcher informed participants that the research article will be available to participants for them to be aware of the findings. The researcher submitted an electronic/hard copy of the research report and research summary as part of the requirements by the Research Unit at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

3.11.8 Dissemination of Results

In terms of the dissemination of results, the researcher was responsible to inform the participants about possible publication of the study. A summary of the study's key findings was made available to participants.

3.12 SUMMARY

This chapter has detailed the research methodology utilised in this research study. The ethical principles and how it was dealt with during the study was explained. The analysed data and research findings will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is essentially aimed at presenting and discussing the empirical findings of the study. Thus, the profile of the participants will be presented. The context in terms of where the research study was done will be provided. The themes identified from the analysed data will be discussed in relation to applicable literature and supported by the voices of the participants. The findings will be discussed in relation to the different objectives of the study.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Two groups of participants from three different public high schools participated in the study. Six key informants from three public high schools were interviewed. Fifteen learners participated in three focus group discussions at the three public high schools. Pseudonyms are used in order to safeguard the identities of participants. The demographic profiles of the two groups of participants are presented in the two tables below.

Table 1 Demographic information of key informants (N=6)

Demographic factors	Sub-Category	No.
Gender of key informants	Male	1
	Female	5
Age of key informants	41-50 years	2
	51-60 years	4
Qualification of key informants	B. Ed	6
Relation to the learners	Head of Department	5
Above 18years	Deputy Principal	1
Post Qualification Experience	11-20 years	1
	21-30 years	4
	31-40 years	1

Table 1 above shows that there were six interviewees who participated in the study as key informants (educators). Participation in this study was based on willingness to participate (voluntary participation) as well as availability during the study. Participants were also

supposed to meet the selection criteria as outlined in the previous chapter. All key informants were selected from the three different public high schools based in the township of Duduza, in the East rand of Gauteng.

Of the six key informants, one was a Deputy Principal whilst five were Head of Departments at their respective schools. Inclusion of Head of Departments and a Deputy Principal in the study enabled triangulation of sources which in turn enhanced credibility of the research findings. In total all educators were six comprising one male and the rest were females. The reason of having too many females was due to availability of educators for the study. The majority of the key informants had at least five years' experience at the particular school and post qualification experience of ten years. This indicates that all the key informants had considerable knowledge with regards to the challenges experienced by learners in the Basic Education Curriculum. All participants were in possession of a B.Ed. Degree. The researcher conducted individual interviews with key informants (educators) from the 21st -23rd of February 2016 Interviews were done at their respective schools.

Table 2 Demographic profile of learners (N=15)

Demographic factors	Sub-Category	No.
Gender of learner	Male	8
	Female	7
Age of learner	19 years	9
	20 years	5
	21 years	1
Race	Black African	15
Grade level	Grade 10	1
	Grade 11	7
	Grade 12	7
Number of repeated grade	Once	9
	Twice	5
	Thrice	1

In total, as depicted by the above Tables 2, all participants were fifteen, comprising 8 males and 7 females, drawn from three Secondary Schools in Duduza area. Participants were also supposed to meet the selection criteria as outlined in the previous chapter. Duduza is a

township west of Nigel on the East Rand in Gauteng. The area comprises 98.9% Black African residents hence participants were all Black African.

4.3RESEARCH SETTING-DUDUZA COMMUNITY

The researcher conducted her study in Duduza, a township west of Nigel on the East Rand in Gauteng. It consists of 16 schools including primary schools. The area has 5 secondary schools that cater for the children with in the area. The researcher selected three secondary schools out of five; these three schools gave consent for the researcher to conduct her study. According to the researcher observation, Duduza area faces a number of social ills that comprises of high rates of crime and violence, poverty, the people in reliant to hand-outs, high rates of unemployment, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy to name a few. The learners in the area come from families that are disadvantaged, some of the learners are orphans and some are raised by single parents. In 2015 the Duduza pass rate decreased, the highest school had a pass rate of 92.21% and the rest of the schools had a pass rate below 69%. Most of the learners in this area have unsatisfactory performance because they are de-motivated and disadvantaged due to their socio-economic background.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM THE COLLECTED DATA

A detailed discussion of the identified themes and main findings of this study will be presented. Collecting data from two different groups of participants' generated rich data and the researcher took a reasonably long time to immerse into the data to identify the themes and sub themes and to get a better understanding of how the data relate to the research question, aims and objectives. Thus, data was reviewed repeatedly to ensure that the report would be grounded on the participants' voices. Polit and Beck (2008, p.507) contend that "qualitative research generates large quantities of data, hence, condensing, organising and making meaning of this mass of data is the most time consuming part of the study."

Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data and in presenting the data and findings of this study, the researcher will make use of the descriptive-narrative text to aid the data presentation and interpretation. Hancock (2002) advises that the researcher can extract quotations from the transcripts of interviews to illustrate the 'why' or 'how' of the phenomena under study; the strength of opinion or belief; similarities and differences between the respondents and the breadth of ideas.The identified themes and sub-themes are

presented in table 3 and a detailed discussed in relation to the objectives of the study will follow.

Table 3 Summary of major themes and subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
1.Challenges experienced with the basic education curriculum	• English as a medium of communication in schools • Learner-educator relationship • Lack of commitment from learners/ Attitude towards learning • Lack of tailored teaching methods • The socio-economic background and environment of these learners • Overcrowding in classes • Condoned learners from primary school level • Substance abuse • Lack of parental support
2.Current support systems to assist those struggling academically	• Services offered by Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Social Development. • Education based Support Systems (School Based Support Team (SBST), FET colleges, SIP Programme from the Department of Education, The e-learning project /Gauteng online
3.Measures to address the challenges of poor performances	• Use of qualified and experienced teachers at higher grades • Teachers should desist from discriminating learners who have exceeded cut off age • Language policy

	• Improvement of learner's socio economic condition • Making use of Skills Trainings Institution /Technical Schools Improvement of Learning Outcomes

4.4.1 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED WITH THE BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM

One of the primary objectives of this study was to explore the challenges experienced by grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years with the Basic Education curriculum within the South African context. Both groups of participants shared their views, and challenges experienced in relation to the aforementioned curriculum. The following sub themes emerged.

4.4.1.1 English as a medium of communication in schools

English as the medium of communication came up as the most dominant sub theme evident in the individual interviews with teachers and also in focus group discussion with learners. All the educators unanimously stated that the use of English as a medium of communication is really the biggest challenge impacting negatively on learners' performances. The following responses are illustrative of how a serious challenge English language is as a medium of communication is.

It was mentioned by one of the participants that *"Learners were raised and socialized in their African languages and their vocabulary is more matured in African language and therefore learning in English is extremely difficult…. it takes time for these learners to understand; progress is hindered and a teacher has to take days explaining same concepts and content for learners to understand (*AP*)."*

Another participant noted that *"With the introduction of CAPS which is content based, it requires a learner to experiment new ideas and have an enquiry mind and thus, good understanding of English language is expected in order for these learners to contextualize concepts and to master the content (*MM*)."*

However, although it appears to be a major challenge, it seems that there is progress. One of the participants stated that

*"English is another challenge, but I think our children are coping; it depends on educators though, I feel it is not as bad as it used to be…The medium of communication has always been English but it is no longer as bad as it used to be. We have a policy at school that teachers who teach languages should work hand in hand with other non-language teachers in assisting learner (*AN*)."*

Thus, from the responses above, it is evident that English language, as a medium of instruction in schools, is a real and daunting challenge that impact on learners' academic progress. This was also observed during the focus group discussions with learners as they continuously struggled to express themselves in English. Learners acknowledged during the focus group discussions that indeed learning and expressing themselves in English was a challenge. Accordingly, learners suggested that the content should be delivered in their own languages so that they can understand better.

One focus group participant suggested that *"Yes English is a problem. I think these teachers must teach us in our own language or explain these big [English] words till we all understandFG1B."*

This is consistent with other research findings that the English language is a barrier to learners' academic progress and achievement. In a study done by (Mji and Makgato, 2006) it was confirmed that learners perform poorly because they find it hard to understand the language of instruction and this affects their comprehension of the concepts and content of the subject. The government's language policy which introduced other African languages as part of the curriculum is likely to enhance performance since the use of only English and Afrikaans as the medium of communication in schools are negatively affecting those speaking African languages (South Africa Yearbook 2013/14).

4.4.1.2 Learner-educator relationship

Participants in focus group discussions share similar concerns regarding teachers' attitudes toward those who seem to be struggling or taking time (slow) to master the concepts and content of the subject presented to them. According to these learners, some teachers have no

patience toward those who take time to comprehend the content. The following comments by participants affirm the above suggestion.

One of the focus group participants explained *"Some teachers will tell you that they will proceed with those who are serious and those who are not you can remain behind (FG1A).*"

Another focus group participant stated *"Others [teachers] take everything personal and end up being angry for no reason; we expect them to behave as parents to us[rather] than teasing us, calling us names..... and [we] will be afraid to ask them where we do not understand* (FG2B)."

"Learning relationship is not good...If you don't understand something we will be afraid to ask, I think at school we should be able to communicate with our teachers and the relationship should be friendly (FG1C)." was argued by another focus group participant.

Some participants reported that some teachers do not even care about their performance. One of the focus group participants stated

"Some teachers would tell you that my children are attending private school so I don't even care; it's up to you (FG1D)."

The attitudes described above might easily be experienced by learners 18 and older but still attending school as discriminatory and discerning. The following comment by one of the educators clearly affirms what the learners described as an "attitude":

"When you see a learner aged 18 or above in grade 8, 9 or 10 then you know these are the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) laughs! That's what we call them. Then you know as a teacher you are in trouble because these learners they lack motivation, they are struggling, they are not serious at all. It is these learners who have been progressed from primary school. If you don't progress them further they start to disrupt classes, bunk lessons, display anti-social behavior because they feel out of place in the current grade. You have to let them proceed (AP)."

As reflected by the comments above, learners are de-motivated by teachers whose attitude is unfriendly and somewhat unprofessional and educators are also frustrated because of the education system requiring learners to be progressed whether they have made the grade or

not. This theme is in line with observations made by other researchers. Jansen (2009) highlights the importance of educators in the lives of students, putting emphasis on the relationships between a learner and educator as essential in building and enhancing student's motivation and academic performance. Iwu, Gwija, Benedict and Tengeh (2013, p.840) concur that if "teachers lack the drive and the enthusiasm to prepare lesson notes and the learning material, poor results are inevitable."

4.4.1.3 Lack of commitment from learners/ Attitude towards learning

The majority of the educator participants mentioned that learners lack the zest, passion and motivation towards learning. According to these educators it is this negative attitude towards learning that is contributing significantly to their poor performances. The educators' sentiments regarding the above are captured by the following comments.

One of the educator participants stated *"They do not obey the rules; they do not participate except the clever ones- those who know the content. They don't bother to attend extra lessons. They are only visible when we check latecomers that's when you can find them there (MT)."*

Another educator participant argued *"The curriculum nowadays is learner centred and requires maximum participation from learners themselves yet learners are not cooperative enough.....they are not committed to their studies. You give them work to do they don't do it…… in class they don't participate busy doing something and distracting other learners who are serious and committed to their studies (AP)."*

Although focus group participants tended to blame teachers for their failure to achieve academically, some indirectly acknowledged during the focus group discussions that they do not play their own part.

One of the focus group participants mentioned *"Sometimes when you have problems at home you will be absent minded eskoleni (at school), you cannot concentrate in class (FG3B)."*

Another focus group participant stated *"It's hard to concentrate because these teachers do not motivate us, some they do but some they blame us, they don't even care about us, they have attitude towards us (FG3C)."*

These findings are congruent with findings in previous studies. According to a study done by Legotlo et al (2002, p.115) it was mentioned that "educators in the sampled schools were of the view that some learners were performing badly because of ill-discipline and uncontrollable behavior." The relationship between the educator and the learners are at risk due to the behavior from both parties and creates an unproductive learning environment that will inevitably render academic success to be affected (Legotlo et al, 2002).

4.4.1.4 Lack of tailored teaching methods

Learners lamented the fact that they are given new teachers straight from university, teachers who lack teaching experience and for them this is a setback as this cohort of teachers is allegedly accused of being inexperienced, devoid of teaching methods and strategies and lacking adequate knowledge about the content of their subjects. Furthermore, they do not necessarily understand the learners' background and context (learning challenges) and therefore they come across as insensitive to the learning challenges learners are encountering. The following comments are illustrative:

One of the focus group participants explained *"Every year we are getting new teachers from universities and those teachers do not understand our backgrounds (learning challenges) at the end of the day we are going to fail, and they will say you guys you are 'dom'(dull) you don't understand this and that... We need teachers whom we are used to, those who understand our learning challenges and backgrounds. We don't want these teachers they must be given to grades 8 and 9 not us (FG3D)."*

Another focus group participant stated "Some of them will just say we are professionals we just teach the way we are supposed to teach so if you don't understand it's not my problem (FG2E)."

According to the focus group participants, newly trained educators do not know how to adjust their learning methods or strategies to ensure that it meets the needs and the level of understanding of the learners they are teaching. To them, all learners are on the same level and they apply a uniform approach in their teaching forgetting that there are those in class who have learning challenges and who needs a different approach of teaching. This corroborates with other research findings that berates this calibre of teachers, arguing that they contribute to poor performance of learners. Again, it is evident that this group of

teachers are alleged to be lacking basic content knowledge resulting in poor teaching standards (DoE 2001).

4.4.1.5 The socio-economic background and environment of these learners

The socio economic background and environment is used here as an umbrella term to refer to the learners' family backgrounds, educational backgrounds of their families and community characteristics such as the prevalence of drugs, poverty, availability of social amenities and recreational facilities and the general quality of life in that community. Duduza community where this research was conducted is well known for high poverty and illiteracy levels, housing mainly consists of squatter camps, unemployment is very high and there is a high prevalence of crime and drugs are freely available and used.

Both group of participants shared the same concerns about the negative impact the environment has on the learners' academic progress and achievements.

One of the educator participants referred to the educational levels of parents and mentioned *"The level of education of these parents is another problem they will tell you that they do not know about this new curriculum and therefore can't assist (AN)."*

Another educator participant stated *"It's true. Most learners are using drugs and you can see the way they behave in the class how they relate with teachers and other learners that they are on drugs (AP)."*

Focus group participants conceded that drugs impede school progress, impact on their concentration, attitude towards schooling, behaviour in class and relationship with the teachers. One of the focus group participants mentioned *"You cannot expect a learner to concentrate when you (the learner) have (has) problems at home (FG1A)."*

Another focus group participant revealed *"The use of drugs is high and it's not only the learners even the teachers also use drugs (FG3E)."*

The above responses clearly show that learners are faced with a myriad of challenges ranging from poverty, lack of parental support and motivation due to illiteracy and the use of drugs which is prevalent in their community.

Many research studies consistently show that students' academic achievement is influenced by background of family characteristics, community where the learner lives, such as socio-economic status of parents and the general populace in that community(Engin-Demir, 2009). Such conditions do not provide a conducive environment for academic excellence. Other researchers have found that several school environmental factors such as the availability of instructional materials, school location and quality of the physical facilities, class size and pupil-teacher ratios, teacher qualification and experience, and supervision have influence on the learners' academic achievement or performance (Adell, 2002).

These findings resonate with Ecological Systems Theory which postulates that environment play a significant role in a learner's achievement and performance. Bronfenbrenner (1986) propounds that the development of the individual is a culmination of many direct and indirect influences, which either facilitate or impede the individual's potential. This theory suggests that people's surroundings, be it home, school, work, church, neighbourhood, culture and government, all have significant influence and impact on the child's development(Donald, et al., 2010; Berk, 2007).

It is therefore, within this framework that the above comments justify this theoretical approach in trying to comprehend the unsatisfactory academic performances presented by learners.

4.4.1.6 Overcrowding in classes

Educators reported that classes are overcrowded and they find it difficult to give individual attention to learners because classes are full to capacity. This is aptly captured by the following quotes from the teachers:

One educator stated that *"You would find that a class has about 45 to 52 learners especially grades 10, has got the highest numbers of both classes and learners at this school. Teachers are overwhelmed and cannot cope and you can imagine the pressure that the teachers have to deal with (AN)."*

Another educator concurred *"We are lacking resources, few schools and many learners so our classes are really overcrowded and it's difficult to deal with learners who are overcrowded (MM)."*

The study's findings corroborates with a number of research studies done that reported

overcrowding to negatively impact teaching and learning. Bayat, et al (2014) confirms that most underperforming schools were found to have teacher to learner ratio of 40 learners per teacher higher than the provincial recommended average of 29 learners per teacher. Classrooms, especially in some rural areas are reportedly overcrowded and teachers are overworked and the unavoidable result of this is the decline in the quality of teaching and learning (Bayat et al, 2014).The unavailability of resources such as material for instruction, the limited infrastructure of schools, where schools are located, the questionable qualifications, experience and quality of teachers, teacher learner ratios and the lack of monitoring and supervision all have a negative influence on the learners' academic performance and achievements (Adell, 2002).

Hall and De Lannoy (2012) further argue that overcrowded classrooms result in a high Learner-to-Educator Ratio (LER) which hampers learning. They further warn that large classes make it difficult for learners to ask questions when they do not understand the work being taught and they get limited attention due to the large number of learners assigned to one educator

4.4.1.7 Condoned learners from primary school level

Teachers lamented the fact that they are at the receiving end of learners who have been progressed from primary school despite the fact that they cannot read and write. To them, this is a huge challenge since they then have to start with the basics. The following comments illustrate the frustrations teachers have regarding learners who had been condoned from primary school.

One educator argued that *"We are receiving learners from primary school who can't read and write and when they come to secondary school it takes time for these learners to master concepts as we have to start from the basics they should have done at primary level (AN)."*

Another teacher concurred *"Our education system is failing our children; their policy that states that learner should not be in the same grade twice or thrice implies that learners even if they fail can be progressed to the next level. What this entails is that we end up receiving learners who are struggling at secondary level because they would have been progressed before they could understand basics at primary levels. It is these learners who are giving us problems (MM)."*

This point of argument is also supported by another teacher who stated that *"The challenges we are experiencing in this regard are the inability of learners coming from primary school who can't read and write, that is the first challenge and imagine at Grade 10 or 12starting afresh to acquaint them with the basics that is reading and writing! (AN)."*

This deplorable culture of condoning or progressing learners is consistent with literature. Bayat, et al (2014) argue that teachers ignore a significant learning problem and resort to condoning learners to the next grade just to avoid the bulk of work that accompanies referring a learner for educational assessment.

4.4.1.8 Substance abuse

Both groups of participants in this study complained that there is a problem of drugs in their communities and that some learners and even some teachers are using drugs. Accordingly, the use of drugs was cited as another contributing factor impacting on the learner's performance. One focus group participant stated *"Sometimes when you have taken drugs it's difficult to concentrate in class.... but even teachers also take drugs at school it's not only learners(FG3C)."*

Another focus group participant added *"The use of drugs is high and it's not only the learners even the teachers also use drugs (FG2B)."*

The above comments were echoed by another focus group participant *"Both learners and teachers use drugs it's not only learners even some of the teachers also use drugs (FG1B)."*

Another focus group participant concurred *"It is difficult to concentrate in class when you are on drugs or when you have problems at home; some learners come to school without eating anything (FG1E)."*

Educators also share the same notion as illustrate below.

One educator stated *"Duduza area is full of drugs, crime, dysfunctional families and therefore this is impacting negatively on the learners' performance. There is this common drug, they call it Nyaope. Learners are addicted to it (AP)."*

Another educator reported "People in the community are taking advantage of poverty and use these learners to sell drugs for them. At the end of the day learners are more into drugs business than learning (AN)."

The correlation of substance abuse and academic performances in well documented in the literature. Research has found that use of drugs has cognitive effects which entails memory loss, poor concentration in academic work, affect student quality of learning, and academic performance (Renna, 2008; Eneh and Stanley, 2004; Brown et al, 2000).Thus, the findings of this study are consistent with and confirm findings of previous studies.

4.4.1.9 Lack of parental support

Another critical challenge highlighted by both groups of participants, as a contributing factor to learners' poor achievement was the lack of parental support. Participants argued that parental support in the form of motivation, active involvement in their children's educational lives by for example attending parental meetings called by school, is paramount if learners are to achieve in their learning. Unfortunately, educator participants indicated that parents are not motivating or giving their children the maximum support they need to excel. The following responses clearly confirm how the lack of parental support which is indispensable for learners' achievements negatively affects their progress

One educator stated *"Parental support is not 100%, even if parental meetings are called, they don't attend,... in fact learners have a tendency of "renting a parent" where by the go out there, ask someone to pretend as a parent. At the end of the day you would have talked to someone who is not a parent. Most of these parents don't even care what's going on. They don't check their children's' books or assist in their homework* (AP)."

Another teacher who upon probed as to what she thinks is the reason for parents' non participation in their children' academic life, reverberates the above assertion arguing

"Most parents are illiterate and do not know the importance of education (MT)."

This is also supported by another educator who stated *"The families where these learners are coming from is not motivating enough; the community itself has got its challenges and therefore learners are confronted and trapped within these challenges, you see them*

resorting to drugs, some especially ladies getting pregnancies, some absconding, some drooping out of school then you realise it's these socio economic challenges (AN)."

Another teacher concurred *"Parents of these learners are also a problem, when called for meetings they don't even attend and I wonder if they even check their children's books. If we call them to come for parental meetings they don't but when you call them for registration of grants for these learners they come in numbers. At the end of the day you will just conclude they are after grant and are not concerned about the education of their children (MM)."*

Another teacher added *"Students rent parents. When requested to bring parents they bring people who they would have paid to masquerade as parent. At the end of the day you would have talked to someone who is not a learner to the parent. Some parents are ignorant, don't know the importance of education and therefore do not motivate children and do not even cooperate with the school (AP)"*

The above statement was also echoed by the other educator stating that *"Parents they only come to school when filling forms for SASSA... yes SASSA do come to school and learners and parents complete the forms here. Therefore, parents are motivated by grants. To these parents, it is no longer a grant but a source of income; a source of livelihood. Actually, it's their salary (AN)."*

Empirical evidence has shown thatwhen parents are involved in school activities children perform well academically (Christenson et al., 2005; Hoover-Dampsey et al., 2005).The same observation were made by Spaull (2011) who posits that most parents in South Africa are semi- illiterate and the effects of this inadequate education mean that children of impoverished parents are likely to be poor themselves. This situation is not unique to South Africa as another study conducted in Kenya also confirmed the importance of parental support to learner achievement (Mbugua, et al 2012; Bayat, et al 2014). Thus, the findings of this study resonate with existing literatures that have linked lack of parental involvement to learner's poor academic achievement. The issue of parental involvement was however not seen as a challenge by focus group participant despite being a serious issue with the educators.

4.5 CURRENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS TO ASSIST THOSE STRUGGLING ACADEMICALLY

As part of the objectives of this study, the researcher wanted to explore with educators the current support systems available to assist grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years to accomplish acceptable levels of performance. Educators interviewed in this study all professed ignorance of programmes specifically meant for those who are 18 years and beyond, rather they were willing to share their knowledge of programmes that are designed for all who have learning challenges and not necessarily for 18 years and above. The researcher did not explore this theme with learners because the learners were unaware of the current support systems that exist to assist them. The following emerged from the interviews.

4.5.1 Services offered by Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Social Development.

The educators acknowledged the work done by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Social Development. The former sponsor the feeding scheme meant to feed learners from poor families who come to school with empty stomachs while the latter offer psych social support in terms of counselling, visiting schools registering learners for SASSA grants. To these teachers, such services enhance concentration of learners in class, give motivation to learners and accordingly, help to improve performances.

"One teacher stated "*Yes we feed the learners here at school. I think the department is doing good work because some of the learners come to school with empty stomachs. Remember in this area [Duduza], most people are very poor; they are squatter camps all over*. AN."

4.5.2 Education based Support Systems

School Based Support Team (SBST)

Located within the schools is the SBST whose role is to identify learners with psycho-social challenging and provide counselling, support and motivation and any other services, the learners might be in need of. One teacher stated

"In our school, and I am sure that is the norm in all other schools, we have the support team, the school based support team whose primary mandate is to assist learners with social, psychological and even learning challenge. They are there to provide counselling for stress

trauma, assist in referring learners for educational assessment, they work hand in hand with the families of these learners in addressing challenges that these learners are facing (AP)."

The other educator added that *"There were also teachers who were taken from the SBST in the past 5 to 6 years and underwent training to assist children that are slow but honestly speaking that programme is not working, learners are not turning up, but surprisingly, in primary schools it's functional. I do not know whether its peer pressure or what but learners are not generally interested (AN)."*

FET colleges

Educators identified Further Education and Training (FET) colleges as one of the measures put in place to assist those who are struggling academically. FET colleges provide theory and practical education (technical skills) in many vocations including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, forestry and mining and prepare students for work place environment. However, educators reported that parents are reluctant to utilise this opportunity. The reasons why parents are not willing to send their children to FET colleges are best captured by the following comments from these educators.

One teacher argued *"We have exposed these parents and made them aware that there are FET colleges where they can enrol their learners rather than progressing their learners to higher grades but these parents are reluctant to hear this. They think these schools are for those who have learning challenges (AN)."*

Another teacher concurred adding that *"We always tell parents to refer learners to FET colleges because we are not remedial teachers. But most parents they don't want to. They will come up with lots of excuses such as lack of transport money, fees to pay at these colleges..... Some they even think that these colleges are for those who are dom(dull) AP."*

SIP Programme from the Department of Education

The SIP (School Improvement Plan) pioneered by the District, group together learners who are academically gifted and educators who are excelling in their subjects on Saturdays and Sundays. They are then given the opportunity to go and teach at other struggling schools. Also those who are struggling to cope are grouped in camps during holidays and are taught by subject specialists, given educational materials and all the resources they need to excel.

One teacher stated *"I know of the SIP programme which is School Improvement Plan supported by the district. Learners particularly matriculants who are excelling in their subjects are grouped together and given the chance to teach and mentor fellow students who are struggling. The same applies to the teachers who are also excelling in their teaching areas. They are camped during holidays and deployed to struggling schools to teach those subjects they have exceptional knowledge of. Even those in ICU (Learners who have learning challenges) are also organised into camps for the holidays and taught by subject specialists, given all the educational material they need to excel (AP)."*

The e-learning project /Gauteng online

Gauteng online is another recently launched project. It is regarded as one of the provincial government flagship information and communication technology (ICT) project to provide computer literacy, and support the delivery of quality basic education, thereby creating sustainable e learning environment in public schools for learners to maximize their potential. Teachers described this project as a step in the right direction. However, teachers could not evaluate how effective the method is since it is a new project just launched a year ago.

One teacher stated *"The usage of tablets... Remember it was launched recently and neither teachers nor learners have knowledge of this and therefore training is ongoing. We haven't launched it yet because we still waiting for training (AN)."*

Another teacher also acknowledged the role of this technology *"The Gauteng online system is helping the learners as it is orienting the learners and equipping them with computer skills, how to search information on internet thus, preparing them for university level (N)."*

Participants in this study felt that the online system will help to ameliorate textbook shortages as it enables learners to access resource materials online and also help to deal with the learners' sole reliance on teachers for information or knowledge.

4.6 MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF POOR PERFORMANCES

One of the primary objectives of this study was to elicit suggestions from both educators and grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years about strategies that might contribute to improving their performance in public high schools.The suggestions proffered by both groups of the participants are discussed below.

4.6.1Use of qualified and experienced teachers at higher grades

Focus group participants agreed that they need qualified and experienced teachers, those who know their backgrounds and their challenges to continue with them up to grade 12 than being given new teachers every time and again. The following responses from participants are illustrative:

One focus group participant suggested *"We need teachers who are experienced to teach us not new teachers and those straight from school. These teachers they just teacher like everything is normal yet they forget we need extra help (FG1A)."*

Another focus group participant concurred *"They must not give us new teachers every time we don't want new teachers. We want to continue with teachers who know us, who know our backgrounds and our situations to continue with us than being given new teachers every year (FG2E)."*

The focus group participants are of the opinion that for continuity it is better to continue with the teachers who they are familiar with and who are familiar with their learning challenges than being given new teachers. Generally, focus group participants were very sceptical of new teachers; they do not have trust and confidence in them.

4.6.2Teachers should desist from discriminating learners who have exceeded cut off age

For most of the focus group participants, teachers seem to have attitudes toward learners who have surpassed the cut of age but who are still attending school. This does not motivate them but scapegoat them and make them feel worthless. When probed further for suggestions as to what they would expect from their teachers for them to succeed, the following were some of the responses.

One focus group participant suggested *"We want love (treated fairly, just and non-discrimination on the basis of their learning abilities) from these teachers they should love us the way they love own children (FG1A)."*

Another focus group participant concurred *"They should treat us fairly and avoid discriminating us. They must stop insulting us saying we are dome (FG1C)."*

4.6.3Language policy

Consistent with research the majority of participants from both groups felt that learning in their own language is a key to their success. Although teachers did not propose the use of vernacular languages to be used as alternative medium of communication in school, all were unanimous in that English is a hurdle/challenge as learners are failing to grasp concepts and content in English. They pointed out that learners were raised and socialized their mother tongue and that it takes a while for learners to comprehend the content and technical concepts in English.

One educator argued *"Learners were raised and socialized in their African languages and their vocabulary is more matured in African language and therefore learning in English is extremely difficult…. it takes time for these learners to understand; progress is hindered and a teacher has to take days explaining same concepts and content for learners to understand(*AP*)."*

In addition, learners also indicated that language is a major hurdle to their achievement and would appreciate if concepts could be explained in their mother languages.

One focus group participant suggested that *"Yes English is a problem. I think these teachers must teach us in our own language or explain these big words till we all understandFG1B."*

Thus, the above concerns support the Department of Basic Education's new initiative that seeks to introduce African language to all learners from grades R to 9 from 2014.This initiative was born after realizing that African languages were not enjoying the same development and utility as English and Afrikaans (South Africa Yearbook 2013/14).Van Der Berg et al (2011) also argue that the quality of teaching English as First Additional Language (FAL) in the Foundation Phase need to be improved.

4.6.4Improvement of learner's socio economic conditions

Participants from both groups agreed that one of the challenges to learners' achievements is their socio-economic backgrounds. Educators agreed that there is poverty and availability of drugs in Duduza community were all impacting on learners' performance in class. Apart from the prevalence of drugs and poverty in the area, some of the educator participants speculated

that most residents in that community are semi-illiterate and do not necessarily value education at all. In line with all these socio-economic challenges, both teachers and learners in this study were united in that improvement of the socio economic circumstances of the community as a whole will enhance performance of learners. The following comments from participants reflect the impact of socio economic effects to learners' educational progress.

One educator argued *"Parents they only come to school when filling forms for SASSA... yes SASSA do come to school and learners and parents complete the forms here. Therefore, parents are motivated by grants. To these parents, it is no longer a grant but a source of income; a source of livelihood. Actually, it's their salary (AN)."*

One educator stated *"Duduza area is full of drugs, crime, dysfunctional families and therefore this is impacting negatively on the learners' performance. There is this common drug, they call it Nyaope. Learners are addicted to it (AP)."*

Another educator reported "People in the community are taking advantage of poverty and use these learners to sell drugs for them. At the end of the day learners are more into drugs business than learning (AN)."

The above comments highlight the socio economic characteristics of Duduza community where the study was conducted and how these impact on learner performances. The impact of socio economic circumstances on academic achievement is well documented in literature. Hendricks (2008) who acknowledges the initiative by South African government to introduce school feeding schemes as an attempt to alleviate or minimises the adverse effects of poverty on poor academic performance.

4.6.5Making use of Skills Trainings Institutions / Technical Schools

Some educators in this study proposed that instead of condoning or progressing learners, they should be directed to skills schools/ technical schools where they could learn productive skills or receive trainings that will make them employable and enable them to develop their potential and earn a living. The participants in focus groups (learners) were ignorant with regards to this theme mostly they emphasised on the challenges they are facing. One of the female school teacher recall her days a learner, she explained;

"During those days there were technical school where learners who were struggling academically would be diverted to earn a skill/training so they can be productive citizens. We need those schools today instead of progressing these learners (AP)."

Another educator stated *"Most parents are ignorant of the role of FET (Further Education and Training) colleges. Even if you encourage them to take children there, they would not because they think those colleges are meant for people with learning challenges (AN.)"*

Thus, diverting learners to FET colleges is seen as a remedy to learners with learning challenges especially those who would have reached the cut of ages but still in lower grades. This suggestion is inconsistent with the Department of Basic Education's decision to set up FET colleges.

4.6.6Improvement of Learning Outcomes

The majority of educators in this study strongly condemned a culture of mediocrity, which creates learners who are dependent, rather than being independent. One male teacher lamented the mismatch in terms of standards requirement between secondary schools and tertiary level. One educator argued *"The government has a policy that a learner cannot be in the same grade twice, meaning even if that learner is failing we just have to progress the learner to the next grade and besides, imagine! 30 % is considered a pass at secondary level yet at university that is totally unacceptable. These learners are relaxed and have this pride that they just want to reach grade 12 not necessarily to pass but just to complete matric (AN)."*

This resonates with literature for instance, Bayat et al (2014) argued that this situation is further perpetuated by what the authors regard as an 'inappropriate policy' that states that a learner may only be held *'back once'* in an educational phase. It is this policy that compels teachers to push learners to the next grade without them having mastered the necessary subject content and knowledge as per the curriculum (Bayat, et al 2014).Accordingly, it was suggested that learning outcomes or standards should be reviewed to match grades that are acceptable at universities. This is so because matric level is meant to prepare learners for university entry and thus, learners should be prepared to meet university standards.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented and discussed the empirical findings of the study obtained from a triangulation of semi structured interviews with educators and focus group discussions with learners 18 years and older and still attending lower grades at school. These findings highlighted the myriad of challenges which can be classified into school related factors, personal factors and socio economic factors within the home environment and/or the broader community faced by both teachers and learners. The results of this study were found to be consistent with previous empirical studies.

The study's main findings, conclusions and recommendations will be presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to present the key findings, conclusion of the study and recommendations drawn from the study. This study was entirely aimed at exploring factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance in Government schools in the area of Duduza Township, a community in the East Rand, Gauteng. It was born out of growing fears from the academic, social and political circles over the deterioration of the quality of secondary education in South Africa. Thus, this study was an attempt to investigate factors contributing to learners' unsatisfactory performance in a bid to find solutions to avert the problem of poor performance that has plagued South African secondary schools.

To the knowledge of this researcher, there is paucity of empirical studies that have attempted to specifically explore the contributing factors of poor performances targeting the 18 years and above learners who seem to be struggling and find themselves trapped in lower grades in secondary schools.

5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

This section summarises the key findings of the study. These findings are in line with the aim and objectives of the study and the relation among the findings and objectives will be highlighted throughout the discussion. The key findings can be categorised into three broad areas namely, factors related to home and family environment, school related factors and community related factors.

5.2.1 FACTORS IN THE HOME AND FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

One of the primary objectives of this study was to explore the challenges experienced by grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years with the Basic Education curriculum. Thus, this study revealed that there are a plethora of factors in the learners' family and home environment that impact negatively on their ability to achieve academically. These factors include, among others, that parents are illiterate and not well informed about FET colleges and lack of parental involvement and motivation.

Lack of parental involvement and motivation

Lack of parental motivation and cooperation was cited as one of the factors that impact on the learner's achievement. It was reported that parents do not attend parent meetings called by the school, and that they are not actively involved in their children's education through regular monitoring of their school work, assisting in home work, and giving children time to study, assist with their school assignments as well as monitoring the overall performance and progress. The findings of this study resonate with existing literatures that have linked lack of parental involvement to learner's poor academic achievement (Christenson et al., 2005; Hoover-Dampsey et al., 2005; Spaull, 2011;Mbugua, et al., 2012;Bayat, et al., 2014).

5.2.2 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

English as a medium of instruction in schools

Within the school environment, English as the medium of communication was regarded as the most obstacles to academic achievement as learners were reported to be struggling to understand the concepts and content of the subject if delivered in English. Again, this is consistent with other findings for instance, Mji and Makgato (2006) also found English as a hurdle to learner's academic progress and achievement.

Teachers' discriminating learners who have reached cut off age

Educators were accused of having unprofessional attitudes, one that is discriminatory and stereotypic to learners who have reached cut off age but find themselves trapped in lower, grades due to learning challenges.

Lack of commitment from learners/ Attitude towards learning

Educators complained that learners were not playing their part, which entails, among others, doing homework and school work, displaying responsible behaviour in the class.

These findings were found to be congruent with previous studies, for instance, study by Legotlo et al (2002) found that learners were performing badly because of ill-discipline, uncontrollable behaviour and lacking passion for their studies.

The use of inexperienced teachers in critical grades

The use of inexperienced teachers at Grades 10 to 12 was strongly condemned by the learners in this study. These educators were blamed for lacking teaching experience, lacking enough content and knowledge of their subjects, devoid of teaching methods and strategies and of

being insensitive to those with learning challenges. This corroborates with other research findings that have also blamed these said teachers for allegedly lacking basic content knowledge resulting in poor teaching standards (DoE 2001) cited in Makgato & Mji (2006).

Overcrowding in classes

Overcrowding was identified as another impediment to learning as teachers felt that it was difficult to deliver and give individual attention to learners when the class is full to capacity. Bayat, et al (2014,) also found the same in their study that most underperforming schools were found to have teacher to learner ratio higher than the provincial recommended average of learners per teacher.

Condoning or progressing learners

The culture of progressing learners before they master basic concepts such as reading and writing was found to be deplorable and perpetuating a culture of mediocrity. This is consistent with what other researcher found in their previous studies (Bayat, et al 2014).

5.2.3 COMMUNITY RELATED FACTORS

The socio –economic background and environment of these learners

The prevalence of crimes and drugs in Duduza community coupled with high poverty levels, low literacy levels, unavailability of social amenities and recreational facilities, squatter camps and the poor quality of life were cited as another contributing factor. This resonates with theory which postulates that environment play a significant role in a learner's achievement and performance (Bronfenbrenner 1986; Donald, et al., 2010; Berk, 2007).

5.3 CURRENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR STRUGGLING LEARNERS

As part of the objectives of this study, the researcher wanted to explore with educators the current support systems available to assist Grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years to accomplish acceptable levels of performance. The following are those programmes as identified by these educators:

- The school feeding schemes launched by Department of Education working in collaboration with the Department of Social Development to feed learners from poor families who come to school without having had anything to eat. The three schools do facilitate in governments National School Nutrition Programme by providing it

learners food. This has benefited in learners concentrating class as well as given the disadvantaged children food to eat. The research conducted by CSDA (2016) has found that both lunch only and lunch and breakfast in-schools nutrition programmes significantly improve the health outcome of children living in poor conditions and have promising educational effects. Social workers on the other hand, offer psycho-social support in terms of counselling, visiting schools registering learners for SASSA grants and social assistance. These services in tandem, enhance concentration of learners in class, give motivation to learners and help to improve performances.

- The availability of School Based Support Team (SBST) which is primarily responsible for identifying learners with psycho-social challenges and provides counselling, support and motivation and any other services the learners might be in need of in an attempt to improve learner concentration, motivation and performance.
- The FET (Further education and training) colleges were identified as one of the measures in place to assist those who are not academically but practically gifted, so that they can learn productive courses, trade or skills that will make them earn a living.
- The SIP (School Improvement Plan) pioneered by the District, group together learners who are academically gifted and educators who are excelling in their subjects and create platforms for them to teach other struggling schools. Also those who have learning challenges are grouped in camps during holidays and are taught by subjects' specialists.
- The e-learning project /Gauteng online is another recently launched project to help ameliorate textbook shortages as it enables learners to access resource materials online and also help to deal with the learners' sole reliance on teachers for information or knowledge.

5.4 MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF POOR PERFORMANCES

The study also wanted to elicit suggestions from both educators and grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years about strategies that might contribute to improving their performance in public high schools. Accordingly, the following are some of the suggestions proffered by the participants:

- Participants suggested that qualified and experienced teachers, well versed in learners' backgrounds and their challenges, particularly those who would have

intercepted them from primary education should continue with them up to grade 12 than being given new teachers. This was also seen as good for continuity.

- Teachers should desist from discriminating, de-motivating and labelling learners who have exceeded cut off age. Learners in this study felt that this was not only against the spirit and ethos of teaching and professionalism but that it was de-motivating, discouraging and inevitably contributing to their poor concentration in class and ultimately their poor performances.
- Consistent with previous studies most participants felt that learning in their own language is key to their success. English was seen a threat by both learners and educators. Thus, they supported the Government, through the Department of Basic Education that all schools will offer an African language to all learners from grades R to 9 from 2014 having noted that African languages were not enjoying the same development and utility as English and Afrikaans.
- Participants agree that one of the challenges to learners' achievements is their socio economic backgrounds as well as community factors. In line with these socio-economic challenges, both teachers and learners in this study were unanimous in that improvement of the socio economic circumstances will enhance performance. This idea is also supported by. De Annoy (2012) who acknowledges the importance of a positive learning environment on a learner's academic performance. This can only be addressed by ameliorating the effects of poverty and social injustice. Hence it is important to improve the school systems and introduce effective early intervention programmes that may assist in reducing these risk factors. It can also be addressed through increased research on the correlation between socio-economic status and education is essential.
- Some educators in this study proposed that instead of condoning or progressing learners, those learners should be diverted to skills schools/ technical schools (FET colleges) where they could learn productive skills or receive trainings that will make them employable and thus, earn a living.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study basically revealed that there are a plethora of factors that are home, school and community related that impact on the academic performance of grade 10 to 12 learners older than 18 years. Thus, the problems that affect learners' performances are multifaceted and it is concluded that a multidisciplinary approach has to be followed including all relevant stakeholders and sectors, working in collaboration, and harmonising their efforts and programmes, with the primary goal of addressing these myriad of challenges identified in this study in an endeavour to enhance learners' academic performances and progress. Taking cognisance of the above mentioned in order to promote sustainable development and quality education there is need for a holistic approach whereby all stakeholders play their role in improving quality education. Strong guidance and support with regards to implementation of policies is needed with commitment of all stakeholders so as to improve education quality and efficiency. Emphasis should be put on remedial work and annual test in order to improve and strengthen the curriculum as well as improving learner performance.

5. 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of this study, the researcher is proposing recommendations to be considered at a macro, mezzo and micro level.

5.6.1RECOMMENDATIONS AT MACRO LEVEL

Given the situation faced by the learners and educators with regard to the Basic Education curriculum, the researcher would like to propose the following recommendations:

Revisiting the policy of progressing learners

The government, through the Department of Basic Education should revisit the 'deplorable' culture or policy of '*progressing learners'* who are struggling academically to proceed to the next grade.

Educators at the secondary schools condemned this policy of progressing learners without them mastering basic concepts at primary levels. This group of learners were accused of "spoiling" the matric results, school pass rates and retarding progress of other learners in classes as they were accused of behavioural problems in class, of lacking motivation and

passion in their studies.

Improvement of Learning Outcomes and raising passing grades

The majority of educators in this study strongly condemned a culture of mediocrity, which creates learners who are dependent, rather than being independent, learners who despite considered to have passed matric, yet their grades cannot match grades that are acceptable at universities. Educators in this study felt that a mark below 50% should not be considered as a pass as this inculcate a culture of complacence and thus, kills the industrious spirit, arguing that a mark below 50% is relatively easy to get yet universities would not consider this as a pass. Accordingly, it is advisable that this mismatch be looked into.

5.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AT MESO LEVEL

The following are the recommendations at the Meso level

Multi Sectoral Approach

All stakeholders comprising the Department of Basic Education, the school, parents, the Department of Health, learners, the community and Department of Social Development must work collaboratively to address problems affecting learners. Although, in this study, it was revealed that all these departments are playing their part, there appears to be is no synergy of efforts and programmes and limited interconnectedness. This study found that parents are not being involved in school programmes and that social workers perform their role without engaging parents, efforts of which, could not make a significant impact or yield intended results especially to learners. Accordingly, this researcher calls for a coalition of efforts toward achieving a common goal. Thus, this multifaceted approach requires a holistic approach

Deployment of educational psychologists and social workers in schools

Given that learners are faced with a plethora of psychosocial and economic problems, there is need for the Department of Education to create posts for full time school social workers and educational psychologists. The role of educational psychologists will be to conduct educational assessments to learners who would have referred to them by teachers with a view to place them in special or remedial schools. Social workers deployed in schools would also work collaboratively with educational psychologists to:

- Identify or diagnose the learners' psycho-social and emotional problems and lobby for early intervention of the learner's challenges.

- Reach out to parents of these learners and conscientising them about the importance of education and of playing active role in their children's academic life.
- Assist in creating a conducive and supportive learning environment where learners will be assisted without being labelled as slow learners or ICU (Intensive care unit). These labels de-motivate learners and destroy their zest for learning. Moreover, it is gross disrespect of the rights and dignity of learners. Thus, social workers and educational psychologists will be stationed at schools to ensure that learners with special needs are generally treated fairly, justly without any form of discrimination and fight any de-motivating factors that may affect learners' achievement.

Reducing learner per teacher ratio

Overcrowding in classes was seen as a contributing factor to learners' poor performances. Thus, it is suggested that educators should be allocated reasonable and manageable number of learners in class so they can be able to give each learner individual and specialised attention. If there is a critical shortage of teachers, the schools or the department of education must liaise with universities so they can make use of student teachers to provide extra classes for those who need are struggling or coping during normal time.

5.6.3RECOMMENDATIONS AT MICRO LEVEL

Parental awareness and conscientisation

It was clear from this study that parents are not actively playing their part, that is, they are not actively participating in their children's academic life. Thus, embarking on a campaign to conscientise and educate parents of the importance of their involvement in their children's learning is also of paramount importance. Parental involvement helps to motivate learners, to lessen academic burden on the part of learners and teachers as they will assist in the learner's homework, help to curb unwarranted indiscipline, absconding, truancy, drug issue and to deal with a myriad of other psycho-social challenges identified in this study.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In view of this study, the following are recommendations for future research studies

- Further research regarding the implementation of the language policy might be meaningful seeing that this emerged as the prominent issue from both learners and educators interviewed for this study. If English language is a stumbling block to learners' achievement then there is a vital need to further explore and address the matter.
- Future research to explore and determine the challenges of parents and factors preventing them from playing an active role in their children's lives is likely to make a meaning contribution to the body of knowledge and provide recommendations as to what type of interventions are needed to include parents as an important stakeholder in education.
- Teachers' perceptions or attitudes toward learners who would have reached cut off age but still in secondary schools need to be investigated and documented. The findings are likely to inform the Department of Education and/or policy makers to review and enhance policies or measures to deal with these challenges.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Good day,

My name is Rutendo Chikomborero Maeresera, and I am a postgraduate student registered for the degree Master in the field of Social Development at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting a research into the factors that are contributing to unsatisfactory performance in Government Schools. It is hoped that this information may enhance social workers, educators and social welfare policy-makers in taking cognisance of the factors contributing to unsatisfactory performance in Government Schools. This will hopefully contribute to improvement of support services in school and the quality of education.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation will be entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. If you agree to take part, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last for approximately an hour. There are no benefits attached when participating in the study and no consequences should you wish not to participate in the study. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable to answer. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. No one except for me and my supervisor will have access to the tapes or data. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report. Should you require counselling services, you can contact Paulina Matheogane, social worker at Child Welfare Nigel, on 079 3814092 for an appointment.

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me on 083 2844971 or rutychiko@gmail.com or my Supervisor, Dr Edmarie Pretorius on 0117174476 or Edmarie.Pretorius@wits.ac.za and we shall answer them to the best of our ability. Should you wish to receive a summary of the findings of the study it will be made available on request.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this study.

Yours sincerely

RutendoChikomboreroMaeresera
MA student in the field of Social Development
Department of Social Work
School of Human ad Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

1. You are now 18 years or older, please share with me your views about the basic education curriculum.
2. Could you share some of the challenges you have experienced with the basic education curriculum.
3. In your view, what factors contribute to the low performance in the school?
4. What other challenges do you experience when attempting to achieve education?
5. In which ways can you be assisted to achieve your grades in time?
6. How do you see the role of the social worker in assisting you to improve your school performance?
7. How do you see the role of the educator/teacher in assisting you to improve your school performance?
8. What other suggestions do you have regarding assistance and support to you to help you to achieve your grades?

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS (EDUCATORS)

1. Could you tell me a bit more about your life as a teacher?
2. How would you explain the basic education curriculum?
3. Could you share with me the challenges you are experiencing in delivering the outcomes of the Basic Education Curriculum?
4. As an educator, how would you describe the challenges faced by grade 10-12 learners older than 18 years in achieving the acceptable level of performance?
5. Could you share with me what support systems/programmes are provided by the Department of Education and Social Development in assisting the learner's older than 18 years to accomplish their school grades?
6. What suggestions do you have that might assist learners and educators in improving performance of grade 10-12 learner's basic education within the Government High schools in the townships?

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORMS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I hereby consent to participate in the research project. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that mu participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular items or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences, I understand that my responses will be kept confidential.

Name of Participant:_____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-TAPING OF THE INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

I hereby consent to tape-recording of the interview. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publications arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Name of Participant:_____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX E

Human Research Ethics Committee (NON-MEDICAL)

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Maeresera

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/06/43**
PROJECT TITLE	An exploration of factors that are contributing to poor performance in Government schools: The case of Duduza Township, Eastrand, Gauteng
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms R Maeresera
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human and Community Development/
DATE CONSIDERED	26 June 2015
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally This protocol has been approved by the HREC (Medical) Sub-Committee
EXPIRY DATE	15 September 2018

DATE 16 September 2015 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr E Pretorious

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature **Date** 15 / 09 / 2018

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX F

Research Unit at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2016 / 146
enquiries: Diane Buntting 011 843 6503

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**25 June 2015**
Validity of Research Approval:	**25 June 2015 to 2 October 2015**
Name of Researcher:	**Maeresera R.C.**
Address of Researcher:	**40 Jencoe Street; Witbank; Mpumalanga; 1035**
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	**013 656 2471; 083 284 4971**
Email address:	**rutychiko@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**An exploration of factors that are contributing to poor performance in government schools: The case of Duduza township, East Rand, Gauteng.**
Number and type of schools:	**FOUR Secondary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Gauteng East**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter;

2015/06/26

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB);
3. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned;
4. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;
5. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage;
6. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year;
7. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
8. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent and learner;
9. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources;
10. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations;
11. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management with one Hard Cover, an electronic copy and a Research Summary of the completed Research Report;
12. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned; and
13. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director and school concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

.....

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2015/06/26

2

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel. (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX G

Amended Research Unit at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)

For administrative use:
Reference no. D2016 / 363 A
Enquiries: Diane Bunting 011 843 6503

GAUTENG PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	7 January 2016
Validity of Research Approval:	8 February 2016 to 30 September 2016
Previous GDE Research Approval letter reference number	D2016 / 146 dated 25 June 2015
Name of Researcher:	Maeresera R.C.
Address of Researcher:	40 Jencoe Street; Witbank; Mpumalanga; 1035
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	013 656 2471; 083 284 4971
Email address:	rutychiko@gmail.com
Research Topic:	An exploration of factors that are contributing to poor performance in government schools: The case of Duduza township, East Rand, Gauteng.
Number and type of schools:	FOUR Secondary schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng East

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB.) must be presented with a copy of this letter.*

2016/01/7

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management ER&KM)
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001

2. *The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid.*
3. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
4. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
5. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
6. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGB/s, principal/s, educator/s, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.*
7. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution/s, staff and/or the office/s visited for supplying such resources.*
8. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.*
9. *On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template).*
10. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
11. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director/s and school/s concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

.....

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: .....

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management ER&KM)

9th Floor 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001

APPENDIX H

CONSENT FORM FROM ASSER MALOKA SECONDARY SCHOOL

28-AUG-2015 17:14 From: To:0136562471 Page:1/1

Asser Maloka Secondary School

P.O Box 2008
Nigel
1490
Tel: (011) 810-0902 /3 /4
Fax: (011) 810-0905

Cnr Mandela & Tambo Street
Bluegumview, Duduza
1496
Ref: 350561

Letter of approval

This serves to confirm that as an institution we agree and give permission for research to be conducted in our **Education Centre** by **Rutendo Chiko Mberero Maresera** a postgraduate from the **University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg.**

She has a full access to **Learners, HODs, Educators and Principals** for them to participate in this project for the duration period.

Hope the above is found to be in order

Yours in Education

Ncokazi G.V
(Deputy Principal FET)

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ASSER MALOKA SECONDARY SCHOOL
2 8 AUG 2015
P. O BOX 2008, NIGEL 1490
TEL: 011 810 0902/3/4 FAX: 011 810 0905

APPENDIX I

CONSENT FORM FROM N. N. NDEBELE SECONDARY SCHOOL

N.N. NDEBELE
SENIOR SECONDARY

education
Department: Education
GAUTENG PROVINCE

6970 Nala Street
DUDUZA
1496

P O Box 1501
NIGEL
1490

BUILD IN FAITH

Enquiries: Zanele Mlambo (Principal)
Enquiries: Daisy Tshoba (H.O.D Life Orientation)

Cell: 082 555 1997
Cell: 0832979365
E-mail: zanelemlambo3@gmail.com

28/08/2015

To whom it may concern

I wish to confirm the acceptance of Rutendo Maeresera to conduct the research at the above mentioned school.

Kind Regards,
Tshoba D

APPENDIX J

CONSENT FORM FROM M.O.M SEBONE SECONDARY SCHOOL

M.O.M. SEBONI SECONDARY SCHOOL

EMIS 350918 Pay-Point 916 144

4899 Seboku Street
Duduza
1496

Telephone (011) 810-4948

P.O. Box 432
Nigel
1490

Fax: 086 559 5465

27th August 2015

Ms Rutendo Maeresera

Research Project Approval

We acknowledge your letter dated 4/08/2015 requesting to conduct focus group discussions with learners in grade 10-12 older than 18 years and interviews with three staff members at M.O.M Sebone Secondary School. We are granting you permission to conduct your research project at our school.

Kind Regards

Ms Mashele
Head of Department

R.L Mashele

M.O.M SEBONI SECONDARY SCHOOL
PAY POINT 916 144
EMIS 350918
27 -08- 2015
32, NIGEL 1490