

**The impact of teachers' strikes on the right of learners to education in the
Eastern Cape Province**

**A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts in Human Rights in the Faculty of Law**

University of Fort Hare



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April 2013

DECLARATION

This is to declare that "The impact of teachers' strikes on the right of learners to education in the Eastern Cape Province" is my original work and all works that have been cited have been duly acknowledged. The dissertation has not been submitted in part or as a whole to any other institution for the award of a degree, diploma or certificate.

Signed: 
Pius Tangwe Tanga



November 30, 2012

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DEDICATION

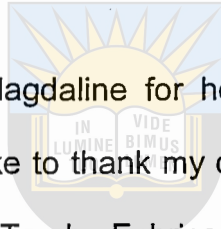
My wife Magdaline Nji and my children, Marynett, Sandrine, Nissi and Chantal.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to the Almighty God for given me the courage and strength to embark on this study and for successfully completing it. I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to my supervisor, Professor N. S. Rembe for his continuous guidance and valuable advice during the process of conceptualizing and writing this dissertation. I was privileged to have him as my supervisor for this dissertation. I enormously benefited from his worth of experience on Human Right Law. Without him, this dissertation would not have been possible.



Special thanks to my dear wife, Magdaline for her continuous moral and other supports during my studies. I also like to thank my children who inspired me in one way or the other. My brother-in-law, Tambe Fabrice also played an important role in advising me on the legal imperatives of academic research. Ms. Priscilla Gutura also contributed towards my success and I am thankful to her.

All the social work students who voluntarily participated in the study deserve praise and thanks, especially as they had to squeeze time out of their busy study schedules almost at the brink of their examinations to fill my questionnaires. I will also like to appreciate and acknowledge that financial contribution of the University of Fort Hare to my studies through fee waiver scheme for staff members. All those whose names have not been mentioned in this acknowledgement and who contributed in one way or the other deserve thanks and appreciation.

ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the incessant teachers' strikes in the Eastern Cape Province and South Africa in general and the poor academic performance as well as poor quality education which is a general concern in many circles. Therefore, this study set out to examine the impact of teachers' strikes on the right of learners to education in the Eastern Cape Province from the perspective of social work students who had experienced at least one teachers' strike. Through a semi-structured questionnaire, a sample of 112 social work students who undertook their Matric examination in the Eastern Cape Province was randomly selected to participate in the study.



The findings show that the impact of teachers' strikes on learners' academic performance in the province was enormous. This was gauged through the number of years learners took to complete the Matric studies, the number of times they wrote Matric, intimidation and loss of motivation during teachers' strikes among other factors. Closely related to this is the poor quality of education that students reported they received in the province, not only because of teachers' strikes but because of factors such as infrastructure problem and lack of teachers. It was also found out that the cost of teachers' strikes was a drain not only both national and provincial government resources, but also on the meagre resources of learners and parents as well as other stakeholders. Furthermore, teachers' strikes also affected the choice of university and programme of study for some students. These students were not supposed to be enrolled at the University of Fort Hare and others did not want to enrol in social work programme but were forced because of poor Matric results. Therefore, they could not be admitted to other universities or other programmes.

It is concluded that teachers' strikes have thwarted the academic careers of some learners who otherwise would have been in some of the top universities in the country or preferred competitive study programmes. In nutshell, poor academic performance resulting from poor academic background contributed enormously by teachers' strikes meant that many learners either dropped along the way without completing their studies or received low quality education. Hence, their right to quality education and access to education is compromised by teachers' strikes. This is a blatant violation of their constitutional right which is also a universal right as enshrined in regional and international legal instruments. Although there are some sources of help to Matric students, the means of provision such as TV, radio, newspapers among others are not accessible to a good number of learners in the province, hence low participation in such recovery programmes. Nonetheless, evening and morning classes as well as weekend classes are the most successful ways of helping Matric learners in the province.

Recommendations emanating from the findings include the fact that education should be declared an essential service in order to ensure that learners are provided with quality education as well as access fully the right to education. Finally, there is a need for an open debate on balancing the right to education of learners and the right of teachers to embark on strikes which are all legally recognized.

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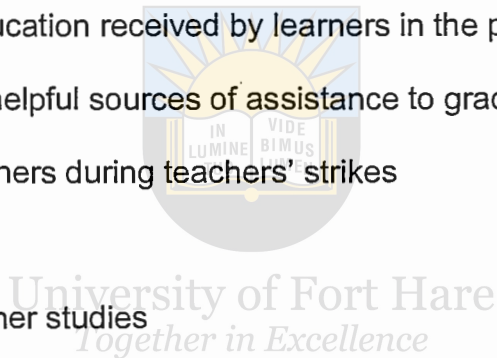
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The development of children is the first priority on the country's development agenda, not only because they are vulnerable, but because they are the supreme assets and also the future human resources of the country (Ravichandran, 2012:10). Therefore, the future of the country depends on how adequately children are prepared across income groups, geographical locations, gender and communities. The eradication of poverty can only be achieved through education of its citizens. Education bestow on children empowerment which enhances the realization of other rights such as political rights; labour relations' rights; right to a healthy environment; right to property; right to housing; health care, food, water and social security rights amongst others. The South African education system during the 40 years of apartheid was structured on racial lines; hence, education was discriminatory. The post-apartheid educational authorities have unified the 19 different education departments through a variety of legislative frameworks "based on constitutionalism that is committed to redress" the past inequality and discrimination (Verieva, 2006:105; Mvoko, 1998:13).

Despite the government's effort to rectify these imbalances in education so as to ensure the right to quality of education as enshrined in national, regional and international instruments, the legacy of apartheid is still visible and the greatest challenge is in the poorer provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape where illiteracy rates are still high and matriculation pass rates are low (Eastern Cape Department of Education, n.d:2-3). It is also reported that while about 65 per

cent of whites and 40 per cent Indians over the ages of 20 have a high school or higher qualification, only 14 per cent black South African and 17 per cent coloured populations have a high school or higher qualifications (Eastern Cape Department of Education, n.d:3). This brings to question the right of learners to education in this country with wonderful crafted legislation internationally applauded. This right is enshrined in section 29; sub-section 1(a) which stipulates the right to basic education. Section 28, sub-section 2 reiterates the child's best interests as paramount concerning matters relating to the child.



Government expenditure on education constitutes about 20 per cent of the government's total expenditure (Eastern Cape Department of Education, n.d). Notwithstanding the massive expenditure by the South African government on education, "the results of that investment are getting worse and worse" (City Press, 2010:22). In reality, this huge investment in education is not backed by quality education resulting to violating the right of learners to quality education throughout the country. South Africa has about 12.3 million learners with some 386,600 teachers and 26, 292 schools including 1,098 registered independent or private schools; with the Eastern Cape Province having a total of 7,160 schools (Eastern Cape Department of Education, n.d). Despite this massive number of schools and learners across the country and province, access to quality education and learners' performance is troublesome. With an estimated population of 6.74 million people in the province in 2010, the majority (87.6%) are trapped in poverty (Makiwane and Chimere-Dan, 2010).

The World Social Forum for 2012 ranked South Africa's education system as one of the worst in the world, featuring 140th out of 144 countries (Patel, 2012). Recently (October 2012), the opposition parties attempted to bring a bill and debate the vote of no confidence on the president who is accused of leading an economy that is weakening and "the violation of the right to access to quality education" in the country (Ngalwa and Kgosana (2012:4). In an attempt to restore confidence in the education system and ensure quality education to South African children, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga has promised to probe and examine the standard of South Africa's National Senior Certificate which many have described as "deceptive and exposes thousands to a life that promises neither further education nor employment" (SABC News, 2012). (Monare, 2012a:1) wrote that the matric examination is "not only the ultimate test of the pupils 12 years of schooling but it also examines the quality of our educational system" and he rebuked politicians who become happy that many have passed these examinations not realizing that the country has definitely failed it test. He therefore cautioned that matric results should be used as "an illusionary predictors and the benchmark of the quality of our appalling public education system" (Monare, 2012a:1). These are testimonies that the quality of education that learners in South Africa is not up to international standards because quality is compromised. Therefore, the right of learners to quality education is simply not respected at the highest level.

To confirm that some South Africa children have been receiving inferior or poor quality education in some part of the country, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) revealed that "Matric pupils in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape will not be given special treatment during the marking of the final examinations" for 2012

(Monama, 2012a:1). This shows that there is always a cover up of the quality of education that these learners in these provinces received through mark adjustments and lowering of pass rate and this makes learners happy. This is what Monare (2012a:1) terms deceptive and will neither lead to employment or entering into higher education with such results.

The Bill of Rights on Labour Relations matter in section 23, sub-section 1 states that “everyone has the right to fair labour practices.” Sub-section 2 (c) also affirms every worker’s right to strike. This constitutional right of involvement in strike has yearly being put into practice by most teachers in South Africa. Teachers’ strikes have been heeded to by most teachers for various reasons including salary increment and other allowances such as housing and transport. Many teachers complained of food, fuel, water and electricity prices which have soared over the years. Going on strike was therefore seen as a weapon to force the government to increase their pay to meet family and household needs (Matamela, 2010:8; Jack, 2008:1; Matamela, 2008:2). These strikes are organised under the auspices of the National Health and Allied Workers’ Union (NEHAWU); South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU); Confederation of South African Trade Union (COSATU); National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA); and sometimes backed by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS).

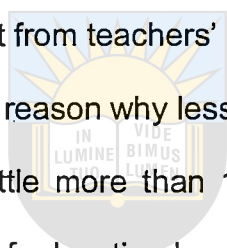
A debate is also raging regarding the incessant strikes that are organised in South Africa vis-a-vis the right to strike and the right to education. Some think that strike at the verge of learners’ examinations; teachers’ strike could be “an unconstitutional infringement of pupils’ right” because of the effect on learners (SAPA, 1999:4).

However, Section 36 (1) provides for the limitations of rights and sub-section 2 stipulates that there should be no limits to any right enshrined in the Bill of Rights, except those section 36 (1).

The Education spokesperson for the New National Party (NNP) argues that the rights of learners to education against the right to strike are greater because of the considerable number of hours lost through strikes. Therefore, the culture of encouragement of strikes is costly to South Africa, especially in the long run (SAPA, 1999:4). SAPA (1999:4) quoted the NNP spokesperson as saying that “a culture of striking reminds one strongly of the culture of liberation before education, which created a lost generation.” This explains why the Democratic Alliance (DA) proposed a bill to curb the negative impact of teachers’ strikes on pupils in 2011 so as to balance the right of teachers to strike with that of learners to learn as well as to declare education as an essential service. According to the DA, between 1995 and 2009, SADTU was “responsible for 42 per cent of all person days lost (Makinana, 2011:6). Perhaps, these unions have been given a blow by the Constitutional Court ruling that upheld a high court decision that unions must be responsible for the damage caused by their members during strikes in the case of *DA vs COSATU* (eTV 7:00pm News, 2012).

Apart from teachers’ strikes, learners have been victims of protests and other forms of intimidation thereby violating their right to education. For example, some 41 schools were closed in the Northern Cape because of intimidation and service delivery protests. In some other places, standoff between parents and department stops some 300 children from learning and it is noted that there a few incidents of

service delivery protests that interfere with the attendance of schools across the country (Monama, 2012b:1). Therefore, the right of learners to education in South Africa is violated with impunity on the grounds that some others have the right to strike and to protest. Resulting from frustrations and other reasons, many learners are forced to drop out schools. It is reported that only 35 percent of children who started school finished; with repeat rate at primary school at 4 percent while at high school, the rate is 18 percent (Monare, 2012b:1). All of these lead to learners' right to education not respected, especially when they withdraw from schools or repeat grades not from their own making but from teachers' strikes, service delivery protests and other reasons. This explains the reason why less than one-third of South African youth have a Matric certificate, a little more than 10th having tertiary qualification (Moeng, 2012:1). Although the cost of education has been blamed on some learners dropping out of schools apart from teachers' strikes, the number of non-paying fees learners has increased from 0.7 percent in 2002 to 56,6 percent in 2011 with the highest proportion of those learners not paying fees coming from Limpopo and Eastern Cape with 89,7 percent and 71,8 percent respectively (Meong, 2012:2). The quality of education received by learners, especially those in the poorest province of Limpopo, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape will normally deter them from gaining admission into tertiary education or even being employed. Some experts have blamed this on teachers failing to teach essential skills to can enable learners gain employment after graduation from secondary/high schools (Phakathi, 2012:1). For 2013 academic year, the Western Cape four major tertiary institutions have received more than 95,000 applications for the only 22,000 available first year places on offer (Federicks, 2012:1).



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1.2 Problem statement

When teachers join strikes, there are usually disruptions of classes at the learners' detriment, especially the Grade 12 learners who have to write their final exams in preparation for entrance into tertiary institutions. Learners' school work such as finishing of the curriculum for tests and examinations cannot be achieved and this results in poor academic performance which is cyclical in nature. Many schools (about 40% in the country) were categorized as "underperformers" in the 2011 Matriculation pass rate of below 60 per cent (Mtshali, 2012). It is an obvious situation that many of these schools are found in the Eastern Cape given its dismal performance in the School Certificate over the years. The author further states that in a report to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education in parliament in 2011, there were a third of learners in 2007 who had repeated a grade and by the time they reach tertiary education, this figure rose to more than half of all learners (Mtshali, 2012:1). Yet, teachers' strikes are always fully and well respected in the name of the right to strike but at the detriment of the learners in the country, particularly in the Eastern Cape.

While teachers agree that teaching is a noble profession in the world, many blamed the government for undermining the teaching profession. Every year they have "to beg for an increase in salaries" through strike actions whose repercussions are pushed onto the learners. As one teacher categorically maintains, "if we are unhappy we will pass the unhappiness to the pupils" (Matamela, 2010:8). An educationist noted that the brunt of the strike will be borne by prospective first year applicants in university or what he calls 'first time undergraduate applicants' (Attwood, 2010:2). This is because of the failure rate and quality of graduates that some of these

schools are producing. It is revealed that the “matriculation results have dropped by 10 percentage points in the past decade, and more than 50% of learners drop out before they even reach matriculation” (City Press, 2010:22). The National Parent Association President lamented the rejection of government offer of increased salary by SADTU and said strike is perpetrating the class system and inequality and that many learners are not getting the quality education that they deserve. Because of the continuous teachers’ strikes in the country, the grade 12 learners from poorer schools have been labeled as “an abandoned generation” who are going to crash out in their final exams, while some have castigated the strike as “an unmitigated disaster for poor children” (Attwood, 2010:2). One author lamented the damage that is caused by the teachers’ strike, especially on

those children at schools previously administered by Bantu Education or homeland departments...It will be nothing other than criminal if children who continue to shoulder the legacy of apartheid education, particularly in the rural areas, should suffer further as a result of the industrial action. (The Herald, 2007:6)

In addition, teachers in poor performing schools are said to be spending little time in class teaching due to lack of adequate subject knowledge and basic pedagogic ability in languages, science and mathematics (Sikhakhane, 2011:25). According to the latter, this problem is compounded by the fact that “teachers in African schools teach an average of 3.5 hours a day compared with about 6.5 hours a day in formerly white schools. This amounts to a difference of three years of schooling.” He further lamented the issue of strikes which unofficially use up to 10 days or 5 per cent of school time each year (Sikhakhane, 2011:25). Apart from the academic and other stresses that the strikes cause to learners, they are physically molested through intimidations and the same is done to non-participating teachers (Sokopo, 2010:1). Regarding all the distractions and other factors that lead to learners right to

quality education being derailed, Professor Jansen maintained that “the schools of the poor are routinely disrupted or trashed by adults, by unions, activists, gangsters, without an effective intervention” (SAPA, 2012:1).

In a related scenario, Bozalek et al (2012:2) have painted a dark picture of the education system of South Africa. They described it as being in crisis with low literacy and numeracy rates, poor discipline and a sense of despair which characterize the education landscape. The country’s education system has also been given another blow as South Africa continues to perform dismally in international schools mathematics and science (Child, 2012:1). According to Child (2012) and Gernetzky (2012:1), South Africa was placed last among 62 countries on the quality of mathematics and science education by the World Economic Forum’s Annual Report on Development. With such ridiculous rankings, the quality of education that learners received is therefore questionable; hence, the right to quality education is denied and compromised.

1.3 Aim of the study and specific objectives

The aim of this study is to examine how teachers’ strikes have affected the rights of learners to education in the Eastern Cape. The following specific objectives will guide the study:

- 1) To examine the impact of teachers’ strikes on academic performance of learners and the quality of education they received.
- 2) To find out the costs of teachers’ strikes.
- 3) To investigate the extent to which teachers’ strikes have disrupted students’ choice of university and programme of study.

- 4) To explore other alternative sources of help to matriculation learners during teachers' strike.

1.4 Research questions

The principal research question is what is the impact of teachers' strikes on the right of learners to education in the Eastern Cape? The study will be guided by the following sub-research questions:

- 1) What is the impact of teachers' strikes on the academic performance of learners?
- 2) What is the quality of education received by learners from the province?
- 3) What are the economic and other costs of teachers' strikes?
- 4) How has teachers' strikes affected entrance to tertiary institution and programme of choice of learners?
- 5) What other sources of help are available to grade 12 learners during teachers' strikes?

1.5 Assumptions

The following assumptions are postulated to guide the study:

- 1) Teachers' strikes negatively affect learners' academic performance and ruin their chances of gaining admission into university and programme of study of their choice.
- 2) The quality of education received by learners in the province is low.
- 3) There are many helpful sources of assistance to grade 12 matriculation learners during teachers' strikes.

1.6 Significance of the study/Rationale

A lot has been written in newspapers and other media outlets about education in the Eastern Cape Province. It is hope that the findings of the study will generate further debate regarding teachers' right to strike and learners' right to education. The findings will also be useful to educational authorities of the programme whereby some important steps could be taken to redress some of the many problems facing education in the province. Finally, the study will contribute to knowledge base in the field of human rights, more specifically, learners' rights to education and trade unionism.



1.7 Delimitation of the study

Although this study is captioned impact of teachers' strikes on the rights of learners in the Eastern Cape, the sample is confined to the University of Fort Hare social work students who have schooled in the province within the last ten years (2000–2011). The rationale for choosing to use university students rather than learners from secondary/high schools is because the students have lived the experience of teachers' strikes and now can reflect how the strikes have affected them. It is believed that the objectives and the research questions will most appropriately be addressed and answered respectively with university students and not secondary/high school learners. In this way, one will be able to gauge the impact that teachers' strikes have had on the learners who are now at the university level. Therefore, secondary and high school learners, those that have dropped out because of teachers' strikes, teachers and parents are not be part of this study sample.

1.8 Operational definition of concepts

The following concepts are defined as used in the study:

1.8.1 Learners

Learners as used in this study include anyone who is entitled to the right to education as spelt out in section 29 (1) (a, b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 and is currently engaged in studies irrespective of the level or year. Therefore, there is no age limit with regards to the use of the word learner in this dissertation.



1.8.2 Teachers' strikes

Teachers' strikes refer to organized stay-away by teachers who teach in public schools; from pre-schools through primary to secondary/high schools. It does not include teachers' strikes in higher education. The Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 recognizes the right of teachers regarding collective bargaining and strike action as well as section 23, sub-section 2 (c).

1.8.3 Right

This study adopts the definition of rights by Jones (2011a:4). They define right in the simplest term as "something you should always be able to do, to have, to know, to say or to be protected from." However, "the core concept of right is that of an agreement or 'social contract' which is established between the person(s) who holds a right (often referred to as a 'right's holder') and the person(s) or institutions(s) which then have obligations and responsibilities in relation to the realization of that right (often referred to as the 'duty Bearer')" (Save the Children, 2005:14).

1.8.4 Right to education

The right to education is one that is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (section 29 (1) (a) which states that everyone has the right to basic education and basic adult education. This also includes the right to further education which is affirmed in section 29 (1) (b) of the Constitution. The right to education is also affirmed in regional and international instruments which are discussed and referred to in this dissertation.

1.9 Chapter structure of the dissertation

The study is presented in five chapters:



Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter is made up of the background, problem statement, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, assumptions of the study, significance of the study and definitions of terms.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

The focus of this chapter is the review of related literature as well as the theoretical framework. Legislative framework is also part of this chapter.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter constitutes the research design, approach, sample and sampling strategies, data collection instruments, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four: Presentation, analysis and discussion of findings

In this chapter, the data collected are presented using frequency distribution tables, analysed and discussed in the light of the current literature.

Chapter Five: Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations

Chapter five is a summary of the main findings. It also contains conclusions and the recommendations drawn from the study as well as suggestions for further studies.



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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

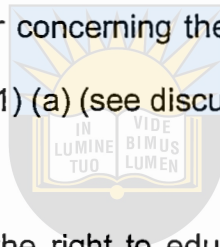
Over the years, the South African education system has been marked by the terror of teachers' right to strike with negative consequences on learners. This right as observed by the government has been over exercised and the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the government want education to be declared an essential service to ensure that children's right to education is respected (Fredericks, 2011:5). Nonetheless, section 36 (1) unequivocally states that "the rights in the Bill of Rights may be limited only in terms of law of general application to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom, taking into account all relevant factors..." Sub-section 2 also states that no law may limit any of these rights, except those mentioned in section 36 (1). The review of related literature is presented under theoretical framework; legislative framework; history of trade unionism in South Africa; an overview of the South Africa's and Eastern Cape education system and attempts at improvement; reasons for teachers' strikes; effects of teachers' strikes on learners' academic performance and quality of education; perceptions about teachers' right to strike and learners' right to education; teachers' strikes and involvement of parents; cost of teachers' strikes on parents and the economy; and conclusion.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The study is underpinned by social justice perspective of children's rights. These rights are enshrined in articles 23-26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948. Article 23 is about right to a job and to join a trade union. Article 24 states the right of everyone to play and relax while article 25 affirms the right to food and shelter for all and the right of children and other vulnerable groups to be cared for. Finally, article 26 of the UDHR stipulates the right to education discussed in the next section. The rights are also contained in articles 9-13 of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966. According to article 9, everyone has the right to social security including social insurance. Article 10 (1) is on the protection and assistance of the family as the basic social unit and foundation of society. Also reiterates that there should be free marriage consent. Article 10 (2) accord special protection to mothers before and after childbirth while paragraph 3 is also about special measures of protection and assistance on behalf of children and young persons. It also provides that children and young persons should be protected against economic and social exploitation. The right of everyone to adequate standard of living and that of his or her family including adequate food, clothing and housing are affirm in article 11 (1). The fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger is recognise in article 11 (2) while 11 (3) stipulates the attainment of the highest standard of physical and mental health.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 spells out in the first 40 articles the rights of the child. Article 3 (1) reiterates the best interests of the child which should be given primary consideration while article 4 provides for the state parties to take all necessary measures to ensure the realisation of the

child's economic, social and cultural rights. Article 28 (1) is on the right of the child to education which is discussed in the next section. Articles 26-29, Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1966 contains a variety of rights. The right to adequate housing for everyone is guaranteed under article 26 (1). Article 27 (1) (a) gives everyone the right to health care services, including reproductive health care; while paragraphs b and c affirm the right to sufficient food and water; and social security including appropriate social assistance respectively. A variety of children's rights is stipulated in article 28 (1) (a-k) while 28 (2) is about the best interests of the child in every matter concerning the child. Finally, the right to basic education is enshrined in article 29 (1) (a) (see discussion in the next section).



Social justice perspective defends the right to education, healthcare, housing, life, care and protection among others that have been described in the preceding paragraphs. Social justice is generally understood to be about distributive justice and also based on equality and solidarity. Social justice is situated in John Rawls's Theory of Justice (1971-2001) which has three principles. Firstly, the principle of basic right – the right to education is universally accepted. Secondly, equal opportunity principle which states that if there is inequality, the most disadvantaged should be favoured. Finally, the Just Saving Principle relates to cross-generation equity including the use of taxation to support education. This is important in the post-apartheid South Africa education system.

The rights under the UNCRC 1989 are enshrined in various laws of South Africa (for examples, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996; Children's Act 2005 as amended in 2007 – see chapter one, section 2 (a) about giving effect to the rights

as contained in the Constitution and (2) (c) regarding giving effect to the country's obligations regarding international instruments ratified concerning the wellbeing of children). These legislations are required to fully meet and respond to the imperatives of children's rights in the context of social justice and social exclusion (Walker, 2011). Social justice involves the commitment to ensure that "each person gets a fair share of the benefits, and carries a fair share of the responsibilities, of living together in a community" (Miller, 2005:3).

According to Miller (2003:3), there are four principles of social justice and include equal citizenship which entitles one to a set of rights; equality of opportunity which enhances life chances; fair distribution of resources; and social minimum where each person has access to resources that meet essential needs. Walker (2011:34) concludes that social justice is linked to the concepts of equality and fairness in which individual citizens are seen as having equal minimum rights and opportunity. UNICEF (2009:70) reiterates that children need to be informed about their rights and actual actions that can lead to the reality of these rights. Therefore, the crucial aspects of children's rights in the future is based on empowerment of children; that is children should know and understand their rights and be empowered to claim them. However, children also have responsibilities towards other children as well as respecting the rights of other children provided for in the UNCRC. For example, children's right to education is related to the obligation to learn and share the knowledge and experiences with others (UNICEF, 1989 cited in Jones, 2011b:46).

A useful framework has been provided by Freeman (2000) in which the author shows how children's rights are conceptualised within the UNCRC. According to

Freeman, the Convention include the commitment to general rights; rights requiring protective measures; rights concerning the civil status of children; rights concerning development and welfare; and the rights regarding children in special circumstances or in difficulty circumstances (cited in Walker, 2011:33).

There is a debate with respect to treating children as equal citizens with adults for the purposes of social justice, especially when it comes to rights and responsibilities. It is argued that children are too immature to fully understand the meaning of exercising their rights, especially when responsibilities are involved (Walker, 2011:34). In this regards, others maintain that children should only be afforded with rights of protection and provision and not that of participation because of their level of development while parents should make decisions on their behalf (Archard, 1993). The Vienna Declaration of 1993, section 4 (45) reiterates the principle of "First Call for Children and it reaffirms the solemn commitment in section 4 to fulfil the obligations to promote universal respect for and observance and protection of all human rights and freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other instruments of human rights and international law. All of these instruments are in support of that in all activities involving children, the best interest of the child should be of paramount consideration because they are vulnerable and immature to take decisions about themselves. Therefore, children need protection so that they are able to fully and harmoniously develop their personalities and enhance their participation in society's activities.

2.3 Legislative framework

While the previous section discussed the general rights, especially to children, this section of the review explores the legislative frameworks that support the right of freedom of expression, association and assembly, especially regarding the organisation of unions and participation in strike action. It also examines the legislative foundation of the right of children to education, beginning with International to regional and national legislations.

Teachers have a constitutional right to freedom of expression through demonstrations and strikes. The Bill of Rights, section 23 (1) affirms the worker's right to fair labour practices while 23 (2) (a-c) respectively provides for the right to form or join a trade union; participate in the activities and programmes of a trade union; and the right to strike. Also, section 23 (5) stipulates that "every trade union, employers' organization and employer has the right to engage in collective bargaining." Similarly, the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 also recognizes the right of teachers to collective bargaining and to embark on strike action, if there is a need. The right to strike is also recognized in the UDHR in article 19 as well as article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, this labour relations right is also enshrined in other regional instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (articles 9 (2), 10 (1) and 11). This freedom enhances teachers' ability to become informed and articulate about issues regarding their welfare. Freedom of expression is said to affect other fundamental rights such as the freedom of choice, religion, association, protest and political affiliation (Motala, 2006:153).

The right of learners to education is affirmed in many international and regional conventions as well as in national legislation. First, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, article 26 spells out the right to education. This right is also enshrined in articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1996. Finally, article 11 (3) of the International Covenant on Economic, Political and Cultural Rights is the recognition of the right of everyone to education which should be directed towards the development of human personality and towards the sense of its dignity. It shall strengthen the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, Articles 17 and 11 respectively of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights 1981 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990 affirm the right to education. There are other international instruments wherein the right to education is entrenched and these include the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (articles 28 and 29). Article 28 (1) is on the right of the child to education which should be achieved progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity. Article 29 (1) (a) states that education should be directed towards the child's personality development, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Other sub-paragraphs (b-e) are respectively on the fact that education should be geared towards human rights and fundamental freedoms, parents, responsible life in a free society, and environment.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention Against Discrimination in Education 1960 in Article 1(a) states that no one should be deprived of access to education of any type or at any level. Article 4 (a) provides for free and compulsory primary education as well as accessibility and availability of secondary education; and that higher education should be accessible to all based

on individual capacity. The World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs 1990 recognizes education as a fundamental human right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout the world. Articles 1 (1) and 3 (1) respectively state the need for every person to benefit from educational opportunities to meet their needs and the provision of basic education to all children, youth and adults.

Section 29 (1) (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 provides for the right to basic education and basic adult education. The right to further education is also affirmed in section 29 (1) (b) of the Bill of Rights through reasonable measures which should be made progressively available and accessible. According to Verieva (2006:101), section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 "is a hybrid provision that comprises a bundle of education rights, divided into sub-sections." However, our concern is not on these rights in totality but on the basic right to education.

It should be stated that children's rights developed from the long-established moral and legal traditions, and as such, situates these rights and responsibilities within a social contract (Jones, 2011a). It is argued that although children have rights to education, this is possible if the local and national governments assume this responsibility for the provision of this service (Franklin, 2002). The definition and implementation of rights, responsibilities and social contract are linked to different conventions, laws and acts described in the preceding paragraphs. One of the core principles of the UNCRC 1989 is the 'best interest' of the child which is presented in Article 3. This Article states that "in all actions concerning children, whether

undertaken by public or private bodies, the 'best interest' of the child shall be a primary consideration." According to UNICEF (2009) and the Vienna Declaration 1993, the 'best interest' of the child relates to the legal protection and care of children. Therefore, governments and other agencies should be involved in the provision, legislation, programmes and policies that positively impact on children (Jones, 2011a:7).

2.4 History of teachers' unionism in South Africa

The history of teachers' unionism is a long one given the political, economic and social dynamics of the country. Teachers' unions were established in the 1960s and evolved along racial lines as prescribed by a racial policy of separate education department by the apartheid government. While white unions were well represented at the decision-making at the state level, other non-white teachers' unions were left in the wilderness until early 1990s (Chisholm, 1999). The development of teachers' union in the country according to (Whittle, 2007:271) mirrored the broader socio-political change and ideological tension between professionalism and unionism. Therefore, there were different unions for whites, blacks, Indians and coloured teachers established in the 1960s whose primary strategies were consultation and persuasion without militant or political action (Hyslop, 1990).

However, the political struggle for liberation in the 1980s resulted to the emergence of progressive teachers' unions whose purpose was to deal with educational change and policy; hence, political and educational agenda (Whittle, 2007). According to Whittle, these unions were constituted on non-racial line and allied themselves to the African National Congress (ANC), COSATU and SACP, and began to attack other

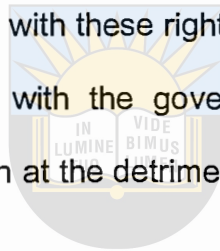
'professional' associations as conservatives and apolitical associations. This resulted in a backlash, accusation and counter-accusation and in the late 1980s, a single teacher union on non-racial line failed to be established by the National Teachers' Unity Forum. In the early 1990s, the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) and SADTU were established because of disagreement on political alignment between professionalism and unionism (Govender, 1996). While SADTU wanted teachers' right to strike, NAPTOSA insisted on learner's right to uninterrupted learning and the two also disagreed on where the united organization should be federal or based on a unitary organizational structure (Whittle, 2007:272).



The new education and labour legislation of the 1990s remarkably influenced teachers' unions. For example, the National Education Act No. 27 of 1996 provided for the management of education at the national and provincial levels, hence, teachers' unions had to restructure so as to ensure their presence in the provinces (Whittle, 2007). Moreover, the government was required by law to consult with stakeholders in the areas of education, in this case, teachers' unions both at the national and provincial levels. According to SADTU (1995), the dawn of democracy swelled its memberships, especially from the ranks of black teachers. On the other hand, NAPTOSA which was formed in 1991 with 16 affiliates started fragmenting because of its politics of non-racialism and other tensions including the effects of the new legislation. This resulted in white Afrikaans-speaking teacher union, NAPTOSA in June 1996 and the formation and recognition of a third teachers' union, the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU) (Whittle, 2007:273). Another blow to NATOSA was that several of its funding members between 1994 and 1998 joined other unions

or formed new ones or simply disbanded. According to Whittle (2007), the National Union of Educators (NUE) formed in 1997 was formerly part of NATOSA.

The preceding paragraphs mirrored the socio-economic and political landscape of South Africa regarding teachers' unionism. The present teachers' unions play a powerful and influential role in the educational sector and social change in South Africa. The Constitution gives teachers, as anyone else, the right to freedom as well as the right to collective bargaining and strike action as contained in the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1996. Armed with these rights, once teachers in South Africa are not satisfied with negotiations with the government on salaries and fringe benefits, they embark on strike action at the detriment of the learners who also have the right to education.



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2.5 An overview of the state of South Africa's and Eastern Cape education system and attempts at improvement

The state of South Africa's education system is being portrayed as one that is chaotic and characterized by corruption, poor academic performance, strikes, intimidation and incompetent teachers as well as the lack of qualified science teachers (Daily Dispatch, 2011a:7). The World Economic Forum recently castigated the low level of the country's education system as one of the worst in the world (Patel, 2012:1) ; a situation that jeopardizes the right of learners to effective and efficient education. The department has been faulted as lacking neither insight nor capacity to deal with the crisis in the country's education sector (Mohamed, 2012:1). There is an ongoing debate regarding the state of education in the country. While a majority of black South African think that the education system is good (72 percent)

and are happy with it (60 percent), whites, Coloured and Indian/Asian South Africans hold a contrary view (Higgs, 2012:1). Nonetheless, Higgs (2012) noted that most South African adults in the metropolitan areas think the education system is generally good while those in the rural areas are less satisfied. There is no doubt with these findings, as it obvious that cities have good and well-equipped schools unlike in the rural and remote communities where the situation is unacceptable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the right learners to education in urban towns and cities is realized more than those in the rural townships and communities. Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu decried the education system and said the former President, Nelson Mandela would cry, especially as the country had its first black president 18 years ago and the education system is still hobbled by poor management and low standards (Agence France Press, 2012:1). Children are at the heart of President Mandela and he would have loved to see their right to education realized at all cost. President Mandela puts children at the top of the country's priorities and pledged one-third of his salary to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and his government also started the National Programme of Action for Children (Daniels, 1998:13). This is an indication of the attachment of the former President to children's rights and their wellbeing.

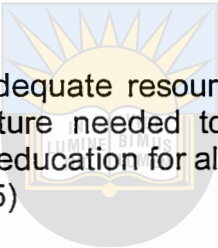
Kunene (2012:1) describes the education system as one that is in a mess from where other problems emerged. The author attributes the impaired and stagnant economic growth because of the cracks within the education system and the August 16, 2012 Marikana massacre of 34 miners to the non-existence of quality education. State public schools are characterized by lack of water facilities, teachers not knowing what or how to teach and some schools having pit latrines or relied on

bucket system (Kunene, 2012:1) and other schools are held under trees (Blaine, 2006:6) while most schools do not have teachers (Fengu, 2012a:1). Mbabela (2012a:1) also pointed out that in the Eastern Cape, of the 4000 temporary teachers that were striking and demanding their reinstatement, 1534 “are not even professionally qualified to teach – some have general degrees and some have just a matric.” This reminds one of the issues of quality of education and how the right of learners can be realized within such prevailing circumstances.

Reports show that in the Eastern Cape, 1483 schools have mud or clay classrooms; 12 percent do not have electricity; 9 percent do not have sanitation; and 19 percent do not have water; and many are poorly staffed (Zukiswa, 2010:2). Other reasons for education crisis in the Eastern Cape include the struggle between the national and provincial departments, serial court cases over temporary teachers’ posts at schools (Fengu, 2012a:1), dilapidated and broken desks and windows, archaic infrastructure as well as the lack of basic resources (Williams, 2012:1). These have negatively impacted on the performance of learners and pose a serious challenge to the upholding of learners’ right to education in the province. It has been reported that the national average performance of grade six learners for 2011 in languages was 28 percent and for mathematics, 30 percent; that of grade three in literacy was 35 percent and in numeracy, 28 percent; and that only 3 percent of South African adults has a university degree or equivalent (Skillsportal.co.za, 2011:1). Consequently, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) concurs the poor quality of the South African education as compared to other major and poorer players. This poor performance of the education sector according to HSRC is due to poor teacher

training, lack of skills, poor support to learners in their homes and shortages of educational resources (Skillsportal.co.za, 2011:1).

Apart from teachers' strikes, various practices and school funding policy which compromise the constitutional right to education. The fee policy is contained in the South African School's Act, No 84 of 1996 which permits public schools to charge fees. This is tantamount to denying the right to education of learners. Others have accused government of tight spending which has:



Created a climate in which inadequate resources are being allocated to improve human and infrastructure needed to transform South African education and provide a quality education for all pupils.
(Veriava and Ramadiro, 2003:15)

These problems have prompted many parents to send their children to private schools where it is believed children could have a good education and fulfill their right to education. According to South African Press Association (SAPA) (2012:1) revealed that the number of learners from private schools has increased from 256, 283 in 2000 to 450,000 in 2012. These notwithstanding, only a very small minority of people are able to send their children to such schools and other top-class schools in the country (Mail and Guardian, 2009:27). This is because as of 2006, private schools charge between R25, 000 and R76, 000 a year (Mohamed, 2012:1). SAPA (2012) maintained that 10 percent of state schools lack water facilities and 11 450 schools used pit latrines and 155 others rely on the bucket system. Many learners walk for about 10km to schools due to lack of transport and get robbed on their way and many engaged in alcohol drinking and drugs abuse (Hollands, 2011:5). SAPA also reported that South African teachers spend less than half of their time in class

each week. All these problems will definitely impede the realization of the right of learners to education.

One writer describes the education of learners in the districts as chaotic and stated that “there are billions involved in contracts and everyone wants to get a share...it is self-enrichment for people who called themselves communists and socialists” (Ndzuta, 2012:7). One writer said it is not a secret that education is in serious crisis, over-politicisation, introduction of education models unsuited to the nation’s education needs and maladministration. Consequently, the children in the rural and underprivileged areas are those suffering most regarding the realization of their right to education (Weekend Post, 2011:8). The increasing “rejection of the value of education in poorest communities of South Africa” has been attributed to the department of education’s lack of responsiveness in solving the current crisis in education (Mohamed, 2012:1). The authorities would only intervene if their positions were at risk. Zille (2010:22) pointed out that matric results has been dropping by 10 percentage points in the past decade while 50 percent of learners do not reach matric and that SADTU is responsible for 42 percent of work days lost across the country since 1995. She noted that while children in good schools attend classes for about 200 days in a year, those in poor performing schools attend only about 100 days. Unfortunately, she held that SADTU members do not send their children to such schools that are vulnerable to strike actions by teachers.

Whisson, (2009:7) listed a catalogue of problems facing education not only in the Eastern Cape but also in other provinces. These include the refusal of European Union funding for pre-school; the closure of farm schools depriving children of

education near homes; closure of teachers' training colleges creating shortage of teachers; phasing out apprenticeships; destroying the system of school inspectors; teachers' deployment and retrenchment of experienced teachers in order to accelerate racial profiling; and the appointment of staff in the department of education at all levels on the basis of party political profile and not on competence, experience and integrity. Most or some of these problems may account for the almost 40 percent of the country's high schools categorized as 'underperforming' and about a third of learners repeat a grade and at further education, half will repeat a year of study (Mtshali, 2012:1). Table 1 shows the matric pass rate in the Eastern Cape Province from 2006-2011.



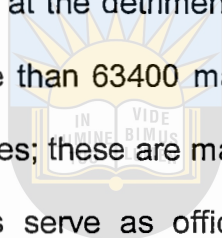
Table 1: Eastern Cape Matric pass rates from 2006-2011

Year	Pass rate	% of eligible learners to varsity
2006	59.3%	-
2007	56.9%	9.3%
2008	50.6%	14.3%
2009	51%	20.3%
2010	58.3%	23.8%
2011	67.8	

Source: Extracted from Matomela, 2009:8; Sokopo, 2011:1; Fengu, 2012b:1; Gernetzky, 2012:4; Daily Dispatch, 2011a:7.

Table 1 shows the decreasing but fluctuation matric results of the Eastern Cape Province and those eligible to enroll at university level ranging from about 9-24

percent. The little improvement in the results in some years has been doubted by the opposition parties, analysts and other stakeholders, suggesting that marks might have been adjusted, especially in mathematics and science which are always having the worst results (Sokopo, 2011:1). However, the department of education has refuted these allegations and stated that the results are taken through a very strict process which does not allow for any leniency (de Kock, 2011:1). The many questions one would ask include where will others go to; to FET and labour market? This is a testimony of the poor results of matric resulting from the many strikes that are organized in the province yearly at the detriment of learners' right to education. In the Eastern Cape Province, more than 63400 matric as of 2008 wrote matric in about 29 subjects, including languages; these are marked in 12 centres for all the 23 school districts; about 906 schools serve as official writing centres (Matomela, 2008a:1).



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The Department to Basic Education has acknowledged its failure and poor performance in what it calls “inappropriate schools” (500 nationwide), which are deemed not be suitable for teaching and learning due to infrastructure problems (iafrica, 2012). Government has also repeatedly admitted its failure and shortcomings in the education sector. It acknowledges the mismanagement of institutions and policies as the biggest threat to progression and to date, its biggest failure in the sector (Payle, 2012:1-2). This acknowledgement is also an indication that the right of learners to education is a failure. Hence, learners have been led ‘down’ by the government and the department of education. In addition, the government recently recognized the need for urgent action to redress and remedy

the shortcomings in the education sector. In its Commission's National Development Plan drawn up in 2012, the government maintains that:

South Africa has set itself the goal to eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, growing the economy by an average of 5.4 percent, and cutting the unemployment rate to 6 percent by 2030. Education, training and innovation are critical to the attainment of these goals. (Jones, 2012:1)

Therefore, it sets a target that "by 2030 all South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes" (Jones, 2012:1). To salvage the situation created by teachers' strikes, national and provincial departments of education have come up with different plans, especially regarding the grade 12 learners who are at the verge of writing their matric examinations. One educational authority said:

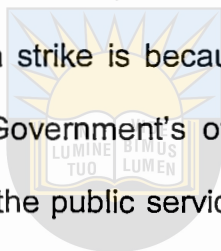
Adequate contingency measures are in place to ensure that any unforeseen eventualities are dealt with forthwith, that any unlikely irregularity that might arise is swiftly and decisively expedited to ensure that continued validity and integrity of examinations.
(Fengu and Nini, 2011:1)

In the Eastern Cape, retired teachers were called in to salvage education in the province through the establishment of matric learning centres where learners are helped to catch up with syllabuses, especially 496 prioritized underperforming schools (Skiti and Sokopo, 2010:1). However, many of the retired teachers live in the urban areas while the learners who are in the rural areas are those in great need and have to contend with inferior infrastructure and lack of facilities (The Herald, 2010a:14).

2.6 Reasons for teachers' strikes

There are a variety of reasons that have been advanced for teachers embarking on strike leaving learners stranded and jeopardizing their future as well as violating their

right to education. Generally, the most important include poor working conditions under which teachers work and poor salaries paid to teachers as well as long working hours (Gernetzky, 2012:4). One teacher supporting strike action said “these increases in food, fuel and electricity prices are an attack on the working class; we need to take immediate action (Jack, 2008:1). Similarly, another teacher reported that they are on the streets to protest against high food and petrol prices because of their concern for the poorest of the poor (Matomela, 2008b:2). Consequently, teachers feel that if they are unhappy, they will pass the unhappiness (through strikes) to the learners (The Herald, 2010b:8). In another vein, teachers complained that an important reason they go on strike is because they have not received any pay progression since 1996. The Government’s offer of less than 6% is tied to restrictive salary adjustment limiting the public service to an increase based only on inflation (Mecoamere, 2004:2).



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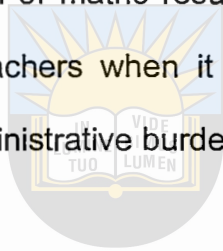
In the Eastern Cape Province, the sacking of more than 400 temporary teachers was believed to have added much burden on the existing teachers and the unfilled vacancies triggered the strikes of 2011 and 2012 (Mbabela, 2012b:5; Stander, 2012a:4). The teachers held that they have many responsibilities to effectively discharge their teaching duties which would not lead to full realization of the right of learners to education as in other provinces with enough teachers. The issue of the redeployment of teachers in the province at the time of sacking the temporary teachers has also been a worrying one for the teachers (Mbabela, 2012a:5). The situation is worsened by the shortage of teachers in grades one, two, three and 12 in the province and this is one of the reasons for SADTU teachers have been fighting for (Velaphi, 2012:1). More-so, there is overcrowding with classroom built for a

maximum of 35-40 learners but filled by 60-70 learners (Carelse, 2011:9) and as such jeopardizing the right of learners to effective and efficient education. Because of this, some have described the situation of education in the province as tragically becoming “a sword word” (Carelse, 2011:9) and teachers’ strikes justified on these grounds.

Some strikes in the Eastern Cape have been reinforced by the provincial department of education having docked the salaries of both striking and non-striking teachers (Ndzuta, 2012:7; Stander, 2012a). However, the docking of salaries of striking teachers is welcome news to many in the province as it re-assures the people that the department has ability to act without fear of favour (Daily Dispatch, 2011b:7). This is because the same Constitution and labour laws that give them the right to strike also “stipulate that those who participate in illegal strikes have to bear the consequences in the forms of “no work no pay policy” (Daily Dispatch, 2011b:7). This is an indication that the people of the province are tired of teachers’ strikes and want their children to enjoy their right to education. Teachers in the province have also demanded the removal of the provincial education superintendant-general, citing section 100 (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 which states that the national government must take full control of the provincial department in cases that the province cannot fulfill an executive obligation in terms of legislation or the Constitution. The teachers’ reasons range from non-payment of teachers, dismissal of temporary teachers to non-consultation about the post-provisioning for the next year (Mbabela, 2011a:2) as well as overall poor leadership (Gernetzky, 2012:4). Without achieving these demands, teachers in the province embark on various strikes. According to the teachers, the department is incompetent in looking

after the interests of teachers, schools, learners and that history has proved tht the department is incapable of doing so (Weekend Post, 2011:8).

The National Teachers' Union (NATU) sometimes demands a comprehensive medical aid subsidy which the government is reluctant to heed to their demands. This has also been another issue that calls for teachers' strikes in the country (Mlambo, 2011:2). In-as-much-as teachers go on strikes; they also have sympathized with learners on the issue of their right to education. Many have been concerned with the downward spiral of matric results in the province and also the confusion of both learners and teachers when it comes to the demands of the curriculum which has increased administrative burden on them (Zukiswa, 2010:2).



2.7 Effect of teachers' strikes on learners' academic performance and quality of education

It is acknowledged that the state has made significant strides in the field of basic and further education in South Africa, thereby discharging its constitutional mandate. However, many challenges still face the department of education, particularly its inability to address sufficiently the plight of poor learners, especially learners from farm schools and those in the deep rural areas (Tire and Shabalala, 2006:92). The role of teachers has been acknowledged in the success or failure of the public education system in South Africa. One report sums this up as follows: "only an insane would dispute this: teachers do matter" and it concludes: "bad teachers not only blind lives, they destroy nations" (Sikhakhane, 2001:25).

The issue of strikes in school brings to mind the performance of learners in tests, examinations and negative impact on their future lives. As Tshangela (2010:1) noted, the greatest fear of strikes is their impact on learners' overall performance, non-completion of syllabuses in most subjects before their final examinations (Matriculation). Consequently, this affects matric pass rate in a province known to be the worst-performing province (Mbabela, 2012b:1). In the Eastern Cape, especially districts in the Transkei areas, there are dismal performance in matric examinations over the years. The province is seen as one "forever consigned to the bottom of the pile, thanks to the never-ending infighting between those who are responsible for ensuring that our children get a decent education" (The Herald, 2012a:20). Not ensuring that learners are afforded quality education as enshrined in the Bill of Rights is a flagrant disrespect of the right of learners to education.

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The quality of education that learners received these days leaves a lot to be desired and this does not augur well for their right to education. Learners are leaving school ill-equipped for the outside world because the education system places too little emphasis on well-staffed schools by trained, motivated and dedicated teachers (Weekend Post, 2011:8). Similarly, during strikes, learners sit for examinations not prepared as they should be and the unfortunate learners are those not attending Model C schools (The Herald, 2010a:14). The quality of matric graduates from public schools has not only being a problem to government and education officials but also to employers. It is noted that "across the spectrum employers are experiencing difficulties with new employees who lack even the most basic problem solving and interpersonal skills (Mail and Guardian, 2009:27). The consequence of lack of adequate preparations of learners to write their matric examinations is gross

irregularities noticed in the province over the past years (568 in three schools in the province in 2011 matric examinations implicated) (Fengu, 2012a).

It is widely acknowledged that the poor quality of education of learners who intends to enroll into university will subsequently present a hassle to learners to complete their studies within record time (Kaburise, 2010). Eyewitness News (2011) contends the issue of Matriculation pass rate and maintains that the pass rate should not be on quantity but on the quality of the pass. It has become a phenomenon for the educational authorities to lower subjects' pass marks each year in order to increase Matriculation pass rates in different subjects. This is a deception regarding the full realization of the learners' right to education. This brings to question the quality of students who are prepared to enter the workforce and higher education institutions. Similarly, the Daily Dispatch (2011b:7) was surprised with the Eastern Cape Matric results of 2010 which showed a marked improvement from the previous years despite five schools with zero percent (18 schools nationwide scored zero percent). Similarly, Maqhina (2011:4) quoted sources that indicated that the matric results for ten subjects were adjusted by the department of education in order to increase the pass rate in those subjects.

Therefore, Daily Dispatch noted that skeptics would doubt the authenticity of the results in the province. The matric results (e.g. 2009) that are adjusted are criticized on the basis of the fact that they give children a false sense of hope and when they get to the university, they fail flat (Sokopo, 2010a:1). If learners who are in grade 12 tend to teach their peers using supplements supplied by the Daily Dispatch and the department of education (Ngcukana and Sokopo, 2010a:1), the quality of education

is anyone's guess. In a similar vein, first year university students are brought in to help execute the national school recovery plan (Mtshizana, 2007:1). In another twist, about 1500 learners who failed grade 11 were promoted to grade 12 further endangering the matric results and its quality (Matomela, 2010a:5). One wonders the quality of education these will acquire at the end of the day. In addition, some experts have described the quality of the results in the following words:

Some of those, who were fortunate enough to have obtained a place at a university to further their studies, will be dis-illusion and disheartened by the huge gap between the level of education of their matric year and that at tertiary institutions. That will be the acid test for many. (Daily Dispatch, 2011a:7).

Learners have also acknowledged the negative impact of strikes on their lives and future. One learner lamented that "it's going to be difficult for us, our future is at stake now (Ngcukana and Sokopo, 2010b:1) and this is because of the failure of teachers to let them enjoy their constitutional right to education. According to Mngxitama (2007:6), one learner who intends to enroll at the university regretted the strike action and said he does not like the strikes as they (learners) cannot apply for university admission and bursaries without results. More-so, the learner said he was intending to enroll for Marine studies which need physical sciences and mathematics, but because of the suspension of their matric examinations, he was frustrated and his right to education trampled upon. Being on the receiving end and not unionized, the learners have very little to do to regain their right to education.

Consequently, some stakeholders have suggested the need for a bridging year between matric and higher education (Kunene, 2012:1). This can also explain the establishment of foundation programme to assist students with poor Matriculation results to later gain access into degree programmes of the university. It is no doubt

that student throughput and retention rates at the university level is low with about 34% of students failing to complete their programmes in record time (Matomel, 2010b). If learners' right to education were constitutionally respected by the educational authorities, there would probably be little or no such problem as presented here.

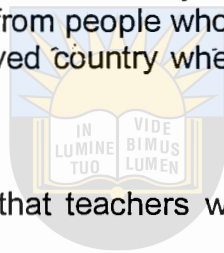
2.8 Perceptions about teachers' right to strike and learners' right to education

The treatment of children in society shows the nature and caliber of that society. It is the responsibility of every society to ensure that no child is out of school and the wellbeing of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habit. It shows how the society is democratic and governed. Therefore, the survival, protection and development of children ensure the wellbeing of society (Daniels, 1998:13). Daniels (1998:13) noted that "when children's interests are at the centre of a society's concerns, that society becomes humane. When forgotten, that society is thrown off balance." According to Carelse (2011:9), the stability to a child's life is the key to his/her success and if children are the 'future', it is argued, there is a need to look at educating them at the best educational facilities. Therefore, a solid foundation needs to be laid in the life of every child and not only for a selected few in Model C schools (Zukiswa, 2010:2).

The right to strike is one of the essential means through which workers and their organisations can promote and defend their economic and social interest. "In South Africa the whole issue of a possibility of a strike by teachers has been presented as unprofessional and disruptive to the educational process" (New Nations, 1992a:23).

Therefore, SADTU believes that an injury to one teacher is an injury to all. There is a prolonged debate about the right of learners to education and the right of teachers to strike and collective bargaining. There has not been any acceptable one over the other as both rights are recognized in international conventions and national legislation. According to the Daily Dispatch (2007:12), teachers complained that:

We have had to make the decision to strike or not to strike in our country where we propagate "freedom of choice". I respect the decision of those who want to strike and was under the impression that my decision not to strike would also be respected-but what verbal abuse and criticisms from even my own colleague! Threats from people knowing where I live to burn my house down (I don't live in so-called "townships"); threats from people who know what car I drive. All these happened in our beloved country where we talk about freedom of speech and choice.



When SADTU announced in 1992 that teachers would embark on a strike, there were fierce debates on the right of teachers to engage in mass action (New Nation, 1992b:12). Many people including officials from the education department to parent groupings argue that teachers' strike will not promote the best interest of children's education. SADTU however argues that their teachers' union is fighting for improved working conditions and a living wage. The argument holds that teachers cannot use their rights and power as workers because they are teachers and as such, have a responsibility to their student (New Nation, 1992b:12). Furthermore, SADTU questions that if the job of teachers in educating children is so important, why then are they being paid so little, and so unprofessionally treated? Therefore, teachers should enjoy trade union and labour rights as in all democracies in the world (New Nation, 1992b:12). SADTU also argues that protests show that teachers are not prepared to play a secondary role in education when their rights are ruthlessly trampled upon (New Nation, 1992b:12). Similarly, SADTU Vice President in an open debate forum raised the question of whether or not teachers have the right to strike.

He said legally and morally teachers have the right to strike and the question here is, what obligations do they have towards civil society? (Daily News, 1992:3). He concluded that just like a teacher has an obligation to teach, the state also has an obligation to provide an adequate background in which to teach. However, he emphasised that the child's right to learn was all-important. Although the above points gained some considerations, some education officials felt that strike action by teachers was "force-feeding the forces of illiteracy (Daily News, 1992:3). Teachers strike according the New National Party could be an unconstitutional infringement of pupil's rights. It stated that:

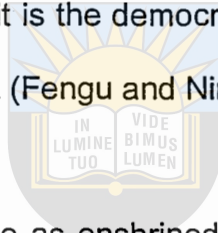
In weighing up the right of teachers to strike against the right of learners to receive education in terms of the constitution, the right to education should receive greater weight, given the considerably number of school hours already lost inter alia through strikes and the untimely staging of the current strike. (The Citizen, 1999:4)

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The debate as to whether teachers right to strike overrides children's right to education and/or vice-versa has been very controversial, posing questions that seem difficult to handle (Diamond Fields Advertiser, 2006:4). Striking by thousands of teachers on the eve of end of year examinations could be an infringement of the pupil's right to education. The New National Party (NNP) education spokesman argued that "in weighing up the right of teachers to strike against the right of learners to receive education in terms of the constitution, the right to education should receive greater weight" (Stuart, 1999:6). In this regard the effect of strike on learners could therefore be unconstitutional. The NNP will therefore welcome investigations by the Human Rights Commission into the possible unconstitutionality of strike and possible ways of rectifying its negative consequences for learners (Stuart, 1999:6). The Herald (2007:6) reported that after the strike action it is important to assess the damage that has been caused specifically to children previously administered by the

Bantu Education and homeland departments. It concluded that it is most likely to be criminal if children, who continue to shoulder the legacy of apartheid education, particularly in rural areas, should suffer further as a result of strike actions.

In 1999, the South African Human Rights Commission undertook to strike a balance between the right of teachers to strike against the right of learners to education. However, before the Commission could begin its work, one of the officials acknowledged that “teachers had a right to strike but there was a feeling that certain rights of children to education were being violated” (Bhengu, 1999:7). The argument and debate rage on. In as much as it is the democratic right of unions to strike, it is also the right of learners to education (Fengu and Nini, 2011:1).



Despite the right of teachers to strike as enshrined in the Act No. 66 of 1995, any good teacher would put the interest of the children they teach first (Weekend Post, 2011:8). Teachers have been accused of using learners as ‘pawns’ to get better wages for themselves at the detriment of learners’ right to education. Therefore, some experts have suggested that teachers’ right to strike must be revisited and that the right to strike must be earned (Hendricks, 2011:12). Hendricks further maintained that there should be a limit to the right to strike until all children are able to read and write as well count and that the constitution needs to be reviewed. The author concludes that “just as companies have contingency plans, so there must be contingency plans for strike (Hendricks, 2011:12). Teachers have been labeled as greedy, and people who wants a share of contracts’ billions. Others described teachers as selfish and irresponsible and said irrespective of what the department is doing, strike is “totally unprofessional” (Rogers, 2011:1). The Herald (2010b:14)

remarked with dismay that strikes cannot be acceptable as the future and right to education of many learners is blighted and compromised.

Lambasting teachers on strike actions, a writer maintained that “it is everyone’s right to earn a decent living and everyone does not have the right to walk away from a job where someone else’s life is in one’s hand. Therefore, strike actions by teachers have made them lost the normally afforded natural respect that society had for them as the whole nation has to pay a price for their greed, especially the youth (Westering, 2007:7). A parent said that “everyone is now sick and tired of this [strikes]”, especially as learners are even intimidated for going to schools while another said they are now resenting strikes as teachers have turned their attention from government to school children (Atmore, 2007:3).

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Although teachers’ strikes have generally generated sympathy from the general public, the incessant nature and intimidation of non-striking teachers and learners alike as well as the negative effects on the right of learners to education have swelled the public against them. This is not only a violation of learners’ right to education, but also the right of others who do not want to participate in strikes but are intimidated, molested, harassed and sometimes mishandled. Perhaps, this is because the teachers unionized under SADTU in the province have a large membership of more than 56,000 (Mbabela, 2012a). Concerns and frustrations have been expressed regarding the fate and future of children who go to schools and are not taught because of strikes (Mati, 2007:7). The Mail and Guardian (2009:27) indicated that the society can boost of itself if only its students are successful, achieving their potential as well as happy which will enhance their ability to give

something back to society. It is warned that “education is too important to be treated as a commodity in the market place. Education is “a vehicle to transmit knowledge, skills and values for the public good” (Veriava and Ramadiro, 2003:15).

Fredericks (2011:5) and Phakathi (2011:3) reported that in an attempt to maintain equilibrium between these two rights a private member’s bill from the Democratic Alliance (DA) was submitted to Parliament. According to Fredericks (2011:5), the bill proposed the following:

- Teachers can strike only after consultation and agreement between the government, unions and school governing bodies. These groups will agree on the manner in which the strike will be conducted and the treatment of pupils during the strike otherwise the following shall apply;
- The rule of “no work, no pay” will be strictly enforced;
- Striking teachers who engage in violence, looting, vandalism and intimidation must face criminal charges and also, unions must face penalties such as fines if their members engage in such actions.

However, the bill was rejected by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) claiming that the party “has and will always be anti-transformation and anti-unionisation of teachers in particular and working rights in general” Phakathi (2011:3). Nonetheless, the DA’s spokesman on labour said unions they could not be allowed to hold pupils hostage for the learner’s are not a bargaining tool. On the other hand, SADTU argues that the bill was not intended for teachers or betterment of education but to undermine SADTU’s gains and therefore concerns about the fate of pupils during strikes was a fallacy (Phakathi, 2011:3). Although the constitution provides for the protection of teachers right to strike, it lays much emphasis on the interest of children and when this two imperatives clash, it is essential that the right

of teachers to strike do not adversely affects the education of children. According to Phakathi (2011), SADTU accuses DA for undermining the teaching profession and the ability of teachers to determine their conditions of service.

There are suggestions that regulations that sought to link teacher's performance to pay levels needed to be introduced (Phakathi, 2011:3). However, unlike some unions, teachers do not have any problems with current proposals to link remuneration to performance. Rather, they believe it is reasonable for the Education Department to attempt to bind teachers to an agreement that they will not strike and by so doing, the following may be taken into consideration according to Pretoria News (2007:11):

- Teachers enter their profession as a calling and as such they have serious responsibilities to society and especially to their young charges.
- Teachers, like policemen and nurses, should find other ways than strikes to redress salary grievances because they are not entitle to disrupt the lives of their pupils, as they did in their strike action earlier this year.

That strike caused the union to lose public support, largely owing to the irresponsible behaviour of a minority of their numbers. Some teachers intimidated colleagues who which to exercise their democratic right to work (Pretoria News, 2007:11). However, the right of teachers to strike was recognised by the former Minister of Education by refusing to declare teaching as an essential service as proposed by the DA. Rather, he warns that anything outside the scope of the law was not protected. He invokes the principle of "no work no pay" and made it clear that he had no intention to extend the rights contained in the constitution to teachers for which they can have a justification for a strike action (Cull, 1999:2). Similarly, the then education minister

defended teachers' right when he said "teachers had the right to strike but not during working hours and not at the expense of their work" (The Citizen, 1994:11).

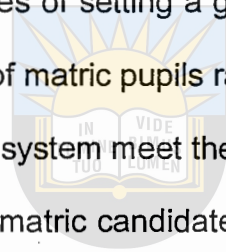
It is not all teachers who are advocates of strikes. Some of them do not condone strike action as it disrupts the future of learners who are the leaders of tomorrow. One educator said "all educators worth their salt" would condemn strike actions while another one described the strike as "akin to the union holding a loaded gun to the department's head" (Rogers, 2011:1). According to Rogers, the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools rejects strikes as they would prejudice learners and jeopardise their right to education. The worst affected learners are those in the township schools, especially with intimidations, harassment and sometimes even violence (Weekend Post, 2011:8) that characterized rural schools, unlike Model C schools in urban areas ((Daily Dispatch, 2011a:7). As such, the learners from these township schools are the worst affected in terms of their right to accessing quality education.

Experts have acknowledged the right of teachers to strike but the striking teachings must also be ready without complain of docking of their salaries. If teachers strike as it is their constitutional and labour right, many argue, the policy of 'no work no pay' should be applied (Daily Dispatch, 2011b:7) but teachers have vehemently opposed it (Stander, 2011:1). This is ironical as teachers will like to trample upon the learners' right to education while jealously protection their right to salary payments during strikes. Educationists and unionists have also seen the need for learners to effectively be educated so as to ensure their right to education. One said in an interview that:

Education is everyone's business and it is unacceptable to have a department not functioning for over two weeks. Education is one of the ANC's five priority areas and we appeal to those who are responsible to help. (Sokopo, 2010b:4)

The Star (2001:9) observed that examination papers being postponed as a result of teachers' strikes are a direct interference with the democratic rights of students to free and fair education. For reasons of distortion, The Star (2001) complained that South Africans don't need distorted role models or obstacles such as exams papers filled with errors. A positive contribution to the children's future is a system that will give hope and take the responsibilities of setting a good example. According to The Star (2001:9), the declining number of matric pupils raises the following questions:

- 1) Does the South African education system meet the need of the student?
- 2) Can the decline in the number of matric candidates be a result of the educational system becoming a political football game?



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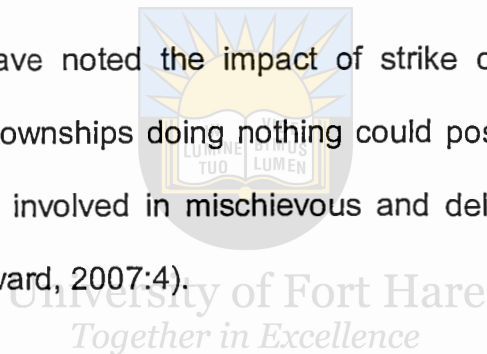
Many stakeholders have insisted that there is a need for basic learning and teaching to take place in the province so as to achieve the right of the learners to obtain quality education. However, the socio-economic realities for the majority of learners in the province are such that schooling is a challenge. (Zukiswa, 2010:2). Therefore, apart from strikes, the socio-economic situation of many learners is compounding the effective realization of their right to education.

2.9 Teachers' strikes and involvement of parents

Parents have also been made to suffer financially as a culture of strikes is perpetuated by teachers' unions in South Africa. According to Mhlongo and Soókha (2007:3), and Hayward 2007:4) parents are forced to deep in their pockets so as to

get money for children's entertainment such as movie tickets and trips to malls in order to keep them off the streets while other parents pay extra for child care which were unbudgeted for.

Parents are forced to rely on unreliable sources of information, especially in the rural areas, fearing for their children's safety and uncertainty over whether schools will open each day and this has created headaches for parents as teachers strike for higher wages. Many parents express their dissatisfaction with the constant strikes which has, and still, jeopardizes the future of their children and other learners (Atmore, 2007:3). Some have noted the impact of strike on increased teenage pregnancies. Roaming the townships doing nothing could possibly lead to teenage pregnancy while others are involved in mischievous and delinquent activities with various repercussions (Hayward, 2007:4).



A disgruntled parent noted that strike is a waste of money as people pay fees and their children are not taught. The parent suggested that rather than striking, teachers should continue with teaching and leave negotiations with unions (Ndlovu and Motloun, 2004:2). Feeling the impact of the strike, one parent who was frustrated and grieving for the children's future reminded teachers that "we count on these results for university. All the children are frustrated and demotivated" (Sokopo, 2010a:1). Another parent was reported arguing that children are missing out on school work through almost two months of wasted time (Masuku, 2008:4).

Although parents are brought in to help in public schools during strikes, they have been criticized for not getting involved in the education of their children. It is

maintained that schooling is a two-way street and the involvement of parents in the learning process is just as critical as that of teachers in the classroom, a fact which many parents fail to grasp (The Herald, 2011:14). In order to effectively ensure that their children's right to education is fully realized, parents should be involved in the process.

2.10 The cost of teachers' strikes to parents and the economy

Apart from the negative impact of the strike on the learners, others have expressed fear about the damage that strikes could cause on the image of the country as a business and investment arena and estimated that the strike of 2004 cost the economy R1billion (Blaine, 2004:3). Although teachers embarking on strikes know that there is 'no work, no pay' policy, they have recently been favoured in court as having the right to strike and still receiving their salaries (SAPA, 2011:6). The cost of strikes is enormous also to the national and provincial department as billions are invested in supplements for learners as well as engaging retired teachers to help. The deployment of the army to maintain peace because of intimidation, violence and harm against non-striking workers cost huge sums of money to the government (Ngcukana and Sokopo, 2010c:9).

National recovery plans involving interactive TV shows, radio broadcasting of lessons and question-and-answer-type shows are costly measures to try to remedy the vacuum created by strike (Matomela, 2007:2) and to enhance learners' right to education. The Citizen warns of COSASs' encouragement of "a culture of striking among pupils would be costly for South Africa in the long run. A culture of striking reminds one strongly of the culture of 'liberation before education' which created a

lost generation" (The Citizen, 1999:4). Unfortunately, we have only seen these recovery plans targeting mostly grade 12 learners because of their pending matric examinations. Therefore, the rest of the learners from pre-school and other grades are usually forgotten and their right to education also forgotten. The Eastern Cape department of education in a bid to score 70 percent during the 2012 matric results has also mobilized subject advisors to teach critical subjects and to start a summer school in October 2012 (Gobo, 2012:1).

2.11 Conclusion

The literature review shows that the impact of teachers' strikes in South Africa has only been documented based on perceptions, and mostly in newspaper articles. Little evidence exists to show that teachers' strikes have been investigated adequately. Hence, the need for this study to examine how teachers' strikes in the Eastern Cape province has impacted on learners' rights to education which is a fundamental human right. Although attempts have been made both the national and provincial governments and education departments through various examination and other supplements to ward-off the effect of these strikes, the impact is usually enormous that these recovery plans cannot overcome. More-so, these plans are most exclusively for the grade 12 learners preparing for their matric examinations. The rest of the learners are never catered for and hence, their right to education is compromised by teachers' strikes. There are many, 50 percent who dropped along the way before reaching matric class (Zille, 2010:22). Although teachers' unionism began a long time ago, the dawn of democracy has worsened the realization of learners' right to education as there are yearly strikes organized by teachers' unions and/or COSATU.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section covers the research design, paradigm, population, sample and sampling procedures, instruments of data collection and analysis methods, ethical issues and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research design

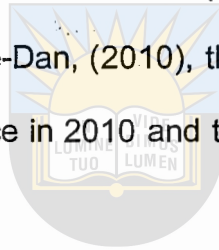
A research design can be defined as a strategic framework for action, to guide the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in such a way that there will be a combination of research questions and the implementation of the research (De Vos, 2005). A research design, therefore, provides a plan that may specify how the research was executed in a manner that allows for the research questions to be answered. It may also involve multiple decisions about the way data was collected and analyzed. It also ensures that the final report answers the initial research question (Blanche, & Durkheim, 1999). This study adopted a quantitative research design through a sample of learners at the University of Fort Hare who were surveyed to be able to ascertain the impact of teachers' strikes on learners.

In quantitative research the key term is quantity and numbers are used to express quantity, therefore quantitative data are numerical, they are information about the study in the form of numbers (Punch, 2005:55). Therefore quantitative research methods emphasise on objective measurements and numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires or surveys. Quantitative research focuses on

gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people, in this case learners.

3.3 Study area

Eastern Cape Province is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa and this can be explained from the huge number of social grant beneficiaries totaling 1,845,320 beneficiaries after the KwaZulu Natal region with 2,672,968 (South African Social Security Agency, 2012). Although the massive legacy of poverty and inequality was inherited from the apartheid era, the province is still plagued by widespread poverty. According to Makiwane and Chimere-Dan, (2010), the population is estimated to be 6.74 million inhabitants in the province in 2010 and the majority (87.6%) are trapped in poverty.



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The University of Fort Hare, Alice campus is located within the Nkonkobe Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. Nkonkobe municipality is divided into four major areas, namely; Fort Beaufort, Alice, Middle-drift and Balfour. The municipality is predominantly inhabited by rural population and has a total of twenty-one wards. About 20% of the population reside in urban settlements, mostly in Alice and Fort Beaufort towns (Hule, 2010). The municipality is home to three educational institutions which are University of Fort Hare; Lovedale College and Healdtown College. Poverty is identified as a major concern as the unemployment rate stands at 82% with 85% of the employed earning less than R1 500.00 per month and 15% without any form of income (Integrated Development Plans, 2010). Industrial activity is mainly agribusiness, especially citrus, beef production and two small-scale agric-processing plants in Alice and Balfour (Mziwonke, 2008).

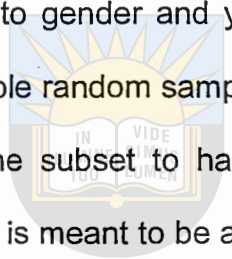
According to Integrated Development Plans (2010:13), “Nkonkobe has high rates of unemployment amounting to 82%, poverty (71.43%) and a higher than dependency ratio of 2.56.” Hule (2010) argued that overall, very high levels of unemployment prevail with many households which are sustained through remittances of income from a single wage earner and various small scale enterprises. It is also held that of those employed, the large proportion is in the public sector (education and health). It is further argued that the dependency of income from the public sector is mainly as a result of the productive base of local economy being narrowed base on commercial farming, forestry and to a lesser extent tourism, much of which is focused on Fort Beaufort area (Hule, 2010). In Nkonkobe municipality, employment levels and incomes are lowest, and poverty levels are highest in the Seymour and Middle-drift areas which are composed of scattered villages which neither have a strong productive base, given relatively poor land and no high levels of public sector employment.

3.4 Population, sample and sampling strategy

Geographically speaking, a population can be defined as a number or organisms or species of the same kind living in a particular area on a specified time. Population is “the total collection of elements about which one wishes to make some inferences.” (Welman et al., 2001:46). On the other hand Bless (1995: 89) defines population as all individuals about whom the research project is meant to generalise.” In this study all the learners at the University of Fort Hare (Alice campus) (551) who completed their studies and passed Matric in the Eastern Cape province made up the total population of the study. Therefore, international students, most of whom are Zimbabweans and other students from other provinces of South African were

excluded from participating in the study. The estimated number of learners on the Alice Campus of University of Fort Hare is 8000 while the entire learners' population is about 12000 on three campuses; Alice, Bhisho and East London (Vice Chancellor's Report to Senate, October 2, 2012).

However, only a sample of 112 learners was selected to participate in the study. First, the University of Fort Hare and Social Work Programme from where the sample was drawn were purposively selected for the study. Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample according to gender and year of study. The participants were selected through the use of simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling allows each member of the subset to have an equal chance of being chosen thus a simple random sample is meant to be an unbiased representation of a group (De Vos et al, 2005).



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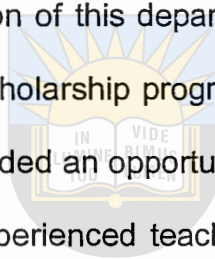
Table 2: Number of Social Work Students (Alice campus) in the Eastern Cape according to gender

Level of study	No of E. Cape Social Work Students		Total	Sample (selected using simple random sampling)		
	Male	Female		Male	Female	Total
Year One	16	39	55	3	8	11
Year Two	49	115	164	10	23	33
Year Three	39	109	148	8	22	30
Year Four	43	141	184	9	29	36
Total	147	404	551	30	80	110

Source: University of Planning Unit, University of Fort Hare, Alice Campus (October 26, 2012)

Blanche & Durkheim (1999) noted that the term sample involves decision about which people, settings and events, behaviour and social processes to observe. This means that a sample is a subset of population that is convenient to represent the population. Cherry (2010), supports this by adding that a sample is a subset of a population that is used to represent the entire group as a whole.

As mentioned earlier, social work students were purposefully selected to constitute the sample as they constitute the largest single department at the University of Fort Hare. More-so, the student population of this department is made up of young and older persons, especially with the scholarship programmes offered to more than 90 per cent of them. This therefore provided an opportunity to get the younger and older generation of learners who have experienced teachers' strikes over the years and how they have impacted on their right to education.



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According to De Vos et al (2005: 232), "this type of sample is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative, or typical attributes of the population that serve the best of the study best". Fifty respondents were therefore selected within the four years of study; the number of learners who were selected at each level of study was determined by the number of social work students from the Eastern Cape. A comprehensive list was obtained from the University Planning Unit from where the sample was drawn.

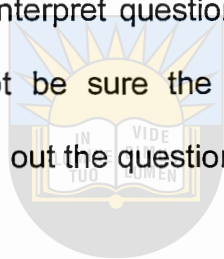
3.5 Instruments of data collection

There were two types of data collection instruments; a semi-structured questionnaire that was administered to 112 social work students at all the four levels of study; and secondary sources, particularly newspapers. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents (Foddy, 1994). A questionnaire could also be defined as a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic (Cohen and Marion, 2000). Using semi-structured questionnaire in this study was very important because the researcher randomly selected 112 social work learners to fill in the questionnaires.

The questionnaire included six sections: Section A had questions on demographic information of the subjects or respondents; Section B was on the impact of teachers' strikes on academic performance and quality of education; Section C was titled the economic and other costs of teachers' strikes; Section D, the influence of teachers' strikes on learners' choice to university and study programme; Section E had questions on the sources of help to Matric learners during teachers' strikes; and Section F seek to find out the state of the learners schools and was titled miscellaneous. Although the questionnaire was a semi-structured one, the vast majority of questions were structure with only a few unstructured questions. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher himself during times where learners were not having lectures in October 2012. The questionnaires were self-administered as all the learners were able to read and write. There are many advantages of self-administered questionnaires, including the following:

- 1) All respondents answer the same questions without the researcher's or interviewer's bias
- 2) More complex questions can be asked than in personal interview.
- 3) Long batteries of otherwise boring questions can be asked than in a personal interview
- 4) Respondents report socially undesirable behaviours and traits more willingly and perhaps more accurately.

However, the disadvantages of self-administered questionnaires are that the researcher has no control over how people interpret questions, and even if questionnaire is returned, the researcher will not be sure the respondent who received the questionnaire is the one who filled out the questionnaire.



Documentary analysis also constituted a secondary source of data for this study. Documents also constituted a source of data whereby books, journals, newspapers and other secondary materials were used for content analysis.

3.6 Reliability and validity of data collection instrument (questionnaire)

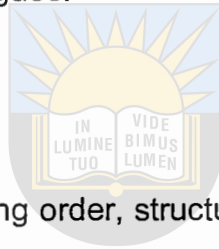
Procedures used in research must ensure that the methods are reliable and conclusions valid otherwise the credibility of findings are threatened and explanations doubtful. When conducting a quantitative research, one needs to make sure the instrument used is valid and reliable. Therefore, it was ensured that the questionnaire which was used in collecting data from respondents was reliable. According to Joppe (2000) reliability is the level to which results are consistent when tested over and over again and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability. If the outcome of a study can be reproduced

under the same methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. Moreover, a high degree of stability indicates a high degree of reliability, which means the results are repeatable. So in other words if an instrument is said to be reliable, it means that it can be used several times to test the same thing and producing same results (Rubin and Babbie, 1989). However, if results happen to change, the instrument can be said to be unreliable. Nonetheless, validity does not ensure accuracy like precision (Bell, 1993).

The type of reliability that the instrument of data collection; the questionnaire was subjected to is stability reliability which is reliability across time. It answers the question does the measure deliver the same answer when applied in different time periods? This was done through test-retest method which ensures only external consistency and not internal consistency which is common in the physical sciences. It implied that the questionnaire had to measure the same phenomenon more than once. This was done through piloting of the questionnaire to five learners from another department, sociology and the actual administration, which all revealed that the questionnaire was reliable as it measured the same phenomenon over time with the same results.

Validity in quantitative research determines whether the instrument truly measures what it is intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. Furthermore, it means that validity determines whether the means of measurement are accurate and whether they are actually measuring what they are intended to measure (Winter, 2000). It should be noted that validity is difficult to achieve (no absolute confidence) because constructs are abstract ideas whereas indicators are concrete observations

(Neuman, 1997). To ensure the validity of the data collection instrument (questionnaire), face validity was adopted. It refers to a type of validity that commonly accepted or agreed as a measure of a phenomenon (e.g. researcher may differ but agree on certain points of arriving at something). Most basic kind and it is judgment by the scientific community that the indicator really measures the construct (De Vos, 2005). It addresses the question “on the face of it, do people believe that the definition and method of measurement fit?” It is a kind of consensus method of measurement (Rubin and Babbie, 1989). Therefore, the questionnaire was judged valid by the the supervisor and colleagues.



3.7 Methods of data analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Quantitative data from semi-structured questionnaires was analysed quantitatively with the help of SPSS. The questionnaires were personally edited and open-ended questions were coded and the data captured into the SPSS spread sheet. This was followed by cross-checking of data for transcription and capturing errors. The results were presented using frequency distribution tables and inferential statistics such as Anova and chi-square test of significance to determine the magnitude of the impact of teachers' strikes on the right of learners to education.

3.8 Ethical issues considered

According to William (2006), there are a number of key phrases that describe the system of ethical protections that the contemporary social research establishment has created to try to better protect the rights of their research participants. Ethical considerations are an important aspect of research, especially social science

research. Ethical procedures are established in order to protect the physical and mental integrity of individuals, to respect their moral and cultural values as well as their religious and philosophical convictions, in addition to their other fundamental rights including respect for privacy whilst maintaining the highest level of confidentiality. An ethical clearance was sought from the University through the Faculty of Law Higher Research and Higher Degrees Committee. With regard to ethics in research, the following ethical considerations were exercised:

3.8.1 Informed consent

According to Corti et al (2000), research should, as far as possible, be based on participants' free and voluntary informed consent. Participants were required to sign an informed consent form which spells out the procedures of the study. According to Patton (2002:407) cited in As de Vos (2011) suggests that before starting to collect data it should be communicated to participants that the information is important and the reasons for that importance, and the willingness of the researcher to explain the purpose of the study should be clear. The researcher had to present the participants with a written informed consent that their participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any given point during the study. This informed consent made up the first part of the questionnaire and contained the objectives, possible benefits of the study, time it would take to complete the questionnaire and assurance of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.

3.8.2. Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

Every individual has the right to privacy and has the right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed.

De Vos et al (2005) argued that privacy implies the element of personal privacy, while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner. The researchers made it clear that whatever information that the participants were going to share was only to be used for academic purposes and anonymity was maintained by ensuring that the respondents' names were not going to be mentioned. These were clearly written in the letter of introduction and the informed consent form that was signed by the respondents before proceeding to filing the questionnaire.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The research findings are limited to the population that formed part of the study because the sample does not claim to be representative for all learners in the Eastern Cape Province. First, this is because, the University of Fort Hare (Alice Campus) and the social work programme were purposively selected. Secondly, there was limited time as well as financial constraint to interview parents, teachers, secondary and high schools learners as well as educational authorities of the Eastern Cape Province. This latter approach would have been able to provide a proper and much clear view of the impact of teachers' strikes on learners' rights to education with some high level of certainty and accuracy; hence generalized findings to the entire province.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter largely rests on the presentation and analysis of the findings of this study. In addition, there is a discussion of these findings in relation to the current literature on the quality of education and the right of learners to education in South Africa. The trends and levels are presented through tables and graphs following the logic of the questionnaire. First, the demographics are presented followed by the impact of teachers' strikes on academic performance and quality of education. Furthermore, the findings on the impact of teachers' strikes on various variables, and economic and other costs of teachers' strikes are presented and discussed. Also, the influences of teachers' strikes on learners' choice of university and study programme as well as the sources of help available to Matric learners during teachers' strikes are analysed and discussed. Finally, this chapter also presents other essential determinants of quality education in South Africa and discussed how they have influenced the quality of education in the province (Eastern Cape).

4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Data were collected from 112 students at the University of Fort Hare. Table 3 shows that the bulk of the respondents (73%) were females whilst 27% were males. According their year of study, table 3 reveals that 43% of the students were doing their fourth year at university; 30% and 27% were in their second and third year level respectively. The least number was found on those that were doing their first year of study at the university which constituted 10% of the respondents.

Table 3: Gender and year of study of respondents

Gender	Year of study				Total
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Male	3	10	8	9	30 (27%)
Female	8	23	22	29	82 (73%)
Total	11 (10%)	33 (30%)	30 (27)	38 (43%)	112 (100%)

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

Table 3 shows that female students or respondents dominate the sample; from the first year to the final year. There are obvious reasons for this dominant of females in social work programme. Some of the reasons include the fact that social work, nursing and education were originally thought to be the exclusive domain of women. Simply put, they were predominately employed in these professions as they were considered motherly and very caring of children, the elderly and the sick. Although things are changing, and men are penetrating many of these fields, they are still dominated by women in Africa as the findings reveal in the case of social work programme.

Fig. 1 shows the graphic presentation of the number of students presented in percentages according to the year of study. The highest percentage comes from the fourth year level, followed by second year and third year is third while the first year is least. These percentages have been presented and analysed in the Table 3.

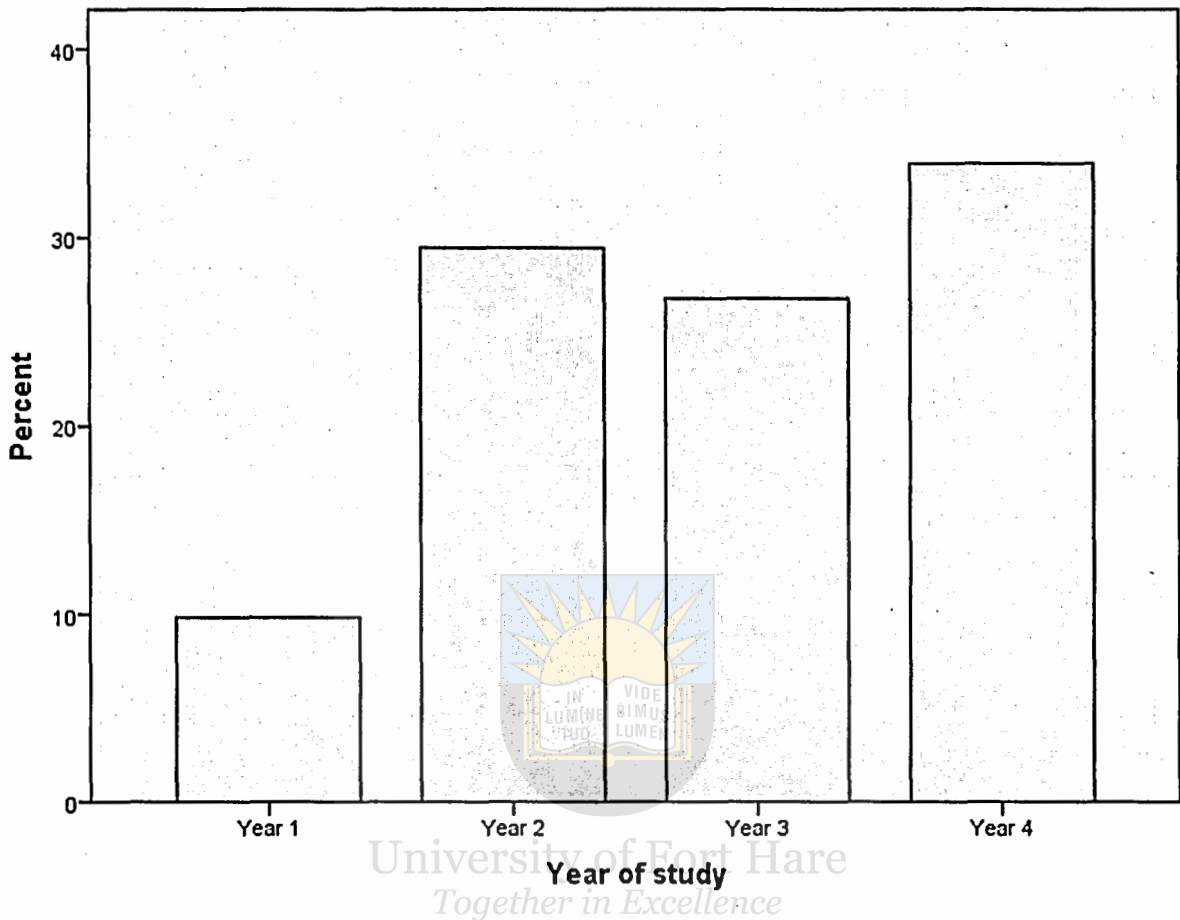


Fig 1: Percentage of respondents according to level or year of study

One might be wondering why the number of social work students is fluctuating as shown on Fig 1. The simple explanation is that social work students were always the highest in number in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, especially as the faculty was getting millions of rands from scholarships emanating from the provincial and national Department of Social Development and Zimbabwean Presidential scholarships. However, because the university is trying to cap numbers to meet the assigned numbers by the Department of Higher Education, the number of social work students has been fluctuating as in most other departments.

Regarding ownership of essential household items, the respondents were asked if they had any form of essential household item that could assist them in learning during the teachers' strike. The results in Table 4 show that the majority (69%) had radios, followed by 66% who had a television set, whilst 43% had access to a DVD. The remaining 39% indicated that they got assistance from the newspapers.

Table 4: Ownership of essential household items that can assist in learning during teachers' strikes

Item	Yes		NO		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
TV	74	66	38	34	112	100
Radio	77	69	35	31	112	100
Newspapers	44	39	60	61	112	100
DVD	48	43	64	57	112	100

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

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The significance of these items cannot be overemphasised as the government; both national and provincial insist that teachers' strikes would not affect Matric learners about to write their examinations as there are various contingency plans put in place (Skiti and Sokopo, 2010:1). The governments argued that these contingency plans will ward-off the effect of these teachers' strikes (Fengu and Nini, 2011:1). Eastern Cape which is rural nature will eventually remind anyone that the use of those items (TV, Radio, Newspaper, and DVD) cannot effectively achieve their aims, especially with the prevailing poverty in the province. A critical examination of Table 4 reveals that apart from Radio and TV sets owned by parents/guardians of the Matric learners, respectively represented by 69% and 66%; other access to other sources of help is limited. Even if Radio and TV sets were taken as satisfactory, what of the rest who did not have access to them and others? Another puzzle is the literacy

level of the parents/guardians of these learners which has a great role in the success or failure of the learners.

The findings show that about 54% of the parents/guardians of the respondents were literate at the time they were about to write their Matric examinations while 46% were illiterates. Further analysis computed through cross-tabulation shows that parents/guardians of female respondents, 42 (about 51 %) were literate while those of male respondents, 18 males represented by 60 %) were literate. On the other hand, 12 males and 40 females indicated that their parents/guardians were not literate and this made up 40% and 49 % respectively of their genders. The ownership of household items and newspapers could be linked to whether a parent/guardian is literate or not.



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However, the high percentage of non-literate parents explains the reasons for the non-ownership of some of these basic items which negatively affects learners, especially at the time they need them most to prepare and/or follow recovery or contingency plans put in place by the national and provincial governments as well as other stakeholders such as the Daily Dispatch, and other enthusiastic and educated parents. Those learners who do not have access to these items would suffer from access to quality education and subsequently, the right to education is not fulfilled as enshrined in Sections 26-29, Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 and other regional and international legal instruments such as African Charter and Peoples' Right 1981, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1989, UDHR, UNCRC and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Some parents/guardians could also be accused of contributing to the lack of

quality education and subsequent denial of the right to education of learners because they do not provide basic household items that could assist learners in their learning efforts. However, this is not their fault but that of unemployment circumstances prevailing in the province. It can also be argued that having these items such as radio and TV sets cannot guarantee access to the learners as many other family members/siblings might be fighting to listen and/or watch their own programmes of interests, leaving the learners frustrated.

Since children or learners at the primary and secondary/high school are considered immature; Archard (1993) reminds us that children needs to be afforded rights of protection and provision and that parents have to make decisions on their behalf; whatever these decision are, one of which is the use of the available household items to help learners follow-up with the contingency plans on their Matric examinations. Hence, the learners are not afforded the fair share of the benefits which are stipulated by social justice underpinnings (Miller, 2005:3).

The respondents represented 22 of the 30 districts in the Eastern Cape Province. Fig 2 shows the percentage of respondents from each of the districts. Fig 2 indicates that about 13 % of the respondents (14) were from King William's Town; 11 of them represented by about 10 % were from Port Elizabeth district. Ten each, made up of nine percent came from Butterworth, Cofimvaba and Fort Beaufort. Gramhamstown was represented by 8 respondents (7%) and the rest of the other districts had representatives ranging from one to six respondents.

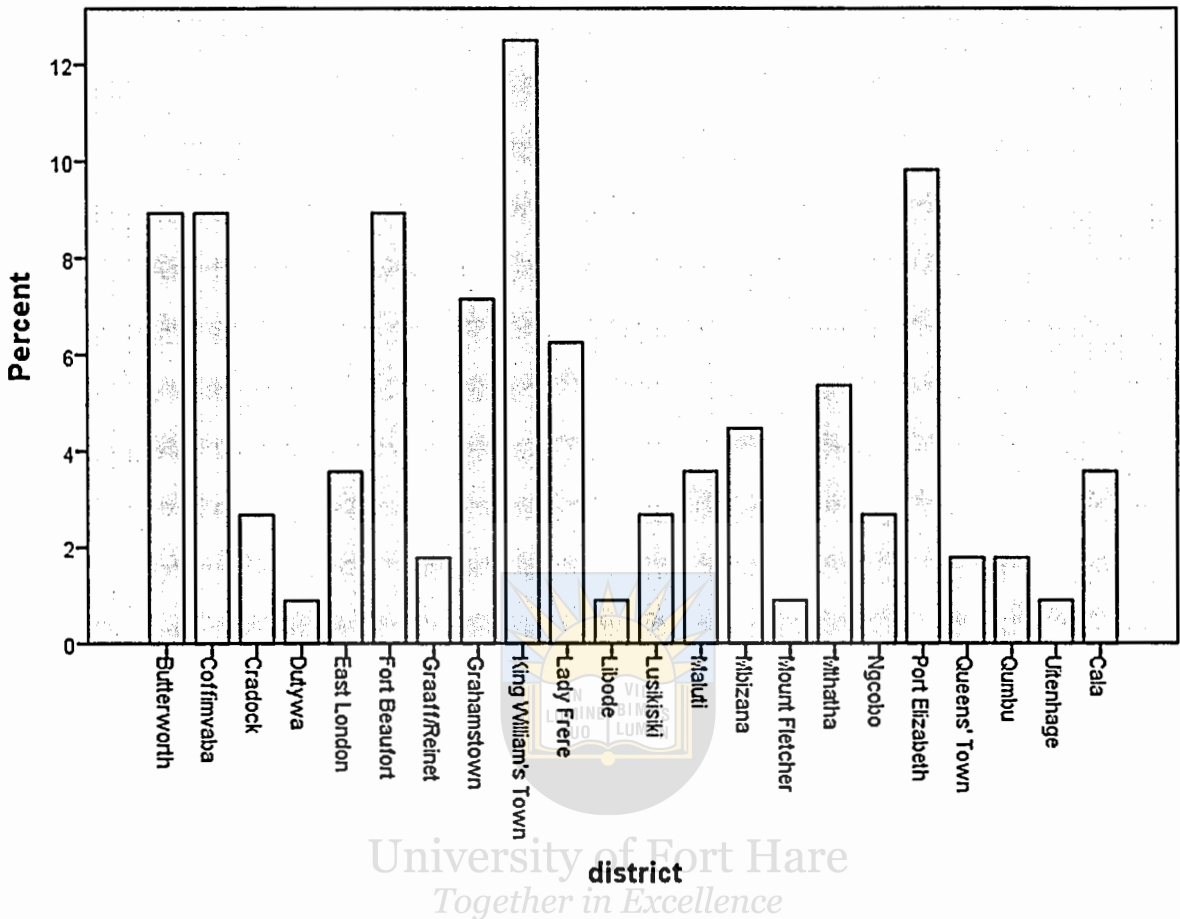


Fig 2: Distribution of respondents according to district

Generally, Table 5 represents the respondents' year of study and the number of times they wrote Matric in order to pass and proceed to tertiary institution.

Table 5: Respondents' year of study and number of times written Matric

Year of study	Times written Matric				Total
	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	
Year 1	7	3	1	0	11
Year 2	27	3	2	1	33
Year 3	19	8	2	1	30
Year 4	23	10	4	1	38
Total	76	24	9	3	112

According to Table 5, a total number of 76 (68%) respondents revealed that they wrote only once with the bulk, 27 (24%) emanating from those that were in their second year of study. However the least number, 7 (6%) came from the students who were in their year one of study. Further Table 5 indicated that 24 (22%) respondents said that they wrote two times whilst nine (8%) revealed that they had to undergo three times before passing their Matric examinations and only three (3%) who made up the least number sat for Matric examinations for more than four times. The findings point to the fact that 32% of the learners wrote their Matric examinations more than once, two, three and four times. No one will dispute the fact that teachers' strikes could have contributed significantly to this; although there are other factors such as poverty and lack of teachers and books as well as infrastructure such as library and equipped classrooms. The end-result of all of these is the poor quality of education that is provided to learners and the denial of their rights to education which many have described in various castigating terms citing various legal instruments protecting children's right to education (Daily Dispatch, 2011a:7; Patel, 2012:1; Mohamed, 2012:1; Kunene, 2012:1).

The respondents highlighted the years they took to complete their studies. Cross tabulation revealed the results in terms of gender. According to table 6, the majority (47%) of the respondents finished their Matric within 12 years with 36 females (44%) exposing that they took 12 years to complete their studies whilst only 17 (57%) males finished their studies within that same period. This was followed by 22 (20%) respondents who finished within 13 years and the females dominated this category with 21 (27%). However, the least number of respondents 5 (5%) indicated that they took 17 years to complete the studies with 4 males (13%) and 1 (1%) female were in this category.

Table 6: Years respondents took to complete studies according to gender

Gender	Year to complete studies							Total
	12	13	14	15	17	18	19 +	
Male	17	1	0	2	4	3	3	30
Female	36	21	5	6	1	6	7	82
Total	53	22	5	8	5	9	10	112

The data in Table 6 can be summarised in a figure to vividly portray the number of years not based this time on gender as in the table, but on the general situation of the learners.

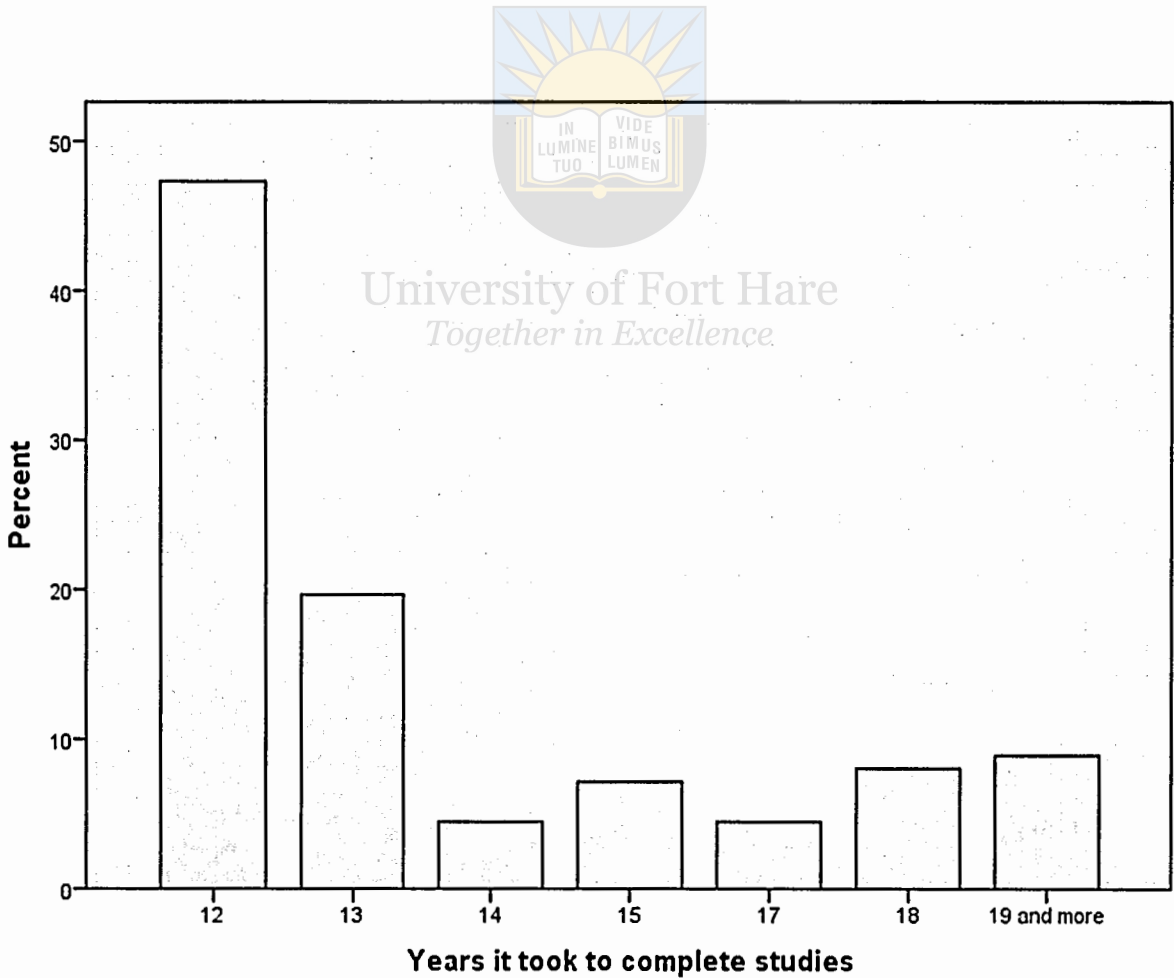


Fig 3: Year students took to complete the primary/high school studies

Fig 3 portrays that the majority of the students completed within the record time of 12 years and this was followed by those who took 13 years. However, the rest took 14 to more than 19 years to complete their primary/high school study which is unusual. It is astonishing that 10 students, 9% took 19 years and above to complete what is supposed to be 12 years. Undoubtedly, there are many factors, with teachers' strikes contributing substantially. One writer stated that except one is blind to see the important role that teachers play in the education of the children and when they embark on a strike, they blind lives and destroy the nation (Sikhakhane, 2001:25). Also given the fact that the Eastern Cape is a poor performing province in Matric examinations over the years, teachers' strikes have worsen the situation; making many learners to repeat Matric examinations more than twice.

Regarding the years that the respondents passed Matric exams, Fig 4 clearly outlines the frequency and the percentage according to these years. Accordingly, about 22% of the respondents indicated that they passed their Matric examinations before 2000, followed by 14 % who highlighted that they passed in 2008. Various years were also revealed which ranged from 2001 to 2011. The least number of respondents according to Fig 4 were found in 2001 and 2002 where 1% each indicated that they passed Matric examination during these two years. If all the students were passing their Matric examinations within the timeframe, that is 12 years; 11 (10%) learners would have completed in 2011; 33 (30%) in 2010; 30 (27%) in 2009; and 38 (43%) in 2008. That is to say, if all went well, without teachers' strikes and other hindering factors, the students would have completed their studies in record time. However, because of these hindering factors, 63 learners (56% of the respondents) took more years than required to complete and pass their Matric

examinations.

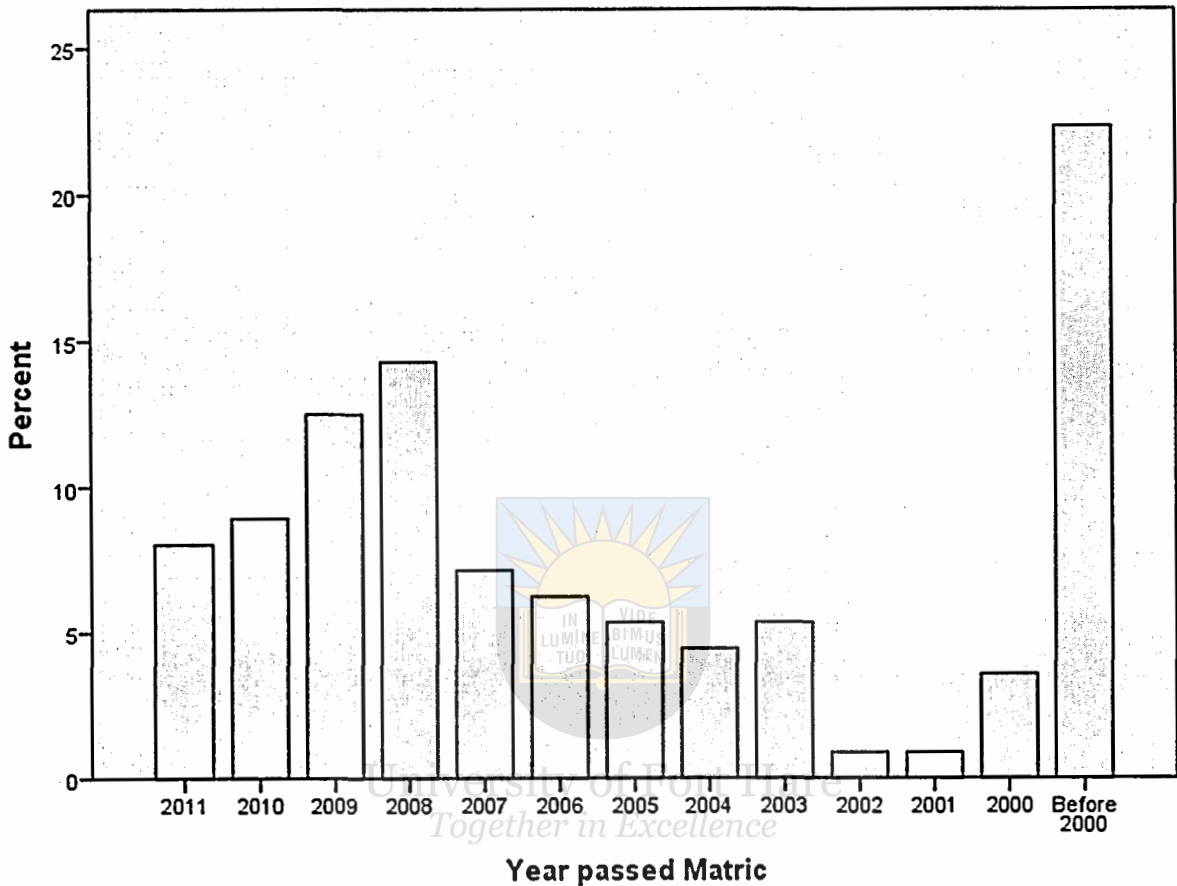


Fig 4: Year in which respondents passed Matric examinations.

Invariably, teachers' strikes contributed to many of the 63% of learners who were supposed to finished the Matric examination on or before 2008. Some authors have widely acknowledged hassle many learners passed through to complete within record time (Kaburise, 2010).

4.3 Impact of teachers' strikes on academic performance and quality of education

The findings reveal that about 46 % of the respondents passed Matric from some of the underperforming schools spread throughout the province while about 55 % passed theirs in average and above performing schools. A further analysis through

cross-tabulation shows that of the 51 learners who passed Matric in under-performing schools, 19, 16, 13 and 3 respondents were from years 4, 2, 3 and 1 respectively. Therefore, this shows that most of them are in year 4 of their social work studies.

The respondents further stated the number of teacher's strikes they had experienced. As shown in Table 7, 30% of the respondents experienced at least one strike, followed by 28% who experienced 2 strikes. Eighteen per cent of the respondents had three strikes whilst the least respondents (4%) experienced between 4 and 5 strikes. Table 8 further 16% indicated that respondents maintained that they experienced more than 6 strikes. These percentages show that 70% of the students had observed at least two teachers' strikes and at most six or more strikes.

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Table 7: Number of teachers' strikes experienced by respondents

Number of strikes	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	34	30	30
2	31	28	58
3	20	18	76
4	5	4	80
5	4	4	84
6 +	18	16	100
Total	112	100	

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

The impact of the number of strikes on the academic performance of learners is enormous and has been documented and lambasted by many writers in this country

(Tshangela, 2010:1; The Herald, 2012a:20; Mail and Guardian (2009:27). The number of strikes in province affects matric pass rate in a province known to be the worst-performing province (Mbabela, 2012b:1).

The results indicates that despite the strikes that were taking place, 68% of the respondents managed to write their Matric only once, preceded by 21% who had to sit twice for the Matric as shown in Table 8. Nevertheless 9% and 3% sat for the Matric exams for more than three and four times respectively. According to Modiaotsile (2012), an educated population remains the fundamental platform for meeting most of the other Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs), and a well-oiled education system is important for many reasons.

Table 8: Number of times respondents wrote Matric exam

Number of times	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 time	76	68	68
2 times	24	21	89
3 times	9	8	97
4 times	3	3	100
Total	112	100.0	

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

The teachers' strikes had various impacts on the matriculates as well as the teachers as shown in Table 9. Regarding intimidation due to the strike, about 63% of the participants agreed to the fact that there was intimidation of non-striking teachers whereas only 37% highlighted that there was no intimidation. Further 61% also indicated that even the learners were intimidated with only 39% saying that they were

not intimidated. The majority of the respondents (78%) showed that the exams were not interrupted whilst 22% actually agreed that the exams were interrupted. The respondents were asked whether they were taught by other teachers and 18% said yes whilst 82% said no. According to Table 9, the results further indicate that despite the strike the exam papers were however delivered on time with 61% saying yes and 39% objecting to that. This means that the exams were not postponed as indicated by 71% of the respondents. In terms of the actual writing of the exams, 67% of the respondents revealed that there was smooth writing and invigilation of exams as compared to 30% who disagreed.



Table 9: Impact of teachers' strikes on various variables

Key variables of question	Yes		NO		Total	
	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent.
Different exam	17	15	95	85	112	100
Intimidation of learners	68	61	44	39	112	100
Intimidation of non-striking teachers	70	63	42	37	112	100
Forceful closure of school	48	43	64	57	112	100
Taught by university students	29	26	83	74	112	100
Exams interrupted	25	22	87	78	112	100
Taught by other teachers not learners'	20	18	92	82	112	100
Invigilation of exams by outsiders	20	18	92	82	112	100
Exam papers delivered on time	68	61	44	39	112	100
Exams disrupted by striking teachers	50	45	62	55	112	100
There were mark adjustments	46	41	66	59	112	100
Taught by peers	57	51	55	49	112	100
Taught by retired teachers	22	29	80	71	112	100
Smooth writing & invigilation of exams	78	67	34	30	112	100
Exams were rescheduled or postponed	22	29	80	71	112	100

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

The factors in Table 9 show the impact of teachers' strikes on the quality and right of learners to education in the province. All of the factors have affected the

performance and quality of education received by the learners. The general cry has been the state of deteriorating nature of education in the country as a whole and the province in particular. Despite the promise for high quality of the provision of education (Jones, 2012:1), learners have been betrayed by the system or authorities both at the national and provincial levels. Furthermore, the factors and the impact of teachers' strikes are felt most heavily in the rural areas and farm schools (Tire and Shabalala, 2006:92); those from the former Bantu education or homeland departments (The Herald, 2007:6) and those not attending Model C schools (The Herald, 2010a:14).



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Mark adjustment or benchmarking of Matric results has become a contesting issue and has been criticized in many circles with educational authorities denying that such practices exist (de Kock, 2011:1). However, the educational authorities have acknowledged their failure and poor performance of learners resulting from teachers' strikes and other related problems confronting learners (iafrica, 2012). Nonetheless, the Minister of Basic Education has admitted there is a problem with the education system and the standards compared to other countries. This perhaps is the reason why the Minister of Basic Education has decided to review and probe the Matric pass mark benchmark through a Ministerial Committee that will begin work next year (2013) (e TV Prime Time News, 2012).

This comes at the wake of criticisms from academics that the entrance requirements of four subjects with a pass mark of 50% and 30% in English language at university offering instructions in English as well as 30% for other subjects which are optional do not meet international standards. This committee will compare the value of the

South African Matric pass marks with other countries and recommendation forwarded to the Minister to review the Matric pass marks (e TV Prime Time News, 2012).

The respondents outlined their opinions on the extent of the impact of teachers' strikes. Table 10 shows the learners opinions.

Table10: Opinions on the extent of the impact of teachers' strikes on various variables

Key variables of question	To great extent	To some what extent	To a very little extent	To no extent at all	Total	
					Freq.	Percent.
Completed syllabuses of Matric subjects	72 (64%)	22 (20%)	14 (12%)	4 (4%)	112	100
Strike main driver of poor performance	42 (38%)	31 (28%)	14 (12%)	25 (22%)	112	100
Satisfaction with Matric results	52 (47%)	25 (22%)	20 (18%)	15 (13%)	112	100
Lost motivation to study	22 (20%)	28 (25%)	22 (20%)	40 (35%)	112	100
Stressed because of strike's impact	39 (35%)	28 (25%)	23 (20%)	22 (20%)	112	100
Satisfied with quality of education	41 (37%)	28 (25%)	25 (22%)	18 (16%)	112	100
All exams based on syllabuses	64 (57%)	32 (29%)	10 (10%)	6 (5%)	112	100

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

Regarding the completion of syllabuses of Matric subjects, Table 10 shows that 64% of the respondents indicated that to a greater extent the syllabuses were completed with only 4% saying that the syllabuses were to no extent at all completed. Further,

38% said that to a greater extent the strike was the main driver for poor performances and 4% highlighted that the strike was to no extent at all the driver for poor performance as shown in Table 10. When asked about the nature of the exams, 57% explained that to a greater extent all exams were based on the syllabuses, 27% indicated to some what extent, 10% to a very little extent and 5% highlighted that the exams were to no extent at all based on syllabuses. However, despite the 20% respondents who indicated that they lost motivation to study, the majority of the respondents (35%) revealed that the strike did not make the learners to lose motivation to study as Table 10 portrays. The bulk of respondents that is 37% were of the opinion that the quality of education was satisfactory to a greater extent although 20% indicated that the quality of education were to no extent at all satisfactory.



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The quality of education as perceived by learners can be illustrated diagrammatically as shown in Fig 5. Although 37% of the learners said they were satisfied with to a greater extent of the quality of education they received, 47% were just satisfied to some extent while 16% were not satisfied at all. The South African quality of education has been demonstrated as not meeting international standards, hence, placed at the bottom of the ladder among many countries (Child, 2012:1). South Africans have also started doubting the quality of education learners are acquiring (Matomela, 2010a:5; SAPA, 2012:1) and wondering if they have the skills can work (Daily Dispatch (2011b:7; Phakathi, 2012:1) and compete globally.

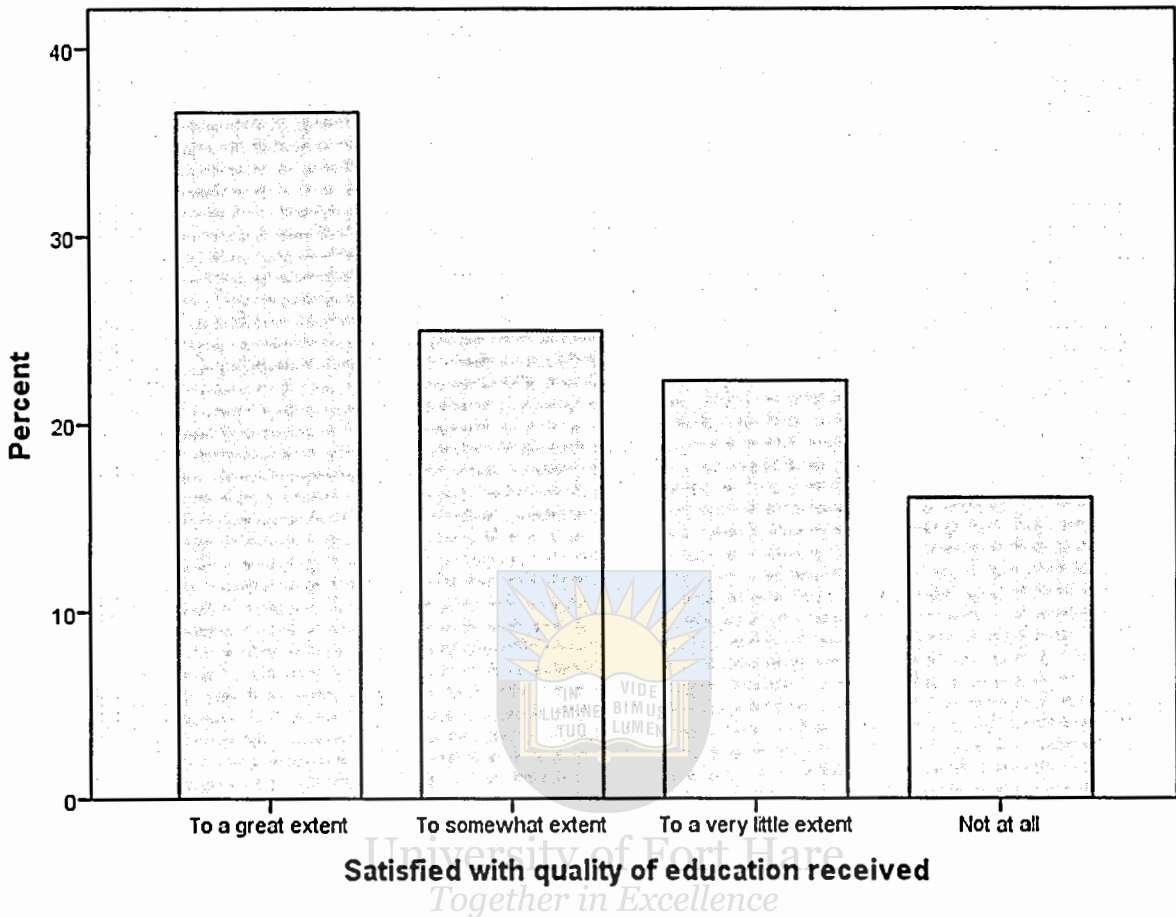


Fig 5: The extent of learners’ satisfaction with the quality of education they received

Similarly, students also voiced their opinion on the satisfaction of their Matric results despite teachers’ strikes. Fig 6 shows that most of the respondents (47%%) were satisfied to a greater extent while 22% were barely satisfied and the rest (31%) were not with their Matric results at all.

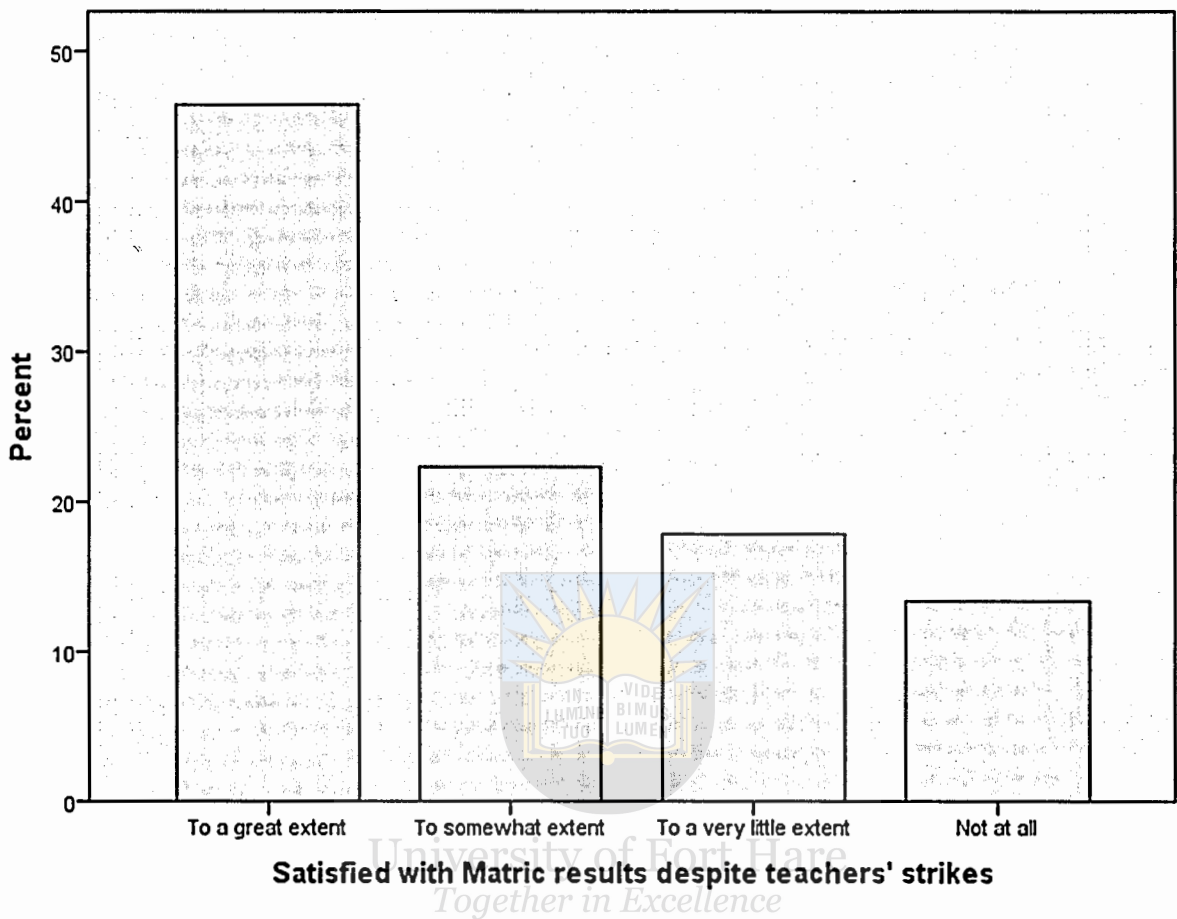


Fig 6: The extent of students' satisfaction of Matric results despite teachers' strikes.

The impact of strikes on learners overall performance, especially with the non-completion of syllabuses of most subjects is overwhelming and has been reported widely (Tshangela, 2010:1; The Herald, 2012a:20). The worst affected areas in the province in terms of performance in Matric examinations is the former Transkei areas and leaves the province to always stay at the bottom of Matric performance (Weekend Post, 2011:8). Thus, the right of learners to quality education and right to education as enshrined in the Bill of Rights are disrespected.

4.4 Economic and other costs of teachers' strikes

Regarding the economic impact of the teachers' strike, Table 11 illustrates the various costs that were encountered. The majority (72%) of the respondents mentioned that they spent weekends studying and not relaxing and on the other hand 28% denied spending weekends studying. This means that the learners had to make up for the lost time to study since 50% indicated that they missed holidays because of strikes. Nonetheless, 77% of the respondents assured that they did not incur costs for payment of extra classes and a least number of 23% paid for extra classes. Table 11 also reveals that in spite of the 22% respondents who stated that they spent money visiting and going to cinemas, 88% were of the view that during the strike they did not spend money visiting friends or to go to cinemas. Concerning the issue of roaming streets during strikes, Table 11 shows that 67% said yes whilst 31% said no. It can be deduced from the results that 40% of the respondents indicated that they were some learners who got pregnant, however 60% said no one got pregnant. Finally, the vast majority (92%) of respondents said that they were not given any fee concession during the strike whilst 8% were given as seen in Table 11.

Table11: Economic and other costs of teachers' strikes

Key variables of question	Yes		NO		Total	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent.
Payment for extra classes	26	23	86	77	112	100
Spent money visiting or to cinemas	14	12	98	88	112	100
Incurred extra transport without teaching	28	25	84	75	112	100
Given fee concessions	9	8	103	92	112	100
Roaming streets during strikes	77	67	35	31	112	100
Someone became pregnant	45	40	67	60	112	100
Missed holidays because of strikes	56	50	56	50	112	100
Spent weekends studying, not relaxing	81	72	31	28	112	100
Risk going home late for extra classes	57	51	55	49	112	100

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

The economic, social and other costs of strikes have been analysed as costing billions of Rands (Blaine, 2004:3). The provincial and national departments have also spent huge sums of money on recovery or contingency plans to ward-off the effects of the teachers' strikes (Ngcukana and Sokopo, 2010c:9). However, little has been said about what the learners have revealed regarding the opportunity cost they sacrificed in order to put more time, risking themselves, forgoing other things to catch up with subjects whose syllabuses were not completed because of these strikes.

4.5 Influence of strikes on learners' choice of university and programme of study

The strikes influence on learners' choice of university and programme of study is illustrated in Table 12. According to Table 12, 80% of the respondents showed that the strike did not hinder their university entrance with only 20% who faced obstacles. Of the 20% whose choices were influenced by the strike, 9% indicated the choice of university, 8% indicated the choice of study programme and 10% said that it affected the year of entry into university. When asked about whether University of Fort Hare was the first choice, 65% said yes and 35% said no. From the respondents that indicated that that University of Fort Hare (UFH) was not their first choice, they were further required to highlight the universities they had made their first choice.

Table 12: Influence of strikes on learners' choice of university and study programme

Key variables of question	Yes		NO		Total	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent.
Strikes hinder university entrance	22	20	90	80	112	100
Affected choice of university	10	9	97	87	107	96
Affected choice of study programme	9	8	98	86	107	96
Affected year of entry into university	11	10	96	86	107	96
Others than influence of university/ prog.	11	10	98	88	109	97
UFH as first choice	73	65	39	35	112	100
Social work programme first choice	80	71	32	29	112	100
Finding it difficult at varsity of educational background	27	24	85	76	112	100

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

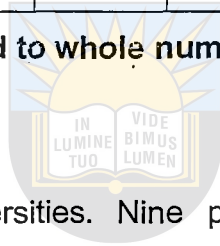


Fig 7 indicates the preferred universities. Nine per cent of the respondents mentioned NMMU as their original preference but because of their Matric results, they were forced to come to the UFH. Furthermore, Fig 7 indicates that 6% wanted to go to University of the Free State (UFS) but had to settle for UFH because of their poor Matric their results. Of the 112 respondents, only 69% had chosen UFH as their first choice of university while and the least (1%) respondents mentioned Stellenbosch and Rhodes University as their first choice of universities and not UFH.

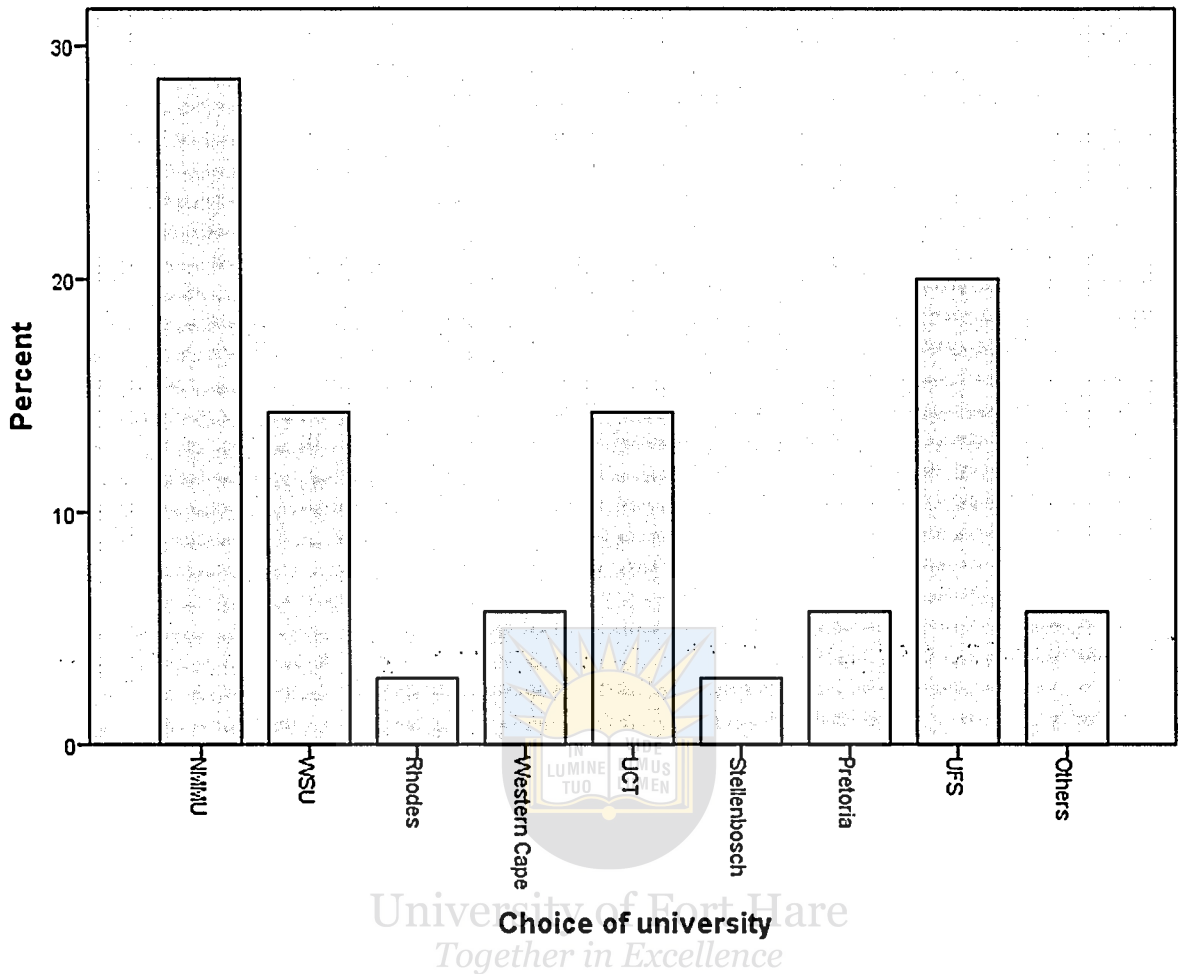
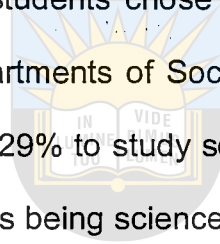


Fig 7: Preferred choice of University for respondents at the UFH

It should be noted that most of the universities that these learners wanted to enrol are first category universities (Universities of Free State, Stellenbosch and Cape Town; Rhodes and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Universities). However, others such as University of the Western Cape and Walter Sisulu fall respectively within the second and third categories of universities in South Africa. By implication, these students; that are 31% stated that because of their poor Matric results, they had to enrol at UHF; otherwise, they would have been at other universities. The latter categories of universities (Walter Sisulu and Western Cape) might have been for convenience and not because they wanted to enrol in high class or first category university in the country. Nonetheless, the choice of university is sometimes

influence by other factors such financial muscles and location than only results of Matric though they are the primary factor that determines admission into university.

Related to the choice of university was the choice of study programme. According to Fig 8, about 71% had social work programme as their first choice with 29% refuted the fact that it was their first choice, that is, social work was not their first choice. As indicated by Fig 8, 12% of the respondents wanted to study sciences, 6% pure arts, 5% agriculture, 3% other social sciences and only 1% wanted education. It should be stated that many of the social work students chose it because of the scholarships from the national and provincial Departments of Social Development. Nonetheless, Matric results might have caused the 29% to study social work against their original intentions which they have indicated as being sciences, arts, agriculture, other social sciences, technology and education in that order.



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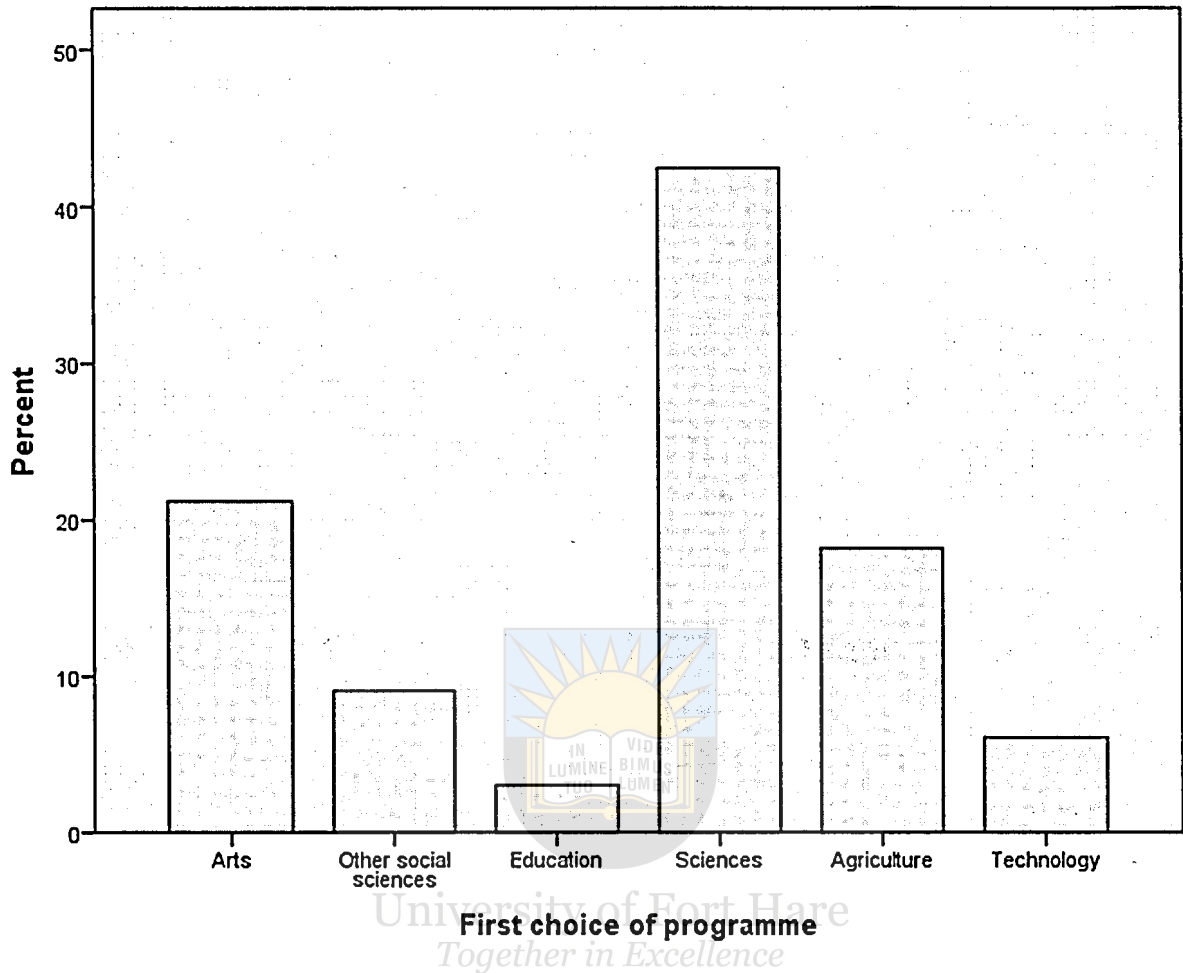


Fig 8: Preferred choice of study programmes other than social work

To enrol in sciences, students are expected to perform well in those related science subjects. Unfortunately, South Africa was rated the lowest country in an international measure of quality of Maths and science education (Gernetzky, 2012:1). This is coupled with the fact that many of the schools in the Eastern Cape Province are lacking enough science teachers, and facing numerous challenges which inevitably lead to poor matric results. Hence, the province is always almost tailing other provinces in matric examinations (Kunene, 2012:1; Blaine, 2006:6) Fengu, 2012a:1; Zukiswa, 2010:2; Williams, 2012:1).

4.6 Sources of help to Matric learners during teachers' strikes

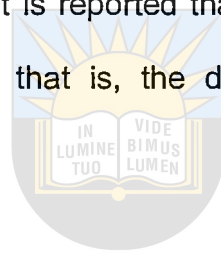
As depicted in Table 13, only 31% (35) of learners participated in one form of Department of Education (DoE) recovery or contingency plans while the rest, 77 (69%) who were equally affected by the strikes did not had the opportunity for one reason or the other. It should be noted that good school performance is linked to the participation of all stakeholders in education. These stakeholders include parents, teachers, learners, SGBs, government departments, and the private sector. However, when asked if they received any help during teachers' strikes, 77% of the respondents indicated that the various stakeholders did not provide any help. Nevertheless, 23% said that they received help in the form of teaching (12%), invigilating exams (5%), and provision of supplement materials (18%).

Table 13: Help provided to Matric learners during teachers' strikes

Key variables of question	Yes		NO		Total	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent.
<u>DoE recovery plans</u>						
Participated in recovery DoE plan	35	31	77	69	112	100
Interactive Radio shows	17	15	94	84	111	99
TV programmes	24	21	87	78	111	99
Extra classes on weekends	33	29	78	70	111	99
Extra classes in the mornings/evenings	23	21	88	78	111	99
DVD for learning	10	9	101	90	111	99
Tutors' helpline	10	9	101	90	111	99
Others mechanisms of help	8	7	103	92	111	99
<u>Parents, NGOs/other stakeholders</u>						
Provided any assistance during strike	26	23	86	77	112	100
Teaching	13	12	99	88	112	100
Provided supplement	20	18	92	82	112	100
Invigilated exams	5	5	107	95	112	100
Other forms of assistance	4	4	108	96	112	100

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

A critical examination of Table 13 reveals that although 31% indicated that they participated in government's recovery plan, 15% participated in radio, 21 in TV education programmes and only 9% each participated in DVD and tutors' helpline programmes which explain the need for these household items as we saw earlier. However, given the rural nature of the province and conscious of the fact that many parents/guardians might not owned these items, the national and provincial recovery plans targeted remote and poor-performing schools (Skiti and Sokopo, 2010:1). This is why 21% of the respondents reported that they attended classes in the morning and in the evenings. Despite these, it is reported that 50% of learners never reach Matriculation (City Press, 2010:22); that is, the dropped along the way before reaching Matric class (Zille, 2010:22).



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4.7 Other determinants of quality education

The study examined the availability of essential determinants of quality education as shown in Table 14. According to Table 15, 69% of the learners maintained that the text books were always delivered on time whilst 31% said the contrary.

Table 14: Other determinants of quality education

Key variables of question	Yes		NO		Total	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent.
Text books delivered always on time	77	69	35	31	112	100
Availability of pit latrines	30	27	82	73	112	100
Availability of library	43	38	69	62	112	100
Good classrooms	80	71	32	29	112	100
Classrooms equipped with desks	78	70	34	30	112	100
Availability of electricity	85	76	27	24	112	100
Availability of water	84	75	28	25	112	100
Others	40	36	72	64	112	100

NB: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers.

Decentralised systems of textbook procurement introduced in the post-apartheid dispensation have not had equitable consequences, and have been expensive for the state. Each child still does not have textbooks and other necessary resource for each subject. In order to ensure that every learner has a text for every subject, the department has sought to improve equity and efficiency in the system. In line with the recommendations of the Curriculum Review Committee (DBE 2009), it developed a national catalogue for books to be used in schools.

In terms of sanitation, Table 14 indicates that 76% of the respondents commented that there was availability of electricity even though 24% said that electricity was not available in their schools. Further 75% mentioned that water was available also and 71% highlighted that they learnt in good classrooms. Only 37% indicated that there were pit latrines at their schools. It can be argued that intended furniture and infrastructure improvements are now not only part of a national departmental initiative running alongside additional provincial infrastructure budgets, they are also a priority for the government as a whole, as Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan spelt out in his medium-term budget policy statement in October 2011. However, the Eastern Cape Province has a huge number of schools and teachers, but many of the schools are suffering from infrastructure decay, lack thereof, and poorly maintained resulting from corruption and bribery (The Herald, 2010a:14; Whisson, 2009:7). Chisholm (2011) argues that good resources are vital in all contexts, but are more so in schools and classrooms surrounded by poverty. Eastern Cape as the poorest region in South Africa is characterised by high levels of poverty.

4.8 Conclusion

In chapter four, the data that were collected from 112 students or respondents were analysed, presented and discussed in the light of the literature. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, particularly year of study, Matric examinations issues, parents/guardians' literacy status and ownership of some key household items and access to newspaper analysed and discussed. The impact of teachers' strikes on learners' academic performance as well as the quality of education was presented with the majority of them having experienced more than one strike. The chapter also shows the impact of teachers' strikes on various key variables pertaining to the nature of the Matric examinations and teachers' strikes as well as the extent to which learners perceived teachers' strikes on Matric subjects, performance, satisfaction with Matric results, quality of education received and coverage of subjects' syllabuses. Furthermore, the costs of teachers' strikes is estimated at billions as costing the economy, affecting national and provincial departments in recovery plans, and the social costs to students is enormous. Also, chapter also examined the preferred choices of university and programmes of study of students, many of which were affected by teachers' strikes which led to their Matric results not up to standards expected for admission into other universities and programmes of study. In addition, the chapter examined the helps from the Department of Education, both provincial and national as well as from other stakeholders such as NGOs and parents. Finally, other determinants of quality education were examined such as text books delivery, library, classrooms, sanitation, and electricity and water availability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four was based on the presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings of this study. Chapter five presents the summary of the findings based on the research questions. Conclusions drawn from the findings and discussion are also presented and recommendations made which could lead to further debate regarding the right of learners to education and the right of teachers to embark on industrial action. Finally, suggestions for further studies are presented.

5.2 Summary of findings

As stated in the introduction, this section of the chapter is presented based on the research questions that were postulated in chapter one to guide the direction of the study. The research questions are postured as in chapter one and the findings are summarily presented to justify that each of the question has been answered using the data that were collected for purpose of the study. The major aim of the study was to investigate the impact of teacher strikes on learners in Eastern Cape Province. Therefore data were collected using the quantitative design. The study sample was 112 students who were administered questionnaires. The respondents represented 22 of the 28 districts in the Eastern Cape Province and they were composed of 73% female and 27% males.

The quantitative analysis in this study affirms that the learners had experienced at least one teacher strike whilst they were doing their Martic levels. More importantly,

the research findings point to the fact that the teachers' strikes had various impacts on the learners which ranged from academic performance and quality of education, economic costs, choice of universities and programmes.

5.2.1 What is the impact of teachers' strikes on the academic performance of learners?

In terms of academic performance and quality of education, the study found out that 47% of the respondents had finished their studies in the standard 12 years required for one to finish his/her matric studies. This means that they managed to write their Matric examinations only once and succeeded. However, they were other learners, 53% who constituted the majority who studied for more years with some reaching even up to 17 years. Similarly, about 68% wrote Matric examinations only once and succeeded while the rest, 32% wrote more than once. In addition, 44% wrote their Matric examinations between 2008 and 2011 while 56% wrote before 2008; consequently indicating the failure rate as well as the issue of repeating classes. All the learners had experienced at least one strike during their period of studying at the primary to Matric level, with most having experienced one, twice and thrice in that order.

Further, the study points out the fact that teachers' strikes impacted negatively on the morale of the learners. This is shown from the results of the study which revealed that the motivation of the learners were lost during the time of striking. Intimidation was also highlighted to have occurred to both learners (61%) and non-striking teachers (63%). However, even though the striking took place in all the schools as pointed out by all the respondents, the findings of the study revealed that in some

schools, the syllabuses were covered completely prior to the writing of Matric examinations with other few schools failing to cover everything required. The students indicated that the examinations were not interrupted neither were they delayed even though a smaller percentage refuted that and argued that the examinations were interrupted.

The respondents in the study indicated that they emanated from two categories of schools which were underperforming schools, average and above schools. The study revealed that the distribution of the learners that passed Matric examinations was almost equal; thus they came from both the average schools and underperforming schools. Finally, the literature paints a very poor state of education in the province and South Africa in general, especially in comparison with other educational systems around the world as well as performance in science and Maths education.

5.2.2 What is the quality of education received by learners from the province?

Some significant findings of the study show that Matric students were taught by peers (51%), Matric examination marks were adjusted (41%), that there was forceful closure of schools (43%), and the disruption of examinations by striking teachers (45%). All of these led to that the learners to perceive teachers' strike as the main driver of their poor academic performance to a greater and great extent. However, the majority of the students (77%) reported that they were satisfied with their Matric results as well as the quality of education they did receive at the Matric level (62%).

Overall, the infrastructure of the schools is commendable since the findings point to the availability of electricity, water and good classrooms in most schools. However some schools had pit latrines and poor infrastructure which contribute to poor quality education and the failure to respect learners' right to education.

5.2.3 What are the economic and other costs of teachers' strikes?

Economically, the results of the study conducted have shown that the strike made the learners to incur costs in transport (25%) in trying to make up for lost time. Most learners had to spend weekends studying and paying for extra classes (23%). It is also argued that some learners became pregnant during this striking period. Consequently others would roam around the streets since there were no classes. The findings of the study highlights that the learners used money to go to school but there were no classes. Despite these economic costs, majority 92% of the students were not given any fee concessions. Also, the literature reveals that the costs of teachers' strikes to both provincial and national departments of education incur heavy expenses in recovery plans and other logistical arrangements.

5.2.4 How has teachers' strikes affected entrance to tertiary institution and programme of choice of learners?

Since Matric results determine the tertiary education for learners, the study sought to find out whether the strike had impacted on the choice of universities and study programmes among the learners. The findings have shown that the majority of the learners, 80% did not encounter any hindrance while a few (20%) faced obstacles. Less than 10% of the students pointed out that teacher' strikes affected their choice of study as well as their study programmes. Out of the 112 respondents, 65% had

chosen University of Fort Hare as their first choice of university and 71% also enrolled in social work programme as first choice programme of study. However, 35% of the learners preferred to gain admission into some other universities such as WSU, UFS, NMMU and Western Cape but because of their poor results, had to settle for UFH. Similarly, 29% wanted to study science, arts, agriculture, other social sciences and technology and not social work as their first choice but were constraint because of poor result. Hence, enrolments into social work programme.

5.2.5 What other sources of help are available to grade 12 learners during teachers' strikes?

The vast majority of the respondents, 69% highlighted that there was no source of help received from other stakeholders during teachers' strikes to assist them catch-up wit lost time. Those that got help had to participate in extra classes on weekends, evenings and mornings, and a few privileged one through radio and TV programmes. On the other hand, the schools that received help were indicated to be in the form of teaching, invigilating of examinations and supplements of other materials.

5.3 Conclusions

The study had aimed to investigate the impact of teachers' strikes on the right of learners to education in the Eastern Cape Province. The study has therefore synthesised both the positive and negative impacts incurred by learners due to the strikes. Firstly, a good assessment was provided on the number of strikes. Teachers' strikes in the Eastern Cape have contributed to further deterioration of the quality of education in the province. The province is already battling with problems such as insufficient teachers, less qualified teachers, infrastructure problems and

mismanagement and corruption; and teachers' strikes have worsen the education system in the province leaving learners desperate for quality education and access to the right to education in a country and province which carries a huge chunk of the nation and provincial budgets respectively. In a highly unequal society, with high unemployment and poverty blamed exclusively on apartheid, the government's effort to eradicate poverty and inequality by providing quality education for all is therefore being hindered. It can be safely concluded from the findings that the society is at war with itself as striking teachers are adding to the poor academic performance of learners which had been exacerbated by the apartheid regime.

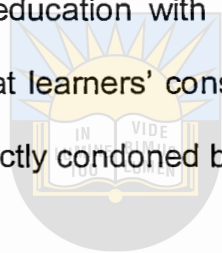


The conclusions are also drawn from the assumptions of the study which include the following:

5.5.1 Teachers' strikes negatively affect learners' academic performance and ruin their chances of gaining admission into university and programme of study of their choice.

The literature and the findings of this study have sufficiently demonstrated the role that teachers' strikes have on learners' academic performance. It would be unfair to state that those who indicated otherwise do not constitute a significant number or percentage and therefore warrant the discarding the negative impact on their studies. Apart from the findings which show the contempt expressed by learners regarding teachers' strikes during their Matric examinations, many educational experts have expressed deep concerns with the handling of education issues and crises in this country. Literature review has also pointed out the disgust of parents against teachers' strikes as they hinder their children's academic performance and the quality thereof.

A good number of students also reported their inability to gain admission into category A universities such as NMMU and Stellenbosch as well as their preferred programmes of study. In essence, UHF and social work programme for these students were their last resort having failed to gain admission in those universities and other programmes. It would therefore be appropriate to say that teachers' strikes have negatively affected the academic performance of many learners as well as thwarted their chances of gaining admission into their preferred universities and programmes. Finally, because of teachers' strikes, many learners have dropped along the way and terminated their education with huge consequences for their future. All of these point to the fact that learners' constitutional right to education is impeded by teachers' strikes and indirectly condoned by educational authorities.



5.5.2 The quality of education received by learners in the province is low.

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Teachers in the Eastern Cape each year fully participate in teachers' strikes organized by one union or the other for various reasons. Even if they are present, little time is spent in the classroom as the literature shows. The findings of this study indicate that because of strikes, some schools do not complete syllabuses of subjects; learners are taught by peers and other stakeholders to catch-up with lost time. Again, the Matric mark adjustment reported some of the learners contribute to poor quality education in the province. This perhaps explains why many of the students from this province performed dismally at the tertiary level with many repeating and/or dropping out of schools. In addition, the literature is very categorical about the poor quality of education that children are receiving from the Eastern Cape Province. Therefore, it would not be over-statement to say that the quality of education that learners get is low, especially comparing to other provinces. To

compare the quality of Matric level education internationally will be committing sacrilege. This speaks to the denial of access to the right to quality education to learners in this province and South Africa as a whole.

5.5.3 There are many helpful sources of assistance to grade 12 matriculation learners during teachers' strikes.

Both the national and provincial departments of education always come up with contingency plans and/or recovery plans as they are sometimes called. However, considering the rural and remoteness of the province and inaccessibility to modern gadgets such as internet, email, computers, TV, radio and newspapers, those government recovery plans do not work effectively in this province. This explains why many of the learners had indicated that they had used most extra classes during weekends, mornings and evenings compared to the few who showed that they use radio, TV, DVD and other forms of print media. It is not only government that is concerned with the plight of learners, especially the Matric examination learners but also parents and other stakeholders such as Daily Dispatch. They have also contributed either through donations of supplements, invigilation and participation in negotiating an end to teachers' strikes. It should be noted that about 54% of parents/guardians were literate while about 46% were illiterate at the time learners were about to write their Matric examinations. While the former could be of assistance to their children, the latter offer not significant academic contribution to their children's education. Above all, one can conclude that there are many sources of help to Matric examination learners during teachers' strikes in the province. However, not all of them have access to these recovery plans, especially as there is usually selection of the so-called poor performing schools. Learners' right to quality

education and access to education cannot be compromised with national recovery plans which are rather creating an avenue for embezzlement of public funds through contracts to furnish this material or the other.

5.4 Recommendations

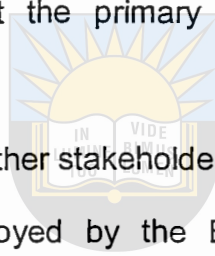
The study warranted some recommendations which are subject to serious debate among teachers, education experts, policy makers and other stakeholders in the field of education. The following are the recommendations:

- 1) Learners should be given access to quality education as it is a fundamental right enshrined in the Bill of Rights and many regional and international legal instruments which South Africa is a signatory. This could be done through improvement of infrastructure, recruitment of qualified staff, proper payment of teachers and timely negotiations of salary packages.
- 2) Education should be declared an essential service to stem the high number of teachers' strikes which is denying learners their constitutional right to quality education and in some places, lack of access to this right.
- 3) Salaries of teachers' should be negotiated every five years taking into consideration inflation and other factors rather than a yearly issue which is devastating to the future of young South Africans.
- 4) There should be an open debate on balancing the right of learners to quality education and the right of labour to embark on strike action. Public gatherings or *imbizos* could serve this purpose.

5.5 Suggestions for further studies

The right of learners to education and the right of teachers to embark on an industrial action is a complex legal terrain and I would suggest the following areas for further studies:

- 1) The qualitative or quantitative study on unionised teachers' perceptions on how strikes can be avoided so as to ensure access to quality education to learners.
- 2) Balancing the right to education and the right to strikes by teachers.
- 3) The perception of learners at the primary and high schools regarding teachers' strikes.
- 4) The perception of parents and other stakeholders' vis-à-vis teachers' strikes.
- 5) The quality of teachers employed by the Eastern Cape department of education.
- 6) The role of the department of education in resolving or worsening teachers' strikes.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a Masters student in the OR Tambo Human Right Centre, Faculty of Law, University of Fort Hare conducting a study on “The impact of teachers’ strikes on the right of learners to education in the Eastern Cape Province.”

- This study is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Human Rights.
- The aim of this study is to investigate the impact that teachers’ strikes have had on the right of learners to education in the Eastern Cape.
- There are no known direct benefits associated with your participation in this research. However, the data will enhance a re-appraisal of readers’ positions on the right of teachers to strike and the right of learners to education. Hence, a stimulation of further debate on these rights.
- This is a self-administered questionnaire relating to your opinions on how strikes have impacted on your right to education over the past years in secondary/high schools.
- This questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. It is important to note that the answers to all these questions will remain confidential neither you nor your district will be identified by name. Anonymity will be maintained throughout the study and dissemination process. The questionnaire with your answers and the accompanying signed consent form will be securely kept for some period of time pending when they will finally be destroyed.

- Your participation is entirely voluntary. Should you agree to participate, you need to sign this informed consent form. You are free to refuse to participate in the survey if you wish.
- Should you require any additional information concerning this study, you are welcome to contact the researcher at 0406022195.



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APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Respondent Number: _____

RESPONDENT:

I, _____

[FULL NAME OF RESPONDENT IN BLOCK LETTERS] [CHECK]

- have read and understood all the above information;
- was given the opportunity to discuss this information and to ask questions;
- volunteer to take part in this study;
- confirm that I have received a copy of this consent form

Yes	No
Yes	No
Yes	No
Yes	No



Signature of respondent: _____ Date: _____

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Respondent chose not to sign consent form

INTERVIEWER:

I, _____

[FULL NAME OF INTERVIEWER IN BLOCK LETTERS] [CHECK]

- have explained the nature and purpose of the study to the respondent in full;
- confirm that I have given the respondent a copy of this consent form

Yes	No
Yes	No

Signature of interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Section B: Impact of strikes on academic performance and quality of education

Q10) Did you pass matric from one of the underperforming schools in the E. Cape (schools with below 50% matric result) ? 1. Yes 2. No

Q11) How many teachers' strikes did you experience in the course of your secondary/high school studies (grade 1-12)? 1. One 2. Two
3. Three 4. Four 5. Five 6. Six and more

Q12) How many years did it take you to complete your studies (grades 1-12)?
1. 13 years 2. 14 years 3. 15 years 4. 16 years
5. 17 years 6. 18 years and above

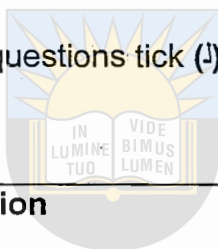
Q13) How many times have you written matric examinations? 1. One time
2. Two times 3. Three times 4. Four times 5. Five times
6. Six times and more 7. Twelve times

Answer YES or No to the following questions: (Tick (J) in the appropriate column).

Question item	YES (1)	NO (2)
Q14. Did you write a different matric exam papers from the rest of the urban areas after teachers' strikes?		
Q15. Were you intimidated not to attend classes during teachers' strikes?		
Q16. Were non-striking teachers intimidated not to teach during teachers' strikes?		
Q17. Was there forceful closure of your school to force non-striking teachers not to teach?		
Q18. Were you ever taught by university students during teachers' strikes?		

Q19. Were any of the exams you wrote broken up or interrupted during teachers' strikes?		
Q20. Were you taught by any teacher from another school or elsewhere during teachers' strikes?		
Q21. Was there any exam that was invigilated other than by teachers during teachers' strikes?		
Q22. Were examination papers delivered to your writing centre in time during teachers' strikes?		

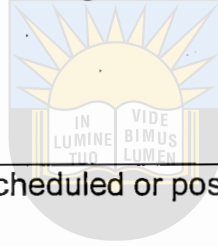
Instruction: For each of the following questions tick (✓) the one out of the 4-point scale that best applies to you.



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Q/N	Question	To a	somewha	Very little	Not at all
		1	2	3	4
Q23)	Completed the syllabuses of all matric subjects				
Q24)	Teachers' strikes the main drivers of poor matric results in the province				
Q25)	Satisfied with my matric results despite teachers' strikes				
Q26)	Lost motivation during teachers' strikes for studying towards matric examinations				
Q27)	Stressed or worried because of the impact of teachers' strikes on my matric performance				
Q28)	Examinations disrupted during teachers' strikes				
Q29)	There were marks adjustment after matric examinations				

	to compensate for teachers' strikes				
Q30)	Satisfied with the quality of education I received at the matric level despite teachers' strikes?				
Q31)	All exams I wrote in secondary/high school were based on the whole syllabuses of the different subjects				
Q32)	Taught by my peers/class mates during teachers' strikes				
Q33)	Taught by retired teachers during teachers' strikes				
Q34)	There were smooth writing and invigilation of exams during teachers' strikes				
Q35)	Examinations were being rescheduled or postponed because of teachers' strikes				



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Section C: Economic and other costs of teachers' strike

Q36) Did your parent/guardian pay for extra classes and/or materials.

1. Yes 2. No

Q37) Did you spend money visiting and/or attending cinema during teachers' strikes?

1. Yes 2. No

Q38) Did you incur extra transport without seeing teachers to teach during strikes?

1. Yes 2. No

Q39) Were you given any fee concessions for missing classes after teachers' strikes?

1. Yes 2. No

- Q40) Were you or anyone of your peers roaming the streets during teachers' strikes? 1. Yes 2. No
- Q41) Did you or any of your peers that you know become pregnant during the time of teachers' strikes? 1. Yes 2. No
- Q42) Did you miss your holidays because of teachers' strikes? 1. Yes 2. No
- Q43) Did you spend weekends studying to catch up because of teachers' strikes? 1. Yes 2. No
- Q44) Were you going home late risking your life because of extra classes to compensate for teachers' strikes? 1. Yes 2. No



Section D: Influence of strikes on learners' choice of university and programme

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Q45) Did strikes hinder your entrance into the university? 1. Yes 2. No

Q46) If **Yes to Q45 above**, how did strikes hinder your entrance into university?

(Tick (✓) all those apply to you).

1. Affected choice of university

2. Affected choice of study

3. Affected year of entry into university

4. Others (specify) _____

Q47) Was University of Fort Hare your first choice university?

1. Yes 2. No

Q48) If **No to Q47 above**, which was your first choice university? _____

Q49) Was your first choice of programme social work? 1. Yes 2. No

Q50) If **No to Q9 above**, which was your first choice of programme? _____

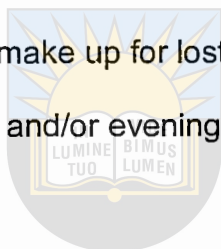
Q51) Did you find difficulty at the university because of your educational background disrupted by teachers' strikes? 1. Yes 2. No

Section E: Sources of help to Matric learners during teachers' strikes

Q52) Did you participate in any contingency or recovery plan by the department of education during teachers' strikes? 1. Yes 2. No

Q53) If **Yes to Q52 above**, which programmes did you participate in them? (Tick (✓) all those apply to you).

1. Interactive radio and question-and-answer-type shows
2. TV programme
3. Extra classes on weekend to make up for lost strike time
4. Extra classes in the mornings and/or evenings to make up for lost strike time
5. DVD for learning
6. Tutors' helpline
7. Others (specify)



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Q54) Did parents/NGOs helped during strikes? 1. Yes 2. No

Q55) If **Yes to Q54 above**, how did they help? (Tick (✓) all those apply to you).

1. Teaching
2. Provided learning supplements
3. Exams invigilation
4. Others (specify) _____

Section F: Miscellaneous

Q56) What was the state of your school in terms of the following(Tick (✓) all those apply to your school):

1. Textbooks delivery was timely
2. Availability of pit latrines

3. Availability of library 4. Good classrooms
5. Classrooms equipped with desks 6. Availability of water
7. Availability of electricity
8. Other infrastructure (specify) _____

DISTRICT OFFICES IN THE EASTERN CAPE FOR QUESTION ((Tick (!) the box that applies to you for Q3 on page 1).

1. Butterworth 2. Cofimvaba 3. Cradock
4. Butywa 5. East London 6. Fort Beaufort
7. Graaff-Reinet 8. Grahamstown 9. King William's Town
10. Lady Free 11. Libode 12. Lusikisiki
13. Maluti 14. Mbizana 15. Mount Fletcher
16. Mount Free 17. Mthatha 18. Ngcobo
19. Port Elizabeth 20. Queenstown 21. Qumbu
22. Sterkspruit 23. Uitenhage 24. Cala
25. Other (specify) _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION !