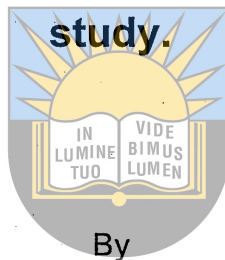


**An investigation into the causes of learner dropouts in
two rural secondary schools**

Fort Beaufort District, Eastern Cape Province: A case



By

University of Fort Hare
Vuyiswa Evelyn Mgwangqa

Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER IN EDUCATION

In the Faculty of Education

University of Fort Hare

Supervisor: Prof. L. Lawrence

Co-Supervisor: Dr. S. Rembe

November 2007

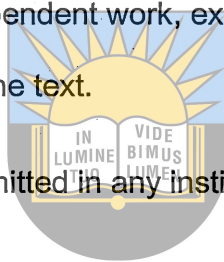
Declaration

I Vuyiswa Evelyn Mgwangqa

Honestly declare that:

This dissertation is my own independent work, except where I have acknowledged other sources in the text.

Also this work has not been submitted in any institution for degree or any academic purposes.



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Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vuyiswa Mgwangqa', written over a horizontal line.

Date : 7th December 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God, my Creator, for giving me strength in my studies. I give you all the glory and honor Lord; you are worthy of all praise.

I give thanks to Ncotshekazi and the late Tukwana Siyoko, my dearest parents for raising me under the wing of the Lord who is my provider and giving me the chance to go to school.

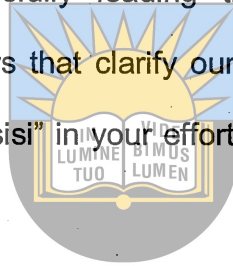
Great gratitude goes to my family, my husband and my loving children. Thanks “Skhomo, Mpumie” for being a pillar and encouraging me through all my studies. If you were not there for me, I wouldn’t be where I am.

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My sincere and profound gratitude is extended to my mother in education Lorraine Lawrence, my supervisor, who worked hard with me from the proposal stage until the completion of this research. Thank you very much Prof for all the ups and downs of our journey, yes of course it was not easy but it was worth it. Again thank you for your passion in education, fruitful experience, and developing me educationally through your intellectual research principles and strategies.

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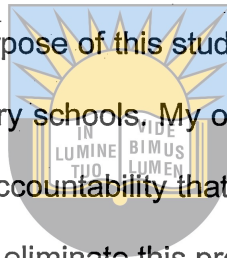
I cannot leave out Mr. Scott Chiverton who for the last few months shared every Friday afternoon peacefully giving unwavering language support and guidance throughout my research. Thank you for being so loyal and dedicated to your work because you exceeded your working hours. Words cannot adequately express how grateful I am.

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Finally, sincere thanks goes to my colleagues M.Ed students and PHD students for working together as brothers and sisters, thus proving unity is strength.

ABSTRACT

Since the attainment of independence in South Africa after the collapse of apartheid, government has undertaken significant changes in the educational context. The main goal in the National Curriculum Statement required learners to be reflective thinkers, independent, creative and resourceful; however, in contrast many learners in rural secondary schools are continuing to drop out of schools not completing grade 12. The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of learner dropout in rural secondary schools. My objective is to use these findings to determine mechanisms and accountability that should be accepted by schools and the department of education to eliminate this problem.



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Qualitative methodology and interpretative research paradigm were followed as I was concerned with understanding the social construction of reality; the way people share meaning and interpret their views and perceptions to the stated problem. Through adopting a case study design in order to increase the depth of the investigation, the data was collected through conducting different kinds of interviews. This study was conducted in two rural secondary schools in Fort Beaufort District, and the respondents were principals, teachers, parents, and in and out of school learners.

The surprising, interesting and sometimes depressing findings of this study showed the strong influence of factors such as poverty, socio-economic status,

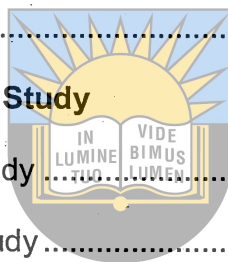
family relationships, school conditions and relationships, peer influences, motivation and HIV/Aids in contributing to learners dropping out of school.

The conclusions from this study led to recommendations to education policy makers to include or upgrade guidance and counselling skills at schools based on the importance of education and choosing careers. It also recommends conducting useful effective counselling workshops for parents, educators and learners. It looks at the need for the Department of Education to improve training for the NCS so that teaching becomes more interesting to learners.

The findings of this study draw conclusions which positively invite fruitful inquiry to further researchers to evaluate the impact of motivation, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy factors to explore whether their influences or implications affect the learners drop out of school or not.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

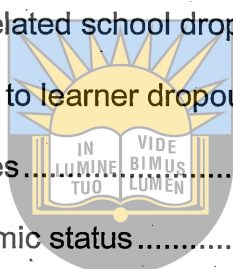
Title page.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	v
Acronyms	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction of the Study	
1.1 Introduction of the study.....	1
1.2 Background to the study.....	1
1.3 Statement of the problem.....	5
1.4 Purpose of the study.....	6
1.5 Research question.....	6
1.6 Significance of the study.....	7
1.7 Methodology.....	8
1.7.1 Qualitative Research Methodology.....	8
1.8 Delimitation of the study.....	10
1.9 Limitations of the study.....	10
1.10 Ethical Considerations.....	11
1.11 Definition of Terms.....	13
1.12 Conclusion.....	14



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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 African and internationally based studies on learner dropout	16
2.3 Social factors related to learner dropout.....	23
2.3.1 Poverty.....	23
2.3.2 Delinquency and truancy.....	25
2.3.3 Pregnancy related school dropouts.....	26
2.4 Family factors related to learner dropout	29
2.4.1 Broken homes.....	30
2.4.2 Socio-economic status	33
2.5 School factors related to learner dropout.....	35
2.6 South African research studies on learner dropout.....	37
2.6.1 The Human Rights Watch	37
2.6.2 South African studies related to poverty, distance, and school factors.....	39
2.6.3 Other studies relating school factors as a cause of learner dropouts.....	44
2.6.4 South African Studies related to family factors.....	46
2.6.5 HIV/AIDS as a health factor in school dropouts	52
2.6.6 Motivation as an overall factor in contributing to learner dropouts.....	56
2.7 Conclusion	61



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Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

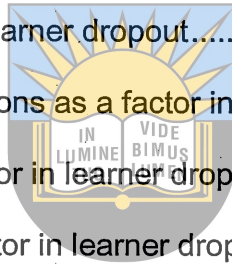
3.1 Introduction	63
3.2 Research Paradigms: choosing the appropriate paradigm	64
3.2.1 Interpretive Research and theory.....	64
3.3 Research Methodology.....	67
3.3.1 Quantitative Methodology.....	67
3.3.2 Qualitative Methodology.....	67
3.4 Research Design: qualitative choices.....	73
3.5. Choosing a Case Study.....	75
3.6 Profiles of Schools and Respondents.....	79
3.6.1 School A: Profile.....	80
3.6.2 School B: Profile.....	82
3.6.3 Sample	83
3.7 Data Collection Procedures.....	87
3.7.1 Interviews	87
3.7.2 Focus Group Interviews.....	89
3.8 Data Analysis Techniques	95
3.8.1 Validity and Reliability.....	96
3.9 Ethical Considerations.....	97
3.10 Conclusion.....	99



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Together in Excellence

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis of Findings

4.1 Introduction of chapter 4	100
4.2 Research Question	102
4.3 Profile of the Respondents	103
4.4 Findings	110
4.4.1 Social –Economic Factors	111
4.4.2 School Factors in learner dropout.....	118
4.4.3 Inter-personal relations as a factor in Learner dropout	126
4.4.4 Motivation as a factor in learner dropout.....	130
4.4.5 Pregnancy as a factor in learner dropout.....	135
4.4.6 HIV/AIDS as a factor in learner dropout.....	137
4.5. Conclusion.....	140



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Together in Excellence

Chapter 5 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction	141
5.2. Summary of previous chapters in the study	141
5.3 Conclusions and implications of the results	150
5.3.1 Socio-economic factors	151
5.3.2 Family factors	151
5.3.3 HIV/AIDS related factors.....	153
5.3.4 School factors	154
5.3.5 Teachers' attitudes to learners	157

5.3.6 Learners themselves contribute to learner dropout	158
5.3.7 Interpersonal factors	159
5.3.8 Motivational factors contribute to learner dropout.....	160
5.4. Recommendations.....	161
References	164
Appendix 1 Permission to conduct Research.....	175
Appendix 2 Consent Form for Respondents.....	177
Appendix 3 Interview Schedules : Principals /Educators.....	179
Appendix 4 Interview Schedules : Learners in School.....	185
Appendix 5 Interview Schedules : Learners out of School	190
Appendix 6 Interview Schedules: Parents	198
Appendix 7 Ethics Document	205
Appendix 8 Introductory letter from Supervisor	206
Appendix 9 Dates of Interviews	207

INDEX OF TABLES

Table1.1. Dropouts School A.....	4
Table1.2. Dropouts School B.....	5

Table 2.1	Tanzania dropout figures.....	18
Table 2.2.	Tanzania reasons for dropout.....	18
Table 2.3	Ethiopia dropout figures.....	19
Table 2.4	Ethiopia reasons for dropout.....	21
Table 2.5.	Malawi reasons for dropout.....	22



Table 4.3.1	Teachers by gender.....	103
Table 4.3.2	Respondents' ages.....	104
Table 4.3.3	Qualifications of respondents.....	104
Table 4.3.4	Teaching experience: teachers and principals.....	105
Table 4.3.5	Distribution of learners at school in gender.....	106
Table 4.3.6	Distribution of learners in ages and grades.....	106
Table 4.3.7(a)	Ages of learners in school.....	107
Table 4.3.7(b)	Distribution of learners Out of school by gender and ages.....	107
Table 4.3.8	Parents by gender and ages.....	108

ACRONYMS

CAR	Country analytic report
DoE	Department of education
DS	Direct source
EPC	Education Policy Consortium
ESAR	East and South African Region
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
MOE	Ministry of Education
SAHSRC	South African Human Sciences Research Council
SRP	Senior rural primary
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

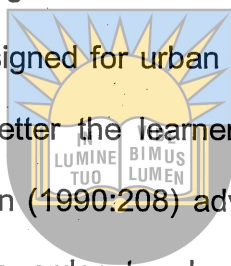
1.1 Introduction

The problem of rural school dropouts has presented itself throughout the world for a very long time. The reasons why learners drop out of schools are complex. The following are some examples of possible reasons e.g. personal, family, school and social related factors. According to Grawage (1992:02) "Dropouts show certain behavior patterns: first the learner loses interest in school, resulting in lower grades performance. Then the learner begins to skip classes."

1.2 Background to the study

The context of my study is rural Eastern Cape, in communities with high levels of unemployment and poverty. The attainment of independence in South Africa in 1994 resulted in a high demand for equal and equitable education at both Primary and Secondary levels. A range of policies and programmes were developed and adopted in order to transform the education system to empower black learners. But at the same time South African Government has not had enough time to improve the quality of educators in line with its professed

aspiration for quality of education and learning in schools. Whereas the Department of Education implemented Outcome Based Education, according to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), to uplift the standard of education, there are still obstacles to schooling causing learner drop outs from school especially in rural areas. These obstacles are associated with lack of resources, multi-grade teaching and shortage of educators due to redeployment. Outcome Based Education has been designed for urban schools. The richer the learning environment in schools, the better the learners perform in their assessment tasks. As Biehler and Snowman (1990:208) advised teachers to determine the levels of ability in learners in order to classify special educational needs according to their intellectual capacity.



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It is generally accepted that schooling is more successful when founded on a belief that each learner has the potential to succeed. The success of each learner then depends not only on available resources but also by and large on creating an inclusive learning environment. This refers to learners' barriers to learning and positive participation in the classroom. For that reason quality of the learning environment is an important determinant of successful learning.

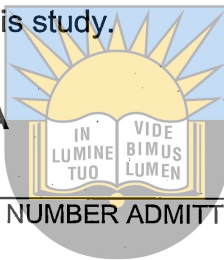
Although school development planning is taking place, it appears that it has not yet produced the intended results of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Seemingly the conditions in some rural secondary schools are not conducive for teaching and learning. Malaka (1999:01) points out those teachers who ridicule and criticize learners destroy their eagerness to learn and complete their education. This results in school drop outs and poor matric results which cause learners to be unable to choose relevant qualifications. In this regard Jacobs and Gawe (1996:336) suggest that teachers must be adequate with skills which promote enjoyment of friendly classrooms. This will enable learners to prepare for their future roles in an excellent teaching and learning environment. I have observed that some rural secondary schools are characterized among other things by high absenteeism by both teachers and learners, death of teachers without the hope of replacements for them. I am a teacher in primary school in Fort Beaufort District in Eastern Cape Province. My research has been triggered by the fact that learners are dropping out in secondary school level between Grade 8 and 12, although they were good promising academic achievers in primary school. My interest is that I want to know what is happening between the transition from primary to secondary education. Different authors provide possible reasons for this. For instance, Biehler and Snowman (1990:512) suggest that classroom atmosphere is important; teachers must help learners who are struggling with their learning in order to achieve good academic goals. In contrast teachers who take teaching as a job are not interested in low academic



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achievers. The results of that are that learners become bored, lose self – confidence and drop out of school. Therefore by carrying out this study my intentions are to investigate the causes of learner dropouts in two rural secondary schools in Fort Beaufort District. I felt frustrated, as a primary school teacher that so many learners failed to complete their education after leaving my school. The table below shows that there are learner drop outs each year in different grades of School A in this study.

Table 1.1 Dropouts in School A



YEAR	GRADES	NUMBER ADMITTED	NUMBER DROPOUT
2005	8,9,10	150	49
2004	8,9,10	120	15
2003	8,9,10	146	39
2002	8,9,10	160	47
2001	8,9,10	152	31
2000	8,9,10	155	21

Source: Admission register from Fort Beaufort District in Secondary School A.

Table 2 shows the learner dropout rate in School B each year.

Table 1. 2 Dropouts in School B

YEAR	GRADES	NUMBER ADMITTED	NUMBER DROPOUT
2005	8,9,10, 11,12	579	162
2004	8,9,10,11,12	422	129
2003	8,9,10,11,12	332	112
2002	8,9,10,11,12	635	212
2001	8,9,10,11,12	789	115

Source: Admission.register from Alice Secondary School.

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1.3 Statement of the Problem

The problem that I was interested in researching was that children drop out in big numbers in secondary school grades, whereas in primary school many of them had the ability to perform well academically.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

In order to carry out this study effectively, I had to be driven by the purpose and specific objectives of the study in mind. This study aimed to investigate the causes of learner dropouts. The objectives of the study were to:

- Suggest to Departmental policy makers what areas of school management and curriculum required improvement in order to retain learners;
- Recommend what support is required from parents, community and school in order to motivate learners.



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1.5 Research Question

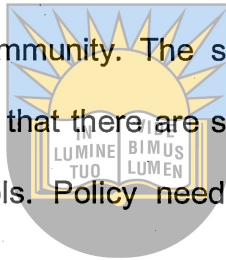
In carrying out this research study, I had the following research question:

Why do learners drop out from school?

This research question would be answered by examining educators, learners and 'parents' perceptions of the reasons for learner drop outs. I also hoped to investigate factors which led to learner dropout that emerged from the home and school environment.

1. 6 Significance of the Study

The study was important because learner drop outs are both economically wasteful and damaging to the learners concerned. I felt that the problem prevents the full development of the community. The study was important because it would make Government aware that there are some learners that can not meet the requirements of the schools. Policy needs to be developed to support struggling learners.



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Rigid curriculum or restrictions by examination requirements and insufficient resources and poor teaching equipments are also contributing to school drop out. Teachers and parents should be aware that lack of motivation in the home environment and school is an important factor to encourage learners to continue with their studies. When learners are motivated to learn, they are eager to initiate learning activities, they are willing to take risks, they remain involved in a learning task and they show a commitment to learning (Kruger and Adams, 1998:139). I agreed with this opinion because motivation energizes learners to reach certain goals. For the purpose of this study the term motivation will refer to learner's

eagerness to engage in learning and their ability to purposive learning goals and potentialities. Motivation is both externally and internally stimulated.

According to Reeve (1996: 3) although children can be externally regulated, the learners should also be encouraged to move away from a dependence on teachers and parents and increase their self – regulation. The learner will work harder when she desires and receives approval and most importantly, discovers the satisfaction to be obtained from the learning process when she accepts responsibility for it.



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1.7 Methodology

The methodology is fully discussed in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 Qualitative Research Methodology

This study used qualitative research methodology in order to provide acceptable answers to the stated research problem. Qualitative research is multi – method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that things are studied in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin

and Lincoln, 1998: 3). Further it is value laden and the inquiry seeks answers to questions that stress how social, school, personal and family factors contributed to learner dropouts in this study. x

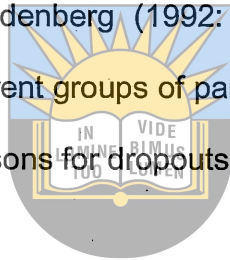
This study adopted case study research design. Sharon (1998:27) defined case study as a field of inquiry that investigates a specific area in order to gain real life context when the problem is clearly visible. Descriptive case study, together with interpretive case study, was suitable for the purpose of this study.



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Leeds (2001:148) defines descriptive data as being collected in the form of words and actions of the respondents rather than numbers as it is in quantitative methodology. By interpretive he means that the researcher gains insight into the nature of phenomenon, gaining new ideas, views and perceptions about the causes of learner dropouts. In this study I have used both descriptive and interpretive data to explore the reasons for learner dropouts in rural secondary schools. By evaluating the data, I have assessed its effectiveness in providing new information about the problem.

An interpretive paradigm was developed, using information from the participants, namely secondary school in and out of school learners, parents, and teachers. I focused on the way they use their experiences to interpret their surroundings, and described what was happening by holistic listening, interpreting and gaining better understanding. The research was open; participants were met in their own world in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the research problem. This paradigm developed what Goldenberg (1992: 321) refers to as an 'insider perspective.' Interviews of different groups of participants were therefore used to capture an accurate view of reasons for dropouts.



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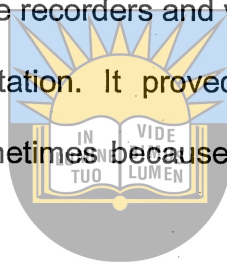
1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study was conducted into two rural secondary schools and two rural communities in Fort Beaufort District in Eastern Cape.

1.9 Limitations of the study

It was envisaged that this study would meet certain constraints which would hinder its smooth running, and this proved to be the case. The constraints were:

- Learners would not speak freely about what caused them not to come to school or to leave school totally e.g. in case of abuse sexually; spiritually and emotionally.
- Lack of resources such as tape recorders and video cameras to be used by the researcher was another limitation. It proved to be too difficult to record interviews, or video them sometimes because of unavailability of electricity in the rural communities.



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- Parents would not recognize that at times their lack of support could be the cause of learner dropouts.

An additional unexpected limitation was the national teachers' strike that led to alterations in my time schedule.

1.10 Ethical considerations

In conducting this study I asked permission to conduct my research from both secondary schools in written form. Each respondent was given a consent form

and agreed that they would participate freely and honestly providing necessary information to the researched study.

In conducting this study I was ensured that the research was conducted with respect and sympathy. All the information in this regard was treated confidentially. People participated freely; no one was forced to participate. The rights and dignity of others were respected. I worked with commitment with the respondents of this study.



Schwandt (1997:106) defines ethics as “moral dilemmas arising from issues of trust, confidentiality, harm, deception and so forth”. Ethical issues taken into consideration for this study were establishing rapport, anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation of the respondents. According to Creswell (1994:165), “the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s)”.

I tried to establish interpersonal relationships with the participants to neutralize initial distrust. Nevertheless, according to Mouton (1996:159) “it might not always be practical”. Because there is no anonymity with face-to-face interviews, I guaranteed confidentiality to the respondents. According to Arksey and Knight (1999:132), “confidentiality is about not disclosing the identity of study

participants, and not attributing comments to individuals or institutions with which they are associated to be recognized, unless they have expressly consented to being identified". Therefore, the names of respondents and institutions were not mentioned. Mouton (1996:157) argues, "subjects tend to be reluctant or unwilling to participate because they may regard the investigation as an invasion of their privacy". In this regard I assured the respondents that the study was for academic purposes only.



1.11 Definition of Terms

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The following are definitions of terms important to the study:-

- Dropout – is the phenomenon when children terminate their school chores before they reach matric, sometimes standard 8 in any type of teaching or education (Grabes, 1980: 01).
- School climate – is a subtle quality which originated from a very complicated structure of influences.
- Substance abuse- is the use of any drug (legal or illegal) when it is detrimental to the user's physical, emotional, intellectual or spiritual well being.

- Poor academic performance – is a virtual certainty for learners with a high rate of absenteeism and this leads to failing of courses and standards, both of which are strong predictors of dropping out (Wehlage, 1989:37).
- Teenage pregnancy the condition of being pregnant among young persons of between 13 and 19 years.
- Motivation – learners' eagerness to engage in learning in order to realize goals
- Poverty – levels of income or lack of income on which people survive



1.12 Conclusion

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This chapter presents a broad framework for this study. It introduced the structure of this study which consists of:

- A review of literature in Chapter 2, including the views of a range of authors and researchers on learner dropouts;
- A discussion of the research methodology used in the case study in Chapter 3;
- A presentation and analysis of the data collected in this study, in Chapter 4;
- Conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

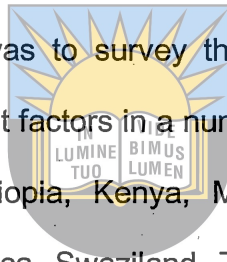
This study was undertaken to investigate the causes of learner dropouts in rural secondary schools. Many reasons have been given for the high number of drop outs, as will be seen in the studies below. This chapter examines how these studies were researched, their findings and relevance to my study. In order to give clarity to the stated problem learners, educators and parents' perceptions will be examined in other studies to determine personal, school, social and family factors that contribute to the rate of learner dropouts.

Reasons why learners, both boys and girls, remain out of school are complex and vary according to the historical, political, social and economical realities of each country. However, there are enough consistencies in research results that reveal common factors internationally. This chapter will present studies ranging over several African countries as well as internationally, and then focus on a number of South African countries that reveal similar factors. These are of particular importance to my study.

2.2. African and internationally based research studies on learner drop out.

A study prepared for member countries of the East and Southern African Region, (ESAR)¹ was reviewed to establish the causes of learner dropouts.

The aim of the above study was to survey the existing data on the gender differences in the school drop out factors in a number of countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

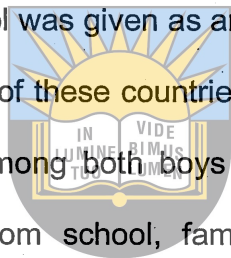


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The data used was compiled from the relevant ESAR documents which consisted of UNICEF and UNESCO publications. The data was solicited through interviews, and was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics of tables including the reasons for dropping out of school revealed by the dropouts themselves.

¹ A Statistical Overview of the Status of School Dropout in Member Countries of East and Southern African Region (ESAR), Nairobi (October 2000)

Through interviewing learners out of school the reports found that the main cause of drop out was poverty, in other words a lack of money to meet school expenses, food, transport, clothes, medicines and school uniforms. In primary schools in Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania where there is free education, learners leave school mainly to fulfill their needs and wants by looking for jobs on farms. Some drop out because of early marriage or being forced to do household chores. Lack of interest in school was given as an important environmental factor in both school and home. In all of these countries the dropout rate as a result of financial problems was high among both boys and girls. Other reasons were illness, pregnancy, distance from school, family problems, lack of parental support, truancy and delinquency.



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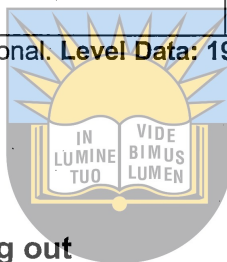
Below are tables of selected countries showing dropout rate statistics and reasons why secondary school learners are out of school in Tanzania, Malawi and Ethiopia.

TANZANIA

Table 2.1 Total number of students dropping out of Government Secondary Schools by Gender and Reason, 1997/98.

GENDER	DEATHS	DELIQUENT	PREGNANCY	TOTAL
Boys	44	3197		3241
Girls	49	3177	526	3752
TOTAL	93	6374	526	6993

Source: Basic Primary Statistics – regional. Level Data: 1999.



TANZANIA

Table 2.2 Reasons for dropping out

	BOYS %	GIRLS %
Pregnancy	0	38.5
Lack of money	39.1	15.4
Illness	21.7	15.4
Death in family	13	15.4
Need to work in home	4.3	7.7
Distance from school	0	7.77
Lack of interest	8.6	0
Difficulties with school work	4.3	0
Wanted to earn money	4.3	0

ETHIOPIA

Table 2.3 Drop Out Rate by Gender and Grade 1993/94²

GRADE	% OF DROP OUT BOYS	% OF DROP OUT GIRLS
1	28	24
2	3	7
3	3	4
4	7	9
5	4	3
6		
7	13	10
8	12	13
9	19	22
10	12	18
11	14	16

NOTE: Grade 6 has been left out because it is assumed that all pupils in grade 6 have completed the cycle.

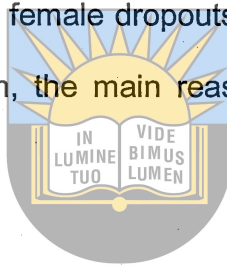
According to research carried out by the team, the drop out rate was higher in rural areas. The higher rate in rural areas was found in all grades. It was also noted that the completion rate was lower for girls (30%) in the rural areas than for

² Table in Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Ministry of Education(MOE). Report on Gender and Primary Schooling in Ethiopia, March 1997.

boys (39%). In urban areas, however, the girls' rate of completion was higher (66%) than that of the boys (59%). This means that girls in rural areas were likely to drop out in bigger numbers because of pregnancy, looking for jobs and also doing household chores.

ETHIOPIA

In a sample of 25 males and 22 female dropouts in Jimma and 37 male and 31 female dropouts in East Gojjam, the main reasons as given by the dropouts themselves are:



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Table 2.4 Reasons for dropping out in Jimma compared to East Gojjam.

REASONS	JIMMA		EAST GOJJAM	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Lack of money	48.0	40.9	35.1	22.6
Domestic chores	4.0	22.7	5.4	29
Illness	12.0	4.5	0.0	22.6
Marriage	0.0	4.5	0.0	12.9
Other	8.0	4.5	5.4	3.2
Lack parents' support	0.0	4.5	5.4	3.2
Need to work	12.	4.5	29.7	0.0
Distance from school	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wanted to earn money	4.0	0.0	16.2	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: IDS Report 31, Gender and Primary Schooling in Ethiopia.

MALAWI

With a sample of 389 females and 464 male dropouts in the rural areas and compared to 110 males and 101 females in the urban areas, the main reasons as given by the dropouts themselves are as follows:

Table 2.5 Reasons given for dropping out by learners

	RURAL		URBAN	
	FEMALE %	MALE %	FEMALE %	MALE %
Cost of schooling	33.7	50.9	31.8	43.6
Lack of interest	19.3	15.1	16.4	17.3
Health/death	17.2	16.8	17.3	17.3
Puberty related	13.6	2.6	13.6	5.0
School related	8.7	7.8	10.0	7.9
Labour demands	4.9	5.6	8.2	3.0
And others	2.1	1.3	2.7	2.0

Source: Ministry of Education, Malawi and IDS Sussex: "Report on Gender and Schooling in Malawi", October 1999.

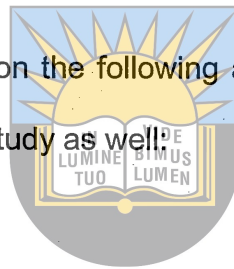
The above cited studies show statistics especially of rural and urban areas drop out rates and their reasons, while my study investigated the causes of learner dropouts in rural secondary schools. The reasons are categorized as social, school, family and personal factors. For the benefit of the study the term drop out is the phenomenon where children terminate their schooling before they have reached matric (Garbes in Grawage, 1980:1). Similarly Verwoerd and Grawage (1980) define dropouts as any eligible compulsory school learners who at any stage permanently end their school career for any reasons, which does not comply or correlate with their inherent shortcoming or ability.

The next section looks at some of the factors arising from these studies in more detail and relates them to other literature.

2.3. Social factors related to learners dropouts

All of the above studies focus on the following as important factors in dropouts and these are important in my study as well:

- Poverty;
- Delinquency and truancy;
- Pregnancy



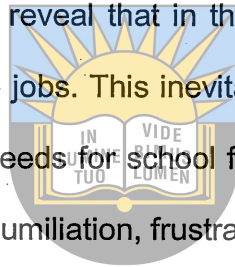
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2.3.1 Poverty

Pretorius (1998:307) refers to poverty in the family, as manifested in poor and overcrowded housing, malnutrition, poor hygiene, lack of books and toys. Moshale (2003) while doing research towards International Co – operation for Autonomous Human Resources Capacity Building for Education Development in Africa, noted that poverty is a multi – faceted phenomenon that is a resultant force of economic, political – institutional social processes that reinforce each other. Poverty also has a multi – dimensional application because it has different

interpretations and is experienced differently in urban, peri – urban and rural areas, in different sectors of the economy and in different geographical areas.

There are many causes of poverty such as laziness, over dependency, poor governance, limited or no jobs and lack of finances. The study of statistics from Tanzania, Malawi and Ethiopia reveal that in those countries there is a lack of finance due to insufficient or no jobs. This inevitably results in insufficient funds, to maintain school and family needs for school fees, uniform, books, medicines, clothes and food. This causes humiliation, frustration and lack of motivation to do anything. Unquestionably, according to Grawage (1992), students who come from a poor environment which is not conducive to providing the requirements for school, will automatically drop out of school when they fail to meet such requirements as paying school fees or buying school support material. Some of these learners are very capable but fail because of a non-supportive environment. These studies make a strong case for claiming that children who drop out of school often blame their circumstances; because they come from poor homes, they are often victimized at school. This view is confirmed in my study as well. This shows that poverty denies the leisure, self respect and opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of society, which includes education. As a result learners who live in countries with problems like Malawi, Tanzania



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and Ethiopia look for jobs on farms in order to survive by meeting their daily life requirements; thus poverty was their main reason for dropping out.

2.3.2 Delinquency and Truancy

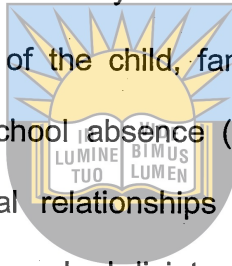
Some learners drop out because of delinquency especially in Tanzania where this occurred with both male and female learners. Delinquency is defined as any action that is prohibited by law Toles et al. cited in Trueba et al.1989) noted that delinquent behaviour is related to a negative attitude towards school and authority. If learners do not obey school rules, they are suspended. Unauthorized absences from school without notice lasting more than three days also result in learners being called to school with their parents. Irresponsible learners, who dodge classes to sunbathe, and those who do not read or do their work will end up leaving school and becoming misfits. The statistics mentioned above did not refer to irresponsible behavior as a cause of learner drop out, though this was evident in my study.

According to Herson (1980:7 – 19) the following factors contribute to truancy:

- Boredom with the school curriculum;

- Moving from relatively informal and sheltered environment of the primary school to the more highly structured milieu of the high school;
- Unfriendly and aggressive classmates and critical teachers.

The personality of a child also determines truancy and unhappiness at home contributes leaving many learners lonely and miserable. These contexts involve the interpersonal relationships of the child, family and school concerning the issue of chronic unexcused school absence (Walch et al cited in Grawage, 1992:147). These interpersonal relationships influence truant children in a negative way, in that they have marked disinterest in school with feelings of not belonging and consistently performing at a lower potential.



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2.3.3 Pregnancy related school dropouts

Another study examined was written by (Grant and Hallaman, 2006). The objectives of their study were to examine the factors associated with schoolgirl pregnancy, as well as the likelihood of school dropout and subsequent re – enrollment among pregnant schoolgirls. The study focused on data collected from KwaZulu Natal, South Africa in 2001. They administered a questionnaire to collect information. The collected data was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics where they gained information from data concerning pregnancy. Their

findings acknowledged that many learners who became pregnant while enrolled in school dropped out and did not return to school following the pregnancy.

Through their research they discovered that “a study conducted in Kenya found that girls with poor performances were significantly more likely than higher performance students to become pregnant” (Grant and Hallman, 2006:5). Elondou – Enyèguè (2004:517) cited in Grant and Hallman (2006:5) concur that respondents may down play pregnancy as a factor in some of the dropouts that are imputed to marriage or to the lack of money. He added that they mentioned pregnancy as their reason for leaving school which is influenced by their families’ financial situations as there is usually no one except the learner to look after the baby. The above study is relevant because pregnancy plays a great part in learner dropouts in South Africa.

According to Wehlage et al. (1989:62) it is estimated that approximately one third of the girls who drop out of high school do so because of reasons relating to pregnancy. Despite their common condition, adolescents who become pregnant also face heavy pressure from their families. Some parents become angry with them and refuse to allow them to return to school after the birth and force them to look for jobs to care for their babies. Some are chased away from home to stay

on their own or with the babies' fathers. The sequences of such demands are that the school completion becomes more difficult unless they get necessary support. In contrast there will be no solution if the father of the child is also a learner.

The pregnancy factor in turn keeps the cycle of poverty intact. Many dropouts report that they leave school because they are pregnant or they are getting married (Ekstroin et al. as cited in Rumberger, 1983). They found it a good reason to leave school because they needed comfort (Hofferth and Moore, 1979). The pattern of life for a poor young woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth is miserable. She is likely to have one more child usually within two years. Mostly she fails to go back to school and once she has a second child, she is unlikely to finish high school. She is unlikely to marry and she is at risk of cycling in and out of welfare system for a significant portion of her life. Kaufman et al.(cited in Grant and Hallman, 2006:7) noted that "qualitative research in South Africa found that some young women marry or move into their partner's home following a pregnancy, and are there by subject to the financial and labour priorities of their new household, which may not place a priority in their continuing education".

In contrast, Meeker et al,(cited in Grant and Hallman, 2006:7) noted that in Botswana young women dropped out of school because of pregnancy but those with good school performances usually returned and received their matriculation certificate. Indeed it is unclear to what extent the pregnancy may have been a precipitating event or an additional financial burden that made school continuation difficult.



A Report of Education in South African rural communities, researched for the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa (NMF:2005) for the same reason indicate in their findings – that among school dropouts many girls apply or receive state child – support grant after giving birth. The money is seen as poverty relief for their families rather than as partially supporting the needs of their babies. It seems as if pregnancy will continue to be a factor contributing towards learner dropouts in schools.

2.4 Family factors related to learner dropout

There are many family influences which lead to learner dropout from schools. Some include the need for money, poor health of the learner or a family member, marriage and parental attitudes towards school.

Family factors in this section will focus on :

- Broken homes
- Socio-economic status of families

2.4.1 Broken homes

A broken home according to Van Rooyen in Schreiber, (1990) refers to the situation where one or both parents are absent for a long period or are not living together. Some of the parents desert their children when they leave home without making any arrangements to continue to contribute financially or practically to the family. Broken homes leave children upset and with guilt feelings, behavior problems, depression, isolation, low self – esteem and they may even become ill. Furthermore divorce or desertion by a parent, a second marriage, death or sickness of any member of the families means a disruption of the family situation. Learners who fall under these aspects which interrupt their education inevitably become dropouts, according to (Pretorius, 1998). In my experience as a teacher, sadness in the home leads to very troubled learners. A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit; again a cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. Therefore learners who are victims of family disruption have their visions and ambitions killed because their hopes perish.

Mothers who go through separation or divorce suffer significant reduction of loss of income. Many live in poverty and are forced to raise their children in poor sections of town under adverse conditions. Shaffer (1989) agrees that divorce represents a drastic change in family life. Life is stressful and unsettled for both the children and the parent. Definitely children who are raised by single, illiterate, unemployed parents have an increased risk of psychological damage and poor academic achievement. The performance of children from single - parent families is lower on measure of school performance, and children often become disobedient while custodian parents may suddenly become more punitive and controlling.



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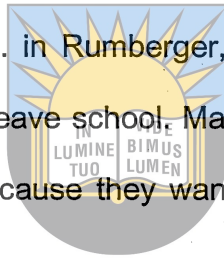
These family problems exist precisely because the high school experience has been discouraging, unengaging and uninviting and because schools have been structured in such a way that they do not accommodate students experiencing unbearable family problems, and this leads to learners dropping out from school. Fine (in Rumberger, 1983) revealed that learners coming from illiterate backgrounds, low or no income tend to drop out due to the above – mentioned factors. Learners who come from single parent homes or stepfamilies are a greater risk of dropping out than students who come from happy families

McMillan et al. (1994:43). A large number of learners dropping out are from single parent families. Natrielo (1995) identifies those learners at risk who lose self – actualization. Those learners lack a drive, need, motive in order to achieve their efforts and life plans including education.

Reber and Reber (2001:660) refer to self – actualization as the final level of psychological development that can be achieved when all basic and growth needs are fulfilled and the full potential is actualized. Woolfolk (1993:349) defines self-actualization as an ongoing process in which a person constantly strives to realize potential. This means that to achieve their own goal, a person needs motivation which will develop self – actualization. In contrast learners who lose potential become unmotivated on the whole and leave school totally. This demonstrates that poverty with its inter – related social issues affecting school attendance. Again lack of family stability and support is a contributory factor that leads to learner dropouts. Interesting findings of these studies about broken families show that learners drop out due to the destructive effects of broken homes.

2.4.2 Socio – economic status

Numerous studies have shown that family background, particularly socio – economic status, exerts considerable influences on educational attainment in general, as well as on dropout behaviour. Learners from families of lower socio – economic status, when such status is measured by parental education or family income, exhibit higher dropout rates than do pupils from families of higher socio – economic status (Beckham et al. in Rumberger, 1989). Economic factors also influence students' decisions to leave school. Many dropouts in different studies reported that they left school because they wanted to, or felt that they had to work to help out their families.



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Numerous studies have found that dropout rates are higher for students from families of low socio – economic status which prevents them from fulfilling the school needs such as school fees, books, food, medicine and school uniform.

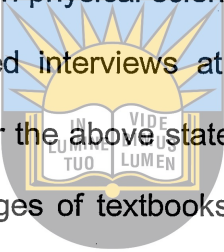
Furthermore, Mac Lanahan et al. (1994) pointed out that dropout rates decreased as family income levels increased because they could fulfill their school needs. Students who come from families living below the poverty level were twice as likely to drop out of school as students who came from families who lived above the poverty level (Rumberger, 1987). This economically

deprived child is not prepared for school and is at a high risk of school dropout because of poverty and negligence in either the home or school environment (Garbes, 1980). Lack of money to pay for school needs, inadequate clothing or the need to help at home with the house or care for younger siblings may raise the absenteeism rates of many children or keep them out of school altogether. Boocock (1980) says that low socio – economic status groups then lag behind in school achievement because of the inability of their families to provide the same stimulation and academic preparation that wealthier families can often provide, and the assignment of children from low socio – economical status homes to academically inferior and overcrowded schools. Parents in high socio – economic status families are more likely to get involved in their children's education. This creates a chance for the children to improve their academic performance. Lower – class parents, on the other hand, tend to have minimum education, to regard school as an alien and hostile institution probably on account of their own negative experiences at school and be less influenced by it than middle – class or upper – class parents (Weiner et al. in Scheiber,1964). As a result of family background influences, the child who will eventually drop out of school will likely be the one who attributes their circumstances to factors beyond their control.

These studies present convincing evidence that parental background in education and also lack of finances contribute to learner drop out.

2.5 School factors related to learner dropout

Another study examined was carried out by Kasente (2002) in Kampala, Uganda. The objectives of the study were to examine at the post secondary level study, factors that create discrepancies in the numbers of men and women enrolled in certain field of study for example in physical science, forestry, agriculture, fishing and engineering. They conducted interviews at schools in order to find the relevant data which would answer the above stated problem. The school related constraints were listed as shortages of textbooks and other learning materials, which led to many obstacles to good teaching, which in turn resulted in bad academic performances.

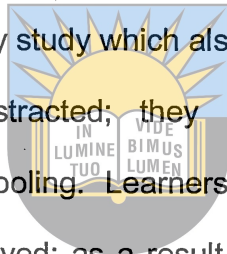


The logo of the University of Fort Hare is a circular emblem. It features a central sun with rays, positioned above an open book. The book has the Latin motto 'IN VIDE LUMEN TUO' written on its pages. The entire emblem is set against a blue background with a white border.

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During interviews different groups were asked to express their perspectives about the higher dropout rate of girls. They revealed that sexual harassment either by school boys or teachers made them uncomfortable and unsafe at school. Lack of ambition was another reason that led to their dropping out. They did not have visions based on their future plans, because some got pregnant and had to look for jobs rather than train for a profession. Poor financial status at home, because their parents were unemployed, also left them unable to meet the requirements of school.

In addition, although the teachers in Kasente's study were trying their best to run schools, they did not listen attentively to learners' views and they also preferred boys to girls. Feedback on the amount of learning taking place was ignored. Learners were not given a chance to express their feelings and opinions about teaching and their dissatisfaction with school management (Kasente, 2002:7 – 10). Kasente's study relates to my study which also found that learners who were sexually harassed become distracted; they lose concentration and lack confidence and interest in schooling. Learners who are neglected by their teachers have their vision destroyed; as a result they leave school without any interest in returning.



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Kasente's qualitative methodology did not measure parents' perceptions of why more girls drop out than boys. Obviously parents will withdraw their daughters if they get the impression that the girls are vulnerable to abuse or anything that parents do not perceive as appropriate. They prefer to have their daughters go to school managed by woman teachers and administrators where they can express their feelings, opinions and frustrations. The importance of parental support for girls' education is evident in many countries (Ramahoho et al. 2000) where parents encouraged their daughters and sons in their academic performance, by

helping them to do their homework, also excusing the daughters from household chores to give them time for school work. As has been shown, the omission of parental views in Kasente's study means that it does not give full information about the reasons why girls in Uganda have a higher rate of drop out than boys.

2.6 South African research studies on learner dropout



This survey of literature also includes several important South African research studies and literature on the learner dropout problem in this country. They are significant because they mirror many of the factors that are mentioned internationally, and especially in other African countries. However, my study benefited from some additional factors that arise in the discussion of South African research below. These are:

- Distance between home and school;
- The impact of HIV/Aids on schooling.

2.6.1 The Human Rights Watch

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) 2005 Report focused on the right to basic education. Their aim was to look at the challenges that face the

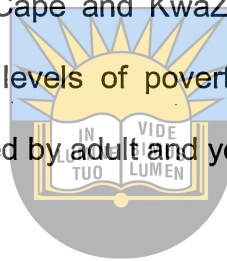
implementation of policies in line with the country's far reaching and progressive constitution. Their areas of concern were particularly related to the right of detained and accused persons, and also access to education on commercial farms. During their public hearing they reported that 2314 children were in detention because they committed crimes such as sexual abuse, violence and gang related activities. They reported in their findings that a solution to poverty and basically a service such as health care and education in rural areas needs to be found.



They mentioned that learners in rural areas traveling distances as long as 30km every day to and from schools are exposed to dangers such as sexual violence, and this can result in higher school dropout rates. Furthermore conditions for education in rural areas remain poor and inadequate when all citizens are supposed to be enjoying freedom. Insecure buildings, lack of water and poor sanitation are some of the problems in these areas acknowledged by Human Rights Watch Report (2006). The Report mentions critical problems that rural schools are faced with, that may cause learner dropouts. Some learners shoplift or steal because they are hungry and poor. Lack of toilets may result in diseases such as cholera, sometimes leading to deaths. Lack of infrastructure may discourage both learners and teachers or cause seasonal illnesses like colds because of broken windows.

2.6.2 South African Studies related to poverty, distance, and school factors

A Report on Education in South African Rural Communities by HSRC & EPC researched for the Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) in South Africa, aimed to find out what rural poor communities experience in education. Their data was solicited through interviews in nine ex-homeland communities comprising three each in Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. These were chosen because they had the highest levels of poverty and unemployment and the lowest levels of education attained by adult and youth in the country.

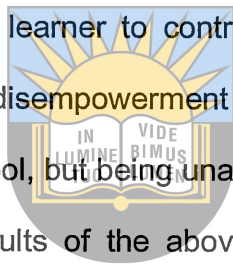


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The main factor that emerged that confirms the earlier studies discussed was poverty. The study found that rural education and its potential for development is deeply connected with the problems of poverty in rural communities and is consequently an important factor in learner dropouts. The findings of the study pointed out that poverty factors referred to an interaction of physical, social and psychological factors. Physical poverty referred to such things as inability of parents or siblings to meet the cost of schooling such as fees, shoes and transport.

This study raised the additional factor of distance between school and home as a cause of dropout. In rural areas, learners usually have the longest distance to cover on foot using potentially risky routes that exposed learners to the dangers of car accidents and rape in the case of female learners. The NMF Study points out that “young learners perceive the distance from school as one of the reasons some children drop out of school” (NMF,; 4). Poverty refers to social factors, which include the need for the learner to contribute to the family survival by looking for work. Psychological **disempowerment** referred to the level of despair such as wanting the child in school, but being unable to satisfy that wish because of the lack of finance. The results of the above study are supported by the findings of my study which also found that distance from school is a risk factor for learners’ safety and health.



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The NMF Study also raised other school factors as a cause of learner dropouts. A number of cases documented by the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) research in rural schools tell of learners dropping out or missing portions of the year when they were unable to pay fees. Often this was a result of criticism or humiliation brought to bear on learners by teachers and principals. They added that wearing an incorrect uniform similarly marked learners as poor. According to the NMF study: “Failure to pay school fees means that a child can be sent home, kept outside the class, not be given books or stationary, be excluded from writing

examinations and using school facilities, have his or her report card withheld and be made to repeat the class” (NMF,2005:53). NMF research revealed that Eastern Cape schools have the lowest school fee income due to insufficient parental income or the high rate of unemployment.

Poverty causes learners to stay at home because their fees are unpaid. The Department of Education acknowledged that non – payment of fees did sometimes result in schools acting contrary to their human rights obligations. This was contained in its review of the financing, resources and costs of education in public school (DOE, 2003). “Poor learners whose parents could not pay school fees have been turned away from school and placed into separate rooms, away from other learners forced to sit on the floor, named and shamed at school assembly and so on”(Ibid 2003:54). Parents are not clearly informed of exemption of school fee policies. Even learners officially exempted from payment may experience intimidation in comments made by principals or educators (DOE, 2003:90).

Those learners definitely will become humiliated due to treatment they receive. Humiliated learners consequently become unmotivated, affected by low self-esteem and self-image. In schools, greater worth should be placed on the

abilities and talents of the learner and not on paying school fees. A confident child is ready for the challenges of learning and understands its importance. The findings did not mention some schools which are flexible about school uniforms and fees and consequently have no drop outs from this factor.

The NMF findings on school factors affirm the African regional studies in the previous section and also other South African researchers, such as Ngwasheng, (1987:1) who reported that the learners dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy, lack of motivation and poor academic performance. Moreover, he added that the dropout's family was characterized by low income and a lower level of parental education. The majority of dropouts seem to come from extended and overcrowded families. Furthermore, pupils sometimes find school boring, as a result of dissatisfaction with conditions in school, poor academic performance, peer pressure and the school climate as outlined in Furtion, (1993:1) who adds that "there is a group of pupils who also cannot cope in the normal classroom situation and the highest failure rate of dropouts come from it".

Equally important studies investigate at risk youth's perceptions of schooling in Kathorus. Malaka (1999:1) conducted a study focused on grade eight in three secondary schools, namely, Katlehong, Landulwazi and Hinge in the Kathorus

area on the East Rand in the Gauteng Province. The motivation for conducting this research was the dropout rate of students at the Junior Secondary phase which is the same grade level that my study focuses on. Again through condensing, organizing, categorizing, conceptualizing and coding data that represented voices of the participants during observations and interviews, the culture of teachers neglecting their responsibilities was expressed in all the schools. Students were all reported as “bunking” periods, emulating their teachers and spending time smoking in the toilets or sunbathing outside the classrooms.



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Most students were reported not to have done their homework tasks and had not compiled notes after lesson periods. Teachers were said to ridicule such students by insulting them, cursing them or teasing them about their natural deformities instead of providing reprimands, guidance, advice or motivation. Hence some learners in this situation were said to dislike some teachers, certain subjects and to have dissatisfaction with school thus failing, not getting along with other learners, and becoming too confused in the classroom situation. In this case, teachers acting as parents of learners must treat them equally as their loved ones not as enemies. The findings that some learners are driven to leave the school because of teachers' abuse are unacceptable in any community.

2.6.3 Other Studies relating School Factors as a cause of learner dropouts

A number of writers cite different school related factors as a cause of dropouts.

➤ Poor primary school preparation

One of the most important socio – cultural reasons for high school underachievers and dissatisfaction is the lack of good primary school preparation. Grawage (1992) writes that a poor reading ability failing grades and irregular attendance are among primary predictors of dropouts. Sibinda (2004:9) estimated that a learner living with heads complicated secondary school are less to dropout. A logical explanation could be that dropouts lack the ability to keep up with academic work, but others researchers Grant and Hallman (2006:9) found this to be inaccurate.

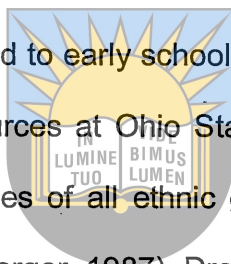
➤ Lack of involvement in school decision making and poor performance.

Malaka (1999:1) noted that to foster acceptance, trust and a sense of belonging in students, they should be involved, for example, in the formulation of school rules and policy, planning and sporting activities. It is only by empowering youth through participative involvement that one can become what one has potential for. In this way, learners at risk will not feel dissociated and rejected. Garber (1980:72) stated that the climate of the school is the quality, which originates from a very complicated structure of influences that can lead to or prevent learner dropouts. Participation in activity in and around the physical set up of the schools

helps to prevent dropouts if the school and classroom atmosphere provide a safe learning space and a safe social space for learners. If the learner does not learn what is meaningful and valuable for achieving complete fulfillment this can also lead to dropouts promoted by lack of motivation (Ngwasheng, 1987:1).

➤ III treatment of learners leading to negative attitudes to school

III – treatment of learners by teachers results in a negative attitude towards the school environment and is related to early school dropouts. In a study conducted by the centre for Human Resources at Ohio State University in (1980) a large number of young American males of all ethnic groups reported leaving school because they “disliked” it (Rumberger, 1987). Dropouts nearly always experience alienation, rootlessness, hopelessness and estrangement from their school, home, neighborhood and society in general. Potential dropouts typically have inferior social and communication skills and such pupils seldom, if ever participate in extra – curricular activities. Cervantes in Rumberger (1987:65) mentioned that negative school attitudes such as rebellion are related to the dropout rate. Equally important is being on the periphery of school life, being unsuccessful academically, feeling alienated and disconnected from the mainstream. One would hardly expect the dropout to perceive the school in any other manner due to their lack of control over their lives and lack of discipline. They have poor attitudes, and little interest in school (Malaka, 1998:01). Wehlage et al. (1986) reported a similar pattern among Latino youth in South Texas City



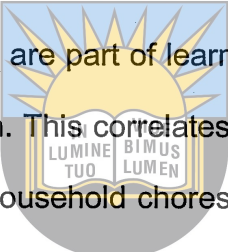
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that those students came to school with beliefs and actions that worked against their academic success. Those attitudes led them to respond to their treatment by the school in a manner that compounded their problem. They formed groups, they did not follow school rules and ditched class rather than do school work. Their attitudes towards school determined their negative attitudes towards their demotivated learning experience. They are less emotionally mature, show weaker personality integration and a lack of ego strength. They are also suspicious and almost paranoid about safety tending towards guilt feelings, show more symptoms of tension, frustration as well as suppressed anxiety (Van Rooyen cited in Grawage, 1992). It is difficult for learners with such complex problems to maintain themselves in a school situation. Their more complex life situations and inner conflict make their problems unbearable. Obviously they would feel out of place in school.

2.6.4 South African Studies related to family factors

➤ The Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF, 2005) mentioned the cost of schooling as a reason for absenteeism or dropouts. Teacher respondents point to poverty as an important barrier to access, given the high percentage of teachers who feel children are kept at home to help with domestic and agricultural work. Teachers also considered lack of parental interest as an

important reason for learners skipping school. NMF (2005: 45 – 47) revealed that one of the most common reasons for children dropping out is that their families need them to work. Every child has extensive domestic duties. Boys mainly work in the fields, keeping cattle, looking for the lost ones and the girls do domestic work like cooking, washing dishes, laundry and cleaning the house.



Parents also believe that chores are part of learning about and preparing for life, complementing formal education. This correlates with my study which found that children who are doing mostly household chores become tired, and do not have the chance to do their homework, read or revise what had been done at school resulting in poor school attendance. Also, most children live with their old or disabled parents who are unable to do the house chores themselves. These household chores create tension between school schedules, family responsibilities, social roles and the desire for education. Schools require learners to be there on time, ready for learning. In their homes, parents expect them to do the household chores during their school time.

Sometimes these parents had the same experiences in their youth and expect their own children to do the same. Due to poverty learners do not attend pre – schools which limit their opportunities of education. The NMF (2005:48) reported

that in most rural pre – schools there is no feeding scheme, so learners cannot attend pre – schools, and start grade one lacking basic skills, knowledge and values of grade R. This gap is rarely factored into the reasons for failing grades in the foundation phase. The foundation phase level teachers tend to teach bigger classes than normal which has consequences for the quality of teaching since the teacher cannot give enough attention to those who are behind the mean stream. This results in learners being unable to complete their work on time; they perform badly, are bored and dislike teachers until eventually they drop out of school. The study highlights the facts that if the average class is large and multi–grade teaching is applied, the teacher cannot teach effectively. Learners and learning also suffered because of a lack of relevant resources. Therefore each learner cannot be given full individual attention during the subject period time, whereas good academic achievers can perform well. In addition parents and guardians are not always able to provide the necessary educational support to their children and this may at least provide one clue as to why learners fail and repeat. The (NMF) study found that the levels of education among adults were low so no one in the learners' household was sufficiently educated to help with homework and further teaching (NMF,2005:29). Obviously those parents struggle to oversee their children's homework and they lose their self confidence, which results in a diffuse personality disorganization. Conversely parents play an important role in determining the educational outcomes of their children and children often want to achieve a similar educational level as their parents.



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The study found that better educated parents encouraged or forced learners to stay in school, and learners obtained good results and performed well in contrast with those who developed diffused personality disorganization due to illiterate backgrounds. This is in line with earlier studies by Catterall (1985) who found that diffuse personality disorganization is more noticeable in at risk pupils. They show a lack of self worth, have a poorer moral fabric and are less emotionally mature, show weaker personality integration and lack of ego strength, they are suspicious and are almost paranoid about safety, tend towards guilt feelings, show more symptoms of tension and frustration as well as suppressed anxiety Van Rooyen in Grawage (1992). This also results in low self esteem and self acceptance.



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The more a person is dissatisfied with his characteristics Grawage (1992), the more negative his self concept. A child with negative or low self concept normally has high anxiety levels (Blesoe in Fine, 1964). His school achievements and social adjustment tend to be poorer late on in life. Beck et al.(in Grawage, 1992) Larson et al. (in Grawage, 1992:163) suggested that the dropout who has experienced feelings of failure in school, is greeted by a society that is overtly hostile to dropouts, thus reinforcing feelings of worthlessness to such an extent that they are easily influenced by peer groups who are out of school, thus eventually dropping out from school in order to be accepted by the age group. To conclude learners who develop low self esteem and self acceptance and are

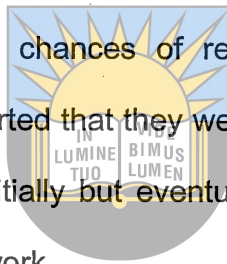
unable to express them, develop guilt and are full of anger, resulting in their dropping out.

➤ Another important South African study, CREATE by Carrim, Dieltiens, Kgope, Moyo and Rembe (2006) aimed to describe the historical context of education access in South Africa. In order to do this they explored the way in which incorrect access is conceptualized in relation with educational access. They framed their study into four zones of exclusion in education. The interest of my study was in learners who are in danger of dropping out. In their findings they noted that learners missed school because they lack money for school fees depending only on pension grants received by either their parents or grandparents. Because learners' biological parents do not work, they drop out themselves as they have to depend on their parents for a living (Ibid 2006:48). They also noted that learners said school was boring and useless because professional people lack jobs in South Africa, so there is no use to continue with their studies (Ibid 2006:78).

➤ In 2002, a South African study carried out by Porteus et al. (2002) aimed at understanding and describing the lives of out of school children and out of age learners in the context of low income urban communities characterized by social challenges, many of them family related. The aim of this study was to consider the extent to which out of school children and out of age learners are similar or

distinct as groups, and to make policy and programme recommendations to better cater to their education and social service needs.

It was found that in different learners' stories, reasons for learner dropouts were given, such as some learners losing their parents and having no family support look after them. Another cause was a lack of money because parents spent everything on alcohol, so the chances of returning to school were limited (Porteus, 2002: 55). Some reported that they were treated badly by their families and refused to go to school initially but eventually they returned to school but were far behind in their school work.



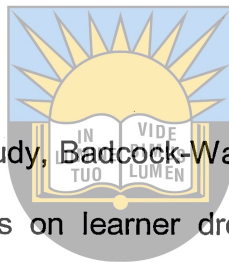
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2.6.5 HIV/AIDS as a health factor in school dropouts

Emerging data suggests that many children are orphaned as a result of HIV/Aids, and are forced to abandon education to care for ill parents or to work in order to supplement family income. The lengths of time children are absent from school as a result of care – taking responsibilities and whether they are able to reintegrate into schools at a later stage is not yet clear. A survey conducted by the University of Fort Hare Education Policy Unit (2005) looked at the extent of the implementation of the Right to Basic Education in poor communities. In their findings many educators cited that some learners drop out of school suffering from illnesses. Some were HIV positive; some had to look after sick family members at home. This study also indicated that although there is a policy and awareness on HIV/Aids among learners and educators many schools do not have their own HIV/Aids policies; some HIV/Aids infected and affected learners drop out of school because of discrimination.

These findings are relevant to my study which found that HIV/Aids was beginning to have a traumatic impact both on educators and learners. The work of educators, both those who are HIV positive and those who have developed fully blown AIDS, will be compromised by the period of illness. Once they know they are HIV positive, many are likely to lose interest in continuing professional

development. Most educators will have to take on additional teaching and other work – related duties in order to cover for sick colleagues. In brief this will result in poor academic performance because the teachers are not well equipped with other subjects. Learners who lose parents, siblings, sisters and brothers are disturbed. They lose concentration and interest in school and eventually they drop out of school.



In a significant South African study, Badcock-Walters, Heard and Wilson, (2002) showed the impact of HIV/Aids on learner dropouts. They argued that the primary impact of HIV/Aids on education is to exacerbate existing levels of dysfunction and make an already bad situation worse. In order to investigate this impact they conducted their study piloting districts in KwaZulu Natal province selected on the basis of their rural, peri – urban, informal settlement mix and preparedness of local district and regional officials to participate. They used qualitative research methods because they went to the setting to conduct interviews. Data was collected through contact interviews, in depth interviews with the child and home based interviews.

In their findings, enrolment of learners gradually decreased each month. Absenteeism rates for learners and educators increased each month combined

with official leaves. This influenced the loss of classroom contact time which produced poor academic achievements which led to learner dropouts especially in grade 12s.

Many learners in the study lost their parents through HIV/Aids related diseases. Many had to travel long distances to find new homes or relatives and for others there was no home at all. As a result some were increasingly absent from school and became distracted. They opted to look for jobs; those who were older to support their younger brothers and sisters. Some orphans dropped out of school because they lacked school support by caregivers at home.

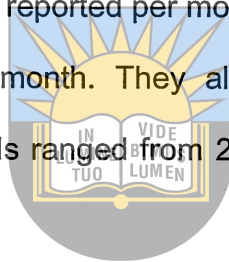


Badcock-Walters et al also noticed that learners dropped out of schools permanently. A higher percentage of female learners dropped out than males; the reasons were cited to be pregnancy, financial stress, orphans, and some due to death of HIV/Aids related diseases.

They also found that many educators were permanently lost to the system, reasons including promotions, leaving the Department and some because of

deaths which were recorded under other causes; this was done to hide HIV/Aids stigmatization upon educators.

Orphaning was defined in the study as the loss of one or both parents as opposed to maternal versus double parent orphans. Through school records of the total number of new orphans reported per month, they noticed that many new orphans were reported every month. They also evaluated this stage as a pandemic stage because schools ranged from 2 – 13 orphans per school each month.



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Because of the effects of this pandemic disease school principals and school governing body made decisions about school fees; some fee exemptions were linked to the incidence of orphaning due to the impact of HIV/Aids in their families.

The Badcock-Walters' study found that the impact of the disease on Africa's education sector is profound and is eroding the delivery of learning, teaching and development to an unprecedented degree. Learners who are HIV/Aids affected

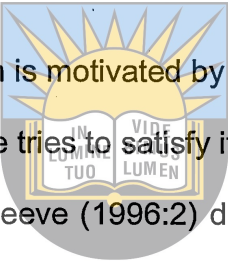
or infected eventually lose interest in school and leave the school totally due to poverty, frustration and loneliness.

2.6.6 Motivation as an overall factor in contributing to learner dropouts

As a teacher, even before I started this research, I thought that motivation was very important in leading to learners dropping out of school. The literature in this study also convinced me that many of the factors that I have described above can lead to demotivated learners; they do not want to go on when their teachers have negative attitudes to them, and their parents do not, or cannot, support them. In my research I found this to be true. When learners liked their teachers and their learning areas, they seemed energized, also if their parents encouraged them to go to school.

For the purpose of this study, the term motivation will refer to a learners' eagerness to engage in learning and the ability to pursue learning over time in order to realize personal goals and potentialities. When learners are motivated they are eager to initiate learning activities, they are willing to take risks to remain involved in learning tasks and they show a commitment to learning (Kruger and Adams, 1998:139). Motivation is a broad topic that covers the arousal, selection, direction and continuation of all types of behavior, (Snowman, 1990:516),

whereas Avenant (1988:19) says: "the role of motivation is in the recording of stimuli that motives are thus the moving reason behind human behavior". He added that it is important that the teachers understand certain forms of misbehavior in children in order to be able to assist the pupils, by building their interest.



To justify this he claims that man is motivated by his needs and want. As soon as a need originates in a person, he tries to satisfy it. Motivation is also an energizer (Reber and Reber,2001:447). Reeve (1996:2) defines it as the internal process that gives behavior its energy and direction. Motivation is also defined as the attitude of wanting to exert oneself to certain goals. Pretorius (1998:210) and Avenant (1988:198) added that younger children are fully dependent on the potential of love. If they do not trust that their teachers do not love them, many will not perform well in the teacher's classes. It is evident that when one is unmotivated, one's inner spirit dies; leaving a person without any vision and ambition.

Love is a strong instrument for unity, encouragement and success. Teachers sometimes show pupils that they do not love them in a non verbal manner, by punishing them in an unreasonable and unfair manner, humiliating them in front

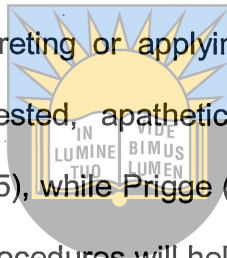
of other pupils by snide and sarcastic remarks. Some simply ignore them and refuse to see the learner's side of any matter leaving the learner become isolated and frustrated, and eventually dislike school and end up becoming dropouts, whereas they could have been good achievers. Comparatively when the learners are loved and respected by their teachers they are motivated to greater exertion.

CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE BEING MOTIVATED	CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE BEING UNMOTIVATED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class atmosphere is relaxed - There is emphasis on individual improvement - Those who fail are encouraged to overcome limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom atmosphere is tense - There is no emphasis on completion and public comparisons - Those who fail are penalized and often humiliated

This study is relevant to my study because it is evident that tense and humiliated learners tend to become dropouts. Jacobs and Gawe (1996:317) concluded that teachers need to prepare their lessons in such a way that their pupils are motivated to participate in the transfer of knowledge. A motivated class is much easier to teach than an unmotivated one, as the learners are more interested and involved in the lesson and look forward to each lesson with the teacher. Again Callahan and Clarck (1982:117) suggest: "if pupils become disgusted with the boredom and confinement of school and associate learning with pain and repulsiveness, injury done to their attitude towards education may be

irreparable". On the whole there is a direct correlation between self esteem and motivation; motivational strategies are called for when a student's responsiveness is low.

Brown (2002) explains the disadvantages underpinning loss of motivation as learners achieving lower performances; finding learning boring and irrelevant; and not comprehending, interpreting or applying material to their lives. Such students may appear disinterested, apathetic or discouraged according to Canfield et al. in Brown (1995:65), while Prigge (2002:237) noted that classroom structure and a set method of procedures will help to enforce the idea that school is a vital place, that it is important but fun. These tactics will then result in satisfied learners and can meet the expectations of success. Equally important, motivation is a vehicle that we all use to achieve success, the expected results in education; surely the motivated learner does better than the average or unmotivated student in school. By becoming motivated, students build up the characteristics needed to turn out to be lifelong learners.



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Two related factors that can lead to a decline in learner motivation. These are:

(i) Peer association and Social adjustment

Rice (cited in Grawage, 1992:501) states that peer influence is often a major factor in influencing a particular student or pupil to stay in school. Most adolescents want to do what their friends are doing. A student may be persuaded to drop out of school if his friends are dropping out to get jobs, earning “big money” or to getting married. Many school dropouts report that they do not feel their peer group has ever accepted them. The young people who feel alienated from their peers sometimes attribute it to money. They could not afford to date or dress in a way that would make them acceptable to their peers. Consequently they feel poorly treated and may drop out of school in order to escape from a painful situation they endured. In the peer group the learner gets the opportunity to test his ideas against those of the other members. This creates a feeling of belonging and acceptance to the group. In this way learners can develop a feeling of being welcome in the group (Rumberger, 1987).

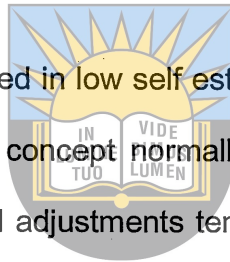
(ii) Negative attitudes towards school

It appears as if the attitudes pupils have towards school and the degree of pupil's social integration in the school environment are related to early school dropout.

Peelo and Wareham (2002) identified factors affecting negative attitudes as:

- Lack of academic support outside timetable
- Lack of staff support in learning and in teaching
- Stress related to choosing the wrong subject
- Lack of support from other learners

All these personal factors resulted in low self esteem and low self acceptance. A child with negative or low self concept normally has a high anxiety level. His school achievements and social adjustments tend to be poor later on in life and he may be easily influenced by others.

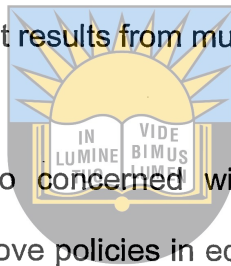


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2.7 Conclusion

All the studies in this chapter relate to my own research into the problems of learner dropouts. Their methodologies and data collection techniques are relevant to the choices that I made, as outlined in Chapter 3. They provide many of the factors that informed my interview schedules and data analysis in Chapter 4. The studies provide detailed evidence of factors that are presented in broad categories as:

- Social factors i.e. poverty, delinquency, pregnancy
- Family factors i.e. broken homes, socio-economic status of families
- School factors that are many but broadly related to teacher and learner relationships, negative attitudes to school, parental attitudes to schooling; curriculum challenges, and distance between school and home.
- Health factors i.e. the impact of HIV/Aids on families and schools
- Motivation as a factor that results from much of the above.

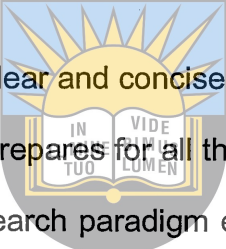


Many of the studies are also concerned with coming to conclusions and recommendations that will improve policies in education and social development that are related to the safety, security, health and happiness of learners. They have assisted me also in making recommendations about the need for the Department of Education to focus on counselling and health education for learners, as well as involving parents in their children's decisions about continuing education. These are outlined in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction



This chapter attempts to give a clear and concise description of how the research was carried out. It lays out and prepares for all the stages of the research. It also discusses the selection of a research paradigm evaluating various methods that were adopted to collect data for this study. The chapter looks at three major research and theory paradigms, qualitative methodology, the research design, population, sampling and procedure, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations kept in mind throughout this study.

The study investigated the causes of learner dropout in two rural secondary schools in Fort Beaufort District, Eastern Cape.

3.2 Research Paradigms: choosing the appropriate paradigm

Paradigm is a framework for design. Research paradigms are the research approaches which address qualitative and quantitative research in the social sciences. The purpose then is to examine the research design suitable for this study. According to Mouton (1996:107) the research design is a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. Thus, it is most important for the study because it maximizes validity of the results and minimizes error. It enables the researcher to anticipate the appropriate decisions and all the social research including education research that gives more than one point of view to a meaningful research project or study. The three major research and theory paradigms are positivist, interpretive and critical. They are constantly developing and have some characteristics in common, but the paradigm selected for my study is interpretive.

3.2.1 Interpretive Research and Theory

Many writers define paradigm according to their specific context. For the purpose of this study, I share Terre Blanche and Durrheim's (1999:36) view that "paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for research and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation". Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach

to the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:363). This means that the qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. It is concerned with finding the answers to questions including why? How? Or in what way? On the other hand quantitative research makes an effort to gather data by objective methods, providing information about relation, comparisons, and predictions in order to remove the investigator from the investigation. It originates in the natural sciences; it is concerned with investigating things which we could observe, experiment and measure in some way. The interpretive paradigm suits this study because its foundation lies in the social sciences. It seeks to study events and processes in natural settings and attempts to view the world through the perspectives of the actors and is also based on idealism. Unlike the critical research theory, which is interested in radical change, interpretive theory seeks an understanding of unique realities behind human action and tends to depend on subjective relationships with the participants in order to reveal the reason behind social actions (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1996).

This study sought to uncover how actors made sense of and understood their reality. People's perspectives and views will help to provide interpretation to the causes or factors that contribute to learner dropouts. This interpretive research paradigm is efficient and appropriate to investigate the stated problem because it

is characterized by a concern for the individual, rather than trying to build universal laws – like generalizations about human behavior. It is grounded in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the people based on education. The interpretive approach benefits by allowing the participants to fully partake in the main part of the research mainly as a result of their familiarity with the causes of learner dropout in their settings.



To justify this, an interpretive paradigm will be applied in this study in order to gain information from the participants namely rural secondary school principals, educators, learners at schools, learners out of school and parents. Participants were met in their own environments in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the research problem. The data thus yielded should make sense to those to whom it applies, and should be checked with them. I focused on the way they used their experiences to interpret their surroundings and describe what is happening by listening and interpreting in order to gain a better understanding. Interpretative research lays itself open to the criticism of relativism which will be examined by conducting interviews among a number of different participants.

3.3 Research Methodology

When a particular paradigm is selected, it leads the researcher to a methodology.

Qualitative and quantitative methodologies are both used to conduct educational research studies or projects.



3.3.1 Quantitative methodology

Quantitative methodology focuses on numbers, experiments and measurements. Credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction, proving validity and reliability. According to Denzin et al. (1994:1) quantitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. I did not select it for my study because I was not trying to measure or prove, but to understand the process of learner dropouts.

3.3.2 Qualitative methodology

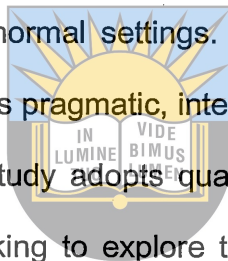
Qualitative methodology is a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context – specific settings such as a “real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interests” (Patton, 2002, cited in Golafshani, 2003:600). Qualitative researchers have come to

embrace their involvement and role within research. In this study I was involved in visiting both the schools and communities to find out what they were like and how people perceived the problem of learner dropout.

Qualitative research is derived from a subjective point of view; it focuses on what people actually do. Mouton (1996:133) views it as study of phenomena because of their intrinsic and immediate contextual significance. The aim is to produce an extensive description of the phenomenon in its specific context. This study involves field work Creswell (1994) in which I physically went to the people, their settings, sites and institutions to observe their environments and recorded their views on the reality of dropouts.

The purpose of qualitative methodology is to seek to understand people's interpretations. Reality changes in people's perceptions. In this study, people's interpretations and their perceptions of the causes of learner dropout in rural secondary schools were thoroughly investigated. These were used to compare or contrast with the views of other researchers through the literature review. By gaining these views and people's perceptions, I hoped to have a deeper understanding and a more complete picture of learner dropouts.

Humans are important subjects because they are the primary source of data which should produce valid and rich data. Qualitative research methods describe and analyze people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. I interpreted phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them as stated in (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:395). The data was collected through individual, face to face and focus groups interviews with the selected participants in their normal settings. Marshall and Rossman (1992:2) state that qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of people. This study adopts qualitative methodology grounded in the interpretive approach seeking to explore the causes for learner dropout in rural Secondary Schools in Fort Beaufort District. The objective of the study was to collect data that would help me understand the views, ideas, experiences and perceptions of learner dropout rates from the selected participants. The qualitative nature of this study is supported by Denzin et al. (1994:2) who state that qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical material, case studies, personal experiences, stories, interviews, observational methods and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual's lives. In this study I used interviews as the main data collection method. Participants were met in their natural environment and presuppositions were minimized.



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Creswell (1994) and Marshall and Rossman (1993) confirm that researchers must physically go to the respondents' sites or institutions to collect data through interviews. Burns and Grove (1997) confirm this when they say true field research is believed to be both complex and dynamic it can be found only by the persons as they interact with and in their social historical settings. In this study the principals, teachers; learners in schools were met at their designated secondary schools, while learners out of school and parents were met at their homes.



The holistic nature of qualitative research

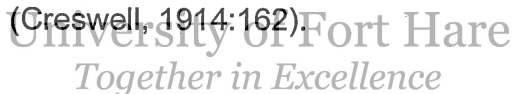
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Understanding of a situation is achieved more effectively through a holistic perspective. Qualitative research is an inductive, descriptive approach arising from phenomenological philosophy McMillan and Schumacher (1993) which focuses on understanding the response of the whole being. A holistic view is therefore used in order to allow the researcher to concentrate on the relationship between elements and context. By conducting qualitative research, the investigator seeks to gain a total or complete picture. In this study its relevance is that the interviewee describes events, ideas, procedures that occur in natural settings in order to make accurate situational decisions. This differs from quantitative research in which selected pre – defined variables are studied.

Corroboration of views by other respondents will ensure that the research findings accurately reflects peoples' perceptions, whatever they may be (Stainback and Stainback, 1988).

The descriptive nature of qualitative research

Qualitative methodology can reveal the nature of certain situations settings processes, relationships, system or people. The researcher in qualitative methodology is interested in process, getting closer to the research subject in their natural settings in order to describe and understand the world through their eyes. In terms of this feature, data are reported in the participants' own words, rather than in numbers (Creswell, 1914:162).



This study describes the principals', educators', learners in and out of school and parents' experiential accounts of the phenomenon of dropouts. The factual descriptive knowledge includes data, facts, empirical generations, narrative and stories which attempt to provide a truthful description that served as a basis for the formulation and presentation of guidelines from the research data obtained through interviews.

Predetermined ideas are not tested in a qualitative approach. Thus the investigation is subjective as it draws on the specific and real experience of the problem regarding dropout which occurs both in the past and future of the education sector. Detailed information should be gathered through interviews and a theme, a pattern, or a theory emerges (Creswell,1994:95). The information gained through interviews in this study was categorized under the themes or factors which led or contributed towards learner dropout. For example, personal, family, school and social factors, helped give a clear picture of influence. "In using inductive reasoning the researcher embarks on a project without an explicit conceptual framework and merely uses general guesses for guidance" (De Vos, 1998:336). The data in this study was analysed and interpreted and attempts were made to discover relationships or patterns through close scrutiny of the data.

The Advantages of Qualitative Methodology

It gives understanding of phenomena in a specific context rather than generalizing. It produces more in – depth, comprehensive information using multi – method data collection strategies. Qualitative research develops explanations of social phenomena aimed at helping us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. It uses subjective information and

participant observation to describe the context or natural setting of the variables under consideration as well as the interactions of the different variable in the context. It seeks a broad understanding of the entire situation.

The Disadvantages of Qualitative Methodology

The very subjectivity of the inquiry leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approaches and information. It is very difficult to prevent or detect researcher induced bias. Its scope is limited due to the in – depth, comprehensive data gathering approaches required.

The logo of the University of Fort Hare, featuring a sun rising over an open book with the Latin motto 'IN LUMINE VIDE BIMIUS' on the pages.

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3.4. Research Design: qualitative choices

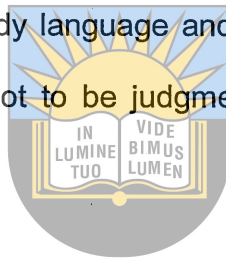
Research design helps to improve the research in practice. It assists in understanding and interpreting the results of the study and ensures that the researcher obtains useable results. It provides answers to research questions. According to Hancock (1998:47), qualitative research can be developed as phenomenology, ethnography, and case studies.

There are aspects of each of these kinds of research in my study. A phenomenological study explores the causes of something. It emphasizes the interpretive human reaction. The phenomenologist attempts to gain entry into the conceptual meaning world of the subject in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives. I believe that multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to each other through interaction with others.



It was not possible to consider the use of ethnography which is suitable for descriptive methodology studies of cultures and people. It is however extremely time consuming since the researcher spends long periods of time in the field. However, it was useful to look at data collection techniques including both formal and informal interviewing, often interviewing individuals on several occasions and participants observation. Analysis of data attempts to interpret data from the perspective of the sample under study. It is problematic when the researcher is not sufficiently familiar with the people's culture and traditions being studied or with their language, but this was not a problem in my study. Interpretation from perspectives may be a misinterpretation causing confusion. I learnt from ethnographic studies that the researcher needs to return to the field to check his/her interpretations with informants thereby validating the data before presenting the findings. This descriptive research design will allow the researcher

to write notes during interviews which could contain rich, detailed descriptions of everything that went on (Neuman and Wiegand, 2002). I also learnt from these studies that it is important to take field notes as soon as possible during the interviews, and to keep in close touch with my respondents, thanking them for their participation. I learnt to allow participants a full chance to express themselves, and noted even small things that might be insignificant, but could be important. It is vital to note body language and expressions of respondents in interviews, and it is essential not to be judgmental in your responses to their perceptions.



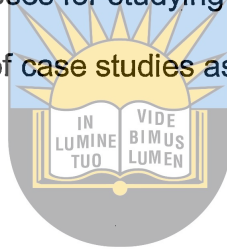
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3.5 Choosing a Case Study *Together in Excellence*

Case study is a research approach which can take a qualitative or quantitative stance. Case study is a detailed investigation of individuals, groups, institution or social units. Leedy and Omroid (1985:114) define case study as a “type of qualitative research in which depth data is gathered relative to single individuals or event for the purpose of learning more about poorly understood situations”. According to Callan and Clark (1982:212) “case study is a special type of problem solving method”. Another description from Cohen et al. (2005:180) defines a case study as a specific instance that is frequently designated to illustrate a more general principle. It is a study of instance in action. It provides a

unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles.

It is a highly versatile research method and employs collection from testing to interviewing. It offers richness and depth of information through variety. Different researchers have different purposes for studying cases. Stake in Denzin et al. (1994:237) defines three types of case studies as intrinsic; instrumental and collective.



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In the intrinsic case study, the study is undertaken because one wants a better understanding of a particular case. The primary purpose for undertaking the case is not because it represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem but rather in lieu of its particularity and importance, the case itself is of general interest. This study follows an intrinsic case study research design because of the particular interest in the reasons for learner drop outs in rural secondary schools. According to Denzin et al. (1994:241) most naturalistic, ethnographic and phenomenological researchers will concentrate on describing the present case in sufficient detail so that the reader can make good comparisons. Comparison is a powerful conceptual mechanism, fixing attention

upon the few attributes being compared and obscuring other knowledge about the case.

This study adopted the case study approach to investigate learner dropouts in two rural secondary schools in Fort Beaufort District of the Eastern Cape Province. The “case” in this study is the problem of learner dropout in rural secondary schools. In order to find the answer to the stated problem this study is situated in two schools located in rural communities where there are the opportunities to investigate real people in order to understand their perceptions of why learners drop out. A case study can penetrate situation in ways which are not always amenable to numerical analysis. This study grouped participants into four categories from two different schools and communities i.e. principals and teachers; learners in school; learners out of school; and parents.

The aim was to examine each group’s perceptions of the causes of dropouts. The case was bounded by time and events. Learner dropout is an ongoing problem in schools being caused by different events, stories, views, persons perceptions as well as other factors identified by the literature reviewed. This case study research design offers richness and depth of information not usually offered by other procedures. Gillhalm (2001:1) states that a case study is one

which investigates a phenomenon to answer specific research questions and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, evidence which is then in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to the best possible answers to the research questions.

Case studies can be descriptive research studies of process and implementation of issues to examine how, why and under what conditions a programme works. Hence, I used it in this study to investigate the perceptions of respondent towards the causes of learner dropouts hoping to gain insight about which relationship should be further investigated. They can be used to identify factors that may contribute to improvement and reductions. This study aimed to specifically investigate the causes of learner dropout in rural secondary schools prior to moving forward to tertiary level in order to fulfill their life careers.

Limitations of case studies

One of the criticisms aimed at case study research is that the case under study is not necessarily representative of similar cases and therefore the results of research are not generalisable. Case studies describe a single unit such as single school or a small number of units, such as a small number of schools. They are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address

reflexivity Cohen et al. (2005:184). Whereas Silverman (2000) highlights lack of external validity of transferability as the major weakness of case studies, the results drawn from a specific study can be generalized. While findings of the reason for learner dropout cannot be generalized in this study I consider that they do provide additional evidence that is similar to other studies in the literature review, especially the African studies and the NMF study. The reasons such as personal factors, social factors, school factors and family factors will shed light on the causes of learner dropout. A strategy to ensure validity in qualitative research involves providing thick contextual descriptions with precision so that transferability can be made by the reader. Therefore, in this qualitative study validity will be checked from the data gained from different focus groups through interviews and contrasted with one another and with the research studies in the literature.

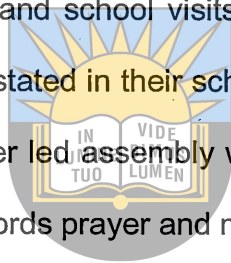
3.6 Profiles of the schools and respondents

Participants were chosen from the population of two secondary schools and communities in Fort Beaufort district. The population consists of school principals, educators, learners currently in school, learners currently not in school and parents. Inhabitants in the same area share a similar background and

common interests(Woods ,2000:17). I selected rural secondary schools where the unemployment rate is high and also the residents are coming from nearby farms. Surely, they would provide information that is rich in description.

3.6.1 School A: Profile

During the period of interviews and school visits, I noticed that school followed school rules and regulations as stated in their school policy. The school began at 7:50 in the morning. One teacher led assembly with a short scripture reading or prayer, then learners sang the Lords prayer and marched to their classrooms.



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The School buildings accommodate all the learners' population of 320. On the opening during January every learner must paid R120.00 for school fees. Even so, the school is deprived of essential facilities such as library, photocopier machine and computer, therefore the quality of teaching and learning is affected. Text books are not enough; this leads to a high failure rate among learners because this school is serving 8 communities so it is difficult for learners to share them.

The learner- teacher ratio is 1:35. This school needs additional staff members since each teacher is over loaded by many subjects. Team work is practiced in order to achieve positive educational goals. There is no sporting facilities or practice.

The caretaker of the school is responsible for the gate and watching the school property again vandalism.



The Staff

The Principal arrived at 7:15 a.m. each morning, opening all classrooms. Other teachers arrived between 7:30 a.m. up to 7:40 a.m. the school gate was locked by 7:40 a .m. They understood one another's strengths and weaknesses in subject teaching. They helped each other in order to maintain good academic results. During teaching time all the teachers attended to their subjects in the classroom.

The Learners

They came from eight communities without transport. They walked about 5 up to 30 km to and from school. They were well dressed in full school uniform. They were well disciplined and friendly. The outer appearance of some revealed that they came from poor families. If the learner did not paid school fees having no full

uniform even a tie, according to school rules the learner had to stay at home. If the learner was late, the rule is that he/she must come with their parents to explain the reason. During break time some learners stay in the class room especially those who are poor in appearance.

3.6.2. School B: Profile



The school buildings were beautiful and accommodated 420 learners but lacked good maintenance. Some window panes were broken and the doors needed handles. During windy days learners suffered from cold and flu. The gate was always wide open for everyone to enter. The school had computers, no photocopier machine, no resource full library and science laboratory. The average text book ratio is 1:5. School fees were R130.00 per learner. The learners could only play rugby or soccer.

There was no community involvement and the cattle, goats and pigs were dwelling and wandering in the school yard.

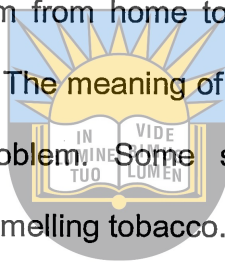
The Staff

The teachers did not care about time; some arrived past eight whereas the classes begin at 7:50 a.m. Some attended their subject period while some sat in the staff room. Team work was not practised, although they obtained bad results

at the end of the year. The principal and the management team tried to attend Saturday classes but the others failed to do so. A few teachers in the school were qualified but lacked professional educational skills.

The Learners

The school had learners coming from eight communities. The majority of them travelled on foot about 15-30km from home to school. The learners were not properly dressed in full uniform. The meaning of the bell was nothing to learners, indeed punctuality was a problem. Some spent learning time in toilets, sunbathing, and came to class smelling tobacco. There was a lack of discipline in the school.



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3.6.3 The Sample

The sample is viewed as a subset of the whole population which is actually investigated by the researcher. The size of the sample was sufficient for a case study to avoid insufficient information and data. The sample consisted of 2 principals, 6 teachers, 10 learners currently in school, 10 learners currently out of school and 10 parents. The sample chosen for this study depended on the purpose of investigation, objects of analysis and certain limitations.

Types of samples

There are two basic methods of sampling probability and non – probability which are used in social research studies. Probability sampling design is composed of simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and clustering sampling.

Non – probability sampling simply represents itself. Types of non – probability samples are: convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snow ball sampling and dimensional sampling.



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For the purpose of this study the non – probability sampling was suitable. Non – probability sampling originates from the researcher focusing on a specific group. It is also suitable for ethnographic research, action research or case study research. It is composed of one to two schools, particular learners, educators or parents (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005:100 - 102). In brief, this type of sampling design is appropriate for this study because it comprised groups of teachers, learners and parents.

Purposive sampling is used in field research. It is most appropriate when the researcher want to select unique cases that are especially informative, when the researcher wants to select members or reach a specialized population. Purposive sampling explores particular types of cases for in depth investigations. This study investigates causes that lead to learner dropouts in rural secondary schools. The study adopted purposive sampling in order to obtain relevant and accurate information which gave clarity to the stated problem (Neuman, 1997:206).



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Sampling procedures led to the choice of individual respondents as part of the sample. The principals of the two secondary schools were selected, one teacher on the school management team, and two staff teachers.

For the learners still in school I grouped learners in each grade according to their communities since the schools were composed of 5 different communities. Two learners from each grade were chosen from each of the 5 groups to come to a final number of 10 learners.

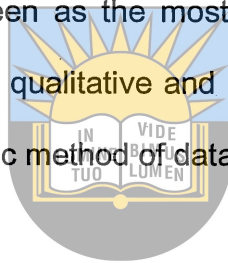
For the learners not in school I used quota sampling. Although it is a weak type of sampling, it is easier, cheaper and quicker than probability sampling (Neuman, 1997: 2005 – 2006). I identified five girls and five boys who represented the population of the two rural secondary schools. The respondents were between the ages of 14 and 24 years old. I negotiated with the principals of the schools and chairperson of the communities about selection of the learners who were out of school. It was difficult to present all population characteristics accurately.



I used convenience sampling strategy for parent respondents. The parents were specifically selected and chosen because of their interest in school activities like fund-raising, sport, helping in school gardening. Also parents should have both children who are in school and have dropped out so that they revealed what they experienced. The purpose of this sampling was to prevent biased and generalized information. It was convenient for both the researcher and parents mainly because of the easy access and clear case information. The sample consisted of 5 parents from each school, age was not considered. I consulted with the principal of the school and S.G.B chairperson to help identify parents who were part of the community and interested in school matters.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection in case studies can rely on many sources. According to Yin (1994:80) these sources involve among other documentation, interviews, direct observation and participant observations. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:645) indicated that interviewing is seen as the most common and powerful way to understand human beings. Both qualitative and quantitative researchers tend to rely on the interviews as the basic method of data gathering.



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3.7.1 Interviews

Moser and Kalton (1971:270) state that the method of collecting data in social surveys is "personal interviewing". Patton (1990:278) states that the purpose of interviewing is to find out "what is in and on someone else's mind".

Interviews were the chief data collection method in this study. The benefit of using interviews in this study includes richness of data and deeper insight into the causes of learner dropouts. Interviews are advantageous because of their flexibility according to (Hammersley as cited in Silverman, 2001:258). I was able

to repeat and expand on the question if the response of the interviewee indicated misunderstanding of the question.

The interviewer can ensure that all of the questions are answered because the study was about the actions the people were doing in their real life. I standardized the interview environment by making certain that the interview was conducted in privacy with little or no interruptions. This is in contrast to a mailed study where the questionnaires may be completed by different people under different conditions.



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The respondent was unable to “cheat” by receiving prompts from others, or by having others complete the entire questionnaire for him or her as often happens in many studies. However, interviews are disadvantageous because they are very costly and time consuming. I had to travel long distances to visit the respondents, spending many hours talking to participants. As Bless and Smith (1995:11) commented “...interviews are expensive, and sometimes the researcher can be biased due to lack of interviewing skills thus reducing the validity of the gathered data”.

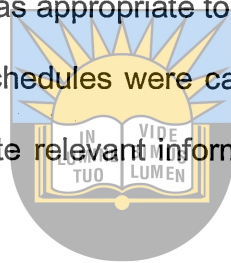
Individual face – to – face interviews and focus groups were the source of obtaining data used in this study. Interviews were not leading the participants. Gillhalm (2000:65) states that a semi – structured interview is the most important form of interviewing in case study research. This study used semi – structured interviews because questions are specified yet there is freedom to probe beyond the answer if the interviewee has difficulty answering a question or provides only a brief response. I used cues, probes and prompts to encourage the interviewee to think carefully about the question further. The general atmosphere of the interview should ideally be one of trust, friendliness and openness, to put participants at ease (De Vos, 1998:321). The respondents in my interviews were met in their own environment. I initially interviewed focus groups and later interviewed some respondents face to face if I felt it was necessary.

3.7.2 Focus group interviews

The focus groups, as the name implies, involve a whole group answering questions together. It is still possible for an individual to give his or her own answers, but in a group context. As Ward et al. (1991:267) says focus groups are “guided group discussions” designed to provide information on a certain topic from a certain population. The focus group is generally considered to be a qualitative rather than a quantitative method, and generally does not yield results

suitable for statistical analysis. Rather the results are interpreted more subjectively. Ward et al. (1991:296) concludes that “focus groups may be appropriate as a stand alone methodology”. The data consists of a record of the discussions and field notes taken during conversations.

This method of data collection was appropriate to this study as it responded to its research questions. Interview schedules were carefully prepared, designed and considered in order to investigate relevant information and give answers to the following questions:



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- ❖ Why do learners drop out from secondary schools? In order to answer this question, this researcher examined the following questions:

What are learners' perceptions of the reasons for learner dropout?

What are parents' perceptions of the reasons learner dropout?

What are educators' perceptions of the learner dropout?

What factors emerge from school and home environment?

Grinell (1988:274) outlines that an interview schedule is a written instrument that sets out overall plans for interviews and determines the structure sequence and content of the specific items in order to make the respondents feel comfortable.

The purposes of focus group interview are to:

- i) Provide data quickly
- ii) Keep cost relatively low
- iii) Provide qualitative data on beliefs, attitudes and behaviors
- iv) Provide more depth of coverage and more detail than can be gained in a

large survey.  **University of Fort Hare**
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Interview schedules were prepared for each of the four focus groups:

- 1) Two principals and three educators
- 2) Five learners at school in each school
- 3) Ten learners not in school from each of the two communities
- 4) Five parents in each of the two communities

The limitations of the focus groups were:

- 1) They do not provide quantitative data, not suitable for statistical analysis or for measurement – analysis
- 2) The number of people interviewed is small
- 3) Privacy is lacking so that the respondents may be fearful of answering sensitive questions, may tend to answer neutrally or may be biased by the opinions of others in the group.

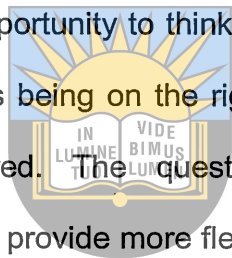


I consulted with school principals for permission to conduct interviews and access a selected sample 15 – 30 minutes mini workshops were run with the respondents in order to outline the study's purpose and what was expected from them. I used my own discretion in choosing participants, and was able to convince the participants of the importance of the interviews but guaranteed their rights to withdraw from the interviews for any given reasons.

Principals and teachers were met in their schools for interviews. They were asked the questions on the interview schedule designed for them. I also took notes of their responses.

Learners in schools were also met at their schools. The interviews were conducted in a separate classroom filled with 5 learners from each school

representing grade 8 – grade 12. I wanted full information on each grade pertaining to the causes of learner dropouts. The learners for both schools sat on chairs in a round shape. I sat in the middle so that all interviewees could view the researcher. I repeated the question whenever the respondent hesitated or appeared not to understand the question. I repeated the answers of interviewees by neutral probing if I did not understand the respondents' answers correctly. It also gave the respondent an opportunity to think about elaborating further. I did not comment about the answers being on the right track or not, but probed for more information when desired. The questions were presented in an understandable manner so as to provide more flexibility and opportunity to probe further.



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Learners not in school were interviewed in their communities. The reason for this was that the school is about 15 km from their respective settings, and they didn't have money for transport. Some of them were working on the nearby orange farms. I arranged a suitable date and time to meet with the respondents. This focus group was composed of workers, young mothers and fathers, who had dropped out of school at different grades and for different reasons. The group consisted of five females and five males. The objectives for this group were to find out why they dropped out. The interview was focused on the subjective experiences of persons exposed to the pre – analyzed situation in an effort to ascertain their views on the situation. The orderly arrangement of reported

responses to the situation helped test hypotheses to the extent that it included unanticipated responses which gave rise to fresh hypotheses for more systematic and stricter investigation as Merion et al. (1956:3 – 4) suggested. This group was enabled by the interviews to explore their implications to the investigated problem. When necessary, I probed the respondents to obtain more relevant information. I also made decisions to interview some participants privately, mainly those who were uncomfortable to express or voice their experiences and ideas in front of the others because of the sensitivity of the problem.



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The parents were also met in their communities because of the long distance from their homes to the school. The groups of parents consisted of five members in each community. Through brainstorming in order to produce the result desired, the data can be difficult to record and analyze and not all the respondents may be equally represented in the results. The aim was to identify a number of individuals who shared a common factor and to collect the views of several within that population sub group. The respondents responded to the list of research questions in parents' interview schedules. They answered verbally while I made note of the responses. This method was used to obtain information verbally as the interview could be defined as an oral questionnaire according to (Best, 1981). It helped me to evaluate the sincerity of the interviewee. This method is based on

the fact that during interviews the respondents would be free to use their own language. The advantage of such an interview is that respondents who are unable to write can talk. They may express themselves much more freely. During the interviews I was aware of errors such as unnecessary probing which could lead to inadequate information. I wrote information relevant to the study and tried to avoid biased information. On the other hand, it is important to be aware that the respondents can intimidate an interviewer causing him or her to record incorrect answers (Hyman cited in Bailey, 1994:177).



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3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

According to Yin (1989:105) "data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of the study". The data collected from the techniques was summarized into field notes, and arranged according to key themes to provide answers to the research questions. Mouton (1986:111) is of the view that "we analyze data by identifying patterns and themes in the data and drawing conclusions from them". After the information was collected, the data from the interviews was compiled as soon as possible. After the interviews were conducted, I still clearly remembered what

was heard and observed, so the themes were established. The themes were analyzed in terms of what I understood from the respondents; I also kept in mind and contrasted them with the literature interviews.

I found some inconsistencies and contradictions emanated from different participants. The level of consistency in the responses was carried out after information was collected from the interviewees, focus group discussions and field notes.



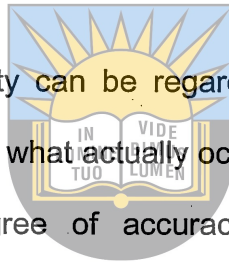
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3.8.1 Validity and Reliability

Two criteria by which qualitative data and data analysis are judged are validity and reliability. Yin (1994:41) argues that there is no uniformly agreed set of validity and reliability criteria for case studies. Validity generally refers to the accuracy and value of the interpretations and reliability is the extent to which other researchers would arrive at the same results if they studied the same case using exactly the same procedures.

Best (1981) defines validity as "that quality of a data gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine". In this investigation, validity and

reliability were checked from the interviews. Content validity was established by referring to the literature relating to my area of study. To test the reliability and validity of the interviews, I visited the schools in order to check the feasibility of respondent responses in the interview process, or to improve the design of the research that would lead to the discovery of the investigated problems.



In qualitative research, reliability can be regarded as a fit between what the researcher's record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched. "... a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage"(Cohen et al,2005:9). This reliability refers to the consistency of the research findings. To increase consistency, I compared the data from various respondents. Furthermore, the same questions were asked repeatedly in different sources of data collection. I also tried to conclude whether what the respondents said was accurate from the context.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Schwandt (1997:106) defines ethics as "moral dilemmas arising from issues of trust, confidentiality, harm, deception and so forth". Ethical issues taken into

consideration for this study were established rapport, anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation of the respondents. According to Creswell (1994:165), “the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informant (s)”. I initially asked for permission from the respondents to involve them in this study. I also tried to establish interpersonal relationships with the participants to neutralize initial distrust. Nevertheless, according to Mouton (1996:159) “it might hence not always be practical”. Because there is no anonymity with face – to – face interviews, I guaranteed confidentiality to the respondents. According to Arksey and Knight (1999:132), “confidentiality is about not disclosing the identity of study participants, and not attributing comments to individuals or institutions with which they are associated to be recognized, unless they have expressly consented to being identified”. I assured the respondents that the information furnished was made available to her for the purpose of the study. Therefore, the names of respondents and institutions were not mentioned. Mouton (1996:157) argues, “subjects tend to be reluctant or unwilling to participate because they may regard the investigation as an invasion of their privacy”. I also assured the respondents that the study was for academic purposes only.



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3.10 Conclusion

The data from the different focus groups and individuals was collected, analyzed, and interpreted. These findings and discussions are presented in Chapter 4.

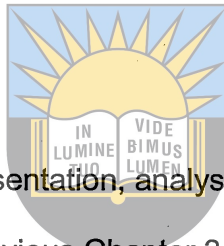


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CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

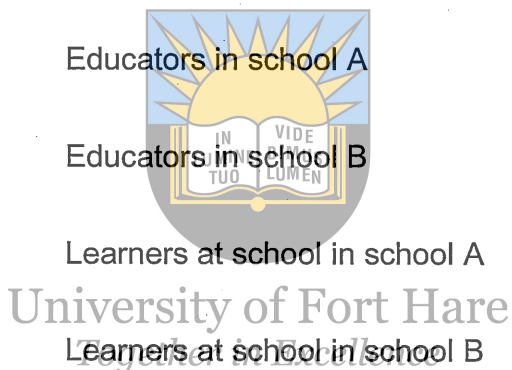
4.1 Introduction



This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the main findings of the research. The previous Chapter 3 laid out the research design and methodology which was a complete description of how the research was conducted. The aim of this chapter seeks to answer the research question why learners in rural secondary school drop out from schools in different grades. The data in this research was compiled from the interviews of forty six respondents which included principals of two secondary schools, teachers, parents and both learners in school and out of school. The respondents gave their views, knowledge and perceptions of the causes for learner dropout in rural secondary schools. The chapter begins with a restatement of the research question, followed by profiles of the respondents. The findings in this study are presented according to the factors which emerged from the literature review; and findings

discovered in the interviews. The respondents are distinguished from each other by means of the following keys:

PA	=	Principal for school A
PB	=	Principal for school B
Educator A	=	Educators in school A
Educator B	=	Educators in school B
LA	=	Learners at school in school A
LB	=	Learners at school in school B
LOSA	=	Learners out of school A
LOSB	=	Learners out of school B
P 1	=	Parents in community No.1
P 2	=	Parents in community No. 2



An analysis of data and the research results, supported by references to literature review in chapter 2, helped in presenting a comprehensive portrayal of the phenomenon under investigation. The results presented in this report should

be regarded as small scale and localized mainly because a larger sample might yield different results; however, useful and important inferences can be made on the basis of these results.

Section A

4.2 Research Question



Secondary learners in rural districts of Fort Beaufort are dropping out in large numbers which disturb the operation of the school and the academic progress. To investigate the above proposition this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

Why do learners drop out of school?

The question will be explored by analyzing responses from the sample below.

4.3 Profile of the respondents

I interviewed two principals, one from each school, and four teachers from both schools in the Fort Beaufort District.

The table below shows the responses from the fore – mentioned participants.



Table 4.3.1 Distribution of teachers by gender

(N) Represents the number of respondents.

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	N	%
MALE	2	45%
FEMALE	4	55%
TOTAL	6	100%

Table 4.3.1 shows the distribution of teachers who responded according to their gender. The two principals were male (45%) and the four teachers were female (55%). This suggests that there were more female teachers than male teachers who responded to interviews.

Table 4.3.2 Respondents' ages

AGE RANGE	PRINCIPALS	%	TEACHERS	%
20 – 29 years	0	0	0	0
30 – 39 years	0	0	1	10%
40 – 49 years	0	0	3	90%
50 – 59 years	2	100%	0	0
Above 60 years	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2	100%	4	100%

Table 4.3.2 shows the principals' age range to be between 50 – 59 years (100%).

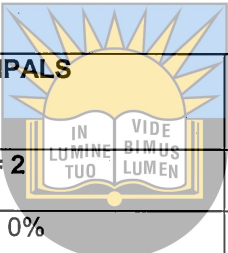
It also shows that 90% of the teachers are between the ages of 40 – 49 years.

Table 4.3.3 The academic and professional qualifications of respondents

QUALIFICATIONS	PRINCIPALS	%	TEACHERS	%
Standard 8 + teachers Certificates	0	0	0	0
Standard 10 + Teachers Certificates	1	50	0	0
Standard 10 + Teachers Diploma	1	50	3	90
Teachers Diploma + Degree	0	0	1	10
Senior Degrees (B.ed hons + Med)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2	100%	4	100%

Table 4.3.3 shows that neither of the principals have a bachelor's degree. Only one teacher passed a B. Ed degree specializing in technology, maths and science.

Table 4.3.4. Number of years of teaching experience for principals and teachers



NO.OF YEARS EXPERIENCE	PRINCIPALS		TEACHERS	
	N = 2		N = 4	
Less than 1 year	0	0%	0	0%
1 – 5 years	0	0%	0	0%
6 – 10 years	0	0%	0	0%
11 – 15 years	0	0%	1	10%
16 – 20 years	1	50%	2	80%
Over 21 years	1	50%	1	10%
TOTAL	2	100%	4	100%

Table 4.3.4 shows that most educators including principals are approximately within the range of sixteen to twenty years teaching experience. Two respondents have over 21 years of experience and are close to retirement ages.

Table 4.3.5. Distribution of learners at school by gender

	NO. = 10	%
Male	5	50%
Female	5	50%
TOTAL	10	100%

Table 4.3.5. Shows that learners at school were equally represented in gender.



Table 4.3.6. Distribution of learners at school in ages and grades

	GRADES	FEMALE	%	MALE	%
		NO. = 5		NO. = 5	
	8	1	20%	1	20%
	9	1	20%	1	20%
	10	1	20%	1	20%
	11	1	20%	1	20%
	12	1	20%	1	20%
TOTAL		5	100%	5	100%

Table 4.3.6 above shows that each grade was represented by one learner.

Table 4.3.7 (a) Ages of learners in school

AGE RANGE	FEMALE	MALE
	NO. = 5	NO. = 5
14 – 16 years	3	2
17 – 20 years	2	2
21 – 24 years	0	1
TOTAL	5	5

Table 4.3.7 (a) shows that most learners interviewed were between the ages of 14 – 20 years old. Only 1 male learner was older than 21 years.


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Table 4.3.7 (b) Distribution of learners out of school by gender and age.

GENDER	N = 20 LEARNERS	%
Male	8	40%
Female	12	60%
TOTAL	20	100%

AGE	N = LEARNERS	%
14 – 17	10	60%
18 – 20	8	30%
21 – 24	2	10%
TOTAL	20	100%

According to the above data the female dropout rate (60%) was 20% higher than the male dropout rate.

Looking at the ages when learners drop out, the 14 – 17 years old show the highest percentage of drop outs with a rate of 60%. The learners in the 18 – 20 years old age group showed a dropout rate of 30%, which is half of the 14 – 17 year old respondents. Finally, the 21 up to 24 year olds showed the least number of dropouts with only 10 percent having not completed grade 12.



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The parent participants who were interviewed served many different roles in the household. Many were living with both their children and grandchildren playing the role of guardians and caregivers. In each community five parents were interviewed giving a grand total of 10 parent participants.

Table 4.3.8. Parents by gender and age

GENDER	NO. = PARENTS	%
Male	4	40%
Female	6	60%
TOTAL	10	100%

AGE	NO. = PARENTS	%
30 -35	2	20%
35 – 45	4	40%
45 – 55	3	30%
55 – 65	1	10%
TOTAL	10	100%

The above table 4.3.8 illustrates that more female parents (60%) were interviewed than male parents (40%). Most parents were between the ages of 35 – 55. 80% of parents were illiterate and only 20% had finished school up to grade 6. Many stated that they were illiterate because they stayed on farms where there weren't any schools. Some were forced to abandon classes in favour of work on the farm especially during harvest and planting season. The distance from school and attraction of the salary received for work made many choose to drop out of school and work instead.

In terms of language ability 40% understand English and 40% understand Afrikaans but all are Xhosa and speak Xhosa fluently. 50% of the respondents earn their living from pension and disability grants, 40% are self employed and some received social grants for their children. The remaining 10% work on orange farms.

Section B

4.4 Findings

In this section the findings gained through interviews in different focus – groups and individuals are organized according to research questions which guided questioning during interviews. Findings are categorized in themes which emerged both school and home environment. The themes are as follows:

Socio – economic factors

Family factors

School environmental factors

Intra –personal factors

Motivational factors

Pregnancy factor

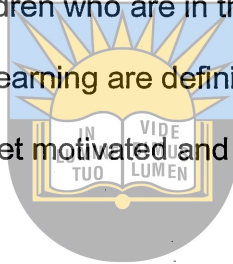
HIV & Aids factor

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4.4.1 Socio – Economic Factors

Poverty

In rural primary schools, poverty is one socio – economic factor which is often cited as a reason for school failure and dropouts. Pretorius (1998:307) says poverty in families leads to overcrowded housing, malnutrition, poor hygiene and a lack of books and toys for children who are in these families. So learners' psychological well – being and learning are definitely influenced by poverty. For these learners it is not easy to get motivated and many feel that they can never really succeed in life.



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The interviewed learners both in and out of school confidentially revealed how their impoverishment was contributing to their inability to succeed in their studies. They noted unemployment of their parents, poverty, and lack of parents as a result of death reduced their chances for success in education.

The following are some of the comments they made in this regard:

L.A My mother died in 2004 because of Aids so no one look after us. Now I am working on an orange farm to look after my younger sisters and brother...

LB We are 8 children at home living with our different mothers and grandmothers also our mother does not work. Only grandmother receives a pension so we are starving, we do not have school uniforms and also cannot pay our school fees. So only three are going to school in primary and all the others stay at home.

LOA Some learners go and live with their boyfriends who are working in order to get what they want. Some learners in the community fall in love with fathers or brothers who received social grants to get money.

LOA It was very painful to go to school with no lunch, coming back home and still have nothing to eat. I become exhausted and hungry as a result, I lost concentration on my studies and what was taught by the teacher.

LOB When you failed to pay your school fees, it was frustrating to get out of the classroom or to stand next to the chalkboard everyday until you paid or left the school.

LOB During break time it was painful because I had nothing to eat. If I carried my home food, other learners would pass remarks about it. I became embarrassed and decided not to carry it; it's better to eat nothing.

P 1 I have seven children and six grandchildren. Their mothers and fathers are not working; we depend on my pension for a living. Only two grandchildren go to school. I have no money for the others for secondary school uniforms and school fees. They stay at home.

The above findings from this study reveal that poverty and unemployment was a strong theme that emerged from data and provided a true reflection of why

learners are out of school and failing to complete their different grades. Hungry minds cannot concentrate; also, pension grants cannot cover all family matters. These findings were corroborated with the finding from the study of statistics in chapter two of this study, which revealed that in countries like Malawi, Tanzania and Ethiopia there was a lack of family income due to insufficient or no jobs. Learners drop out of school because of physical poverty that is inability to pay school fees and other school as well as home needs like food, clothes and medicines (MOE / IDS 1999). In South Africa the studies also found that rural education and it's potential for development is deeply connected with the problems of poverty in rural communities and consequently the cause of learner dropouts (NMF, 2005:4).



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Distance from school

The distance of the school from learners' homes is another major cause for learner dropouts. Many must walk through forests, across railway lines, flooded rivers and frozen paths in winter. Many arrive at school tired, wet and hungry making it difficult for them to concentrate.

Interviewed learners stated that the time and energy expended in travel to and from school had a detrimental effect on their motivation to study. Poor school

attendance and apparent laziness regarding school work can be attributed to this long distance to school.

LA *We are coming from different communities. We walk 15km to go to school. On rainy days we don't go because of the rivers that we cannot cross. At school we were far behind.*

LB *It's not nice to be dirty at school because of the gravel road. My shoes become old and it's not nice to wear them some learners laugh at you so I decided to stay home.*



LA *I'm afraid of wild animals and gangsters and strangers during the journey.*

Principal and educators mentioned that the majority of their learners come from nearby communities. When they were asked how learners come to school, they all agreed that they travel long distances every day to school. The principal commented: *Learners always arrive at school tired and in some cases hungry as they have to leave their home very early because of the distance to the school.*

EDUCATOR B *On rainy days they miss school and find it difficult to catch up with other learners.*

PARENT 1 & 2 *This long distance is not good for children to travel alone; one school child was raped and became pregnant.*

PARENT 1: *Their school shoes become old faster, unable for me to buy again.*

The NMF (2005: 4) supports these comments by saying “young learner perceive the distance from school as one of the reasons some children drop out of school”. This study supported these findings because participants cited a number of dangers, e.g. sometimes prison escapees, which can harm learners. Moreover rainy days and heat can result in illness. Some learners are able to cope with this journey to accomplish their visions and ambitions in life whereas others cannot and eventually drop out.



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Poverty related to family environmental factors

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Learners expect their parents to support them financially but when this doesn't happen, learners may drop out of school. This statement was repeated in the participant's remarks as well as by numerous authors. Mc Whirter et al. (1993:23) highlight the fact that the environment has an influence on learners due to changes in family composition and the presence and temptation of drugs. He emphasizes that social changes and new technology have created new sets of influences and experiences for children and young adults.

The interviewed respondents mentioned social changes in their families as contributing factors towards the causes of learner dropout. These included divorce, parents not living together, step parents, parents who deserted their children, loss of income due to death or sickness and parents' negative behavior. They also highlighted that low social – economic status and unemployed family members reduced learner's chances of fulfilling their ambitions in education. They also noted that parents who were unskilled and illiterate often influenced or caused learners to drop out. Hillman (1996:2) observed that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and areas are less likely to do well at school. This supports the family respondent's replies to the interview.



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These are the comments of the respondents in this regard:

LA My mother divorced with our father, no one supports us.

LB My parental relationship is not conducive they don't care about education they don't appreciate my educational progress, they say I waste my time, I'm too old for school.

LOSA I stay with my stepmother, she does not like me, I'm suffering in school supplies now I'm out of school.

LOSA My parents when I request for school necessities they shout at me saying that I am learning at my own expense.

LB *I don't know my parents; my mother is in Johannesburg she doesn't come back, so I'm frustrated.*

LOSB *My parents are alcoholics and they fight, misuse money and buy no food so I stopped going to school.*

LOSB *My grandparents want me to look after livestock around the house before and after school; that is why I'm not going to school.*



LOSA *My mother's boyfriend beat me without reason. I ran away to stay with my aunt who lived in Fort Beaufort. Now I'm a domestic worker in Fort Beaufort.*

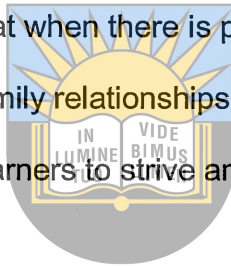
LOSA *My parents divorced two years ago. At school I was always thinking about their situation. It was hard for me to concentrate at school, I was always scared that my father was going to kill us because he said one day "I am going to kill you and your mommy."*

LOSB *My grandmother was sick. I looked after her, so I stopped schooling.*

LOSB *I struggled with my homework and reading my notes, no one at home could help me because they are illiterate.*

LOSB *Our parents are not working, my father sold cows in order to buy food for us, now I'm working to assist my family financially because my father's cows are all sold now.*

All the above statements were the findings exposing interesting revelations of family factors causing learners to dropout. Frustration with regard to the poor supportive role played by their parents was echoed by many learners in and out of school. In my own experience as a teacher, I have observed in most communities that single – parent families, step parents, unemployment and overcrowded families are strong factors disturbing the learner’s pursuit of goals. Moller (1994:51) emphasized that when there is pride within the family structure and this is expressed in good family relationships the children develop a positive self – image which propel the learners to strive and progress in life.



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4.4.2 School Factors in learner dropout

School plays a basic role in the development of a learner. The learner enters the school as a child, within the school they are transformed from babyhood and leave the school as molded teenagers or developing adults. Learners spend most of their time in school fully involved in school related activities. These school activities develop their talents and identify their life careers. The school as an educational environment has an impact which can destroy their learning goals. From the respondents’ views and perceptions various subcategories of school related influences were identified as follows:

Local school conditions

One of the most basic needs of human beings is the sense of safety or freedom from fear. This statement is supported by Mwamwenda (1996:266), who maintains that the fulfillment of children's safety needs is important to their sense of security and that the school should see to it that children are protected against factors threatening their security. The following additional factors were indicated in the learner's comments:



LA *We are five sharing one textbook; it is difficult for us to do homework because we are not living in the same communities.*

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LA *We dodge teachers who wait for us in their classes sunbathing because we have not done our homework.*

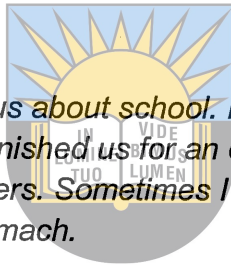
LB *It's cold inside the classrooms, some windows and doors are broken during windy days, the wind blows at us directly.*

LB *I don't like to read my books but I like to play soccer, listening to music and dancing. But here at school we do not play sport, nothing attracts me.*

LOSA *I like to sing gospel and modeling. Ever since, I was in the secondary school nothing was done, I was a slow learner but in music and modeling I always won 1st prices in Primary Competitions.*

The above responses indicate that learners became discouraged because of the lack of resources in schools and the lack of extra-mural activities, which meant their talents were ignored.

Learners when they were asked what they like and dislike about school they highlighted that:



LA Teachers do not encourage us about school. If we are late because we are travelling long distances they punished us for an example running around the school, beaten, and pick up papers. Sometimes I became dizzy or fainted because I ran with an empty stomach.

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LB I dislike teachers who come to school under the influence of alcohol, smoking and also the teachers that did not attend their periods regularly.

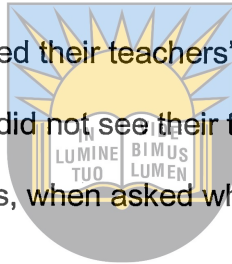
LB I dislike teachers who do not assist you when you do not know the subject matter and you are asking to clarify something, they will shout at you asking why you don't understand it.

LOB I did not like teachers who gossip with other teachers about the progress of the learners. Also I don't like any nickname identifying my education progress, like "Sidenge".

Teachers' behaviour affecting learners' perception of school

As a teacher, I acknowledge that teachers are supposed to be good classroom managers and learner role models. They should encourage learner co operation in all classroom activities. Teachers need to make the learners understand the value of the activities that they are engaged in. This will be possible if the teachers create a conducive atmosphere both in the school and in the classroom.

The respondent learners observed their teachers' unacceptable behavior when they interacted with them. They did not see their teachers as parents and proper role models to emulate. Learners, when asked what they disliked about school, highlighted that:



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LB I dislike teachers having love affairs with school learners because they are our parents and role models.

LOSA Teachers must teach us the notes not just give us pamphlets to read or ask questions in the test.

LOSA I dislike to be embarrassed in front of other learners.

It was evident from the above learner's responses that teachers are not taking responsibility for helping learners develop the skills and dispositions needed to reach their full potential. Very (1979:205) sees the teacher's first task is to take notice of and meet the learner, by helping, supporting, accepting, encouraging

and teaching them successfully. Teachers should model the behavior they expect from their learners.

Factors affecting learners' attitudes towards school

Interviewed learners perceived that their teachers, parents and other learners did not give enough support to them pertaining to their educational obstacles.



Their remarks about the lack of support from them were as follows:

LA *All our teachers are not living in our communities. So it is difficult for me to get time seeking for help in my work because when teachers' transport arrived they all went to their houses.*

LB *Mathematics is killing me, and good achievers are living in other communities its too far to get there for practice.*

LOSA *My parents are illiterate and no one is able to help me with my homework and reading.*

LOSB *Teachers do not even help us during free periods with our subjects although they saw our performance was poor.*

LOSB Teachers have a problem, they have favourite classes. If for example they have high percentages in Grade 11B and lower percentages in Grade 11A they love that class and always go to teach that class.

The above comments revealed that personal traits in teachers like lack of patience, tolerance, interest in learners, warmth as well as flexibility appeared to be critical factors which strongly contribute to poor academic performances among learners (Very, 1979:207).



Peer pressure

Peers are a vital part of a child's social atmosphere and greatly influence the thoughts and actions of the child. Peers can cause a positive or negative environment for the learner.

The following comments relate to peer groups influence contributing to the causes of learner dropout:

LA My friends take drugs. They forced me to do it too. I try to refuse but then they beat me.

LB ...it's nice to be under the influence of drugs as if I am rich and I forget about hunger and poverty at home.

LOSA I usually steal my grandmother's money in order to buy dagga and alcohol.

LOSB *Some learners undermine the way you dress and your lunch. During break time you keep you safe alone. They group themselves according to their status. If you come from poor families they do not play with you.*

LOSB *Some learners undermine your clothing when you are “ikrwala” said that its the attire of Pep Stores and that it is cheap. By the time some learners would laugh at you. Even when you have done the celebration after circumcision they would call you “mvaswa”, this embarrassed me so I decided to drop out of school.*



LA *We are fighting at school about our boyfriends.*

Learners mentioned that it had become fashionable to drink and smoke among the modern youth although their problems did not go away by using drugs and alcohol.

These were further comments of the learner participants in this regard:

LOSA *Students inside the school smoked cigarette and used drugs which is wrong because their behavior was wrong; they disrespected the teachers and their parents.*

LB *Some students go to taverns during the weekend, and on Mondays they fail to come to school because they have hangovers.*

LA My father used drugs; he said it is medicine for stress and chest problems so I used dagga because it brings life.

LA Learners using drugs ill treated the girls by sexually harassing them for example wanting to kiss them.

LOSB We want things as youth like clothes but our families cannot afford to do for us because of lack of money. That's why I end up imprisoned for stealing because I wanted the nice life that they were getting but now I am a dropout from school and my future is dead.



Pretorius (1998:305) believed that alcoholism and drug abuse are a common phenomenon of deprived neighborhoods. This behavior is disturbing the progress of society and families. Learners use drugs to cope with insecurity, stress, low self esteem, feeling of rejected on all relation or just for everyday life. The principals and teachers of both schools agreed that some learners use drugs even on school premises. They also noted that they misbehave in the classroom. They also revealed that some parents didn't believe that their children were using drugs when they received a phone call from the school.

Teaching and learning problems

Further school factors arose out of teacher and principal responses. When teachers were asked what problems they faced within teaching their subjects, their responses were:

EDU A *learners were lazy, they failed to do their homework.*

EDU B *They are too cheeky and naughty while you are teaching, they played, laughed or sunbathed outside.*

PRINC A *Lack of teamwork among teachers and learners in school contributes to bad academic progress.*



PRINC B *Lack of resources and better understanding of implementation of NCS limited the chances of good results of learners.*

PRINC A *Redeployment left a heavy burden among the staff, additional teachers are needed to download the work for effective teaching.*

PRINC B *Lack of parent involvement in their children's education by responding on teachers reports about their children's behavior at schools.*

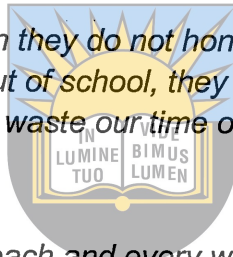
4.4.3 Inter – Personal Relations as a Factor in Learner Dropout

There was significant data that showed that learners felt their poor academic achievements were the result of poor relationships with teachers and sometimes

parents. Learners were not happy about teacher's attitudes and behavior displayed towards them.

LA I dislike being shouted about my stupidity, I am not God who gave me a brain like this.

LB Teachers behave badly when they do not honour their periods in the morning. Even when school principal is out of school, they will sit in the staffroom laughing and not attending classes. They waste our time of learning.



LOB Teachers who are absent each and every week makes me sick.

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LB Teachers must stop teasing and cursing some learners about their natural deformities, they lower learners' self esteem and self image and also kills a country because that learner will dropout whereas he/she would be a potential leader of our country.

It became evident from the learners' comments that teachers often discouraged them and they lost interest from school due to dissatisfaction with boring and humiliating conditions and ill treatment they obtained from schools. Mwamwenda (1996:246) also maintains that teachers' attitudes and personal behavior play a role in weakening someone's confidence or morale. Larson et al. (cited in Grawage 1987:163) identify learner dropouts as learners who received negative support which destroyed their self worth instead of motivating them.

Poor academic performance is the result of a lack of intellectual achievement obstructed by fears and guilt feelings which resulted in repeating classes cause a lack of self worth in learners. It is also promoted by inadequate implementation of the curriculum, and obviously losing their self image and therefore dropping out. The outcomes of inadequate curriculum implementation led to learners repeating the grade.



Parental Relationships

I have observed in my teaching experiences that learners who are unhappy at their homes become poor academic achievers. Unhappy and dysfunctional relationships of learners with their parents were mentioned by the learners as a major influence into the cause of learner dropouts:

LA Parents must stop insulting their children saying that they are wasting their money and time when they repeat the grades. I need my mother's comforting words when I failed the grade because it is not easy at school.

LOSB My mother shouted at me calling me with bad names accusing me of wrong things I did not practice.

LOSA Parents must stop abusing their children by discussing with their friends or neighbors when they have done something wrong. You become ashamed of yourself and hate your parents.

In this regard parents should bear in mind that family violence and verbal abuse are manifested in their children's minds. As a result the children would behave worse and treat their parents the same way by insulting them(Mc Whirter et al. 1993:162). In good family relationships confidence and a positive self image propel the learner to strive and progress in life.



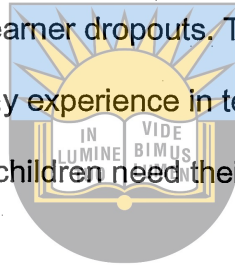
The remarks made by some of the learners indicated that their poor parental marriage status affected their progress level in education. Remarks from the learners to this effect were as follows:

LOSB My parents are divorced, my mother does not like us to appreciate our father's support, we are their children, we like them both.

LOSB My parents were always arguing and fighting my father was womanizing, so my mother was jealous of that. At school I cannot concentrate, feeling sad sometimes drowsy, I really did not like that situation.

LOSA My parents are separated in their marriage. My mother worked for us. It's my duty to look after my young sisters and brothers so I dropped out from school in grade 8.

Violence among families traumatizes learners resulting in a loss of self actualizing. Pretorius (1998) postulates that learners who come from broken homes, deserted by parents suffer from heartache and frustration. Pretorius (1998:306) observed that family disintegration due to desertion, divorce, extramarital and illegitimate relationships are characteristics of a deprived family, which put the child at risk of not realizing his or her full potential. Instead this puts them at risk which can lead to learner dropouts. This is confirmed by the out of school learner responses and my experience in teaching. Parents are the umbrella of their families. Their children need their shoulders to cry on during hardships of this life.



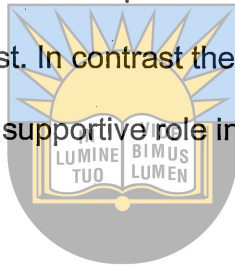
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4.4.4 Motivation as a factor in learner dropout

Parental Support in motivation

As mentioned in Chapter 2, I have always considered parent's involvement is one of the most influential aspects of children's motivation. The parents are the initial teachers of the child before the child goes to school and encounters education through a teacher. If a parent is completely engaged in the learning process with a child, the academic performance of a child will be positive. Also parents set an example for the child to understand that help is in the classroom and at home. Therefore parents are good stimuli of motivation.

Very (1979:234) noted that children sometimes rely heavily on parental encouragement for their motivation in study. This implies that where no such encouragement exists, learners may become demotivated and drop out of school. Children generally thrive on their parents' support continuing with their education. Therefore it is the parents' responsibility to inspire their children so that they will aspire to be the best. In contrast the findings of this study revealed that many parents do not play a supportive role in their children's education.



Many learners echoed frustrated remarks in this regard. They cited concern with school progress, emotional support and financial support as manifestation of parental support that they needed but did not receive.

LA My mother is a single parent, in my future I want to raise my child with my husband. Parents should educate us about motherhood as God wants us to become married woman.

LB My father frustrates me, he does not support me in school needs telling me to rather stay at home because educated people suffer to get good work.

LOSA My parents are illiterate, we are suffering at home. I dropped out from school in Grade 6. I supported my kids in their school work in order not to suffer as I did in life.

LOSB Parents do not inspire us about education, instead they discourage us.

LOSB Parents must use all means to support our education financial or asking for help in teachers concerning financial states to prevent learner dropouts from schools.

It is a reality that many black learners from rural areas are financially disadvantaged. They drop out of schools, and they seem to adopt immature responses to their lack of financial resources, e.g. by engaging in crime or substance abuse.



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The interviewed learners made numerous shocking revelations about the causes of crime in their communities.

LOSA Sometimes conditions at home like poverty, humiliation and parental abuse that lead children to do crime.

LA Our community composed of uneducated people, this environment affects success that is why the crime rate is so high.

LOSB We are doing nothing so during the day we look for something to steal in order to get money for our needs e.g. housebreaking, selling cows we steal in another community.

The above learners attempted to justify their actions by saying it is happening throughout the country. Many young people are engaged in psychopathic behavior. Pretorius (1998:305) noted that criminal activities are characteristic of deprived neighborhoods in which demoralized behavior is evident. Therefore social conditions, economic patterns provide a framework for understanding the increase in criminal behavior among children and teenagers.



The role of teachers support in motivation

Teachers need to try all measures necessary to improve the success of teaching and learning. Teachers require knowledge, understanding of physical, psychological and moral development and of specific environmental factors which influence the progress of learning. Kruger and Adams (1998:145) outlined that teachers must produce learners who are independent and who take responsibility for their own learning by supporting and motivating them in each teaching situation. However, learners in this study commented that teachers are contributing to their lack of motivation.

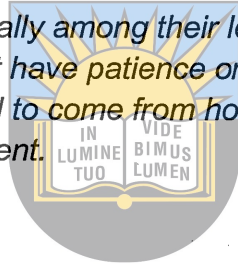
LA Teachers must encourage learners in their education but they shout us when you fail to make the homework without hearing what is the reason for that.

LB At home you are not happy even at school you receive the same treatment.

LOSA I dropped out of school because teacher so and so wanted me to be his girlfriend. I refused but everyday he directs difficult questions to me. Failing to answer he beats me.

LOSB Having a problem in learning the teachers will gossip about that to one another so I became demotivated and left the school in grade 9.

LOSA I became demotivated about school and totally left the school because teachers did not share love equally among their learners. They love and favour only good achievers. They don't have patience or tolerance to assist low academic achievers. It is painful to come from home hatred and even in the school receive the same treatment.



In this regard Kruger and Adam (1998:141) revealed that if a teacher is supportive of learners in learning, they feel safe and eager to learn. Piechowski (1998:198) corroborates that "many bright adolescents today cope with difficulties in dangerous environments and are in great need of support and encouragement" from teachers and parents. To conclude it is generally understood in education that the three pillars of school learning namely the teachers, learners and parents should work together in promoting positive educational outcomes.

4.4.5 Pregnancy as a factor in learner dropout

All interviewed respondents in this study mentioned pregnancy as another major problem which leads to learner dropouts. In rural areas, too many learners are headed by single female parent households who invariably have a variety of partners. In overcrowded families it also appeared that mothers and fathers have no privacy about sex especially when they are drunk. This was evident in the learner in the primary school in Fort Beaufort District age 10 who raped a four year old girl. In his response to the police he said that he practised what was done by his mother and father.



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Learners in school perceived pregnancy as a tool for dropping out from school purposely expressing their views as follows:

LA There are two types of pregnancy – planned and unplanned.

LA Some learners planned their pregnancy by not using contraceptives or condoms in order to receive child grants. Some are having 3 children between the ages of 15 – 20...they received a lot of money as their salaries contributed to the upkeep of their families.

The above statements are correct: some of the secondary dropouts were known to me as a teacher. There were mothers of two or three children only one year apart in age.

LB They planned pregnancy by imitating their peers in order to be accepted by them especially during community celebrations they flock together.

LB Other girls are jealous of their boyfriends who impregnated another girl or just to give birth for their boyfriends.

LB I don't encourage them; they lack the knowledge of how to handle themselves. Their future is full of problems.

LB Yes, our mobile clinics do not come regularly, so its better to abstain from sex in order to be free of HIV/Aids.



LB Unplanned pregnancy in our days and age is when the learner was being raped.

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Learners out of school gave different examples of how they became pregnant and some privately revealed their motives for that:

LOSA I became pregnant at the age of 15 then stopped going to school.

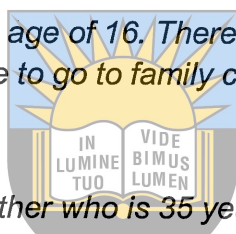
LOSB I was living with my relatives aunty and uncle with the same 'Amabhele' for school purpose. My aunty was working in Fort Beaufort as a domestic worker coming home only at the end of the month. At night her husband forced me to have sex with him. He promised to kill me if I talked about this. I became pregnant so he gave me money to go home. My parents chased me away. I did not mention who did this, instead I mentioned that it was a young boy as my uncle advised me. Now I had 3 children at the age of 22.

LOS B *I became pregnant at the age of 16. I was grateful for this in order to stop schooling. Now I am a mother of 2 kids.*

LOS B *We were living in an overcrowded house. My brother in law raped me several time. I became pregnant. I won't go back to school because I am too old and I am also looking after my child. I reported this but my relatives said we were both drunk.*

LOS B *I became pregnant at the age of 16. There were no mobile clinics in our community, lacking transport fee to go to family clinics in town.*

LOS B *I lived with my single mother who is 35 years old, unemployed, running a shebeen and having many boyfriends. She taught me that female private parts are their banks. I became pregnant with my second born. Now I am HIV positive, I am going to die, what about my kids? I hate my mother who is also HIV positive.*



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P1 *My granddaughter was raped by a herd man on the way to school. She was walking alone because she was late. She became pregnant, dropped out from school and abandoned her child since she worked in Cape Town.*

4.4.6 HIV/AIDS as a factor in learner dropout

The primary impact of HIV/Aids on education is to exacerbate the level of dysfunction and make an already bad situation worse. Badcock – Walters et al. (2002:1 – 11) found through research the impact of the disease on Africa's education sector is profound and is eroding the delivery of learning, teaching and development to an unprecedented degree.

Unfortunately, the conventional education management information system (EMIS), even where they are functional, do not capture or provide data regularly enough to identify trends. Consequently, the ability of the educational systems in question to monitor and measure input, function and output is extremely limited and precludes any systematic examination of these issues in most cases. Also the Education Policy Unit at the University of Fort Hare (2005:4) researched the Implementation of The Right to basic Education in poor communities. Their findings showed some learners who are HIV positive are looking after sick family members who are suffering from Aids. Their attendance at school became poorer and poorer, and as a result, they abandoned education and opted to drop out of school. The HIV/Aids pandemic will have a traumatic impact on all educators and learners as perceived in this study. The work of educators both who are HIV positive and those who have developed fully blown Aids will be compromised by the periods of illness. Once they are HIV positive many are likely to lose interest in continuing professional development. Most educators will have to take additional teaching and other work related duties in order to cover for sick colleagues. In brief this will result in poor academic performances because the teachers are not well equipped to teach other subjects.



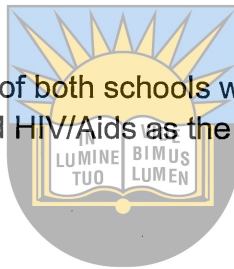
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In this study respondents revealed that HIV/Aids contributed towards learner dropouts:

P1 My son committed suicide when he tested HIV positive before he went for manhood.

P2 This disease traumatizes the whole family because in my family I have two orphans; their parents were working in Johannesburg they died because of this hungry lion called HIV/Aids.

When principals and educators of both schools were asked why learners drop out from school; they mentioned HIV/Aids as the factor contributing towards learner dropout.



EDU A HIV/Aids contributes to physical poverty which is in relation with social factors. Family working members died because HIV/Aids resulted to older learners looking for jobs in order to be able to support surviving members of the family.

EDU B It promotes pregnancy because some learners are staying alone where no parental discipline is practised.

LA My friend dropped out of school after a long illness related to HIV/Aids.

LB HIV/Aids caused some learners to drop out of school because there is no one to pay for their school fees if their parents died.

LOSA I dropped out of school looking after my mother who is suffering from HIV/Aids. I am her first born; my grandmother cannot manage to do this on her own because she is too old.

P1 My child dropped out of school and now she is suffering a long illness after being raped on her way to school by men with HIV/Aids.

It is evident from the above comments that the effects of HIV/Aids have an impact on school attendance and drop out rates. In families it kills many infected and affected persons; it also brings poverty and poor academic progress contributing to learner dropouts.



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4.5 Conclusion

The following chapter will conclude by summarizing the results of this research in full. It will attempt to bring to light new knowledge on a topic which will put challenging recommendations for further fruitful inquiry. It will assist educational sectors with suggestions of how the knowledge can be applied to eliminate the problems associated with the causes of learner's dropouts.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

An analysis of data and the research results, supported by the literature review presented in chapter 4 concluded the investigation by presenting relevant evidence of the stated problem. This chapter will present conclusions drawn from this research and point to further fruitful inquiry. It provides statements that give general advice about how the knowledge of this research can be applied. Recommendations will be presented to serve for the application of results in teaching as well as further topics of inquiry which can be researched in the future.

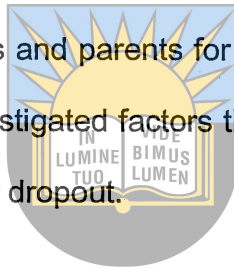
5.2 Summary of previous chapters in this study

In chapter 1, the problem was introduced. The background mentioned that learner dropout is being experienced by other countries like the United States and other countries in Sub Saharan Africa. The problem of rural school dropout

has presented itself throughout the world for a very long time. The reasons for learner dropout from schools are complex. This study based in the Eastern Cape, Fort Beaufort district, aimed to investigate the research question:

-Why do learners drop out of school?

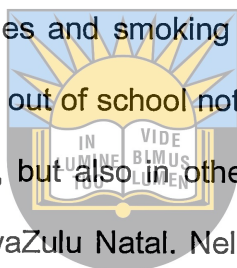
In order to find the reasons for the stated problem, the question was examined by interviewing educators, learners and parents for their perceptions of the reasons for learner dropouts. I also investigated factors that emerged from the home and the school which lead to learner dropout.



The importance of this study is to enable education policy makers to eliminate or reduce the causes of learner drop outs. This question was answered by findings from the literature review of studies related to this topic, and also data obtained from respondents.

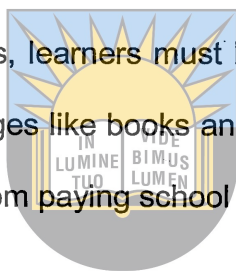
Chapter 2 explored other authors' views about this problem. The literature review contributed to gaining an understanding of the previous knowledge and also to point out what is missing while at the same time giving clarity to the stated problem. Different research studies revealed many reasons for learner dropouts. For instance, Kasente (2000:7 – 10) found that poor financial status at home due

to parental unemployment limits learner's chances to meet school needs like uniforms and school fees. Sexual harassment by school boys and teachers leave girls unprotected at school from incurable sexual diseases. Also, neglect or favoritism among learners destroy eagerness and interest in schooling which resulted in learner dropouts. Malaka (1999:1) found that learners themselves contributed to learner dropout by bunking periods, not doing homework, sunbathing during teaching times and smoking in the toilets e.g. drugs. It has been evident that learners drop out of school not only in the Eastern Cape where this case study is investigated, but also in other provinces in South Africa like Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu Natal. Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) (2005) elected these provinces because of high levels of poverty and unemployment which lead to learner dropouts. In countries of East and Southern African Region such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, rural secondary schools have a high number of learner dropouts. Tables of selected countries from above like Ethiopia, Tanzania and Malawi in Chapter 2 Ethiopia (1993/94), Tanzania (1997/98) and Malawi (October 1999), showed the statistics of learner dropouts and reasons. The strongest factors contributing towards learner dropouts were poverty, unemployment, no support from parents, illness, pregnancy, distance from school, family problems, truancy and delinquency.



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Many authors like Pretorius (1998:307) and the NMF (2005) revealed that poverty in the family decreases the chance of academic success due to the lack of school necessities. Some learners drop out of school because they cannot pay school fees due to shortage of income at home. The Eastern Cape Province study carried out by the Nelson Mandela Foundation NMF(2005:53) revealed that if they failed to pay school fees, learners must leave school. When school fees are paid they get school privileges like books and reports. The proposed formula of exemption of poor parents from paying school fees is not being implemented.



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Pregnancy was also related to school dropouts; literature NMF (2005) revealed that many learners deliberately fall pregnant in order to get support grants after giving birth to bring relief for their families rather than support the needs of their babies.

Family influence was also noted as contributing towards learner dropout. Implications of broken homes like divorce, learners deserted by parents, second marriages, death or sickness among family members played a major role in learner dropout. The above implications brought stress and unhappiness in the lives of the family, which affected academic progress of learners. Unemployment

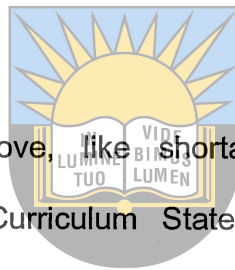
and low economic status in their family caused learners to opt for working rather than schooling in order to help their families. Family chores like keeping cattle and domestic work eliminated time and chances of school work in learners. NMF (2005:44 – 47) revealed that learners carry their own household chores in the expense of dropout of school time. Learners become tired and frustrated of not having a chance of doing their homework. Eventually they became misfits in the school.



Illiterate background of parents and lack of support and encouragement in learners' education have an impact on failing and repeating the grades. Learners who failed the grades twice or more lose their self – confidence lowering their self esteem and unquestionably they dropped out of school. NMF (2005:29) study found that if the parent's education status was poor, learners struggled alone with their education, fail the grades and lose self – confidence.

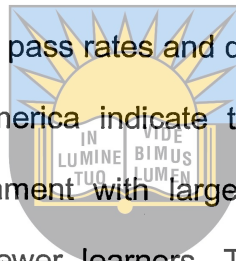
It has been evident from literature reviews of this study that the poorer areas of the country are highly populated by Africans and that is where the shortage of educators comes in. The implication of formal contact hours is that the quality of teaching will be affected as the work of educators is spread across grades. The workload demands on educators are greater, resulting in educator

ineffectiveness, stress and obviously academic results will be poor. The lack of relevant resources and multigrade – teaching in rural schools does not improve the quality of education, instead it produces learner dropouts. It is important to state that the unattractive conditions in which educators work need to be improved and disparities between urban and rural school eradicated in attempts to improve the quality of education especially in rural communities.



The implications of the above, like shortage of textbooks, inadequate implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS), redeployment of teachers in schools, behavior of learners to teachers and teachers to learners limited the progress of teaching and learning. Ill treatment of learners by teachers sexually, spiritually and emotionally does not encourage learners to continue with their studies, instead it produces learner dropouts. Some learners lack parental love at home; at school they receive the same treatment and their hopes obviously perish. Pretorius (1998:310) noted that parents who excluded themselves from their children's education by not supporting them in all aspects of school, actually discourages them, since Very (1979:234) emphasized that children sometimes depend heavily on parental encouragement as well as teachers for their motivation to study. McCombs (1994:145) confirmed that positive teachers relationships with learners can provide self – regulated learning.

It has been evident from literature that learners found that to be educated is boring and it takes a long time to lead to work and also some graduates are still looking for jobs. It was also observed by interviewed educators that rural based districts tend to have larger classes than urban based districts. Large classes, particularly in impoverished communities may arguably be regarded as a contributing factor to low matric pass rates and dropouts. International studies on effective schooling e.g. in America indicate that class size impacts on the teaching and learning environment with larger classes performing poorly in comparison to classes with fewer learners. Therefore class size should be controlled because teachers cannot give each learner individual attention especially slow learners, thus leading to further dropouts.



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The research studies and literature on the topic of dropouts and their significance to this study gave me an opportunity to move forward by investigating a specific area of the country and adding to the current body of research on this problem. In particular this study has added valuable data on the impact of HIV/Aids to studies such as Badcock – Walters (2002:1 – 7). Their aim was to assist in managing and mitigating the impact of HIV/Aids on education. They revealed that researched school enrolment had declined because of the implications of

HIV/Aids diseases. Absenteeism rates, both educators and learners, negatively influence the smooth process of teaching and learning. Also the numbers of orphans per month was increased to between 2 – 13 orphans, as a result of parental HIV/Aids related diseases.

Chapter 3 laid out how the study was conducted. This study used an interpretive research paradigm which was grounded in a qualitative approach. Its purpose was to see events and processes in a natural setting and attempts to get clarity on the stated problem by viewing the world through the perspectives of the actors. This study is based on a qualitative research methodology. I have been fully involved as a teacher in this context for many years. The aim was to go straight to their settings to interview them in order to get relevant information and ideas. Research instruments were chosen and carefully prepared to give clarity to the problem. The case in this study was the causes of learner dropout in rural secondary schools. The sample was composed of 10 learners in school, 20 learners out of school, 10 parents, 2 principals and 4 educators. The aim of interviewing this population was to get rich descriptive information. The focus groups were formulated purposively but also according to convenience, in order to get relevant information from the respondents. The chief method was interviews, both focus groups and individuals if they did not feel free to talk in front of others. Private interviews sometimes enabled me to get more

information. All the respondents responded positively to the questions which were formulated from the research question. The data was summarized in field notes, most respondents refused the use of tape recorders as if they are going to be held accountable for the causes of learner dropouts. I negotiated the entrance with school principals and community chairpersons who gave me permission to do my research.



Data analysis techniques consisted of categorizing responses and combining similar evidence from different sources which seems to strengthen their validity. The data collected from interviews was summarized into themes. The findings were clearly presented in chapter 4 according to the factors which emerged from the literature review and findings discovered in the interviews.

Validity and reliability of this study was confirmed from relevant information gained from the interviews. I compared the data directed to each question from various respondents in the groups and individually in order to measure fruitfulness of the given information.

Ethical considerations were honored through this study. I respected the dignity and views of all participated respondents.

5.3 Conclusions and implications of the results of the study

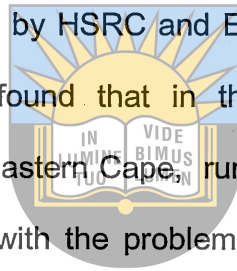
Since this is a case study, it does not provide generalisable conclusions, but it does add examples to strengthen the findings of other studies. Conclusions from this investigation into the causes of learner dropouts show that socio – economic, family, school environment, HIV/Aids and personal factors all play a major role in the decision of learners to drop out of school. It also produced some unexpected findings in answering the research question:

Why do learners drop out from school?

All respondents gave their perceptions and views of the reasons for learner dropout. The conclusions below are therefore based on their views and corroborated by the literature summarized above and in Chapter 2.

5.3.1 Socio-economic factors

The implications of socio-economic factors like poverty, unemployment and distance from school are highlighted in several studies in Eastern and Southern African countries which found that the main causes of dropout tended to be poverty and unemployment, which lead to the failures to pay for school expenses, food, transport, clothes, school uniforms and medicines. Also, the South African research studies by HSRC and EPC researched for The Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) found that in three South African provinces Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape, rural education and its potential for development is overwhelmed with the problems of poverty and a high rate of unemployment.



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The findings of this case study also corroborated the above statements and concluded that hungry minds, poor economic family status and unemployed parents produced learner dropouts.

5.3.2 Family Factors

In my findings parent's backgrounds sometimes are an important influence on their children. Mussen et al. (1990:632) state that if parents set high educational and occupations goals and reward school work, their children display higher levels of aspiration in education. Hence interactions with parents and dynamics

around parents affect the future lives of their children. Disharmonious relationships with parents in this study have a major influence on the level of learner motivations in their goals for education and self development. Verbal and physical abuse in families manifest in delinquent attitudes and behaviors in children. These tendencies are carried over to the school; its effect contributes towards poor academic performance. Teachers address their bad behavior by applying rules which are usually accompanied by punishment. These measures usually fail because no punishment exists at home. On the other hand the learner's achievement of goals is disturbed by family disintegration. Family interactions become strained as a result of some situations that consist of single unemployed parents, divorced parents' extra marital affairs, step-parenting and also parents who decide to desert their children.

This study found that all these factors can depress children and affect their achievements. Learners expect their parents to support them financially and emotionally. The lack of financial resources in many families sees many learners turning towards criminal activities and substance abuse. This factor of substance abuse needs to be investigated further although it has not been scientifically proven. Although some learners in this study confirmed that they used drugs to stop worries and frustration the factor of substance abuse needs to be the focus

of further research studies because the results are inconclusive. Many attributed their involvement in crime as a means of satisfying financial needs.

5.3.3 HIV/AIDS related factors

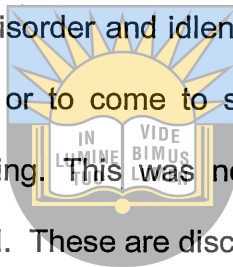
Many families are suffering from incurable diseases which affect the progress of schooling. This study has shown that some learners dropped out of school because their parents died from HIV/AIDS related diseases. Now the older ones must look after the young ones. Some learners commented that they looked after sick family members. Some dropped out of school in order to support their sisters and brothers because they are orphans, whereas some lost concentration and interest in their studies, traumatized by being infected and affected by this pandemic HIV/AIDS. Another learner painfully revealed that her mother taught her to be a prostitute; they both suffered from knowing that they were going to die due to HIV/AIDS. One of the most important findings in this study is the evidence that HIV/AIDS is becoming a major cause of learner dropouts in this district.

A survey conducted by the University of Fort Hare Education Policy Unit (2005) also confirms that some learners drop out of school because of discrimination. This was confirmed by the respondent in this study who said that she stopped going to school because other learners gossiped about her HIV/AIDS status and

they treated her unfairly no one wanted to sit next to her. There was also a respondent in this study who dropped out of school suffering long sickness due to being raped by an infected man on the way to school.

5.3.4 School Factors

A dysfunctional school where disorder and idleness prevail, does not encourage learners to pursue knowledge or to come to school cheerfully, instead it kills learners' enthusiasm for learning. This was noted when interviewed learners mentioned dislikes about school. These are discussed below.



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In this study it has been concluded that the learners' sense of security is threatened at the school by the implications of long distances they traveled and peer pressure. The findings also showed that some learners bring weapons to school to defend themselves. This can lead to other learners being attacked and threatens the safety of the teachers.

Another factor from the data was the lack of extramural activities at both schools; this demotivated learners. Extramural activities create a positive school experience especially for those who struggle academically. The consequence of

the unavailability for extramural activities can lead to many academically unsuccessful learners losing interest in school or ultimately dropping out of school. Their talents and careers are squashed and nothing about school attracts them. It has been suggested that the task of engaging learners in extramural activities can be given to learners themselves for co-organizing. This surely will promote togetherness, self-respect and also cooperation among learners themselves. Teachers can serve as overseers or supervisors of extramural activities. The individual deprived school can liaise with other schools for mentorship, use of facilities and borrowing of equipments. Talented learners have to be given a chance to expose themselves, and nourish their talents in order blossom in future by involving them in competitions like different kind of music, dances etc. Extramural activities occupy young people in their formative years so that they will steer clear of unacceptable lifestyle and practices.



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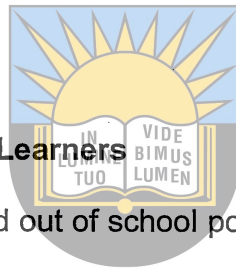
In addition the data and the literature survey concluded that one of the obstacles in the effective implementation of National Curriculum Statement is the lack of relevant resources. This causes learners to lose out a lot from not being able to experiment and link context to real life. It should be emphasized that proper educational facilities are needed in schools to keep learning and teaching meaningful and enjoyable.

In this study it was concluded from the findings that peer pressure influenced learners to drop out. Peer groups in secondary schools and in their communities influenced one another in a direct way, by providing each other with a sense of belonging and acceptance. Peer influences had negative implications for learning and motivation among learners to the extent that they endured unacceptable behavior to meet their needs for love and a sense of belonging, and ignored adult attempts at discipline.



Secondary school learners revealed that they competed with each other in attempts to prove their own identity and value. This competition caused them to engage in unhealthy and destructive behavior, impacting negatively on their attempts to engage in learning. They spend more time competing with one another over social issues like appearance than on academic work. Learners also observed and imitated one another's behavior. They do this regardless of whether it will affect their performance. For example in this study, participating learners recounted that learners used alcohol and drugs to escape from reality and to conform with their peers. The effects of drug abuse dependence are unfortunately brought into the school. This had negative implications for learning performance. Individual learners gradually became stifled, de-motivated and failed to realize their full potential. This can gradually lead to dropouts.

In conclusion, the learners expected the government to provide them with stationery, transport, sport facilities and school supervision. The lack of these resources left the learners feeling frustrated, unsupported, and they therefore became de-motivated to learn. It is also observed that rural-based districts tend to have larger classes than urban based districts. The implications of overcrowded classrooms can impede the progress of teaching and learning.



5.3.5 Teachers' Attitudes to Learners

Interviewed learners both in and out of school pointed out that teachers' absence from classrooms during class periods, negative attitudes towards certain children, and favouritism among others all created a conducive atmosphere in learning and teaching. It is discouraging for learners who received harsh or indifferent treatment from their teachers. Learners expect their teachers to support them as learners. The implications of no support by teachers led to misunderstandings between learners and teachers and some learners opted to dropout from school

Positive and negative teacher's attitudes and personality play a role in learner's academic achievement. Effective teaching requires a healthy positive attitude towards the learner and the process of learning. This implies that learners will be

inspired to pursue their goal and achieve their learning. The learners in this study felt that teachers having affairs with learners is also unacceptable because teachers are the surrogate parents of learners. Their fear of having an affair sometimes led to them dropping out because they felt that if they refused the teacher would have a negative attitude. This behaviour did not promote quality of teaching and learning; instead it destroyed learners' respect for teachers and education. Learners were convinced that teacher support would contribute to their motivation to engage in learning.



5.3.6 Learners themselves contribute to learner dropout

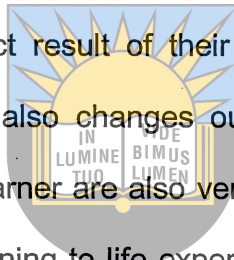
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The findings from educators in this study show conclusively that learners adopt bad behaviour habits that render them unsuccessful in their education. Learners who do not do their homework, read their books, or who spend class time outside playing, end up failing the grades. The consequence of this is that learners fail or drop out from school not because they cannot meet the academic requirements but because of their bad behaviour and the implications for their studies. Learners, who are responsible for their learning, knowing what they want to be in life, participate more actively in the process of learning. They are more likely to be motivated. The majority of respondents seemed to indicate that self-esteem was a good booster for motivation and learners with a positive image were

perceived to be generally better adjusted and motivated than those with less positive images.

5.3.7 Inter-personal factors

Learners claimed that teachers, parents and peers discouraged them in their learning because they failed to provide sufficient support. This lack of support gave students little drive to succeed in their education. Many learners felt that their own poverty was a direct result of their failure to perform well in their studies. What we experience also changes our perceptions and values. The personal experiences of the learner are also very influential in creating a lack of motivation because linking learning to life experiences will not allow the child to see a personal relevance in education. Results from this study identified that the learners were not interested in learning, they were inactive and had little dedication to anything related to school; most of all they were demotivated. This analysis of the learners reasons for dropping out showed that those three traits combined with poor behaviour was often a recipe for low academic achievement. The results of the interviews revealed that understanding learners interests could help policy makers devise a plan that takes into account ways that will help motivate learners in rural areas and create self-confidence in order to decrease the dropout rate. A common claim from the majority of participants was that parents' lack of involvement destroyed many learners' interest in school. So from this data it can be concluded that lifelong learners were created when teachers



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were enthusiastic, learners received rewards, peers encouraged one another and personal experiences were positive. These factors raised an individual's self esteem and self image often resulting in learners doing well in school. Conversely, when those aspects were not cultivated or experienced negatively by learners many chose to drop out.

5.3.8 Motivational Factors contribute towards learner dropout

It has been concluded from the respondents of this study that a lack of motivation among learners contributed greatly towards learner dropout. Many of those interviewed stated that the negative attitude and favouritism by teachers contributed to low self esteem and self-confidence. This was commonly cited as a reason for dropping out. Many studies have indicated that there is a direct correlation between self esteem and motivation. When the learners' self esteem dies, no medicine can heal that spirit except motivation and encouragement. When a learner's responsiveness is low, she may appear disinterested, apathetic and become discouraged. Feelings such as these will inevitably lead to learner drop outs.

5.4 Recommendations

There is a need in educational policy to include or upgrade guidance skills at schools based on the importance of education and how to choose a career. It is also important to have counselling workshops for parents, educators and learners in order to bridge and tie up the gaps between them. Parents in rural areas need to become more aware of the importance of becoming involved in their children's education. In order to reduce the dropout rate, it is suggested that schools find a way to provide extra or remedial classes for at risk learners in each school where necessary. Guidelines for improving and maintaining discipline of both learners and teachers should be implemented.

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It is recommended that schools work hard to provide extramural activities such as sports teams, music and dance classes or competitions and hold academic award ceremonies for learners. These activities play an important role in helping to create a positive environment for learners, thus improving motivation with the result of keeping more learners in school.

One other request made by teachers was to increase training and support for the implementation of NCS in a creative and motivating way. The majority indicated that motivation would increase if they could learn how to develop resources that would assist in the implementation.

Community dropouts are not contributing to the development of the community or the country. Community ward councillors and community committees must work together to help these people to become participants in society. This can be done by creating projects that put them to work or by establishing skills training schools that will allow opportunities for dropouts to have jobs while improving the community at the same time.



Future research studies may need to assess the Government's future plans for dropout learners. In addition to this, Government's plans for supporting orphans and street children in South Africa also need to be reviewed. Therefore tracer studies that could explore what happened to them may be useful. In this regard census and employment data may be of assistance and it would also be a useful to disaggregate such data in terms of age and provinces.

It is not clear in South African studies if girls return to school after pregnancy. In this regard it will be useful to consider the statistics on birth rates of adolescent girls who become pregnant at school. It would be helpful to understand the effects of social grants and their possible contributions to female learners dropping out of school or failing to return after the birth of their first child.

There is an urgent need for the Department of Health and Welfare to take care of supporting families who are suffering in poverty due to HIV/Aids implications by visiting each community in good time in order to recognize their problems and to arouse their hopes and lives. The Department of Education can identify orphans in each district giving support in school need and also assisting those young ones with bursaries in order to brighten their future. Education campaigns should be conducted in rural and farm communities about how to control this pandemic, and those who are already affected should be assisted fully so that they maintain their self – esteem.



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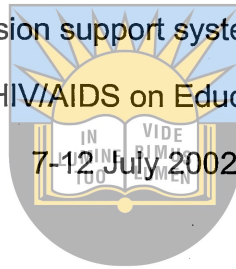
There may be other areas of future research arising from this study which was limited in its scope. Motivation, the impact of HIV/AIDS and pregnancy are three factors which have a strong influence on whether learners drop out or not. Therefore, it would be useful to have more data collected on these factors to compare results from different areas. The results from this study and future studies will hopefully be found to be useful in order to improve and raise the quality of teaching and learning in South African rural schools.

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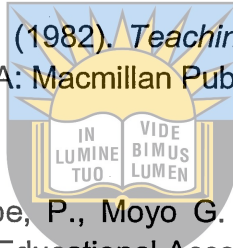
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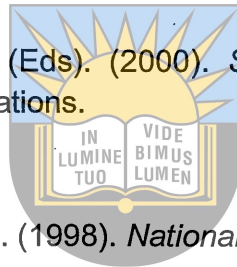
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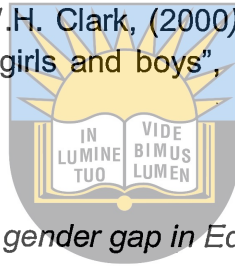
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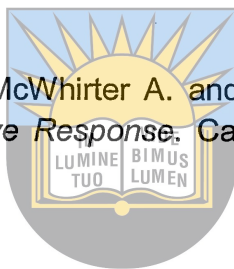
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**APPENDIX 1:-PERMISSION TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH IN SCHOOL**



University of Fort Hare
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24 Gaga Street

Alice

5700

May 2007

The Principal

.....

.....

.....

.....



Dear Sir/Madam

Request to conduct a field research study in your school:-

My name is Vuyiswa Evelyn Mgwangqa, an educator at Emmanuel primary school. I am a part time student doing Master of Education with the University of Fort Hare. I kindly request to be granted permission to conduct a field research study with your school. My research focus is to investigate the causes of learner dropout in rural Secondary Schools, a case study of Fort Beaufort District in Eastern Cape Province.

The research shall be conducted on theto the.....2007. The respondents will be the school principal, educators, learners in school, parents and learners who are out of school.

The information obtained will be used for research academics purpose only and your responses will be confidentially maintained.

Thank you in advance.

Yours Faithfully

Vuyiswa Evelyn Mgwangqa (Mrs.)

**APPENDIX 2:-CONSENT FORM FOR
RESPONDENTS**



University of Fort Hare
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24 Gaga Street

Alice 5700

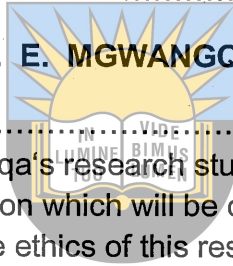
28 May 2007

TO: THE RESPONDENT

.....
.....
.....

CONSENT FORM FOR MRS V. E. MGWANGQA RESPONDENT

I..... fully agree that I will be the respondent of Mrs. Mgwangqa's research study. I promise that I will provide her with the necessary information which will be of help to her study. I am fully aware that I will be bound by the ethics of this research, exercising confidentiality as required by this study.



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Signed at.....on this.....day
of.....2007

Signature of Respondent.....Date
.....

Signature of
Researcher.....Date.....

**APPENDIX 3:-INTERVIEW SCHEDULES
FOR PRINCIPALS & EDUCATORS**



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INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

The aim of the interview is to find out about your views concerning causes why learners drop out of school. Please feel free to share your views with me on the stated problem. Remember there is no right or wrong answer; please answer the questions in the interview schedule to the best of your ability.

2. ASSURING CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Please be assured that whatever you say or do or show will be treated completely confidentially.

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3. PERMISSION TO TAPE

I will tape the conversation for accurate recollection of our discussion. You have a right to ask for the transcription to review it before any use or to totally cancel it. Do you have a problem if I tape this conversation?

4. ANY QUESTIONS

Before I start, do you have any questions about the purpose and use of this interview: confidentiality and anonymity, tape recording or any other thing you would like to ask?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR PRINCIPALS AND EDUCATORS

1. How long have you been a teacher /principal?

.....
.....

.2.What are your qualifications?

.....
.....

3. What subject are you teaching?



.....
.....

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4. How old are you?

.....
.....

5. What is the average number of learners per class in your school?

.....
.....

6. How do your learners perform in your subject?

.....
.....

7. As an educator what problems are you faced with in teaching your subject?

.....
.....

8. What factors do learners take into account in deciding to opt H.G. or S.G. in your subject?

.....
.....



9. What solutions would you suggest in order to improve the situation?

.....
.....

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10. Do all learners attend your classes regularly?

.....
.....

11. If no, please give reasons for irregular attendance

.....
.....

12. How do learners come to school?

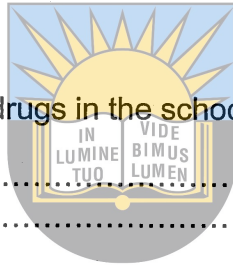
.....
.....

13. Can all learners afford school fees?

.....
.....

14. What measures do you take against learners that do not pay the fees or have no full uniform?

.....
.....



15. Are there learners who use drugs in the school?

.....
.....

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16. If they use drugs, what measures do you take?

.....
.....

17. Usually which types of health problems do learners at your school have?

.....
.....

18. Are there girls who fall pregnant while at school?

.....
.....

19. Which measures do you take against students who fall pregnant?

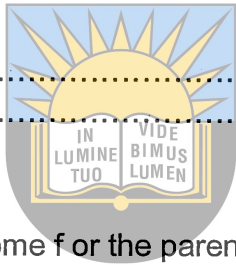
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20. (a) Can parents of learners read or write?

.....
.....

20. (b) If yes, give percentage

.....
.....



21. What are the sources of income for the parents around your school?

.....
.....
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22. During long break where learners get food?

.....
.....

23. Does HIV/AIDS contribute towards of learner dropout? If so state how.

.....
.....

24 Why do children dropout of school?

.....
.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.

APPENDIX 4:-INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR



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Interview schedules for learners in school

1. How often do you attend school?

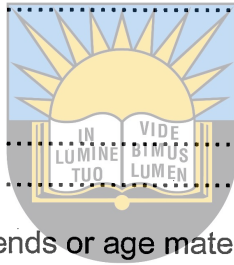
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2. Do your friends attend school regularly?

.....
.....

3. How old are you?

.....
.....



4. Do you have some of your friends or age mates that dropped out or left school before completing the grades?

.....
.....

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5. If yes, what were their reasons for dropping out?

.....
.....

6. What do you like about school?

.....
.....

7. What do you dislike about school?

.....
.....

8. Generally how far is your school from home?

.....
.....

9. How do you get to school everyday?

.....
.....

10. What do you do during break time at school?

.....
.....

11. How well do you perform in class tests?

.....
.....

12. Which ones do you pass?



.....
.....

13. Which ones do you fail?

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.....
.....

14. During June or December holidays do you take home your results?

.....
.....

15. Have you been absent from school this year?

.....
.....

16. If yes what were the reasons?

.....
.....

17. How many are you in your family?

.....
.....

18. Do all of you attend school? Yes/No

.....
.....

19. If the answer above is No, state the reason.

.....
.....

20. Do you live with both parents?



21. If not, why?

.....
.....

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22. Who is paying for your school fees, books and uniforms?

.....
.....

23. What are your parents doing?

.....
.....

24. What is the highest level of education attained by your parents?

.....
.....

25. At home who helps with homework?

.....
.....

27. What duties or activities do you do after school?

.....
.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH; GOOD LUCK IN YOUR STUDIES.



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**APPENDIX 5:-INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR
LEARNERS OUT OF SCHOOL**



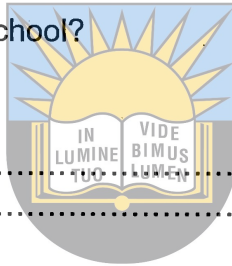
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INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR LEARNERS OUT OF SCHOOL

1. Which grade level did you stop going to school?

.....
.....

2. Why did you stop attending school?



.....
.....

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3. Which subjects were you doing?

.....
.....

4(a) Which subjects did you like best?

.....
.....

4(b) Please, explain why.

.....
.....

5. How old are you?

.....
.....

6(a) Which subject did you do badly?



.....
.....

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6(b) Please explain why

.....
.....

7. Are all your friends attending school?

.....
.....

8. What did you like about school?

.....
.....

9. What did you dislike about school?



.....
.....

10. How were you getting to school?

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.....
.....

11. Who paid your fees, bought books and uniforms?

.....
.....

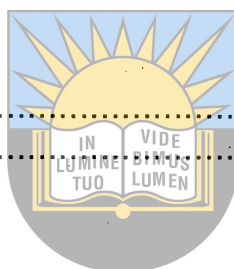
12(a) Which teachers did you like most?

.....
.....

12(b) Please explain why.

.....
.....

13(a) Which teachers did you dislike most?



13(b) Please explain why.

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.....
.....

14. Are there girls who become pregnant at school?

.....
.....

15. How did the teachers treat them?

.....
.....

16. How did the parents treat them?

.....
.....



17. How many are you in your family?

.....
.....
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18. During your days in schools were there learners who used drugs?

.....
.....

19. If yes, how did they behave in school and in the community?

.....
.....

20. During your school days what were your parents doing?

.....
.....

21. Did your parents attend school?

.....
.....



22. If yes, what level of education do they have?

.....
.....

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23. Did your parents help you with your homework?

.....
.....

24. If no, who helped you with your homework?

.....
.....

25. What were you doing during break time at school?

.....
.....

26. At the present moment what are you doing?

.....
.....



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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

APPENDIX 6:- INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR



PARENTS

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR PARENTS

1. Do you have children who stay at home not attending school?

.....
.....



2. If so please give reasons for them not attending school.

.....
.....
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3. How old are you?

.....
.....

4. How many are you in the family?

.....
.....

5. How many are employed?

.....
.....

6. How many are unemployed?



.....
.....

7. How many children go school?

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Together in Excellence

.....
.....

8. How many of your children pay school fees?

.....
.....

9(a). Do you have children who use drugs?

.....
.....

9(b) If yes, how do they behave in the family and community?

.....
.....

9(c). How do you treat them?



.....
.....
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

10(a) Do you have children who are sick and unable to attend school?

.....
.....

10(b) If yes for how long have they been at home?

.....
.....

10(c) How have you helped them?

.....
.....

11. What activities do your children do at home before and after school?

.....
.....



12. Are there specific roles done by girls and boys on weekends?

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.....
.....

13. If yes please name them.

.....
.....

14. How is your children's performance at school?

.....
.....

15. Do you think home activities done by the children affect their performance at school?

.....
.....

16. How far is your home from school?



17. How do your children get to school?

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.....
.....

18. How long do your children travel from home to school?

.....
.....

19. Do your children bring homework home?

.....
.....

20. If yes, who helps them?

.....
.....

21. At home when do your children do their homework?



.....
.....

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THANK YOU FOR CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX 7:- ETHICS FOR THE RESEARCHER



University of Fort Hare
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SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES

Field research code of ethics

NB: This form should be completed and signed by the research candidate and co-signed by the research supervisor before the candidate embarks on field research

Research Candidate: VUYISWA EVELYN M GWANGQA

Research title: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES OF LEARNER DROPOUTS IN TWO RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS FORT BEAUFORT DISTRICT, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE; A CASE STUDY.

Programme: BEd Hons/ MEd/Phd

University of Fort Hare
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Supervisor: Prof. L. LAWRENCE

Co-Supervisor: Dr. S. REMBE

Research focus

1. What is your research focus?

Is to investigate into the causes of learner dropouts in two rural secondary school. My focus is to know what is happening in secondary school academically and socially.

2. Please attach research tools that you plan to use for data collection

Main research tool are interviews. Four focus groups interviews each having interview schedule which is carefully structured. In-depth individual interviews, these interviews will help respondents who have secrets and ashame to speak in front of others.

3. Who will be respondents for this research study?

1. Principals, of the two secondary schools together with 3 teachers.
2. Learners in schools both schools.
3. Learners out of school in two rural communities.
4. Parents having children in both schools.

4. How do you plan to inform your respondents about your research?

1. I will conduct a mini-workshop for about 30 minutes or an hour with them. Telling them about the interviews and its procedure.

Consent

5. Will you secure the informed consent of all respondents in this research study?

YES

NO

X

6. Kindly attach a copy of your consent form

7. In the case of research involving under age children, how will you secure consent?

The parent or guardian of each child will be requested to sign the consent form on behalf of the child.

Confidentiality

8. Will you guarantee your respondents confidentiality and anonymity?	YES X	NO
<p>9. If the answer is YES, in 8, please explain</p> <p>Their dignities will be maintained. Their names and school names will not be mentioned. The information will be used for academic use only.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">University of Fort Hare <i>Together in Excellence</i></p> <p>10. How will you respond to respondents who wish their identities to be publicly acknowledged?</p> <p>I will give that opportunity if there is a need for that.</p>		

Potential benefit to the respondents

11. Is there any potential benefit that the respondents might gain from participating in this research study?	YES X	NO
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12. If the answer is YES, in 11, please explain this benefit

Their mentalities will developed especially in interview skills. Also developed an ability to share ideas and socialize with others.

Potential harm to respondents

13. Are there any foreseeable risks to respondents that might result as an outcome of this research study?

YES

NO

X



14. If the answer is YES, in 13, please explain how you plan to respond to these risks.

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Potential harm to UFH

15. Are there any foreseeable risks of harm to UFH that might result from undertaking this research study?

YES

NO

X

16. Are there any other ethical issues that you think might arise during the course of the research?

YES

NO

X

17. If the answer is YES, in 17, please explain how you are planning to respond to this situation.

Signed:

Student:

Co-signed:

Supervisor:



Date:

22 May 2007

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APPENDIX 8:-INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM THE SUPERVISOR



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

24 May 2007

The Principal




MRS VUYISWA E. MGWANGQA

The above mentioned is a student pursuing her Masters studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare. I am her co-supervisor. The title of her study is An Investigation into the Causes of Learner Dropout in Rural Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Fort Beaufort District, Eastern Cape Province. She has completed her research proposal and she is now required to collect data from schools. She will be required to conduct interviews with school principals, SMT members, educators, learners who are at school and those who have dropped out of school and parents.

I would be grateful if you could allow her to collect data from your schools through interviews and observations. I would also be grateful if you could kindly provide her with the school's official documents like minutes of meetings, circulars and other school policy documents. I would like to assure you that every information that will be collected will remain confidential. Mrs. Mgwangqa will ensure that she does not disrupt school activities during the period she will be collecting data in your school. I thank you for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely


Symphorosa Rembe (PhD)
Senior lecturer and Mrs Mgwangqa's Co-Supervisor

**APPENDIX 9:- DATES OF THE INTERVIEWS
FOR FOCUS GROUPS**



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FOCUS GROUPS INTERVIEW DATES & VENUES

Interviews for learners in school A: - 19:07:2007 Nompumelelo Secondary School.

Interviews for learners in school B: - 20:07:2007 Siyanqoba Secondary School.

Interviews for learners out of school A: - 05:06:2007 Jorje Location.

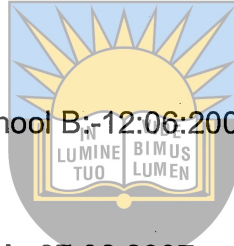
Interviews for learners out of school B: - 12:06:2007 Lloyd Location.

Interviews for parents in school A: - 07:06:2007 Jorje Location.

Interviews for parents in school B: - 13:06:2007 Lloyd Location.

Principals and teachers of school A: - 24:07:2007 Nompumelelo Secondary School.

Principals and teachers of school B: 25:07:2007 Siyanqoba Secondary School.



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