

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS POOR PERFORMANCE  
OF GRADE 12 LEARNERS**

**AT**

**MANOSHI AND MOKWATEDI HIGH SCHOOLS**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership for the degree of **MASTERS IN DEVELOPMENT** has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my work in design and execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my mother, the late Dinah Maboya. May her soul rest in peace.

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## **Factors contributing towards poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors contributing towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at two selected high schools, which fall within low quintiles in Limpopo Province. Specifically, the study focused on low Grade 12 outputs in relation to access to university. Due to the exploratory nature of the study and the holistic approach that was undertaken both the home and school environments were targeted as points of investigation.

Multiple methods of data collection were used. First, data were collected through individual interviews with learners, educators, principals, and parents. Second, an observation method was used to collect data, such as, time management by learners, their behavioral patterns inside and outside the classroom and in the schoolyard. Finally, document analysis was used to analyse the attendance and performance of learners on attendance registers, quarterly and half yearly schedules, and mark sheets.

Key findings of this research suggest that the home environment of learners is not educationally supportive due to poverty, which includes factors such as parents' low-level of education, high unemployment rate, child-headed families, unpredictable home environment, emotional problems and issues relating to gender roles.

In the school environment, the study showed the following causative factors: lack of facilities, unavailable learner support materials, lack of discipline, English as a medium of instruction, heavy workload due to rationalisation and redeployment of educators, and confusion with regard to the application of the new curriculum (National Curriculum Statement). As a result, the study concluded that both home and school environment factors collaborate in producing poor Grade 12 results in the schools. Recommendations are made for attention to be given to these factors by all educational stakeholders. Directions are suggested for future research on poor performance and university access.

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## ACRONYMS

DoE: Department of education

LRC: Learner Representative Council

SGB: School Governing Body

SASA: South African Schools Act

SMT: School Management Team

R & R: Rationalisation and Redeployment

NNSSF: National Norms Standard School Funding

LA-: Learner from school A (Manoshi)

LB-: Learner from school B (Mokwatedi)

EA-: Educator from school A (Manoshi)

EB-: Educator from school B (Mokwatedi)

PA-: Parent of a learner at school A (Manoshi)

PB-: Parent of a learner at school B (Mokwatedi)

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

South Africa is a developing country in which the poor and the rich exist side-by-side, where the levels of poverty in rural and urban areas are not the same. The problem that needs to be investigated in this study is that Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools are unable to perform to the required level that may allow them entrance to a university. In other words, the learner must pass with an exemption (50% and above) to be admitted at university. Failure to obtain exemption means that learners might be required to first register for a bridging course before they can embark on their envisaged degrees. This could waste their time and scarce resources. Since 2008, learners are expected to pass with a Bachelor as a benchmark for university entrance.

There are several studies internationally and locally (e.g. Saiduddin, 2003: 22; Themane, 1989: 151) regarding poor performance at high school; the results revealed that in many cases the level of academic performance in urban and rural areas is not the same. Adell (2002:91) argues that poor performance at high schools is an international problem that has been linked to the low socio-economic background of the learners. It has also been found that urban students tend to perform better than those in the rural areas (Munn, 1996, cited by Louw, 1993:26).

Education does not exist in a vacuum; it reflects the broad social, economic and political structure of the country it services. In South Africa, the past education system for the Blacks was closely related to the broad development programme and political solutions, which are currently being worked out. Education and politics exist in a symbiotic relationship since education is always addressed within an environment of politics. It is argued that these differences in academic performance represent social realities such as poverty, political, and socio-economic problems (Engelbrecht, Kruger and Booyesen, 1996:263-266).

According to Kirov (2002:53), poverty has spatial, racial, and gender dimensions. Poverty is concentrated in provinces that have a high rural population, which is predominantly Black. Their high poverty levels are due to their high illiteracy and unemployment levels. These perpetuate the problems that influence poor school performance by the children. Kirov further indicates that the Human Development Indices (HDI) vary considerably and the Limpopo Province has been identified as the one with the highest poverty rate of 77.9% followed by the Eastern Cape at 74.3%. This figure (77.9%) confirms that illiteracy and unemployment levels are linked to poverty. The demarcation of provinces and settlement patterns seems to be politically motivated and confirms the findings of the other studies. For instance, 89% of Limpopo Province's Black population lives in rural areas characterised by, among others, malnutrition (Statistics Africa, 2001).

Government came with a key mechanism to achieve redress of inequality at schools through distribution of the education budget policy that provided a framework for allocating “non-personnel recurrent costs on the basis of need”. A “resource targeting list” was developed; informed by physical conditions, available facilities, the degree of overcrowding of the school, educator: learner ratios, availability of basic services, and the relative poverty of the community around the school. The main impact of the revised formula is that the poorest 40% of schools should receive 60% of the provincial schooling non-personnel budget allocation and the less poor 20% receive 5% of the resources (National Norms and Standards for School Funding, which will be abbreviated to as NNSSF Act, 1998 henceforth).

The two schools that were researched fall within quintile 1 and 2 respectively, since they are among the poorest of the poor (NNSSF Act, 1998). These low quintiles represent high poverty levels, low levels of education, and high unemployment rates; while high the quintile represents areas with less poverty, high levels of education, and low unemployment rates. The learners at schools under study do not pay school fees. This supports the notion that the population in that area is poor, and this was highlighted in a baseline study that was conducted in Polokwane Municipality, Limpopo Province. These schools fall within Molepo/Maja/Chuene cluster, which has an unemployment rate of 63.2% (Polokwane Municipal IDP 2005-2007).

One other factor that might be attributed to poor academic performance could be socio-economic background, creating a negative social environment at home. According to Solo (1997), the atmosphere at home helps to foster or break school success. He further argues that domestic quarrels by parents especially those who are poor and unemployed result in child neglect and eventually the learner's performance will be affected negatively. Some of the research studies cite serious malnutrition problems that impact on poor academic performance of learners (Polite, 1994). Munn (1996) contends that urban learners perform better than those in rural areas families in urban areas can afford to provide their children with balanced diet than rural families.

The school environment might also be the source of poor performance if learner support materials are not adequate. The arguments concerning lack of facilities and resources in rural-based schools are always raised where there is serious under performance at schools. Such schools often serve disadvantaged learners who are from families that are not educationally supportive (Ralenala, 1993).

Although there are arguments that the difference between rural and urban areas is political; the researcher wishes to indicate that there was a need to take stock of what the current situation is, especially now that our country has been democratic for the past fifteen years, to check whether we are better or worse off than before 1994 (Engelbrecht *et al.* 1996). Despite the differences between rural and urban schools, there is a need to acknowledge that some high schools in the rural areas excel in performance while some urban-based high schools perform poorly which denies learners' entrance to university.

Learners who perform poorly might have other problems that are not academic, such as death or divorce, which are highly emotional issues to cope with. The situation might become worse because schools have no mandate to interfere with family matters unless the family requests advice or intervention that is in line with ethical considerations. Hence, the participation of parents in the education of their children could facilitate discussions of issues by parents and educators as they are encountered at home and at school. Some parents might not talk about the behavior of their children, thus resulting in a negative relationship between educators and parents. Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. Hence,

poor school performance does not only result in learners having low self-esteem, but also causes significant stress to the parents. There is a suggestion that the school environment should link up with the environment at home in terms of warmth, love, understanding, and encouragement (Karande & Kulkarni, 2005: 72). The findings of this research may come up with recommendations that might enhance communication between the educators and parents to discuss the strategies that might improve performance of learners.

A caring environment in the school leads to the attainment of good education, which is associated with good outcomes. Schools are the testing ground for the success or failure of learners to adapt to the demands of the society. There is also more success in a climate with high learner involvement, personal learner-educator relationships, and innovative ways of improving the performance of learners. The findings of this study will assist the researcher to recommend remedial measures that would address the problem relevant to the source of poor performance of Grade 12 learners (Adell, 2002: 91).

Many children suffer from unpredictable home environments such as parents being arrested for always quarrelling due to substance abuse. The presence or availability of parents is crucial since they provide information, learning opportunities, behavioral models, and connection to other resources. The absence of such support severely limits these transactional protection processes and results in learners having a low self-esteem. According to Saiduddin (2003: 88), educators should create a positive school environment for learners to feel at home at school in such a way that they can openly discuss what prevents them from performing to the required standards. Hence, the involvement of parents would allow the school to seek assistance from relevant authorities to provide the necessary intervention

Generally, various studies that attempt to explain academic failure start with the three elements that intervene in education: parents (family causal factors), educators (academic causal factors), and learners (personal causal factors). Among personal variables, the most studied are motivation and self-concept (Saiduddin, 2003: 86).

Motivation as a personal variable was also found to be the most important since the learner will strive to achieve high marks even if he/she is not good in, for example, mathematics. Consensus exists among the diverse motivational theories and approaches in as much as they conceptualize motivation in terms of conscious beliefs and values. In the arena of motivation, there exist all kinds of opinions and results. Some research found that motivation maintains a circular relationship with the level of information processing and improvement of academic performance of learners (Gonzalez, 1998). This study seeks to investigate the de-motivating factors that contribute to poor performance.

The decline of performance at high school as compared to a learner's performance at primary school could be due to tighter academic standards where hard work and creativity are necessary to cope, in addition to less personal attention and fewer opportunities to participate in classroom decision-making (Berg, 2003:530-631). There are arguments that the poor academic performance could be due to the teaching methods that were used during primary schooling, which created dependency in learners. Learners complain that educators at high school are less friendly, always stress competition, which consequently make them feel less academically competent. As a result, their level of performance drops. This research could recommend how under performing learners could be assisted and encouraged through addressing the issues raised by such learners and by encouraging educators to give learners individual attention during study time since some of their problems might be academic while others might be problems within their families.

Sanchez (2000) contends that self-concept as another personal variable is at the base of future school success or failure, having been formed since early Childhood Education, from peer contact, teacher attitude, and expectation. Transition from primary to high school could be problematic because learners have to do most of the schoolwork alone. This needs self-reliance and a positive self-concept from learners. The learners' age group in this study is between 16-18 years, which is the adolescent stage that is usually a very difficult stage to transcend and if the learners' self-concepts are poor, they could rely solely on educators to finish the syllabus before the exams. This may impact on their performance. Research indicates that there is a positive correlation between academic performance and peer relationships such as if the learner is isolated and rejected by his/her peers he/she may perform poorly. This is supported by another



study (Buote, 2001), which indicates that learners who perform poorly in school are those most rejected by their peer group in class.

## 1. 1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners in the Limpopo Province has been a concern for quite some time. Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools are two of the schools in the Mankweng Circuit that are among the under performing schools. The problem is that most learners do not perform at a level that would allow them university entrance.

The final results of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools between 2000-2008 are reflected in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 below:

TABLE: 1.1 Grade 12 Results: Manoshi High School

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NO. WROTE</b>	<b>PASS RATE%</b>	<b>IMPROVED %</b>
2000	131	22.2	—
2001	84	28.2	5.9 (up)
2002	29	48.8	20.6 (up)
2003	57	76.9	28.1 (up)
2004	62	84.2	7.3 (up)
2005	75	47.8	37.5 (down)
2006	51	54.9	7.1 (up)
2007	44	81.8	26.9 (up)
2008	73	51.0	30.8 (down)

Source: Records at Manoshi High School

TABLE: 1.2 Grade 12 Results: Mokwatedi High School

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NO. WROTE</b>	<b>PASS RATE %</b>	<b>IMPROVED %</b>
2000	68	45.6	—
2001	58	36.2	9.4 (down)
2002	32	75.0	38.8 (up)
2003	23	86.6	11.6 (up)
2004	34	91.2	4.6 (up)
2005	37	78.4	12.8 (down)
2006	48	83.3	4.9 (up)
2007	48	68.8	14.5 (down)
2008	55	52.2	16.6 (down)

Source: Records at Mokwatedi High School

## **1. 2 MOTIVATION TO CONDUCT THIS STUDY**

The researcher resides in the same Ward 4, where the schools under study are located. According to the researcher's observation, despite the improvement of results in recent years, few learners obtained university entrance. Most of the learners have relocated to other high schools to the extent that the enrolment of the schools in question has dropped drastically and continues to do so. As a professional educator and member of the community, the researcher's need to investigate the problem became stronger to find out which factors could be contributing towards the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools where learners are unable to perform at a level of results that would allow them university entrance.

## **1. 3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to investigate factors that contribute towards the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and prevent them from achieving required results for university entrance.

## **1. 4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the study:

- The objective of the study is to establish the factors in the home and school environments that contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools such that they are unable to achieve required results which would allow them university entrance.

## **1. 5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

This study sought to unearth answers for the following question:

- Which factors in the home and school environments contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and prevent them from achieving required results for university entrance?

## **1. 6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study could shed light on how to achieve quality education in comparable schools in the Department of Education. The study might provide insight into the problems whose solution might help inform specific actions to be taken to efficiently and effectively address the poor performance of these schools.

This study would not only assist the Department of Education and School Management Teams of Manoshi and Mokwatedi to improve their level of performance, but it would also provide strategies to guide the educators of Grade 12 how to improve the performance of learners to a level that would allow them entrance to the university.

## **1. 7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will apply to the terms selected as key to the study.

- **Poor performance**

In this study, poor performance refers to scores below 50%, which was the benchmark for university entrance prior to 2008. This 50% was an average of a learner's marks. Any mark from 49-40% translated in to the majority of learners passing with an S symbol; that is, School Leaving Certificate that does not allow learners university entrance. The new curriculum (Revised Curriculum Statement 2005) came with a new benchmark, Bachelor, that allows a

learner university entrance from last year 2008. The difference is that the new benchmark for university entrance does not recognise the average mark of a learner, as it was the case with Exemption, instead the learner must pass all approved subjects with a minimum percentage.

- **Grade 12 learners**

Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools are in the age group 16-19 years. This group is the most vulnerable since they are in the adolescent stage; which, if not properly managed, could disrupt the learning process and frustrate learners. They might be under a lot of pressure due to their peer groups that have a tendency of isolating those who do not conform to the group's mandate (Louw, 1993: 422).

- **Quintile**

Quintile is a framework used to categorise schools in terms of the level of education and the level of unemployment rates of the communities around the schools. The lower quintiles 1-2 represent relative poverty of communities with low level of education and high unemployment rates. The schools under study are d as quintile 1 and 2, Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools, respectively and learners do not pay school fees (National Norms Standard School Funding Act, 1998).

## **1. 8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Limitations of the study cannot be overlooked since participation in this study is not compulsory and those who do not want to participate might be the ones who could give crucial information.

## **1. 9 CHAPTERS OUTLINE**

The chapters are outlined as follows:

### **1. 9. 1 Chapter 1: Background to the study**

The chapters outline the introduction, problem statement, motivation to conduct the study, aim of the study, research objective, research question, significance of the study, definition of concepts, limitations of the study and chapters outline.

#### 1. 9. 2 Chapter 2: Literature review

The literature review sought to present factors relating to academic performance researched internationally, in South Africa, and in Limpopo Province. The factors are categorised under home and school environment respectively.

#### 1. 9. 3 Chapter 3: Data collection procedure

This chapter presents the introduction, research methodology, research design, area of study, population, sampling method, purposive sampling, research sample, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, pilot study, interviews, observation, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

#### 1. 9. 4 Chapter 4: Data analysis and results

The data that were collected, analysed and the results are presented in this chapter. This was done through: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. Findings were categorised, thus factors contributing towards poor performance were reflected under home environment and school environments.

#### 1. 9. 5 Chapter 5: Findings, recommendations, and conclusion

The chapter summarises the major findings, which are categorised into home and school environments, recommendations, implications for further research and conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an account of the literature reviewed on poor performance of high school learners. The purpose of the literature review is to outline the factors that contribute towards the poor performance of high school learners as researched internationally and within South Africa, focusing on home and school environments. Numerous studies link the poor academic performance of learners to socio-economic problems, poverty, and politics (Engelbrecht *et al.* 1996).

The reviewed literature was mainly from primary sources, journals, secondary sources; education policy documents, articles, and newspapers. The South African perspective is not different from the international perspective since poor performance of learners at high school affects all high school learners from a poor socio-economic background. Therefore, poor performance of learners should be looked at holistically due to factors such as poverty, which has spatial, racial and gender dimensions, which in turn have determined settlement patterns of different racial groups in all provinces. Human Development Indices (HDI) for different provinces varies considerably and Limpopo Province was found to be the worst at 0.531, and a 77.9% poverty rate (Kirov, 2002:53). HDI is an indicator that is used to measure basic standards of living, life expectancy and literacy levels of population; if the educational levels are low then the unemployment levels will be high. For example, in the Limpopo Province, the unemployment levels are the highest (42.5%) due to the fact that the educational levels are low while the province is geographically vast; with the rural population of 89% which is predominantly Black (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The literature that was reviewed revealed that factors contributing towards poor performance are linked to socio-economic problems, poverty, and politics.

The following are different factors that have been identified as contributors to poor performance in the literature reviewed. In the home environment, factors that were identified are: unpredictable home environment, self-concept and self-identity, parents' educational levels, unemployment of parents, marital status of parents, availability of natural resources, communication style vs. relationship, and educational resources at home. In the school environment the following factors were identified: learner profiles which highlighted anomalies regarding attendance of classes, motivation to learn, attitude towards learning, substance abuse, relationship between the learner and educator, the relationship between the educator's motivation and that of a learner, sensitivity towards individual needs and differences, school transition, medium of instruction, the role of South African's School's Act (SASA), unequal distribution of facilities and resources, decision-making by the School Management Team, extra-curricular activities, and peer pressure.

## **2. 1 HOME ENVIRONMENT**

The educational condition attributed to the family needs no emphasis, as there is an ever-increasing awareness of the importance of the parents' role in the progress and educational development of their children. The family background is the most important and weighty factor in determining the academic performance of learners (Adell, 2002: 91). Countries that are educationally progressive encourage the active interest of parents and local communities in the education of their children. However, this has not been the case in South Africa. The Education of the Black learner has experienced a high Grade 12 failure rate as well as a high dropout resulting in vast pool of unskilled labour (Themane, 1989:151). The researcher intuitively concurs with Themane (1989) regarding the minimal participation of parents in their children's education. Children who need assistance for their homework become frustrated and without any hope resulting in poor performance at the end of the year with results that prevent them from achieving required results for university entrance.

### **2. 1. 1 Unpredictable home environment**

Unpredictable home environment includes loss in the family through death, divorce, separation or substance abuse. Domestic quarrels by parents' results in child neglect. Research on poor academic performance was conducted on African Americans (Saiduddin, 2003: 22). The study

found that factors influencing poor academic performance are poverty, cultural differences, unstable homes, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy. African Americans learners are exposed to a similar negative environment at home as learners in South Africa also come from poor family backgrounds. The exposure of the youth to negative role models from an early age contributes not only to poor performance but also to learners dropping out. Hence, research has found that children from intact homes were less likely to repeat a school grade even when socio-economic status was removed statistically. Learners from unstable families are emotionally disturbed and therefore tend to under-perform (Adell, 2002: 91). In South Africa, the researcher found that parents who abuse substances could not model the correct behaviour or be of any assistance, let alone motivate their children.

In contrast, it has been found that internationally, poor academic performance is a problem that manifests itself not only in poor communities but also in countries that are classified as developed. The ability to control one's environment is directly related to self-esteem. Since African Americans had little control over their educational environment and perceived their educators expectations of them as low, they often performed poorly. In turn, their under-performances then reinforced their negative self-image. Where such assistance does not occur due to parents being migrant workers, learners struggle to adjust to school requirements while their academic performance is negatively affected, preventing them from achieving required results for university entrance (Wilson & Black, 1978).

### **2. 1. 2 Self-concept and self-identity**

Success in school often correlates with positive self-concept and self-identity. Research generally indicates that African Americans learners are not as confident as those from other racial/ethnic groups. As a result, they have more difficulty in establishing ethnic, tribal identity, and pride in their African Americans heritage. They feel despaired, disillusioned, alienated, frustrated, hopeless, powerless, rejected and estranged. These are all elements of negative views of the self. Conditions at home help foster or block school success. Some of these conducive home conditions are: close family relationships that help build positive self-concept; helping children read at home; parental involvement in school; having high expectations for children's schooling; clear rules and standards for their behaviour; thus encouraging learners to perform at a level that



earns them entrance to university (Solo, 1997). The researcher supports this argument because in most cases Black learners from disadvantaged schools (rural) tend to be de-motivated, and lack confidence especially if they are to compete with those from better (urban/Model C) schools.

### **2. 1. 3 Parents' educational level**

Diaz, a teacher and psycho pedagogy expert in Spain who wrote a paper titled 'Personal, family and academic factors affecting low achievement in secondary school', indicates that among family factors of the greatest influence are the educational levels of parents (Castejon & Perez, 1998). The learner's perception of family support directly affects performance, while the mother's level of education does so indirectly. Those learners whose parents are not adequately literate are disadvantaged because these days' parents are required to assist their children with their assignments and projects that are supposed to be done at home.

Marchesi and Martin (2002) conducted research regarding social class in Spain and the results revealed that one's results and expectations for the future are better if one belongs to a higher social ladder. Research conducted in America equally indicates a high correlation between low school achievement and socio-economic background where most of the researched families are classified in the lower economic brackets, with the highest poverty and unemployment rates. Education failure is legitimised by inherent inferiority, where there is a high illiteracy rate, poor hygiene, and lack of middle class child rearing practices, especially among parents, all of which are viewed as a manifestation of poverty (Cummins, 1994:3).

### **2. 1. 4 Unemployment of parents**

Nutritional deficiencies in early childhood are associated with poor cognition in later years where chronic deficiency of iron (leading to anemia), zinc and intake of vitamins are lacking, which is independent of psychosocial adversity. Feeding schemes could assist to curb such problems since learners would be able to eat a balanced diet at school, thus improving in their academic performance (Polite, 1994). Unfortunately, in this country (South Africa) feeding programmes are only implemented in primary schools and not at high schools. However, there are discussions to extend feeding schemes to high schools. Most of the parents in rural areas are

single, illiterate, and unemployed. Such parents might not be able to provide their families with a balanced meal.

However, Munn's (1996) arguments about urban learners performing better than those from rural area could be challenged since sometimes even learners who are brought up in families that can afford to provide their children with balanced a diet perform poorly which could be due to other factors.

The unemployment rate of Limpopo Province is 42.5%. Polokwane Municipality has a 41,5% unemployment rate, which is concentrated in rural than in urban areas (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The area where the study was conducted is in ward 4 in Polokwane Municipality, which is rural and falls within the rural cluster Molepo/ Maja/ Chuene with the highest unemployment rate of 63.02% compared to the Moletji cluster (also rural) 54.16%, and the City/Seshego (urban) cluster is the lowest at 27.24% (Polokwane Municipality IDP 2005-2007). Given the unemployment levels of the area, malnutrition poses a threat to the performance of learners at the schools under research. The poverty levels where the schools are located affect the Grade 12 learners in such a way that they cannot attain university entrance results.

### **2. 1. 5 Marital status of parents**

According to the history of research relating to poor academic performance of learners at high schools, is an International problem, which has been linked to the low socio-economic background of learners. The marital status of being either single, married, divorced, or widow, the parents' social class in terms of their income categories of lower, middle or upper income-class all impact on self-concept and the learning process of learners. A stigma is often attached to separation and divorce, affecting the learner's academic performance negatively (Adell, 2002:91). The uncertainty results in undue anxiety among young people. Discussion of family problems between parents and their children will reduce such uncertainty, and they will eventually adapt to the situation. However, it is taboo to talk to children about reasons why their father did not marry or divorce their mother in our Black culture. The anxiety triggers emotional problems and long-term distress resulting in academic underachievement. Internal processes such as perception, memory, motivation, attitude, level of ability, and emotions should be taken

into account when issues relating to the academic performance of learners are being dealt with. If a learner is an orphan or his/her parent is terminally ill, the learner will have a problem coping with schoolwork, thus resulting in poor academic performance due to her/his emotional state (Karande and Kulkarni, 2005: 961-967). A lower level of concentration results in poor academic performance (Litner, 1991:24). This affects the level at which learners perform at school and prevents them from obtaining results, which allow them university entrance.

In contrast to some of the afore-mentioned research, the research conducted in Spain indicates that the most influential family components on performance are not socio-cultural or economic, but rather those pertaining to the affective or psychological dimension. Although there was good academic preparation in parents, especially the mother, a positive cultural environment and a favorable school environment, it is the affective and relational variables which most stand out as factors that influence academic performance either positively or negatively (Castejon & Perez, 1998).

### **2. 1. 6 Availability of natural resources**

Natural resources like land and water are necessary for the sustainable livelihood of communities. However, sometimes land might be available but water could be a limiting factor as communities still rely on rain, which is seasonal and not reliable, thus perpetuating malnutrition. Hence, aspects of the physical environment (e.g. land) have received considerable attention from psychologists as it has an influence on malnutrition which affects the growth of the child's brain, which is also linked to low intelligence in rural areas (Lloyd & Still, 1989). The researcher concurs with the findings of the study because the area under research is a rural area where access to land and water could curb the malnutrition problem through food gardens and consequently enhance the academic performance of learners.

### **2. 1. 7 Communication style vs. relationship**

The influence of a family's educational climate is defined by the amount and the style of help that learners receive from family; this is determined by elements of the family context such as the dynamic communication and relationships and attitudes towards values and expectations. Similarly, parental expectations have a notable influence on their children's academic results,

even when the socio-economic status is not that favorable. There is an indirect relationship with performance from the learner's perception of how much importance his/her parents assign to their children's studies at home (Marchesi & Martin, 2002). Another study (June, 2003) found that parents' expectations encourage their children to pursue goals with hard work, enhance self-efficacy and nurture good study habits. However, high parental expectations and unwillingness to accommodate alternatives could result in counter productive anxiety in their children (June, 2003: 198-200).

Other studies in Spain indicate that the level of family cohesion and relationships prove themselves capable of predicting performance. The parenting style (democratic, authoritarian) is also influential both in the learner's educational process as well as in the family-school relations; research has indicated that a positive family climate favours the development of well-adapted, mature, stable, and integrated subjects, while an unfavorable family climate promotes non-adaptation, immaturity, lack of balance, and insecurity among children. Their poor concentration results in under-achievement at school (Castejon & Perez, 1998).

### **2. 1. 8 Educational resources at home**

The learner's background relating to availability of educational resources at home like books, electronic resources such as TV, computer, study desk and table for their own use and general academic support at home are crucial. Learners who have access to such resources are at an advantage compared to those from poor families because they will be more informed about the latest developments around them thus assisting them to improve their performance at school while those from poor families with no resources still have to write the same examination paper. Thus, the learners' non-exposure to educational resources from poor families will affect their performance compared to those who have access to such resources. Despite exposure to programmes that should not be viewed by our learners, there is a lot of educational information that can be accessed through TV. Computers that are connected to the Internet would assist our learners to source information for school assignments and projects.

## **2. 2 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

According to Saiduddin (2003:2), it is a convenient scapegoat to pass the blame and responsibility for the low academic performance to factors such as socio-economic status, family, culture and the learner being less intelligent than the others. Research conducted at high schools in South Dakota has shown that all learners are educateable, and that the way in which the school is managed is the most critical factor in determining the quality of education for its learners. Researchers at the Ohio State University attribute the academic failure to the economic and social conditions while administrators and educators have also developed this mindset. The study was undertaken at a high school on the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota. This argument can be disputed based on the status quo of most rural schools in South Africa because how can learners perform well in chemistry, life science, and physical science without the necessary facilities (laboratory) and chemicals that are necessary for them to perform experiments.

### **2. 2. 1 Learner profiles**

The performance of learners should be investigated in line with their opportunity-to-learn indicators (learner-profiles). Indicators such as attendance of classes would highlight anomalies regarding his/her attendance, which might be regular or irregular and such indicators are early signs that might determine whether learners will perform well academically or not and remedial measures could be implemented before it is too late. Learner-profiles also indicate the positive effects of participation of learners in extra-curricular activities in Wisconsin where learners involved in extra-curricular activities tend to improve in their performance unlike those who are not participating (Burmester, 2005).

### **2. 2. 2 Motivation to learn**

A study in England noted many factors that influence both the rate and enjoyment of learning. Once an individual has experienced something, and has stored that experience, he is able to refer to and use it at a later stage. As such, learning and memory are inextricably linked. The reward and punishment levelled at learners in the past will affect their motivation and attitude towards learning in the present. The expectations of others and the climate which surround learners will

determine their readiness to learn, which in turn will result in learners performing poorly academically (Mullins, 2005:39). Another study suggests that maintenance of high motivation influences psychological and social functioning and facilitates academic performance as well as positive school perceptions (Gilman & Anderman, 2006: 375-391).

### **2. 2. 3 Attitude towards learning**

Attitudes are learned throughout life and are embodied within our socialisation process. All of us observe others and assess attitudes on the basis of communication style (verbal and nonverbal) and behaviour. This is an example of an informal approach, which is spontaneous and based on our understanding of social cues. We may be wrong in our judgment of learners who turn up late for classes and do not ask questions, but they may still hold very positive attitudes towards the subject that was being presented at that time. The negative attitude towards learning could result in learners performing poorly preventing them from obtaining required results for university entrance (Mullins, 2005: 365).

### **2. 2. 4 Substance abuse**

Cunningham (1994:272) found that 94% of high school learners at Pine Ridge Reservation have used alcohol. He indicated that drinking among this age group is considered 'normal' where males are twice as likely as females to drink daily, which disturbs their concentration and their level of performance at school. In South Africa, the problem of learners abusing alcohol is also an issue that needs serious attention since most rural schools are near liquor outlets.

Marijuana and cigarettes are easily accessible to learners these days; it becomes even more difficult for educators to control learners who use such substances. The abuse of such substances impairs the learner's ability to learn and respond to questions relating to the learned information. In most cases of the crime committed at schools substance abuse is involved. Research conducted by Colorado State University (Hodgkinson, 1990) points out that more than a third of the African Americans adolescents use marijuana on a regular basis, compared to only 5% regular users among White Americans. It is assumed that crime and unbecoming behaviour at schools were the result of substance abuse. This problem is becoming a threat to our high school learners because of the accessibility of substances (alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, and drugs).

## **2. 2. 5 Relationships**

- **Relationship between the learner and educator**

The research conducted in Spain (Marchesi & Martin, 2002) found that the relationship between the learner and educator are some of the factors that determine academic performance. Characteristics of the educator are considered as key elements for the learner's personal and academic development. Hence, it is crucial that educators should be role models to be emulated by the learners. Research (Castejon & Perez, 1998) found that educator's expectations significantly influence the learner's results. The educator's assessment is mediated by two variables: firstly, the greater the learner's intelligence, the better the academic results and the better reciprocal appreciation between the educator and learner; secondly, family support for study also makes the learner value his/her educator more highly.

- **Relationship between educator's motivation and that of a learner**

Studies found that there is a positive relationship between the educator's motivation and that of the learner, while educator-learner relationships are also mediated by the educator's attribution of poor performance to the learner in terms of academic performance. The socio-metric status of the learner affects performance both directly and indirectly, since it is influenced by intelligence (Georgiou, 2002). Some researchers argue that educator development is at the heart of long-term sustainable improvement in the South African context. Their proposal is that educators need development along three dimensions simultaneously: content knowledge, teaching approaches and professional attitudes (Kriek & Grayson 2009: 185-203).

## **2. 2. 6 Sensitivity to individual needs and differences**

Educators who want to achieve their objectives, learner individual differences and opportunities should be taken into account to ensure that learners are given individual attention. Sensitivity to individual needs and differences is crucial in order to analyse the historical, psychological and societal context where the sense of self is shaped by inherited characteristics and influenced by social environments in which the learner finds herself/himself. Most social scientists would agree that both inherited and environmental factors are important in our development, and it is the way in which these factors interact which is key to adult personality. However, some scientists differ

with regard to the weight they place on these factors, some arguing that personality is heavily influenced by our inherited characteristics and will never change while others believe that the personality will reverse (Mullins, 2005: 336-339).

### **2. 2. 7 School transition**

A study of Oglala Sioux in South Dakota (Bryde, 1969) indicates that the learners perform satisfactorily until the sixth grade. After the sixth grade there was a decline in learner performance. This phenomenon was labelled as the 'Crossover Phenomenon,' believing that early adolescence is an extremely difficult time because the cultural differences become more evident during that stage of development, resulting in personality disturbances thus blocking achievement at school (Bryde, 1969).

### **2. 2. 8 Medium of instruction**

The problems in education have a long history such as the strong campaign from way back in 1954 by the African National Congress when they challenged the Group Area's Act. The use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction was also a serious concern in the past, among Black learners. However, the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 represented the end of the use of Afrikaans and ushered in the new dispensation in which English became the medium of instruction for the education of a Black child. Currently, there are arguments that mother tongue is the basis of all teaching and that must be the medium of instruction because bilingualism cannot be set as the aim of teaching (Themane, 1989:122-177). Most Grade 12 learners are struggling to communicate in English and that could be one of the factors that put them at a disadvantage, since that is the language used to respond to questions in the examination. A study that was conducted in India and in South Africa (Sayed *et al.* 2007:111) found that similar exclusionary experiences are being felt in both countries where language is used as a critical means of exclusion. In South Africa, exclusion is experienced in the almost blanket denial of access to mother tongue learning while in India children are forced to learn Hindi at the expense of their mother tongue.



### **2. 2. 9 The role of the South African School's Act (SASA)**

South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996d), Section 34 (1) indicates that the state “must ensure access of learners to education and the redress of past educational inequalities among sections of our people who have suffered particular disadvantages”.

The past injustices in education are to be redressed through provision of an education of progressively high quality for all learners. As such, it is proper to take stock of the achievements regarding the envisaged aims of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996d). In order to advance the democratic transformation of society, the Act requires the establishment of elected School Governing Bodies (SGB) and Learner Representative Councils (LRC) in all schools. The SGB and the LRC are expected to work hand in glove with the School Management Team to ensure that the schools run smoothly without disruptions especially from learner disruptions. The schools under study have complied with the requirement of SASA.

### **2. 2. 10 Unequal distributions of facilities and resources**

Education promotes human capital as an asset that has greater or lower rates of return depending on the extent and quality of education that is provided. The South African government's aim is to redress the huge backlog of facilities created by apartheid's segregated schooling environment, as well as gross inequalities in provision of resources for the different racial groups. However, the inequalities regarding the quality of facilities and distribution of resources are still a serious problem even after celebrating fifteen years of democracy, during which government emphasised equity. Generally, some of the factors contributing towards the poor performance of learners are lack of resources and poor facilities in most schools, but especially in rural areas. Some of the schools are dilapidated compared to those in urban areas. The problem regarding unequal distribution of resources between provinces, rural and urban areas are still intact (Motala & Pampalis, 2001:56).

- **Facilities**

According to Ralenala (2003) thousands of schools still have poor physical infrastructure and many are dilapidated, dangerous, and unfit for human habitation. There is often no water on site or sanitation thus such conditions do not only restrict the teaching and learning activities of the

school but also threaten the health of learners and educators as well. This could influence absenteeism of both learners and educators. Problems encountered regarding the academic performance of high school learners in the whole of South Africa, also apply to Limpopo Province. There is a strong relationship between learner performance and the quality of the facilities available to learners. Several schools do not have laboratories and the situation simply means that learners learn science by rote learning and some of them even complete their high school education without ever having seen a beaker (Ralenala, 1993). Ralenala quoted an article in the *Sunday Times* of 27 July 2003, titled: “Are we making progress?” where Potenza points out that only 27% of the schools in the country have libraries. Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools are examples of such schools where facilities are not available. For example, both schools do not have laboratories; administrative blocks and only the principal of Manoshi have an office. Recently (2009) when the researcher visited the schools during phase 2 investigations the principal at Mokwatedi high school still shares a room with the administrative clerk. The room has been divided with cupboards.

Currently, the situation has not changed that much, since most schools especially those that are in the rural areas, in contrast to those in the urban areas, do not have satisfactory infrastructure. These disparities among schools were confirmed by the previous Premier of Gauteng Province, Mbazima Shilowa on Monday the 19 February 2007 during his State of the Province Address. His speech was titled: ‘Education Action. Promise to Black kids’. This is what he said: “The education of the Black child continues to be compromised 13 years into democracy. We have made important strides in redressing the inequalities of the education system of the past, we have not yet succeeded in ensuring that the quality of the education of the African child is up to scratch”. The Premier’s statement supports the argument that our schools need much more support from the Department of Education for learners to perform up to the required standard, allowing them to achieve required results for university entrance.

There are suggestions of how to improve the performance of learners irrespective of whether facilities and resources are available or not, which argue that it depends on an individual educator and his/her creativity. Greame Bloch, an education policy analyst of the Development Bank of South Africa was quoted by (Kgosana, 2006:25), arguing that creative educators do

experiments with baking powder. He believes that each school is entitled to a good library and computer lab; however, sometimes facilities without committed educators are just not good enough. Kgosana (2006) further quoted the education policy analyst specialist (Bloch) who emphasised that facilities and adequate relevant resources are important but the recipe for managing a good school also has to do with an efficient principal who knows how to manage his/her staff. It means that the principal has to ensure that educators are at school on time; that they are in class during school hours and have a good knowledge of what they teach.

- **Resources/Funds**

In the United States, although there was relatively minimal research available in 1995 about effects on performance after implementing school-based budgeting reforms in the United States, few districts have tried to decentralize, and of those that have, school performance improved. Hence, in December 1996, the New York State Legislature, under pressure from Mayor Rudolf Giuliani and Chancellor Crew, introduced changes in the governance of the New York City school system. Among the provisions to the 1996 governance law was a timetable for 'Performance-Driven Budgeting' implementation that called for all schools in New York City to do school-based budgeting by the 1999-2000 academic years (Stiefel, Schwartz, Portas, & Kim, 2001:1-7).

A study of 44 schools in 13 districts in the United States, Canada, and Australia by the Centre on Education Governance, found that schools that implemented school-based budgeting and focused on actively restructuring curriculum and instruction were able to improve learner performance. The schools also had to have meaningful authority over the budget, personnel, and curriculum. However, where school-based-budgeting failed it was found that school-based budgeting was viewed as an end in itself rather than a way to focus on improving teaching and learning (Wohlstetter, 1995; cited by Stiefel *et al.* 2001:3).

However, South Africa's budgeting is not school-based, nor does it focus on restructuring the curriculum and instruction methods. The budgets are centralised from National Government; the Provincial Treasury allocates funds to Provincial Education Departments before allocations are transferred to different schools. The researcher's argument is that the budget at school must be

used to address the needs of learners in a specific school because the needs of one school might not be similar to the needs of another school. Each school should be given the responsibility of utilising resources efficiently and effectively without compromising quality and in line with the needs as prioritised by those LRC members as beneficiaries to improve their performance and access university education.

Wilson and Ramphela (1994:141-145) are concerned about the discrimination in the funding of education by the state. They indicated that in 1983/4, the subsidy for an African learner was R234, 00 compared to a white learner at R1654, 00 for the same academic years. In 1991/2 the school expenditure per white learner was R4 448,00 per annum but only R1 248,00 for the African learner. Moreover, levels of inequality varied between provinces, between rural and urban environments and in types of education offered. Generally, the situation was worse at higher levels of schooling (Motala & Pampalis, 2001:56). Thus, funding is one of the factors that are raised where performance is not satisfactory.

Funding was skewed in the sense that in 1981, forty-five point six percent (45,6%) of state funding was spent on white pupils who represented only 20% of the total school population in South Africa (Themane, 1989:107). According to the research findings, distribution of funds had a racial segregation. For example, an African child was allocated R146.00, a Coloured-R498.00, Indian-R711.00, and the White child-R1211.00 (Themane, 1989:133-134).

Currently, the allocation of funds in rural schools has gradually increased since 1994 compared to the situation in the previous era. However, the gap between the rural and the urban-based schools is still huge and there is a need for urgent intervention by the Department of Education. Information regarding disparities in funding is reflected in chapter 4, Table: 4.1. According to the researcher, poor literacy levels in South Africa indicate the extent of deliberate neglect of investment in human capital. Prior to the 1994 elections, the situation was such that urban, particularly former Model C schools were and they are still in a more satisfactory position than rural schools; hence they require minimal state expenditure while rural schools facing many problems should be funded more than urban schools that have already benefited from the past. There is a need for enormous state assistance to close the gap between such disparities (Motala &

Pampallis, 2001:55-56). Hence, in most cases when learners are not performing, the issue that is always raised is the lack of facilities and inadequate resources like learner support materials.

### **2. 2. 11 Decision-making by School Management Team**

Crew, the Chancellor of New York City School introduced a school-based budgeting initiative called 'Performance-Driven Budgeting' in order to stress that the cornerstone of the plan was to have every expenditure made with the intention of improving a school's performance. The main goal of the reform was to give the schools more control over how resources were spent so that they could be used more effectively and efficiently to improve learner performance (Stiefel *et al.* 2001:7).

Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1997) contend that site-based management is an innovation that has its roots in the private sector, which encourages self-management and empowers the employees, leading to improved morale and higher productivity. Site-based management theory was transferred from the corporate world to the realm of public education, giving schools authority over budget, personnel, and curriculum.

According to the findings of the study on school-based-budgeting (Stiefel *et al.* 2001: 7), many reforms aimed at improving public schools involve transferring control over resources from central authorities to school-level decision makers while at the same time holding school decision-makers accountable for learner achievement. The underlying logic is that decision-makers who are closer to the ground would be better able to allocate resources to learners with different backgrounds, learning styles, and needs in general. As a result this interest should change allocation of resources in a way that leads to improvements in the level of academic performance because the allocation would be better aligned to the academic needs of that specific school (Stiefel *et al.* 2001:1). The researcher's argument is that increasing school control over budgets where learners participate, priority will be given to learner support materials that are crucial for them to perform better.

Budgeting must be de-centralized such that decisions taken at schools should be democratic and include all stakeholders such as the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body

(SGB) and Learners' Representative Council (LRC). Such decisions should be inclusive to ensure that decisions address the needs of the learners in each specific school. The researcher supports the notion that all stakeholders, SMT, SGB, and LRC should participate in decisions that will impact positively on the performance of learners. This argument is in line with the South African School's Act of 1996d.

### **2. 2. 12 Extra-curricular activities**

It is important that schools should include extra-curricular activities in their timetables so that learners can explore other activities besides being taught in class. Some learners might be gifted in athletics, soccer, dancing, netball or tennis. Participation in extra-mural activities refreshes the learners' minds and increases their motivation. Research (Louw, 1993: 24) indicates that people with healthy bodies usually develop characteristics such as adventurousness, energy and assertiveness. The state of health exerts an influence on your confidence to perform academically and be assertive during one's entire lifespan. If the learner's health status is poor he/she will be absent from school owing to consultations with doctors or going for check-ups at clinics or hospitals. Several lessons will be missed and this may result in poor performance. The individual's state of health influences not only the person's physical development, but is also closely linked to his/her energy level, ability as well as enthusiasm to do things and explore the world which could enhance the learner's academic performance. The situation in the South African schools is that most of the schools do not have facilities for some of the extra-curricular activities (dancing, table tennis, tennis, drama etc.) to accommodate those learners who do not play netball and soccer so that they too can develop the ability to explore the world (Kaplinsky, 1992:8).

### **2. 2. 13 Peer pressure**

It is generally assumed that every individual has a ceiling above which he or she will not be able to profit from experience in a particular activity, and the ceiling is set by hereditary factors. It is also assumed that the rate at which he/she approaches the ceiling is determined by a variety of factors, including his/her rate of physiological maturation and the richness of the environment to which he/she is exposed. It should also be taken into account that a person's potential ceiling

may be lowered in the course of development by a variety of external and internal events like peer pressure (Conger, 1991:113-114).

Researchers contend that the adolescent's value judgments are often influenced by fear of rejection by the group (Sharry, 2004:1-3). Childhood and adolescence are times of first encounters and intense experiences in the present. They are periods full of joy and sadness, excitement, and fear, as well as rapid growth and new learning. These are critical times when certain events and relationships greatly impact on an individual's life and determine the future. Peer pressure results in negative decisions, rebellious, and moody behaviour, which in turn result in poor academic performance since they are not cooperating and in the process they lose a lot of time for their lessons (Sharry, 2004: 1-3).

## **2. 3 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the researcher's literature review highlighted several factors that contribute to poor performance as researched by different researchers internationally, including South Africa. Limpopo is one of the provinces in South Africa where most Grade 12 learners are unable to perform at a level that would allow them university entrance. The impact of these factors on the academic performance of learners are applicable to all learners; especially those who are from poor socio-economic backgrounds, irrespective whether the country is classified as developed (America) or underdeveloped, such as South Africa. Similarly, this is a global problem as highlighted by international and local literature.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **3. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study was to investigate factors that contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools preventing them from achieving required results for university entrance. This chapter presents the research methodology, research design, area of study, population, sampling method, purposive sampling method, research sample, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, pilot study, interviews, observations, ethical considerations and limitation of the study.

#### **3. 1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

There are two paradigms that determine the direction of a research project from its commencement to the last step of writing the research report. These paradigms are qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The researcher used the qualitative approach due to its suitability in social research, which can be done in the subjects' natural setting (De Vos, 2001). Qualitative research is a type of primary research in which the researcher collects first-hand information obtained directly from participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 10). In this study, data was collected from Grade 12 learners, Grade 12 educators, principals, and parents of sampled learners in the targeted schools rather than information from books. The research investigated factors in the home and school environments that could be the root cause of poor performance at the schools under study.

Field research is an indication that qualitative research is undertaken within the habitat of the actors and is closely related to the term 'naturalist' as it is employed in the field of biology (Neumann, 2006: 35). This qualitative study aimed at unearthing detailed information that could be some of the factors that continued to prevent Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools from achieving required results for university entrance.



Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in the sense that it typically operates within the setting where people create and maintain their social world (Neumann, 2000:122). Qualitative research is “idiographic” in nature, aiming to understand the meaning that individual Grade 12 learners, Grade 12 educators, principals, and Grade 12 learner’s parents at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools attach to their day-to-day life. The paradigm uses an inductive form of reasoning rather than a deductive one, thus developing concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in the data (De Vos, 2001:242).

Basic characteristics of qualitative research are such that it is undertaken within the habitat of the participants, relies on spoken words of participants rather than on books, it is a meaningful way of collecting human experiences, qualitative research design keeps on changing as new data and additional sources become available (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Phases of the research**

This research was conceptualized and implemented in two phases:

The first phase focused on the literature review, planning, and aspects of who to include in the study that could assist during the sampling process. Key trends, such as inequality regarding urban compared to rural schools, which result in the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at the schools under study were identified; hence, only few learners have access to university education.

The second phase involved a critical review of the status quo of researched schools, taking into account the fact that our country has been a democracy for 15 years. The need was to take stock of our situation in rural schools and establish whether it has changed, if not the study would then investigate what went wrong, since Grade 12 learners continue to perform poorly preventing them from achieving required results for university entrance. The collection of data was done through revisiting and analysing the policy documents, relevant Education Acts such as SASA (1996d), and the NNSSF Act (1998), document analysis at respective schools and the writing of the report which provided the findings, results, recommendations and the conclusion.

The study embarked into this kind of research, with the aim of producing a detailed picture or a profile in words and numbers of participants (Neumann, 2006:35). In this case, Grade 12 learners, Grade 12 educators, principals, and parents who held a particular view regarding the poor performance of learners at the schools under study. The study used carefully selected number of participants to make it a qualitative study that relied on spoken words for the provision of a more sensitive and meaningful way of collecting human experiences (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:38).

Typical of qualitative research, the research design kept on changing as new data were collected and as additional sources became available. The inclusion of additional participants like educators and principals became necessary not only as a means of uncovering educators' opinions and understanding of the problem of poor performance in their respective schools but also to air their views regarding how the performance could be improved. Not all of the data were responses to the research question; other concerns from Grade 12 learners, Grade 12 educators, and parents emerged during interactions with the interviewer and casual conversations with the educators and the principals.

The rationale behind the choice of qualitative research is centered on its strengths. Qualitative study is flexible and emphasises people's lived experiences their perceptions, assumptions, prejudices and presupposition were discovered and connected to the social world around them (Neumann, 2000). The qualitative approach assisted the researcher to get to the bottom of the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners at both high schools, where learners are unable to perform at the level that could allow them entrance to the university. Hence, the researcher focused on the schools in question using this approach to unearth factors that might have been the root cause of the whole situation.

### **3. 2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a guideline within which a choice about data collection methods has to be made. In the qualitative design, the researcher's choices and actions create a research design best suited to the research during the research process (De Vos, 2001: 80). The concept 'design' in a

qualitative study includes the entire process of research from the initial stages of conceptualisation of a problem to the writing process. The qualitative research design is flexible, unique and evolves throughout the research process. Therefore, there are no fixed steps that should be followed and cannot be exactly replicated (Creswell, 1994:2).

### **3. 2. 1 AREA OF STUDY**

This study was conducted at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and the surrounding villages where Grade 12 learners from both schools stay. The schools are situated in the Eastern part of Polokwane City, to the right hand side of the R71 road towards Tzaneen, about 8 and 5 km respectively from the Zion Christian Church at Moria. The schools are in Ward 4, Polokwane Municipality, which falls within a rural cluster Molepo /Maja /Chuene that includes Ward 1, 2, 3, and 4. Manoshi is located in Sehlale village, but also serves Makubung and Maripathekong villages, while Mokwatedi is located in Mankgaile village and serves learners from Mankgaile, Sehlale, and Mountain View villages.

### **3. 2. 2 POPULATION**

The population for this study consisted of all 85 Grade 12 learners (40 at Manoshi and 45 at Mokwatedi high schools), 20 Grade 12 educators (10 from each school), two principals and all Grade 12 learners' parents. The researcher regarded the identified population as the relevant group about whom generalisations can be drawn (Arkava & Lane, 1983: 27).

#### **Characteristics of participants**

- **Grade 12 learners**

The characteristics of the participants (Grade 12 learners) at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools have similar economic backgrounds. Generally, they are from low socio-economic backgrounds and most of their parents are unemployed. The learners are within the age group of 16-19, which is a volatile adolescent stage. It is a transitional stage that needs understanding and

support from parents as well as educators. In engaging them, one needs to understand the world they are moving in. It is crucial so that they can be guided properly (Sharry, 2004: 1-3).

- **Educators**

Educators in both high schools can be classified as part of the middle-income group. Most of them reside in urban areas. Those who stay locally are very few. The researcher assumes that these educators are academically suitable to teach at high schools because schools must comply with the requirements for each post allocated to such educators.

- **Principals**

The principals of Manoshi and Mokwatedi can be categorised as being from a high-income group and also qualified based on the assumption that one cannot be a principal at a high school if he/she does not meet the requirements of the post or not adequately qualified.

- **Parents**

The characteristics of the parents were typical of people living in poverty where the only means of survival is through practising subsistence farming, basing their hopes on rain, which is seasonal and unreliable. Most of the learner's parents were below the age of 60, which determines their qualification for old age pension, or not. Their educational level was low; they only had a primary school education, hence they were unemployed.

The participants were predominantly females. The details concerning their gender will be reflected in item 3. 2. 3.2 (research sample) below.

### **3. 2. 3 SAMPLING METHOD**

The sample was drawn from the population consisting of Grade 12 learners from Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools, 2 principals from schools, Grade 12 educators and Grade 12 learners' parents.

A sample is an element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study or a subset of measurements drawn from a population we are interested in. A sample can also be defined as a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons, which together comprise the subject of our study (Seaberg, 1988:240).

It is also possible to reach accurate conclusions by examining a portion of the total group. The definition of sampling is a technical accounting device to rationalise the collection of data, to choose in an appropriate manner the restricted set of persons, objects and events from which the actual information would be drawn. The researcher employed a non-probability sampling technique, particularly the purposive sampling method, which assisted her to choose in an appropriate manner, the restricted set of participants (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:83).

### **3. 2. 3. 1 Purposive sampling method**

The sample of Grade 12 learners were purposively selected from other Grades because the study focuses on the poor performance of this group in relation to the required results for university entrance. The June/July examination schedule was used because these marks can highlight the level at which learners have performed from January to June. A sample of the bottom 10 learners on the June/July schedule was identified from each school since their names were recorded in terms of their merit. Both principals were also identified to clarify other information regarding how the school is financed since such information might not be accessible from other participants like learners and educators. Educators were necessary to give their opinion of the poor performance of Grade 12 learners was necessary. Only educators teaching Grade 12 learners were necessary because they are the ones who have direct contact with Grade 12 learners on each school day, and only parents of the 10 learners appearing on the bottom of the class list were identified, as they are the most relevant in this study because according to the records the bottom 10 learners formed part of those that did not perform well.

The purposive sampling method was chosen because the researcher was concerned with the relevance of the sample in the sense that only those learners who performed poorly during the June/July examination were used. These are mid-year results that are normally used when

compiling a learner's year mark, currently called Cass (Continuous Assessment) at the end of the year (Arkava & Lane, 1983: 27).

The purposive sampling method allowed the researcher to acquire information that would build up arguments towards a deeper understanding of participants' reasons for performing poorly in their studies. Another reason for the choice of purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher, in that a sample was composed of elements that contained most characteristics representative or typical attributes of the population (Singleton *et al.*, 1988:153).

### **3. 2. 3. 2 Research sample**

In this study, the research sample constituted 32 participants. There were 20 Grade 12 learners from the two high schools (10 from each school Manoshi and Mokwatedi), 4 parents (2 parents of the sampled Grade 12 learners from each school), 6 Grade 12 educators (3 from each school) and 2 principals. There were more females than males. Out of 20 learners, 12 were females and 8 were males, 3 females and 3 males represented the educators. All 4 parents were females and both principals were males. In terms of gender the sample of 32 constituted 19 females and 13 males.

### **3. 3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The procedure for collecting data entailed gaining access to both schools, presentation of oneself and becoming acquainted with the research subjects, the data collection procedure, the pilot study, and data collection instruments.

- **Gaining access**

Since access to the research site could be an issue, the researcher negotiated permission from the principals and the Department of Education so that rules and regulations in public schools concerning access are complied with. Arrangements were made with research participants whereupon time schedules were drawn and agreed upon. The sampled parents were consulted individually by the researcher at their respective homes to ask their permission and agree on the time of their choice (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:57).

Depending on the contingencies of the setting and the research problem chosen, there are two kinds of research access that may be obtained (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000):

- “Covert” access without subjects’ knowledge of researchers’ presence.
- “Overt” access which is based on informing participants and getting permission from all of them, often through ‘Gate keepers’. In this case gatekeepers are the Department of Education and the principals.

In this study, the researcher chose the “Overt access” which was relevant to this study due to the fact that my participants had the choice to participate or not (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

- **Becoming acquainted: The initial relationship**

Since the researcher was not a member of the schools, she had to create a relaxed atmosphere. The presentation of oneself is very important because it leaves a profound impression on the respondents and has great influence on the success (or failure) of the study. Sometimes, inadvertently, the researcher’s presentational self may be misrepresented, as Johnson (1976) discovered in studying a welfare office, when some employees assumed that he was a “spy” for management despite his best efforts to convince them of the contrary. The explanation of the research’s purpose and getting permission from the principals, educators, learners and parents was done. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary and the collected information would be strictly confidential. The researcher assured them that the aim of the study was to find out why Grade 12 learners perform at a level that does not allow them university entrance, and to find out which factors at school and home contributed to their poor performance as well as the role-played by the learners’ parents in education (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:58-59).

### **3. 3. 1 Data collection instruments**

Data collection instruments are the tools that the researcher used to collect data. The researcher used several instruments to collect data so that almost all issues can be covered in this study. A pilot study preceded the interviews to highlight errors in advance. Some of the information was obtained through casual conversation with participants. Individual face-to-face interviews were used for individual Grade 12 learners, educators, parents, and principals, because the researcher

wanted the respondents to discuss even those issues that are sensitive. Individual face-to-face interview for Grade 12 educators, and principals were used to get their opinion since they are in direct contact with Grade 12 learners on each school day (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 48).

Observable data was collected through observation. The data collected through this method was time management, spaces inside and outside the classroom, outside the schoolyard in relation to time management, behavioural patterns of learners and issues of moral order, and their physical appearance (De Vos, 2001).

Document analysis of attendance registers, mark sheets, quarterly and half-yearly schedules was used to get the information that might not be accessible during interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 89).

Grade 12 learners must register for 7 approved subjects and the choice of such subjects must be in line with their choice of stream. The Science stream includes the following subjects: English, Home Language, Mathematics/Maths Literacy, Chemistry, Physical Science, Life Science, and Life Orientation. The Commerce stream includes: English, Language, Mathematics/Maths Literacy, Accounting, Economics, Business Economics, and Life Orientation. The General stream entails: English, Home Language, Geography, History, Tourism, Business Economics, and Life Orientation. The learners are required to pass English with a minimum of 30%, Sepedi (mother tongue) 40%, and four subjects with 50% to get an Exemption (prior 2008) currently equivalent to Bachelor which is university entrance.

The learners are supposed to pass a minimum of six subjects, as highlighted above, per stream to get a Bachelor, which is a requirement for university entrance. The 2006-2008 results reflect the number of learners who wrote the examination, the number passed, Exemptions/Bachelor, S-Senior Certificate, and Diploma/National Senior Certificate for Manoshi and Mokwatedi are highlighted in chapter 4 of this study in Table 4.2, and 4.3.



### **3. 3. Pilot study**

Pilot study is defined as the “miniaturised walk-through of the entire study design” (Babbie, 1990: 220). The purpose of the pilot study is the investigation of the feasibility of the planned project is to bring possible deficiencies in the measuring procedure to the fore (Huysamen, 1993: 205). The question for the interviews was piloted on six Grade 12 learners, 3 from Manoshi and 3 from Mokwatedi high schools. During this period, the researcher realised that the question was confusing because it did not elicit some of the crucial information required and so the researcher decided to extend such an interview question to Grade 12 educators, the principals, and the parents of the sampled Grade 12 learners. The confusing question was restructured.

### **3. 3. 3 Interviews**

Interviewing is one of the most common methods of data collection used by researchers to inform them about social life. Interviewing could thus be regarded as the universal mode of systemic enquiry (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995:1). The technique of individual face-to-face interviewing treats the interview as a pipeline for extracting and transmitting information from the interviewee to the interviewer (De Vos, 2001:297).

Individual face-to-face interviews were used thus strengthening the clause of confidentiality. This assisted the researcher to understand the closed worlds of participants, the factors affecting learner’s poor performance at home and at school, educators’, principals’ and parents’ comments and opinions regarding learners’ poor performances. However, learning about these ‘closed worlds’ depends on the ability of the interviewer to maximise the flow of valid, reliable information while reducing the distortions in the interviewee’s recollection of events. Open-ended interviews enabled the interviewer to obtain an inside view of the social phenomenon that also explored other avenues that emerged from the interaction. The use of open-ended interviews encourages two-way communication. This kind of interview confirms what is already known but also provides the reasons for the answers and often interviewees may more easily discuss sensitive issues (De Vos, 2001:298). The advantage of using interviews is that interviewers do not have to be particularly skilled in the art of interviewing.

During the interviews, which were conducted in the participants' natural habitat (school), the researcher adopted the role of a "peripheral-member researcher" because she believed that she could develop a desirable insider's perspective without participating in the activities of the learners, educators, principals, and parents (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:676).

The following interview question was used for all participants.

Which factors in the home and school environments contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners and prevent them from achieving required results for university entrance?

- **Learners**

The learners were interviewed at their respective schools. Interviews were face-to-face and individually administered. Learners' interviews took 10-15 minutes. All participants answered the questions in their Home language (Sepedi). The following open-ended question was asked: Which factors in the home and school environments contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and prevent them from achieving required results for university entrance?

- **Educators**

Grade 12 educators were also interviewed at their respective schools. Interviews were conducted in English. The researcher used an individual face-to-face interview with 3 educators per school. Interviews took 10-15 minutes. The interview question focused on their opinion about the poor performance of their Grade 12 learners: Which factors in the home and school environments contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and prevent them from achieving required results for university entrance?

During the interviews, other questions developed spontaneously in the course of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Participants wanted to know the reason why a certain school had decent facilities and resources, which those other schools (including Manoshi and Mokwatedi) did not have in the area. Another issue that cropped up was Rationalisation and Redeployment of educators (R & R). First hand information about individuals and groups can be

obtained through casual conversation, observation and document analysis of official records. In this study, first hand information of individual participants was obtained through interviewing individual learners, educators, principals and parents one-by-one (Jorgen, 1989: 15).

- **Principals**

Principals were interviewed individually at their schools and English was used. The interviews lasted for 5-10 minutes. The interview question sought to enquire about their opinion regarding the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners. The question was as follows: Which factors in the home and school environments contribute towards the poor performance at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and prevent them from achieving required results for university entrance?

- **Parents**

The parents were also individually interviewed, face-to-face, at their respective homes between 16H00-17H00. The interviews lasted for 5-7 minutes. The parents could not communicate in English due to their low level of education. All interviewed parents indicated that they have primary education. Therefore the question was translated into the home language. The parents' interview question was similar to all questions that were answered by all participants. The question was as follows: Which factors in the home and school environments contribute towards the poor performance at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and prevent from achieving required results for them university entrance?

Vernacular interpretations were employed in order to clarify the question for learners and the parents. This resulted in all participants answering the question. Questions were answered in an open-ended way, which ensured that the researcher have access to the world of the Grade 12 learners, educators, principals at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools, respectively, and the parents, as well as to understand points as grounded in the learner's behaviours, attitudes and feelings towards education. The educators, principals, and parent's questions were also answered in an open-ended way to ensure that crucial information is elicited. The process of interviewing was flexible since participants were at liberty to pursue other issues that shed more light on new information.

### **3. 3. 4 Observations**

Researchers applying the qualitative approach use observations quite often. The strategy is used as a principal data-gathering strategy in qualitative research because researchers are interested in the ways in which people usually make sense of or attach meaning to the world around them (De Vos, 2001:277-281).

The observation method is unobtrusive and does not require direct interaction with participants; the observation can be conducted inconspicuously. In fact there are settings and types of behaviour, which could not be studied through other more blatant methods. Another strength associated with observational research lies in its flexibility to yield insight into new realities or new ways of looking at realities. This method produces especially great rigour when combined with other methods. The researcher was able to observe certain information like learner's behaviour that would not be possible to get during interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 89).

The observation technique focused on the observation and directed attention to the learner's behaviours in terms of time management, spaces inside, outside the classroom and schoolyard, and learners' physical appearances as "selected observations". The focus established and refined the characteristics of learners and their relations among the elements. The stages of observations formed a funnel, progressively narrowing and directing the researcher's attention deeper into the elements of the setting that have emerged as theoretically and/or empirically essential until these elements merge into the actual factors contributing towards their poor performance (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 83-89).

The selected observed factors that the researcher directed attention to are the following: Time management, spaces inside and outside classrooms and the schoolyard as well as the physical appearance of the learner (uniform).

- **Time management**

In this study, the researcher focused on the issue of time management by learners. The strategy allowed the researcher to observe the behaviour of the learners at school, during lessons as well as after the lessons. The researcher observed the learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi schools,

respectively, during their lunch and recess periods to learn how these young ones structure their leisure time and how they respond to the siren/ bell as it marks the beginning and the end of each lunch and different learning periods respectively and all the data was captured as field notes.

- **Spaces inside, outside the classroom, and school yard**

The researcher's observations were on the behavioural patterns of learners inside the classroom, outside the classroom, and outside in the schoolyard during break, as well as on the location of the school in relation to other local facilities such as clinics, and different types of businesses to see if such facilities could be a factor contributing towards poor performance.

These notes were expanded into proper full notes, which served as the basis for the identification of emerging patterns of behaviour of learners. The information was then consolidated and in terms of time management, response to siren/bell, go out in groups, direction- to the toilets, shops, or home, and spaces within/out of school premises (Loflan, 1994).

- **Physical appearance of learners' uniforms**

Physical appearance, like learners' uniforms and facial expressions when they are called to run back to their classes, were noted. The observation was continuous each time the researcher visited the schools. It was not necessary for learners to be told by educators to go back to classes. This was a sign of ill discipline, and that learners do not take time seriously.

### **3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Issues of ethical confidentiality and privacy of personal rights of learners, educators, principals, and parents had to be protected. Not all the information was recorded to avoid adverse effects of disclosure. Since participation in the study was voluntary and some of the identified learners left the school premises before being interviewed, it was assumed that they did not want to participate and were not followed-up, but were replaced.

It is every learner's democratic right whether to participate or not. The researcher obtained permission from the relevant authorities. The Department of Education, Manoshi and Mokwatedi

high schools, Grade 12 learners, educators, principals, and parents gave permission for the study to be conducted. The objective of the study was explained verbally and participants were assured that the information obtained during interviews would be kept confidential.

### **3. 5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There is a possibility that some participants could have lied deliberately in order to paint a bad picture of the situation. Some of the learners who did not want to participate might be those who could have shed more light on the problems encountered as individuals or groups. Despite these limitations encountered, the responses provided shed light on our understanding of the factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners.

### **3. 6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined the research methodology for the study. The pilot study highlighted gaps; there was a need to rephrase the question before the actual interviewing could start and also include other participants who could assist in providing answers to the question as some of the factors that contribute towards poor performance at the researched schools could not be elicited from Grade 12 learners only. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to access information that affects performance at home and at school. Some of the issues that were not related to the research question but were relevant to the problem of poor performance also cropped up. The researcher was therefore satisfied that the necessary data was collected through individual face-to-face interviews, observations, and document analysis, which highlighted critical issues that were not envisaged.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### 4. INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents an analysis of the results of the data collected at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools that highlighted several factors by learners, educators, principals and parents for the learners' poor performance. The report outlines the findings categorised in terms of home and school environments, which directly addressed the researcher's initial aim of the research. The categories may overlap to some extent, but taken together, they provided a comprehensive overview of the researcher's interpretations of results based on qualitative research. Throughout the report, the researcher was concerned with identifying factors pertaining to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners who were unable to perform at a level that would allow them entrance to university education. The analysis was an ongoing thing as data were collected as an interim measure and early analysis, and analysis continued after data collection had been completed as a final step before consolidation of data. The researcher used processes such as data reduction, data display, results, conclusion and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 428-430).

The processes are as follows:

##### **Data reduction**

There was a need to reduce the data after the research had been completed due to excessive records. This was done through the data reduction process. This is the first step of sub-processes that clustered the findings in line with their categories and themes. The data was then further selected and condensed (Morse & Field, 1996: 107-108).

##### **Data display**

Data display was the second step where the data were organised in a concise assembly of information and a more focused display, which is a structured summary of a draft document (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 428-430).

## **Results, Conclusion and verification**

Results, conclusion and verification is where the researcher compared/contrasted, noting the patterns, themes, clustering negative cases, using confirmation tactics that looked for surprises, and checked the results with participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 180).

### **4. 1 HOME ENVIRONMENT**

The home environment was found to be of no assistance to learners due to the parent's low level of education and that made it impossible for learners to achieve the standards required at school for them to pass with results that allow university entrance. The parents of learners at Manoshi (school A) will be abbreviated as PA- 1 and PA-2 and parents of learners at Mokwatedi (school B) will be abbreviated as PB-1 and PB-2, henceforth.

#### **4. 1. 1 Lack of parental support**

The importance of parents' role in the education of the child determines the achievement and success of children at school. The family background is the major factor in determining the academic performance of learners because unstable families contribute towards poor performance (Adell, 2002: 91).

PA-2 said:

My daughter is a mother; she must take care of the baby and also cook for the whole family. During the weekend she must wash clothes for all of us. I want to assist her but I am sick. She does not have time to study.

The parents are participating minimally in their children's education (Themane, 1989: 151).

PB-2 confessed as follows:

I cannot assist my son with his homework. I am not educated, he ask his friends to help. I do not have time because I sell African beer so that we can buy food for him and his siblings.



#### **4. 1. 2 Unpredictable home environments**

Parents and families provide the first protective factors in a child's environment. The home that is stable and has clear consistent rules that are enforced fairly, where a child receives warmth and care, sends the message to the child that life is secure and dependable. Domestic quarrels, substance abuse by parents affect the academic performance of learners negatively because their focus is on their conflicts and the children are neglected in the process (Saiduddin, 2003:88).

PA-1 indicated that:

My husband is an alcoholic who fights with me every weekend. He is unemployed, we always fight for the child support grant. He want the money to be given to him, arguing that he is the father of those children.

#### **4. 1. 3 Educational levels of parents**

The study found that most of the parents' level of education is such that they are unable to assist their children with their schoolwork. The researcher categorised the learners' parents as illiterate since the interaction revealed that most of them only possess primary education. The parents' limited education puts more strain on non-performing learners at school. Thus, when the learners have not mastered the first level of the learning material and the educator embarks on the next level, that learner will be left behind. As classes proceed he/she is likely to be behind the schedule (Castejon & Perez, 1998).

PB-1 said:

I am not educated, I want to assist my child but I do not understand his home work. I do not know where to start.

PA-1 confirmed the findings as follows:

I want to assist my child but I cannot read English and their schoolwork is different from what I learned at primary school.

The parents are not literate enough to assist their children with schoolwork. The home environment is supposed to be the basis for good education where the foundation for future

learning and success is laid. According to Cummins (1994: 3), home is the crucial social setting that is conducive to supporting and grooming children. The learners from Manoshi (school A) will be abbreviated as LA-1, 2, 3...10 while learners from Mokwatedi (school B) will be abbreviated as LB-1, 2, 3...10, henceforth.

The following information was from LA-2:

My parent is not educated. She never attended high school. I get help from my educators during study time. Sometimes I get help from my neighbor, because he is a teacher.

The researcher is convinced that learners whose parents are available are better off, in the sense that these learners are not responsible for all household chores. Even if they are not supported educationally, they have moral support and supervision from their parents who ensure that children do their schoolwork, and they go to school regularly.

This study found that parents acknowledge that they are responsible for assisting their children with their schoolwork, but the problem is that they are not sufficiently literate to offer meaningful assistance to their children. That influences the poor academic performance of their children to the extent that they are unable to pass with Exemption/Bachelor.

PA-2 confessed as follows:

I feel sorry for my daughter. She is working very hard to cook for the whole family. She must take care of her own child. I want to help but I am not educated and I am sick. During the weekend she washes clothes. If she is not around, her siblings are not prepared to cook or clean the house.

#### **4. 1. 4 Employed vs. unemployed parents**

As a result of the low level of education of the parents, most of them are unemployed (Louw, 1993: 26). The problem of parents not earning enough to cater for all the needs at home also

influences academic performance indirectly. School performance is also linked to nutrition. Provision of balanced meals can curb chronic health problems and the poor academic performance of learners (Collins, 2003). The participants who were not employed highlighted several economic hardships they found themselves in which in turn affect the performance of learners negatively.

PB-1 highlighted the following:

I am the only one who is employed at home. I am a farm worker at Magoeba's kloof. I can only manage to buy mealie meal and soap. There is no money to buy meat and clothes. A bag of potatoes must last for a month until I get paid at the end of the month.

PB-2 was quoted as follows:

I am not working. My husband is also not employed. We rely on my in-laws' old age pension. The money is not enough because we are 10 in the family.

PB-1's comment:

I am divorced and unemployed. My family survive on money from child support grant for two children who are still below 14 years.

As such, it is difficult for unemployed parents to raise the children and provide adequate food, clothing, and assistance. However, parents do provide moral support as well as modelling the acceptable behaviour. In most cases families experience financial hardships, which is an indication of the low socio-economic background. Where such children do eat a healthy diet, their improved memory and conceptual thinking contribute towards their satisfactory academic performance (Karande & Kulkarne, 2005:4). Nutrition deficiencies are also a threat to the academic performance of learners (Polite, 1994).

This study also found that there is a problem where parents are unable to find work close to the home; they only come home at the end of the month. As a result, these parents cannot offer

parental supervision for their children. Those children who lack discipline and are not determined to succeed at school then have the leeway to play truant and misbehave since they do not account to anybody. Affected children might find themselves in a situation in which it is difficult to cope with their schoolwork and they cannot pass with an Exemption/Bachelor.

#### **4. 1. 5 Marital status of parents**

Uncertainty about who the father is or why the mother is divorced causes anxiety among young people. Sometimes when the mother cannot afford to provide certain needs, their self-esteem and eventually their performance at school is affected (Litner, 1991: 24). The uncertainty regarding having one's mother as a single parent also affects one's self-concept and self-identity negatively, resulting in poor performance at school (Solo, 1997).

LB-9 complained as follows:

You feel neglected by your parent if she cannot provide what you need as a child. My mother always tell me that being a single parent make life more difficult for her because as a child I want to know why is my father not assisting, and she does not want to talk about it.

Hence, there is an argument that the ability to control one's environment is directly related to self-esteem (Wilson & Black, 1978).

Emotional problems as a factor that influences poor performance was highlighted by orphans within the sample. The situation of being an orphan is the worst scenario; since such learners cannot be compared to other learners whose parents are migrant labourers, single or divorced. Within the sample there were two orphans and their experiences were shocking. The situation was so bad that the orphan preferred to leave his siblings with his stepfather after the mother's death and went back to stay alone at his grandparents' home although they had passed away (Karande & Kulkarne, 2005: 961-967).

LB-5 openly related his story as follows:

My stepfather ill-treated me after my mother's death. I came back to my grandparents. They are also late. Since there was no one at my grandparents' home, I could not afford to buy units to recharge electricity. I sometimes slept being hungry; I cannot study because there are no candles. I am waiting for the grant from government.

The orphans are going through a rough patch since the loss of parents' results in emotional instability. This affects the performance of such learners especially if there are no support mechanisms in place to deal with the trauma (Conger, 1991:113-114).

#### **4. 1. 6 Size of the family**

The number of family members also puts more strain on minimal resources than parents can afford to provide. The children are affected, as they have to compete for those resources. The minimal number most families were found to have been 6, while others have more than 10 members. Extended family members made matters worse since they too have to share the minimal resources (food and clothing) that parents bring home. Most of the learners from bigger families experience more problems than those from smaller families. Hence, it is argued that conditions at home help to foster or block school success (Solo, 1997).

LB-8 raised raised this issue:

At home I am staying with my two brothers, three sisters, parents, grandparents, uncle, aunt, and two cousins. We are fourteen. Life is not easy for us because we have to share food, blankets, and we often fight over clothes since if you wake up late your siblings will wear your uniform, clothes, or underwear.

Life becomes worse at school for such learners. Due to the economic hardships they find themselves in they sometimes go to school hungry or available food is not enough for all of them. They cannot concentrate at school and academic performance suffers.

In contrast, there are learners who are from the worst situations like orphans and those from families who cannot even provide their children with food, but they still excel in their academic performance (Castejon & Perez, 1998).

#### **4. 1. 7 Availability of basic services (water and electricity)**

Water is available in all villages serviced by both Manoshi and Mokwatedi, which is impressive since the threat of water-borne diseases, and absenteeism due to ill health is thus minimised and no lessons will be missed. This would be a positive sign of success if there were no other factors that may prevent such learners' entrance to university.

However, not all villages have electricity. Only three villages have electricity: Mountain View, Sehlale and Mankgaile. Makubung and Maripathekong are two of the villages without electricity.

LA-8 from villages without electricity indicated that:

There is no electricity in our village. I have to fetch firewood from the bush. I cannot study at night because sometimes there is no money to buy candles or paraffin.

However, participants raised other issues during the interviews, and such factors are reflected in this chapter since they were highlighted as some of the factors affecting the performance of learners. The issues that cropped up during interviews were gender roles and communication problems like non-participation of the LRC in SGB and School Management Team meetings while educators in 4. 2. 6. and 4. 2. 7 below raised issues regarding poor short-term workshops and workload as perpetuated by Rationalisation and Redeployment (R & R) of educators.

#### **4. 1. 8 Gender roles**

This study found that there were issues regarding gender roles that cropped up as 12 female participants complained that all household chores are the responsibility of girls except where there are no girls in the family or the girl is still too young to take over such a responsibility. There is a relationship between family environment, life stress and coping strategies and academic performance among African women learners. Some of female learners are already

mothers. Gender factors affect female learners in both rural and urban schools. More female than male learners are found to be performing poorly and sometimes drop out. After dropping out of school they normally confine themselves to household chores (Sayed *et al.* 2007: 84).

LB-4 participants argued as follows:

Yes, the availability of water and electricity reduce the workload for me as a female but I still have to cook, clean and wash the clothes for the whole family while my siblings (boys) are playing. After I have done all what was supposed to be done, I am tired and cannot study.

More siblings at home place pressure on the elder sister especially the child-headed families and this affects her academic performance because she will be tired before school starts. She will be responsible for bathing and clothing the younger siblings, especially if parents are not around to assist.

LB-7 confessed as follows:

There is no one at home to clean, cook and wash our clothes. I do not have time to study. I have to bath my siblings and dress them before I go to school. I am always late for school.

Some parents are not at home to assist children with household chores and support them morally. Such parents are migrant workers, and they only come home over the weekend or month end. As a result, learners are responsible for all household chores, making it even more difficult to cope with their schoolwork.

The researcher confirmed these concerns during the interaction with the parent component. Hence, parents should revisit the roles of their children, irrespective of their gender in order to strike a balance regarding allocation of responsibilities among them. Such responsibilities must be reduced to allow enough time to focus on their studies channelling their energy towards improving their performance at school.

## **4. 2 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

The Department of Education (DoE) should encourage equal participation of all affected parties such as the School Management Team, the School Governing Body and the Learner Representative Council (Abbreviated as SMT, SGB, and LRC hence forth) to ensure that there is inclusive active participation, thus promoting community-based decision-making.

### **4. 2. 1 Lack of parental support**

Socio-economic status is a general scapegoat. Almost everybody blames the socio-economic status of learners for the poor performance of learners at school. In contrast to that statement, there is the argument that all learners are educable if they are given well-trained educators and relevant learner support materials. Dysfunctional families aggravate learners' inability to meet the required standards that will enable them to gain university entrance. There are findings that children from intact homes are less likely to repeat a school grade despite their socio-economic background that is usually not conducive to their performing well at school (Saiduddin, 2003: 2-23).

Educators at Manoshi (school A) will be abbreviated as EA-1...3 and educators at Mokwatedi will be abbreviated as EB-1...3 henceforth, while the principal at Manoshi will be abbreviated to PA and the principal at Mokwatedi will be abbreviated to PB henceforth.

The EB-1 went further to say:

There is a shaky parental involvement and support to the school's endeavour to attain successful results. Most learners' stay alone or only with siblings while parents are elsewhere for jobs as a means for survival. As such, learners have poor discipline from home and they disturb normal schooling.



EA-3 complained about the following:

The performance of their school, specifically Grade 12 learners was associated with poor family support and poor socio-economic background of learners.

#### **4. 2. 2 Attitude towards learning**

Attitudes are spontaneous and based on the understanding of communication style that may be verbal or non-verbal and behaviour. The negative attitude towards learning results in the poor performance of learners and that will determine their academic achievements (Mullins, 2005: 365).

EA-3 complained that:

Learners are not serious about their studies because educators stay at school for afternoon studies and this is the time for each learner who is struggling in a specific subject to consult with the relevant educators for assistance.

#### **4. 2. 3 Substance abuse**

- **Learner's experiences**

The participants complained that there is a problem of smoking and drinking of liquor during break instead of eating their lunch. Learners complain that such learners interfere with the continuity of lessons because some learners do not come back to classes on time after break (Cunningham, 1994: 272).

The information by LA-7 was that:

Some of us go to the nearby shops and sometimes come back very late, others do not respond to the siren or they do not come back after break. When they come back, they do not cooperate with educators.

Learners acknowledged that learners who are under the influence of dagga or liquor tend to be unruly. They cannot concentrate any more and their disruptive behaviour affects all learners in

that specific class. Learners' questions elicited issues regarding their family backgrounds and the prevalence of substance abuse at their respective schools.

- **Educator's experiences**

The interview with the EA-1 elicited the following:

There are sporadic indications of substance abuse of alcoholic beverages and dagga, which are easily accessible; which tend to drag down the admired behaviour and eventually affecting performance not only of the unruly ones but for the whole class.

EB-2 complained that:

The learner's lack of discipline and their attitude towards the learning process is a problem that continue to disturb performance.

EB-1 explained that:

Learners identify themselves with their role model from an early age. The role model might be the mother, father, educator, friend, or someone within the community. Therefore, parents and educators must to model the correct behaviour since learners tend to emulate wrong behaviours from us.

Lack of discipline creates a negative attitude in learners towards the educators, thus affecting the relationship that must be maintained to promote an undisrupted learning process. Time for lessons is used to address such learners and eventually the whole class is affected. The entire scenario results in time for learning being interrupted, and this leads to most learners academically under performing (Marchesi & Martin, 2002).

#### **4. 2. 4 Medium of instruction**

There is a serious problem regarding English as a medium of instruction. The whole interview process with learners had to be done in their home language. The question was translated into their home language, and they were allowed to answer in the same language. Using English as the

language of communication was found to be a contributing factor to poor performance that emerged as being serious during the interviews. Educators also raised the language issue that learners cannot read in their mother tongue, and it is worse in examinations and tests because they cannot read question papers. The parents were also unable to communicate in English. Despite the language problem, they were relaxed and open to discuss their individual problems with the researcher.

EA-2 raised the following concern:

Our learners cannot read in their Home language let alone in English. Hence,  
If they cannot read a question paper they cannot respond to the questions.

The language that is used as a medium of instruction in different educational settings has a major impact on the academic performance of learners, or on their interest to learn a specific subject or the way they communicate with the educator as well as fellow learners about different concepts of a subject. In South Africa, most of the subjects are being taught in English. The issue of medium of instruction has been contested, where some parents and educationists argue about mother tongue as the language to be used when learners are taught at school (Themane, 1989: 122). However, educators and principals were interviewed in English and the interaction was perfect.

#### **4. 2. 5 The role of the South African School's Act (1996d)**

All schools in South Africa must comply with the SASA (1996d), aimed at ensuring that all decision-making at high schools involves all stakeholders. Therefore schools are obliged to elect SGB and LRC and they must be invited to meetings of the SMT to participate in a constructive manner. Manoshi and Mokwatedi also complied with this Act.

#### **Inclusion of SGB and LRC**

- **SGB**

During the interviews with the parents, one parent raised issues that were not relevant to the study and the researcher felt that it was crucial to capture part of the statement to highlight the

importance of participation by parents in SGB meetings and of allowing participants to discuss other issues of concern openly without fear of intimidation or victimisation.

PA-2 indicated her concerns as follows:

I am an SGB member for one of the local Primary Schools. Some of the educators do not want parents to ask questions in meetings. They want us to listen to what they want to tell us without asking questions. Since that day, I am no longer invited to SGB meetings.

Although all (4) parents interviewed were not sufficiently literate, they acknowledged that their involvement in their children's education was of utmost importance since that would assist the School Management Team in the learning processes of their children. Hence, in most cases, their input regarding how to deal with their ill-disciplined children is necessary. The parents' role in modelling the correct behaviours was also acknowledged as crucial (Saiduddin, 2003:22).

- **LRC**

The researchers' argument is that LRC should not be elected for compliance with the SASA (1996d), but should play a role in transforming our schools. Furthermore, participation of the LRC in SMT and SGB meetings would assist in identifying and addressing the needs as well as problems encountered by learners at school and improving on areas that are highlighted as problematic in their learning processes. As a result, conflict between SMT, SGB, LRC, educators, and learners would be minimised, allowing schools to run smoothly without disruption from learners and that could assist to improve the level of performance resulting in more learners accessing entrance to university.

The study found that there was an issue relating to communication breakdown between the SMT and LRC that came out at both Manoshi and Mokwatedi. The issue at stake was that although LRCs are in existence, sometimes they are not invited to meetings of the SMT and the SGB. Compliance in election of the two structures, SGBs and LRCs, is not good enough because the decisions that are taken by the SMT might impact negatively on the quality of education, particularly for a Black rural child. The LRC represents all learners in each school; therefore,

decisions must be inclusive, especially because they are the beneficiaries of budgets from government (Sayed *et al.* 2007: 36-39).

This statement was made by LA-3:

As LRC member in this school we are not participating in meetings between SMT and SGB. We cannot share some of our opinions with them because they do not want to be questioned and I am no longer invited.

Another LB-4 indicated:

We once raised a question as learners regarding utilisation of funds at school through our LRC and that resulted in victimisation of some learners who served in the committee.

#### **4. 2. 6 Unequal distributions of facilities/resources**

One of the roles of the SASA (1996d) section 34 (1) is that the state ensures access to quality education and redress of the past education inequalities among sections of those who suffered particular disadvantages.

- **Availability of facilities and their physical standards**

##### **Classrooms**

Both schools have classrooms that are in a poor condition since the walls and floors have cracks, some windowpanes are broken, and the classrooms have no ceiling, which makes it difficult for educators and learners to hear each other due to noise on rainy days. During winter, the classrooms are very cold which might affect the concentration of learners and they might easily catch flu, resulting in the increased absenteeism of learners. There is an argument that the new post-apartheid schools are in exactly the same place, neighbourhood, and the same social environment as it had been during the old order (Sayed *et al.* 2007: 39).

### **Administration blocks**

The two high schools under study do not have administrative blocks; the principals share a room with administrative clerks. There is no privacy for the principals. For example, educators' files are confidential and sometimes the principal might be unable to discuss private matters with one of the educators, learner, parent or any visitor that may need the attention of the principal. The state of the buildings in these schools is shocking. This reflected the reality that there is no monitoring or inspections by the Department of Education to verify the status quo of schools and whether allocated resources to schools are utilised effectively or as requested. If for argument's sake there is monitoring taking place, then such monitors are not reporting what is happening on the ground, and so one may assume that there is misrepresentation. Studies (Motala & Pampalis, 2001) found that educators, principals and learners' morale might be low and the educators' motivation to teach is affected. There is an argument that the difference between rural and urban areas is political. The change in rural areas is not good enough since most rural schools, including Manoshi and Mokwatedi, still leave much to be desired.

### **Laboratory**

The researcher observed that one corner of a classroom was used for experiments while some of the educators were busy marking books. In essence, there was no laboratory since such a facility should be fully equipped with instruments, chemicals as well as safety measures like fire extinguishers. However, the researcher observed a few learners using the available material to perform experiments, even though some of the experiments could not be performed due to inadequate equipments and chemicals. The inadequacy and lack of appropriate materials such as chemicals, impact negatively on the performance of learners (Ralenala, 1993).

EA-2 raised the following concern:

Facilities like laboratory, and computer lab are the most crucial for our learners to be at par with learners from well-resourced schools. It is unfortunate that our learners have to write the same paper with learners who are exposed to all learner support materials.

There is a need for more funds to improve the physical standards of existing facilities and for the construction of other facilities such as laboratory and administrative blocks that did not exist during both phases of the study. More funding is necessary to buy learner support materials especially science apparatus, and also the construction of necessary facilities that might assist in improving the academic performance of their Grade 12 learners to improve results and allow them university entrance.

The schools are not adequately equipped for learners to perform as envisaged. The interview question elicited information to the researcher about educators' experiences and their opinions regarding poor results, which highlighted their frustrations.

- **Computers**

Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools do not have computers that could give learners the opportunity to access information on the Internet or give them the choice to do computer studies if they were to choose which subjects they would like to study. Hence, learners are compromised because they are evaluated as if they are on par with other learners from advantaged schools. Availability of computers in these high schools could put pressure on the DoE to appoint qualified educators in that field to teach the subject in those schools. Relevant information could be accessed on the Internet since the current curriculum expects learners to explore and surf the Internet to acquire necessary information for different tasks to improve their academic performance. The educators argue that learners are not able to travel to urban areas where they can access necessary information on the Internet. Given the constraints, privileged children are not suddenly going to attend at a poor public school; they would rather travel to more resourced or private schools (Sayed *et al.* 2007: 39).

LA-3 complained as follows:

Our school does not have computers where we can access information.

Some of the assignments/ tasks need information from the Internet. I

want to register for computer subjects so that I can look for a job because

my parents cannot afford to send me to the university.

LA-4 raised this concern:

We are not treated equally because there are high schools and some of the primary schools that have computers. As a Grade 12 learner I will be expected to type assignments at university and I cannot use a computer.

LB-5 indicated:

All urban schools that I know are well resourced compared to schools rural area but we are expected to perform like learners from schools that have everything while we do not have necessary resources.

They indicated that previously resources were not equally distributed and that rural schools, including Manoshi and Mokwatedi were not adequately funded compared with other schools especially those that are urban based. The principals further noted with appreciation, the increase in funding of schools and that currently all schools were funded equally.

The principals gave their own opinion regarding the funding of schools, but their concern was that the gap is not closing. They indicated that schools are funded equally depending on the number of learners the school has and the quintile within which the school is categorised.

Participant EB-1

Funding of schools is one of the obstacles since the schools are not adequately equipped with learner support materials, that is necessary materials to compete with other well-resourced schools. Examples are lack of laboratories, computer labs.

EB-2's comment:

Poor schools such as this need more funding to assist them to elevate the the standards of performance. The current curriculum requires that learners must source information from the Internet. As a result, the learners in this school are not coping, they are lagging behind in all subjects.



The researcher had to verify whether the discrimination in funding as highlighted in Chapter 2 of this study by Wilson and Ramphele (1994:141-145) and Themane (1989:107) when they argue about the skewed funding that was also racially and urban biased, and had been acknowledged by all participants, has been addressed. This study found that the issue of discrimination is still intact since the funding at Manoshi, Mokwatedi and one urban former Model C Schools reflected a huge gap that still needs to be closed for schools to have equal treatment so that they can be compared academically in their performance. This perception that the Department of Education is urban and racially biased when allocating resources seems to be true based on the findings of this study and the remarks by the previous Premier of Gauteng during his State of the Province Address on Monday the 19 February 2007. There are arguments from other studies, which support the discrimination regarding funding (Motala & Pampalis, 2001:56).

However, such allocations should be utilized in consultation with all stakeholders at schools so that the SMT, SGB and LRC will be able to prioritise which matters need to be given first preference. In essence, there must be some follow up by the DoE to ensure that resources are utilised effectively and efficiently. The fact that the schools have a LRC means they must participate in decisions such as utilising the budget for that financial year, for example, the construction of a laboratory that will also be fully equipped with all necessary apparatus and safety measurers. However, this study found that the LRCs at both high schools were not always involved in such meetings with management as indicated in 4. 4. 3 below.

Table 4.1 highlights the difference in allocation of funds for Manoshi, Mokwatedi (both rural), and School X (urban-Former Model C). The figures are per learner per annum for 2004-2006.

Table 4.1 Allocation of funds per learner per annum for Manoshi, Mokwatedi, and School X

YEAR	Manoshi		Mokwatedi		School X	School X
	Per day	Per annum	Per day	Per annum	Running costs	L T S M
2004	R63.30 * 12 =R 759.60	R63.30 * 12 =R759.60	R63.30 * 12 =R759.60	R63.30 * 12 =R759.60	<b>R 5 880. 00</b>	-----
2005	R55.56 * 12 =R 666.72	R55.56 * 12 =R 666.72	R62.57 * 12 =R750.84	R62.57 * 12 =R750.84	<b>R 5 940. 00</b>	-----
2006	R281.41* 12 =R 3376.92	R281.41* 12 =R 3376.92	R285.78*12=R3429.36	R285.78*12=R3429.36	<b>R 6 240. 00</b>	-----
2007	R381.91* 12 =R 4582.92	R381.91* 12 =R 4582.92	R331.15*12 =R3973.80	R331.15*12 =R3973.80	R 33600.00	R81 760.00
2008	R369.56 *12=R 4434.72	R369.56 *12=R 4434.72	R374.62*12 =R4495.44	R374.62*12 =R4495.44	R 29125.00	R 92 035.00

Source: Manoshi, Mokwatedi and School X

Since the investigation was done in 2 Phases, Phase 1 covered 2004-2006 and Phase 2 covered 2007-2009. Given the figures in Table 4. 1, the differences highlighted in this study confirmed the arguments that were raised by other researchers referred to in Chapter 2 of this study, as well as perceptions of bias by the participants. The findings in the first phase of the study highlighted similarities between schools, which are within the Capricorn District. Manoshi and Mokwatedi categorised quintile 1 and 2 allocations are almost the same per learner per annum, but compared to School X, categorised quintile 8 that is urban, there is a huge gap. The bold figures for School X for 2004-2006 were the allocation per learner per annum. It was clear that for the same years the schools in this study received less per learner per annum (Themane, 1989: 133-134).

However, during Phase 2, the bottom figures for 2007-2008 are for running costs and Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) respectively while the budgets for 2009 were still outstanding. During the second phase of my research, School X indicated that the 2007-2008 (R33600.00 and R29125.00) was transferred into their account for running costs. However, R81 760.00 and R92 035.00 were not transferred into their account but the money was for Learner Teacher Support Material supplied to their school. Again the researcher noted with surprise that School X no longer talked about funding per learner per annum for 2007-2008 only, but that there was an extra allocation catering specifically for LTSM, while in the schools in the study, the status quo remained funding per learner per annum and no extra allocation of LTSM. Wilson and Ramphela's (1994) argument of biasness has been confirmed by this study.

Although the study found that there are follow-ups by the DoE to verify requisitions by different schools, well-resourced schools still get preferential treatment and receive more than other schools especially, more than those that are under performing (Motala & Pampalis, 2001:55).

EB-2 raised this concern:

An example is that among the rural high schools there are schools categorised as 'DINALEDI' schools that are being more resourced; instead of giving those resources to schools that are under performing.

Another concern from EB-3:

It is so painful to see Minister and MECs cars driving past our schools to visit the few schools that are performing well being over resourced instead of visiting the poor performing schools where they can see the poor conditions for themselves.

Participant EA-3 highlighted the following:

Some primary schools in our vicinity have beautiful and well equipped facilities that even offer computer lessons as subject but unfortunately learners from such primary when they come to high school which is also local, facilities and computers are not available.

Learners become frustrated due to lack of resources. Hence, those learners whose parents can afford to pay travelling costs send their children to other resourced schools. The question is: what about those learners from a poor background? They do not have a choice; they are stuck with these schools that do not have facilities and resources for them to perform at a level that will allow them entrance to the university. Chances are slim due to factors beyond their control. (See the results in Table 1.1 and 1.2 in Chapter 1 and Table 4.2 and 4.3 in Chapter 4; and look at the number of Exemptions/ Bachelors Degrees for the schools under study). The current curriculum and interpretation of results is being criticised.

EA-2 complained as follows:

The standard has gone down but still does not elevate the standard of the results. The learner must pass all the required number of NSC subjects, the average is no longer useful where a learner performed well in other subjects but poorly in one of the six NSC subjects.

EA-1's argument is:

Poor learners are not coping because the learner is required to do research on the internet to complete the tasks of this new curriculum. Our learners do not have access to such resources and facilities to do their assignments as required. The only solution is to get information at Internet Café, where they must pay in line with time spent on the computer.

Some participants complained that the DoE offer them short-term workshops and incapable facilitators. These workshops are not sufficient for them to teach the new curriculum.

The issue raised by EB-1 was:

The facilitators at these workshops are not well conversant with the matter to be presented because they are unable to elaborate on their examples in a real classroom situation. In fact they cannot even answer most of the questions from us who are being work shopped.

#### **4. 2. 7 Rationalisation and Redevelopment (R & R)**

The frustrations caused by the process of rationalisation and redeployment of educators also put a strain on educators' morale particularly at Manoshi high school.

Participant EA-1 indicated:

Currently, six educators are in excess; they might be removed any day from now. It simply means out of twenty educators, only fourteen will remain.

The enrolment has decreased each year while this R and R process will continue to perpetuate the educators' low morale. This affects the performance of both educators and learners. However, at Mokwatedi high school only one educator teaching Grade 12 learners was redeployed. Currently, Mokwatedi does not have an educator who is in excess.

Generally, redeployment of educators disturbs the teaching and learning process since the affected educators' morale drops immediately he/she realises that he/she has to relocate to another school, which sometimes does not happen immediately. The learners' performance could be affected immediately the educator is informed about his/her status regarding R and R. The replacement of the educator takes time, learners will be more affected because they might not adapt easily to the teaching style of the newly appointed educator who replaces the redeployed one.

The issue of workload addressed by EB-3 was:

There are more classes and subjects per educator, coupled with a lot of paper work such as learners' files, mark sheets, daily preparations for each subject, class work for each class and subjects, assignments, and tests. The R & R process aggravates this problem, which only looks at teacher/pupil ratio but fails to take the number of classes per educator and the number of subjects per educator per class into account.

#### **4. 2. 8. Physical location of the schools**

The location of schools in relation to other facilities that may sell toxic stuff, like cigarettes or dagga to learners, and is detrimental to the education of our children is a concern. Another issue is that they go out of the school premises to buy snacks. The problem is that it is not possible to follow them into the nearby businesses such as liquor outlets. For example, Manoshi high school is located near a liquor restaurant. Those learners who are not disciplined might be tempted to go and buy liquor. That could aggravate the problem of those learners who have a tendency of bunking lessons and going for a drink whenever they feel like doing so (Hodgkinson, 1990, as cited by Saiduddin, 2003:22).

Based on the information by learners and educators regarding the behaviour of some learners, the researcher has confirmed the behaviour of learners during their break, particularly male learners through observation. For instance, boys spend more time at the toilets, which makes one suspect that they might be doing unacceptable things like smoking, which is not easily prevented by educators.

The Department of Education has noted the problem of liquor outlets next to schools since February 2007. There has been an ongoing announcement on Radio Thobela, calling upon all stakeholders like the Liquor Licensing Board, affected businesses and schools to meet and discuss how the problem could be solved in an attempt to curb the substance abuse at schools and assist in improving the academic performance of learners.

#### **4. 2. 9. School transition**

The Grade 12 learners are going through an extremely difficult time. A phenomenon termed ‘Crossover Phenomenon’ is characterised by a decline in learner performance, thus causing personality changes that often disturb motivation to perform at school (Bryde, 1969).

EA-2 indicated that:

Learners do not seem to worry about their performance because they should at least feel bad each time the educator distributes their class/examination scripts. They complain that the educators set questions that were never taught in class.

#### **4. 2. 10. Peer pressure**

These Grade 12 learners are in the adolescent stage; their future may be disrupted because of their attitude and unacceptable behaviours trying to impress their peers. Learners and educators in 4. 2. 8 above raised concerns during interviews regarding the behaviour of learners especially after break (Sharry, 2007: 1-3).

### **4. 3. DATA GATHERED THROUGH OBSERVATIONS**

#### **4. 3. 1 Selected observations regarding learner’s behaviour**

Learners’ behaviour was observed specifically on time management, their behavior inside, outside the classroom, and in the schoolyard, as well as their physical appearance (uniforms). They did not observe time. When the bell rings, they walked slowly to their classes. In class there were some who do not pay attention to the educator. During break, boys spend a lot of their time at the toilets, where they might be smoking. After break their behaviour tends to be to be

unacceptable. Some go out of the schoolyard and they also do not observe time, while others do not come back to class. Participants raised a concern that learners do not behave well in class, especially after break (Spradley, 1980).

The researcher noted the way learners displayed their disrespect for school management. Three of the learners at Manoshi high school who were identified to participate in the study disappeared before they were called to come to the interviewing room. The following day, when it was their turn to be interviewed, they have disappeared for the second time, whereas they had been in class in the morning. However, those learners who disappeared were replaced in the same way the sample was selected. The educators confirmed learners' negative attitude and ill discipline. The negative attitude and ill-disciplined behaviour of learners in their approach to school is confirmed by Mullins (2005).

The researcher's observation confirmed the concerns that were raised by educators and principals. This is an indication that learners do not respect the authority of the school management and that learners are not concerned about using time effectively at school. It is a difficult situation for educators since corporal punishment has been abolished. If learners were to be punished, it means the responsible educator must remain with such learners for the duration of the punishment after hours, which is difficult for educators who live far from the school. The accumulated time lost during break and the tendency of leaving before time impacts negatively on learners' performance because time that has been lost cannot be replaced, thus resulting in learners performing at a level that cannot allow them entrance to the university.

#### **4. 3. 2 Document analysis**

A document analysis was done with the assistance of the Educators as requested by the principal. For example, attendance registers, mark sheets, and previous results. The data that were collected were recorded manually through the writing of notes since most participants were not comfortable to be recorded electronically.

- **Attendance register**

According to official documents such as attendance registers, the attendance of learners was not satisfactory. Almost everyday there were three or more learners absent. At times, the number of absent learners is even higher after school holidays and long weekends.

- **Mark sheets**

Mark sheets were analysed to see the performance of Grade 12 learners. The marks were not impressive, the mark sheet was full of red circles (highlighting failed subjects) and the educator who was helping the researcher to get the relevant information and identification of my learner sample acknowledged that learners' performance was very poor.

- **Grade 12 Results between 2000-2008**

The results in both schools indicate that there is an improvement of performance in terms of the overall percentage of the learners who have passed. However, in terms of the learners who passed with Exemption/Bachelor, the figures are not satisfactory, because only a few passed with an Exemption/Bachelor, which is the new benchmark for university entrance. The S-symbol/National Senior Certificate (NSC) qualifies a learner for School Leaving Certificate, meaning such a learner cannot be accepted at a university, but could be accepted at a Technical College or Further Education and Training (FET) and receives certificates, N1-N6.

The example of results below reflects the number of learners who managed to pass with Exemption/Bachelor. Hence, the aim of this study was to find out factors contributing towards poor performance of Grade 12 learners at schools under study focusing on university entrance. In terms of the number of learners who have passed there is improvement of results in percentages but the number of Exemptions/Bachelors is not impressive. The Tables 4.2 and 4.3 give a picture of Exemptions/Bachelor for 2006-2007, and the 2008 results which are interpreted as follows: An Exemption is currently equivalent to a Bachelor (see the example per school for the three consecutive years in table 4.1 and 4.2 below:



Grade 12 Exemptions, S-Senior certificate, Bachelors, Diploma and NSC at Manoshi High school between 2006-2008

Table: 4.2

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. Wrote</b>	<b>No. Passed</b>	<b>Exemptions</b>	<b>S-Senior certificate</b>	
2006	51	28	4	24	
2007	44	36	4	32	
<b>New</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Interpreted:</b>	<b>Bachelor</b>	<b>Diploma and NSC</b>	
2008	73	37	5	14	18

Source: Records at Manoshi High School

Grade 12 Exemptions, S-Senior certificate, Bachelors, Diploma and NSC at Mokwatedi High school between 2006-2008

Table: 4.3

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. Wrote</b>	<b>No. Passed</b>	<b>Exemptions</b>	<b>S-Senior certificate</b>	
2006	48	40	11	29	
2007	48	27	6	21	
<b>New</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Interpreted:</b>	<b>Bachelor</b>	<b>Diploma and NSC</b>	
2008	55	32	6	10	and 16

Source: Records at Mokwatedi High School

### 4. 3. 3 Data management and analysis

Data management includes activities aimed at achieving a systemic, coherent manner of data collection, storage, and retrieval. The researcher must ensure that data are retrieved when the need arises so that the reliability of the study can be verified. Therefore, a system for storage and retrieval should be designed even prior to the data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994:428-430).

Data analysis contains sub-processes: data reduction, data display, results, conclusion drawing and verification. These processes were done before data collection, during study design and planning, during data collection as an interim and early analysis, were carried out; and after data

collection as final products were approached and completed (Miles & Huberman, 1994 as cited by Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 179-181).

The researcher's critical task in recording data that were collected qualitatively was not to accumulate all the data but to get rid of most of the accumulated data through constant winnowing so that such data could be systematically analysed at a later stage (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 64).

- **Data reduction**

Qualitative data are usually in the form of written descriptions and reflections or ideas, and could become too much and so become a challenge to manage; that is why data reduction is necessary. In this study, data were reduced in an anticipatory way when the researcher chose a conceptual framework, research question, and instruments. After the researcher had completed her field notes, interviews, and observations she then summarised field notes by categorising data. In this case, this involved data that fell within the home and school environments, respectively. Data were then clustered and findings were written as further data selection and condensation (Morse & Field, 1996: 107-108).

- **Data display**

Data display is an organized, concise assembly of information, which is a second inevitable part of analysis. That assisted the researcher to draw conclusions from a reduced set of data as a basis for identifying meaning. The more focused displays in the form of a draft document included structured summaries and synopses (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

- **Results, Conclusion drawing and Verification**

Results, conclusion drawing and verification involved the interpretation of data, where comparisons and contrasts are identified, the patterns were noted, themes, and clustering negative cases, following up by using confirmation tactics that look for surprises and checking results with participants. The researcher presented "data transformation" as information that had been condensed, clustered, sorted, and linked to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:180).

Currently, since 2008 the interpretation of results is different from the previous era where the learner's marks were added together and the average of 50 and above was a benchmark for the Exemption sought. However, in this new curriculum, results are categorised into science, commerce and general streams. Learners' achievement results will be as indicated below per certificate. National Senior Certificate (NSC) for N1-N6 certificates, Diploma qualifies the learner entrance to Technikon College for different Diploma Certificates, and Bachelor allows the learner entrance to the university for his/her Junior Degree. The interpretation is as follows:

**1. National Senior Certificate- the learner must pass as indicated below:**

- Minimum of 30%- in the language of learning (English)
- Minimum of 40%- in the mother tongue
- 4 National Senior Certificate (NSC) subjects with minimum of 30%-39%

**NB: The learner qualifies to be admitted to a Technical College**

**2. Diploma- the learner must pass as indicated below:**

- Minimum of 30%-39% in language of teaching (English)
- Minimum of 40%-49% in mother tongue
- 3 NSC subjects with minimum of 40-49% or better, 4 recognised NSC

**NB This qualifies the learner to be admitted to a Technikon College**

**3. Bachelor's Degree- the learner must pass as indicated below:**

- Other 2- Minimum of 30%-39% including the language of teaching (English)
- Minimum of 40%-49% in mother tongue
- 4 Adequate achievement of 50-59% for recognised NSC subjects

**NB This is University entrance (Current Language)**

The results for both high schools for 2000-2008 are reflected in Chapter 1 in Table: 1.1 and 1.2. An analysis of the results of the schools under investigation indicates that the overall average of performance of Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools between the academic years 2000-2008 is 34, 3 and 29,0; including those learners who did not pass with an exemption, and the difference

was 5,3. This difference is not significant to warrant that Mokwatedi be treated differently from Manoshi high school.

This study specifically looked at the overall performance in relation to university entrance Exemption and Bachelor as the current benchmark between 2006-2008 at Manoshi and Mokwatedi, respectively. Based on the above Tables 4.2 and 4.3 most of the learners got less than 50% as a bench mark for Exemption and also in 2008 where the bench mark for university entrance is a Bachelor, the number of Exemption/Bachelors were 13 and 23 while the averages are 4,3 and 7,7 for Manoshi and Mokwatedi, respectively. The average difference in performance in relation to university entrance between the two high schools between 2006-2008 is 3,4 which is not sufficiently significant to warrant that Mokwatedi high school be treated differently from Manoshi high school.

#### **4. 4. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the researcher summarised the findings of the study in terms of factors contributing to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners of Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools at home where issues of parental support and socio-economic background were discussed. At school, the researcher found issues relating to resources, availability of computers and the status quo of facilities, prevalence of substance abuse, medium of instruction, the physical location of the school in particular Manoshi, communication of stakeholders as required by SASA, implications of R and R as well as data collected through observation which highlighted unacceptable behaviour of learners. The researcher therefore concluded that the research question was answered and the objective of this study was achieved.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5. INTRODUCTION**

The chapter seeks to present the summary of the findings from the investigation of factors contributing towards poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and thus preventing them from achieving required for university entrance. Conclusions are drawn, based on the findings; after which recommendations for remedial measures are made to the authorities of the schools and the department of Education. The findings of this research identified several factors that affect learners, the home environment that is not educationally supportive and at school where there is a lack of facilities and learner support materials.

Factors that affect learners who come to school with their unique set of characteristics that may assist or impede academic performance have been identified. Some learners are more intrinsically motivated than others and can adjust to pressures of the environment. Such learners might develop good self-esteem and self-worth. The school, an extension of home for the success or failure of learners in adapting to the demands of the society, should be a secure base where learners feel a sense of belonging and security. As a result, a caring environment and adequate resources in the school provide a protective shield that results in good educational attainment, which is associated with good outcomes and fosters competence in achieving learning success and entrance to university (Solo, 1997).

#### **5. 1 SUMMARIES OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

The major findings of this study seek to respond to the research question as stated in Chapter1: Which factors in the home and school environments contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners and prevents them from achieving required results for university entrance? The findings revealed that there were numerous factors at home and at school contributing to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners, and the details were presented in the previous chapter,

that is, Chapter 4: Data analysis and results. The main findings were the following: Firstly, there are factors in the home environment as highlighted by learners and by parents. Secondly, there are factors in the school environment as presented by learners, educators and principals.

## **5. 2 HOME ENVIRONMENT**

In the home environment where parents and learners interact with each other every day. That is the reason why it is important for parents to model the correct behaviour and to groom their children to become responsible adults.

### **5. 2. 1 Learners at home**

- Some learners complained that their parents are working far from home and can only come home at the end of the month. As a result, the learners have the responsibility of taking care of their siblings (child-headed families). Parents are not at home to monitor their children's activities with respect to school participation and are not able to assist them in household chores.
- There are unpredictable homes where there is substance abuse by parents, quarrels and unstable families resulting in low a learner's self-esteem.
- Three learners were orphans; as a result, their morale was low due to their loss and lack of support to deal with the traumatic situation they are faced with.
- The issue of gender roles was raised, which compromises the female learners in terms of their responsibilities at home. Female learners argued they have to do all the household chores while boys are free to study or play soccer.
- Female learners (about 4 of them) were already mothers. They have to do their schoolwork and attend to their own babies.

### **5. 2. 2 Parents at home**

- The educational levels of parents were found to be low. The parents who were interviewed have only primary education that renders them incapable of giving their children the necessary educational support. The study found that the learners' homes are not educationally supportive.
- The unemployment rate of parents is high. All interviewed parents were unemployed, which makes life difficult since the needs of learners at home cannot be adequately met.
- The marital status of parents stigmatises learners from single, divorced parents, and so does the class of family.
- The size of the family, together with the extended family members, is too many (more than six members) and learners then have to compete for minimal resources (food).

## **5. 3 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

### **5. 3. 1 Learners at school**

- There were lack a of facilities and learner support materials. For example, there were no laboratories and computers.
- English language proficiency was very low. Consequently, the interviews had to be conducted in their mother tongue.
- Substance abuse by some learners was cited as a problem that disturbs lessons and resulted in unacceptable behaviours.
- It was also noteworthy that the children of the educators residing in the surrounding villages were not enrolled at the local high schools.

- Exclusion of the LRC in SGB and SMT meeting was mentioned. This indicated poor consultation of the LRC. The finding was that members of the LRC should be part of the decision-making in terms of fund allocation.

### **5. 3. 2 Educators at school**

- Sporadic instances of substance abuse were noted.
- Undisciplined learners do not adhere to time allocated for break and some do not come back to classes after break and the problem was perpetuated by the location of the school in relation to liquor outlets particularly at school A.
- Absenteeism was also a serious problem.
- The use of English came out to be one of the major problems, since learners cannot understand the questions in the examination, which results in wrong answers, and eventually they perform poorly.
- There were inadequate facilities. Some of the facilities are dilapidated; tables and chairs are broken and inadequate.
- The allocation of funds is inadequate and was found to be urban biased; therefore the criteria used for allocation was questioned.
- The new curriculum was seen as a problem because of short-term workshops. The facilitators are not conversant with their learning content and they are unable to unpack the contents of their manuals and apply them in real classroom situations.
- The workload was found to be excessive even though the number of learners in class was not abnormal. Each educator is allocated more classes which were organised by the R&R process, which focuses on the teacher/pupil ratio without taking other aspects such as the



- Only learners from poor families enroll at local high schools because their parents could not afford to take them to well-resourced schools due to lack of money for traveling. Most of these learners cannot even read a book written in their mother tongue.
- Utilization of funds by the Department of Education is not monitored. The participants argued that if there were follow-ups then each school would then account, and the changes could be visible over the years.

### **5. 3. 3 Principals at school**

- There is poor parent participation in the education of their children, due to some being migrant labourers or illiterate.
- The R& R process affects the performance not only of learners but also the morale of educators declared in excess. The timing of this process does not take the performance of learners into account. The DoE should rather identify excess educators before the school closes for the festive season and redeploys them as early as January the following year when schools re-open so that they can start at the schools to which they are being deployed at the beginning of the academic year.
- Principals acknowledge that the department is subsidising schools, and they appreciate the allocation, but they observed that there is still a gap that does not close between the disadvantaged schools and well-resourced schools. According to participants, more resources should be allocated to poorly resourced schools to give learners equal access to facilities and resources like laboratory and computer labs to source out information on the Internet at school.

- Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools do not have administrative blocks, a library, a laboratory or computers. Classrooms are dilapidated (cracked walls, floors, and broken windowpanes).

## **5. 4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given the situation faced by the learners whose parents want their children to be educated, but are unable to assist with school work, due to their limited education, poverty and being migrant labourers and therefore not available to give moral support and supervision to their children; the researcher recommends that:

### **5. 4. 1 The School Management Team**

The School Management Team should:

- Ensure that educators identify under performing learners, monitor the utilisation of study time, and assist in resolving problems regarding the poor performance of such individual learners and groups at school, because they do not get assistance at home.
- Encourage learners to complete most of the work at school during study time, where they can assist each other or seek help from their educators since their parents might not be able to assist.
- Encourage all learners to participate in extra-mural activities giving them the opportunity to build self-confidence and positive self-esteem; and assist them to interact with others. Participation in extra-mural activities is essential in order to identify the capabilities of different learners. Their identification will assist educators to expose and encourage them to pursue relevant careers.
- Involve LRC IN meetings once in three months with SMT and the SGB.

- Guidance Educators must discuss school problems as encountered by educators and learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools. Solutions to such problems must also be discussed so that all parties must work towards achieving the same goal.
- Learner support team should be formed at schools to assist learners that may need individual help or extra lessons.
- Create a caring and supportive environment where learners will be assisted without being labelled by grouping them into categories (slow learners, hyperactive, special education etc.)
- Ensure that educators are adequately qualified to teach subjects allocated to them and that they do their work properly.
- A workshop could be coordinated by the SMT and facilitated by Government officials to encourage parents to become involved and make them realise the importance of their participation.

#### **5. 4. 2 The Department of Education**

- The Department of Education should revisit the criteria that were used to allocate resources to schools so that the most needy schools are prioritised and the amount of funds to be in line with their needs.
- Task teams should visit all schools to establish and verify their needs and even take photos of each school to ensure that resources are allocated in line with their needs and status, rather than in terms of requests from principals as submitted to the Circuit Office. This could assist disadvantaged schools to enjoy equal treatment and access to quality education too.

- The schools should have special educators who will assess learners' academic achievement by administering educational tests (curriculum based test, Peabody individual achievement test, etc) and put measures in place to deal with problems that affect academic achievement from the beginning of the year.
- Educators should be trained to identify/diagnose emotional problems and lobby for early intervention by relevant authorities like Social Workers.
- Monitor implementation of policies like the language policy and ensure compliance with SASA, thus ensuring that LRCs are invited and allow them to participate fully in all decision-making when School Management and the SGB meet.
- Monitor or revisit the methods of teaching and assessment. The DoE should ensure that service providers who facilitate workshops for educators are conversant with their subject matter.

## **5. 5 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Although this study has achieved its aim and objective of investigating factors within the home and school environments that contribute towards the poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools thus preventing them from achieving required results for university entrance; there are a number of related aspects that warrant additional research. For instance, it is necessary to verify the accuracy of the results, with different subjects from other schools who are in similar situations.

- In the context of this study, it would also be important to find out about factors that bring about the good performance of learners who succeed despite their low socio-economic backgrounds, dilapidated facilities, and under-resourced schools. Such research would assist in developing programmes to curtail the incidence of vulnerability.

- Further research should be conducted to find out if the implementation of the Language Policy (particularly the mother tongue as language of teaching) could improve academic performance, especially among Black learners.
- An investigation should be conducted to ascertain the qualifications of educators and their relevance to the subjects they are teaching, especially in schools that are not performing up to set standards.
- Future research should explore the ways in which the educators' personality and style may have repercussions for the learners' final performance as well as in their potential academic failure.

## **5. 6 CONCLUSION**

The study presented the effects of an unfavourable social environment both at home and at school. These impacted on the academic performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools and highlighted specific needs and requirements that learners should have in order to perform at a level that would allow them university entrance results. Although recommendations for the specific schools and the Department of Education have been highlighted, solutions might not be easy, especially for learners from dysfunctional families and orphans. However, with regard to recommendations to the SMT and the Department of Education, positive results could be achieved. The concerns regarding the behaviour of learners (ill-disciplined), the SMT, SGB and LRC should develop strategies to deal with the problems without violating the government policy (South African School's Act of 1966d) and the Constitution of South Africa 1996 in the Bill of Rights, chapter 2, section 29, subsection (1) and (2) which is clear in terms of the right to education, equality, practicality, and the need to redress the past discriminatory laws and practices.

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**ANNEXTURE A**

P.O.BOX 130  
BOYNE  
0728  
08-FEB-05

Dear D.E.T/District Officer/Principal, educators, Learners and parents

I am currently enrolled/registered with the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership for a Masters Degree in Development. Part of my Degree consists of a research study. I will be conducting research regarding factors responsible for poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools.

It is vital to involve Grade 12 learners. Your participation is, therefore, of utmost importance to the study and I would appreciate it if you could spare some time to participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary and involves no feasible risks or harm. You may call me (MS Rammala) at 082 413 7187 or 073 558 8482 to ask clarity on any question about the study.

Best regards

**MOKGAETSI SALOME RAMMALA**

I..... willingly agree to participate in the study, which has been explained to me in writing by M. S. Rammala.

.....  
**PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE**

.....  
**DATE**

**ANNEXURE B**

**APPROVAL FROM MANOSHI HIGH SCHOOL**

**ANNEXURE C**

**APPROVAL FROM MOKWATEDI HIGH SCHOOL**

**ANNEXURE D**

**APPROVAL FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**













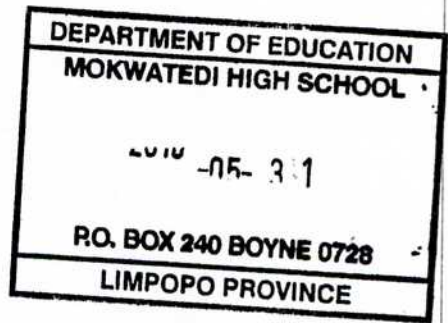




EMIS NO: 923240907  
ENQUIRIES: MOLEPO M.J.  
CONTACT NO: 0829303439

MOKWATEDI HIGH SCHOOL  
P.O. BOX 240  
BOYNE 0728  
31 May 2006

Mrs Rammala  
P.O. Box  
Boyne 0728



Madam

Your application to conduct a research at our institution has reference.

The SMT of Mokwatedi High school has appreciated that you had chosen our school as a centre of investigation into your topic of research. They gladly granted you permission to go on with your research

You can choose any date that suits you; as long as your research activities can be done after 12 o'clock. Please inform us of the date in advance  
Thank you

Yours faithfully  
M.J. Molepo (Principal)





# Limpopo

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

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## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Sir/Madam

The bearer, Rammala M S, has been given permission by Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) to conduct research at Manoshi High School in Capricorn District. The research title is about 'Factors that influence poor performance of Grade 12 learners at Manoshi High School.'

The Department requests departmental officials, learners, managers and educators to cooperate with the researcher when research activities are conducted.

It is envisaged that the research report will assist LDoE in many ways.

Thank you

  
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**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

**DATE:** 14/8/2006

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
HEAD OFFICE**