

**A CASE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF FORMER STREET CHILDREN AS
LEARNERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the “A case study on the experiences of former street children as learners: Implications for teaching and learning” is my own work and has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any university.

N. Boyana

Date

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ABSTRACT

In this study the main focus is on the experiences of former street children as learners. The main emphasis of this study is the manner in which such experiences influence these children's learning towards constructing new identities. By examining the experiences of former street children in a school environment, namely a teaching and learning environment, this study will contribute towards the literature by providing focused and relevant information pertaining to the way former street children experience learning.

By focusing on these particular learners from the street, the study attempts to explore and build an insightful knowledge in terms of understanding how former street children perceive learning in relation to their present personal and past life on the streets. Through this study the researcher will hopefully be able to determine how former street children feel, experience and relate to teaching and learning within a school context.

Data collection for this study included the researcher's observations and face-to-face unstructured in-depth phenomenological interviews with learners who are formerly from the streets. Among others, the study found that these particular learners have low self-esteem, a low opinion of themselves, and lack of self-confidence. The study also revealed that some of these learners are struggling academically and would appreciate it if academic was parallel with vocational skills so as to equip them for the world of work. It also transpired that learners who have relationships with those who have not been to the streets changed their lives for the better by learning from their peers but those who have relationships with other former street children at this school continue to engage in deviant behaviour, for many schooling has helped them to reclaim their childhood identity.

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CYCC	Child and Youth Care Centre
DBST	District Based Support Team
DoE	Department of Education
DoHA	Department of Home Affairs
DoSD	Department of Social Development
DoHA	Department of Home Affairs
ECDoE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ID	Identity Document
ILST	Institution Level Support Team
LSEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
GO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIHD	National Institute of Health Development
OBE	Outcomes Based Education

SASA	South African Schools Act
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), section 29 (1) states that a child has the right to a basic education. Therefore these clauses as stated in the Constitution of South Africa have implications for the education of special needs learners (street children). The particular learners that this research is focusing on are “street children” who are enrolled at a school that was initially opened only for street children; subsequently, it accommodates all vulnerable children. The school is in the province of the Eastern Cape, city of East London area.

The school referred to in this research is a school which originated as a school for street children, started in March 1991 as a result of the failure of children to achieve in a mainstream village school. The constraints on these particular children presented challenges that mainstream education could not cater for: issues such as displacement in mainstream education, not age-appropriate aligned to grade and peer age groups. In this particular special school learners come from diverse backgrounds, and are referred to the school by social workers and Child and Youth Care Centres in and around East London.

Learners are sent to this particular school for learning and rehabilitation. As some of these learners come directly from the street(s) they enter school without any parental or background information, birth certificate, learner profile or portfolio. From current experience(s) as an educator at this special school it is evident that the negative behavioural tendencies of these learners are a deficit in terms of teaching and learning.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The school was started by a group of volunteers as the board of trustees had no money to pay salaries. They struggled to keep some of the volunteers as they found the children too difficult to handle. In 1992 and 1993 the founder began lobbying the old Department of Education to register the school as a special school. The decision was that this type of school did not align to any of the recognized categories of specialized education, but that teaching of street children was very worthwhile and appreciated. The recognized categories were the hearing impaired, visually

handicapped, severe mentally handicapped, mild mentally handicapped and physically challenged. Therefore they considered registering the school as a farm school to allow curriculum freedom and the running of the school. This school was registered in 1993. The founder was elected chairperson of the working group of the specialized education of the Provincial Education and Training Forum in 1993. This provided a platform and opportunity from which to lobby for the recognition of a new category of specialized education, namely education for the extrinsically disabled child i.e. disabled by social, economic and domestic circumstances outside themselves and out of their control. In January 1996 The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) formally recognized education for extrinsically disabled children. When the school started it only had 20 learners from Grade 1 to Grade 6. A new grade was added each year and the first Grade 12 class began in 1998. With the addition of new grades came new subjects and new staff and many new pupils, reaching a maximum of 229 learners enrolled in the school by June 1998. Troubles began late in 1998 and saw learners refusing to attend school and making the school and the children's home (a place of safety) ungovernable. Under these severe circumstances it was unsafe for teachers and no teaching and learning was possible. During this period most of the equipment and records were destroyed, including a Certificate of Excellence presented to the school by the then Minister of Education Mr Sibusiso Bengu. The school closed in 1998 and was reopened in 2000 with only Grades 1-9, as there was a fear that older learners would be disruptive.

Prior to the introduction of curriculum 2005, education for street children in this particular school was structured around the provision of educational instruction which seeks to accelerate the academic level of deprived children to the point that there is consistency between the academic level and the child's chronological and grade age. Other objectives centred on developing the child's appreciation of creativity and the skills required for self-expression in the art form. There used to be a skills training centre which aimed at developing the child's practical abilities in combination with studies in literacy, practical sciences and mathematic functions required to enhance the application of the skill. Learners were also trained in basic mechanics (developing an understanding of, application for and maintenance of machines), carpentry skills were developed, and education in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry and poultry farming with a view to enhance the child's perspective and understanding of the work ethic and economic structure of self-support.

Learners were assessed on entry and placed in one of four bridging classes where an accelerated learning program was followed in Maths, isiXhosa and English. This was underpinned with art and educational games, thus simultaneously giving a pre-school foundation. Each child moved at his or her own pace and academic potential. Learners were introduced to a full school curriculum multi-grade classes then called Standard. 4 (Grade 6) and Standard 5 (Grade 7). The first formal exam learners had to pass was in Standard.5 (Grade 7). The high school section curriculum consisted of the following subjects: English, isiXhosa, Mathematics, Science and Pottery. Apart from developing skills, pottery is believed to be very therapeutic and it was discovered that several of the slow learners were particularly gifted in this field, as it appealed to the kinaesthetic and hands-on learning.

When the African National Congress (ANC) came to power in 1994 South Africa was politically transformed, and this transformation impacted on the education system and all other areas of society. According to Duwenhage (as cited in de Wet and Wolhuter 2009:359) education not only had to be transformed, it had to play a key role in the transformation of the South African community. The 1995 White Paper for education and training stipulated that:

It should be a goal of education and training policy to enable a democratic, free, equal, just and peaceful society to take root and prosper in our land, on the basis that all South Africans without exception share the same inalienable rights, equal citizenship, and common national destiny, and all forms of bias (especially racial, ethnic and gender) are dehumanizing (de Wet and Wolhuter 2009:259).

According to de Wet and Wolhuter (2009:360) the Department of Education also called for education to play a leading role to “overcome the devastation of apartheid, and provide a system of education that builds democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice.” The following were the focal point for education transformation:

1. The creation of a single, non-racial education dispensation wherein there is space for all participants.
2. The entire overhaul and democratization of education management.
3. The upgrading and improvement of the education infrastructure.

4. The transformation of curricula in order to eradicate the legacy of apartheid in the system (de Wet and Wolhuter 2009:360).

The national transformation of education affected the education system that was followed at the school under study. The new ANC government wanted to provide a new unified education and training system based on the values of equity, on redressing past imbalances and on a progressive raising of the quality of education and training (DoE, 2001). The call for the transformation of Special Needs Education system was due to the findings of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training which discovered that amongst others, the curriculum and education system as a whole has generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive drop-outs, push-outs, and failures. The recommendation was as follows:

1. The education system should promote education for all.
2. The system should foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.
3. There should be changes to mainstream education so that learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early and appropriate support provided.
4. Changes would be required to special schools and specialised settings so that learners who experience mild to moderate disabilities can be adequately accommodated within mainstream education (DoE, 2001).

The way the government decided to make the vision for educational transformation a reality in South Africa was to introduce Curriculum 2005 in 1998 (DOE 2001). Through its Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach to teaching, learning and assessment, South Africa finally had a teaching methodology that would transform teaching and learning in South Africa into a democratic system after the end of apartheid, post 1994.

These changes in White Paper 6 (2001) forced this school to undergo a transitional phase. The bridging classes were done away with, grades were introduced and the curriculum was changed. Instead of a skills-based curriculum there were 9 learning areas. More time had to be allocated to

these learning areas; therefore the practical subjects became jeopardized and eventually eliminated from the curriculum.

The demands of the new curriculum called for the gradual phasing out of the practical subjects. This impacted negatively on slow learners and former street children who enrol at any time of the year to the school under investigation. These learners had to do the same curriculum as the mainstream schools, had to be assessed as learners in mainstream schools, had to complete the same amount of work as prescribed by the DoE and their work had to be taken for moderation the same as in mainstream schools. Accelerated education was also phased out as the system did not allow for it. This posed a huge problem for the school such that several letters were written to the DoE for flexibility to the curriculum to cater for these learners but to no avail.

Transformation in the education system meant that the former street children who come to school with no previous school records, who are known for the tendency of moving from one place to another (mobility), who are consistently absent from school and who are behind their age cohort had to follow the system of education that is followed at mainstream schools. Hence Epstein (1996:293) argues that “the formal education response is one of encouraging homeless children to blend into the existing school system without structurally adapting the system to their specific needs.” Epstein’s statement has a profound impact in this study.

As a result the school under investigation tried to introduce special classes where slow learners were taught separately but they became frustrated as they were a laughing stock to other learners. Teachers assigned to special classes are not trained to deal with the specific special needs of these particular learners, and this often resulted in inappropriate disciplinary measures as there is a lack of adequate support structures and services to assist teachers. The lack of parental support to address these challenges is a major problem and a matter of concern (Conference on Inclusion 1997).

Shrunick (1993) states that formal education is good but is not recommended for street children due to the fact that not all of them can attend formal schooling and that not all street children cope or become reintegrated into the formal education system (Shrunick 1993:37). According to Shrunick (1993:37) the reasons for not encouraging street children to be reintegrated in a formal education system are that street children have a tendency of dropping out of school, maybe

because of learning disabilities, emotional problems or difficult circumstances at home. When they eventually get back to school they will be approximately three or four years behind in their school standard. It is for this reason that informal education is seen as an alternative to these children, in relation to teaching and learning.

Under normal circumstances parental involvement plays a vital role in the education of a child. The performance of a child who is helped by a parent to do their school work is different from that of a child who has no relationship with their parents. Le Roux (2001: 98) says that “the home environment has a determining factor in forming perceptions about learning.” Street children do not stay in their homes, those who are lucky stay with child care workers in children’s homes where the environment is totally different from a natural and normal home environment. He also argues that since street children have no parents to support them with their school work their motivation to learn will differ from that of children who get support from their normal households. (Le Roux, 2001). This statement by Le Roux (2001) strongly shapes and forms the basis for this study.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

From the introduction and background to this study, it is clear that educational transformation in South Africa affected the education system that was previously designed for street children at the research site. Street children are expected to compete in the curriculum that is based on achievement. It is also evident that street children do not have parental support in so far as school work is concerned. The voice of street children as learners pertaining to how they experience teaching and learning in a formal school environment is not well explored in literature. Whether street children at school experience difficulty adjusting to school life or overcome their street identity and the stigma attached to it is not clear.

The presence of street children as learners and the implications it has for teaching and learning is an aspect not well explored in research. The study therefore seeks to investigate the experiences of street children as learners in a formal schooling context. The researcher argues that these learners manifest different academic and learning needs due to their vulnerable circumstances. This research locates itself in developing an understanding of how street children relate to teaching and learning and the impact the education system has on them as learners. The researcher focuses on these issues as a problematic concern.

1.4 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to examine the experiences of street children as learners in a formal schooling environment. Of critical importance is the manner in which such experiences influence these children towards constructing new ‘positive’ identities, eradicating old ‘negative’ identities that are associated with being a street child or even entrenching old identities.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (a) What are the significant experiences of former street children in a formal school environment?
- (b) What sort of implications do these learners’ experiences have on teaching and learning?

1.6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By examining the experiences of street children in a school environment, namely a teaching and learning environment which presents itself as a formal learning environment, this study will contribute towards the literature by providing focused and relevant information pertaining to the way street children experience learning. This study will contribute significantly to research as the voices of these particular learners have not been studied in depth from their perspective and the way they relate to formal teaching and learning and the school context in general. The research therefore depicts in-depth narratives of street children’s schooling experiences from their perspective. The study has significant relevance for informing policy relating to the mindset, attitude and thinking of former street children in a learning context such as a school, and hence the significance of this study is contributing to a scholarly body of knowledge.

1.7 THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

As the researcher is an educator who has taught children previously from the streets she has had several personal experiences and encounters with these vulnerable children. These experiences and encounters have concerned and motivated the researcher to question how these learners adjust

to a school environment after spending years and months on the streets. The reason is that learners who have never been on the streets do not learn the same way as those who are from the streets, and educators do not understand how to treat or teach these vulnerable children who come from the streets and hence are suspicious of them and have called them ‘labelling names’. Furthermore scanty literature on the issue under investigation provides a major justification for this particular study, as it suggests that the issue of how street children perceive schooling as learners is clearly under-researched.

By focusing on these particular learners from the streets, this study attempts to explore and build an insightful knowledge base in terms of understanding how street children experience learning in relation to their present and past personal life worlds. Through this study the researcher will hopefully be able to determine how street children feel, experience and relate to teaching and learning within a school context. The aim of this study is to create awareness, understanding and knowledge about how former street children perceive learning and furthermore how teaching these learners requires an in-depth knowledge about the life world of these children who come to formal education directly from the street and their personal identities. Therefore, this study focuses on one particular school that caters for vulnerable children who manifest behavioural disorders.

1.8 DELINEATION OF THE STUDY

The study will be limited to one school in the East London District, as this school includes vulnerable learners with diverse educational needs, such as children with behavioural problems, sexually, physically, and emotionally abused children, orphaned children and children from the street. This study will focus only on those learners who are from the street, but have been directed to school. These learners are selected for this study because they have direct experience of living on the streets and enter the school system with no prior biographical or school information which impacts on their personal identity and scholastic performance record. The school has been chosen because it is the only school in East London that formally caters for street children.

1.9 MAIN CONCEPTS

Learner: The word ‘learner’ as used in the SA Schools Act (RSA, 1996) refers to those attending school in South Africa from Grade R to Grade 12.

Teaching: Teaching may be characterized as an activity aimed at the achievement of learning, and practiced in such manner as to respect the student’s intellectual integrity and capacity for independent judgment (Scheffler, 1989). Teaching is defined by Gunter (1985) as a capacity by which a human being, usually but not necessarily a child or youth (that is, someone not yet adult), is taught by another person, as a rule but not always an adult, to know and to do certain things. Teaching is always concerned with helping a pupil to acquire knowledge and skills.

Learning: According to Vygotsky learning is a social process that takes place between people. He conceptualized learning as internalization of social interactions in which communication is central: learning takes place through social interaction in a specific context and becomes internalized by a person (Hedegaard, 2001:6).

The child: The child, like an adult, is a subject, not an object or thing, an inalienable subject of thinking, choice, decision and action, but initially very unfinished and incomplete, much more so than the adult, who is already to a large extent what he must still become. As a subject the child is a conscious being, a free being, a rational being and an open being in his particular situation in the world, his freedom is a freedom to respond to being addressed, his existence is an answering existence and consequently an assignment or task (Gunter 1985:69).

Street children: The term ‘street children’ is used extensively to refer to a group of children who have carved a niche for themselves outside of the mainstream. Neglected, forsaken, abandoned and despised are the images that come to mind (Veeran, 2004). Duyan (2005:11) defines street children as those who have no permanent home, who have been abandoned by their family or have no family alive, moving from friend to friend or living in abandoned buildings. Some abandoned children may visit their family and spend nights with them, but mostly remain on the streets for various reasons.

Vulnerable children: Vulnerable children mean children who are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonably standard of health or development without the provision of them of social services. ([www.parliamentary UK](http://www.parliamentary.uk))

1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE: Chapter one provides the background and rational of the study, the research question, purpose of the study, significance, the paradigm perspective, definition of concepts, delimitation of the study and chapter breakdown.

CHPTER TWO: Chapter two presents a literature study based on a theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and how the significance of this theory impacts on the literature review based on specific themes.

CHAPTER THREE: Chapter three describes the research design and methods and how the process will unfold, including measures to ensure trustworthiness, ethical considerations, data collection and data processing.

CHAPTER FOUR: In this chapter data analysis for the data collected and clear interpretation of its meaning will be addressed through a thematic presentation of the data.

CHAPTER FIVE: Chapter five consists of the research findings, recommendations, limitations of the study and the final conclusion.

1.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher has given an overview of the school, the research problem, the research question, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study, and has defined the main concepts.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents literature reviewed and contributing largely on the issues that impact on the lives of street children. Issues such as the categorization of street children, factors that contribute to street children, statistical global and national figures of street children, perceptions about street children, psychological manifestations of street children, physical factors that characterize street children, the educational needs of street children and how the curriculum accommodates children who are from the street are discussed.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Ecological systems theory

The study is informed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1994). Bronfenbrenner was a psychologist, born in 1917, who developed the ecological theory of human development. He is considered to be one of the well-known scholars in the field of development psychology. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is considered suitable for this study as it analyses the types of human development associated with the various systems, namely the micro system, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. I will briefly describe these systems and shape these systems based on this study.

The microsystem: "A microsystem is a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in a sustained, progressively more complex interaction with and activity in the immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner 1994).

Included in the microsystem is the learner, the family, the school, the peer group or the systems in the immediate environments as they directly influence or are influenced by the child (Bronfenbrenner 1994). This means that the microsystem is nearer to the child as it includes home

and school because this is where the child spends most of their time. A family is also the place where the child is taught how to behave in an appropriate manner (Bronfenbrenner 1998).

Most street children left their homes when they were still very young and have no family ties, therefore they lack such role models as parents or extended families to teach them about the world from a caring and nurturing context.

According to Swick and Williams (2006:372) the microsystem “as a child most intimate learning setting, offers him or her reference point of the world. It may provide the nurturing centrepiece for the child or become a haunting set of memories of one’s earliest encounters with violence.” The focus for this study is to conceptualize an understanding of the experiences of former street children as learners and to understand how these vulnerable children personally relate and interact with teachers and their peers.

Literature reviewed in this study categorized street children as those who have permanently left their homes and have no ties at all with their families (Nowke 1998). The researcher therefore argues that street children come from dysfunctional homes and the relationship that is supposed to exist between the school and the family in developing the child is non-existent and hence dysfunctional. Furthermore, the literature revealed that a number of street children left their homes because of poverty and abuse (Le Roux 2001; Iduashina 2004), therefore it can be argued that the experiences street children had with their families are filled with unpleasant memories.

b. The mesosystem: The mesosystem is two microsystems interacting, such as the connections between a child’s home and the school. The mesosystem is made up of the major settings containing the child at a particular point in his or her life. It encircles interactions among family, school, peer groups and, for some children, television, church or work place (Bronfenbrenner 1994). There are four groups of interconnections between home and school settings (Sontang 1996:329).

1. **The multi-setting participation:** This includes the home and the school and is where the child actively participates and is directly involved.
2. **Indirect-linkage:** This involves multi-setting and the child is not an active participant but his or her parents are. The parents create the connection and the relationship between the

settings, which are the school and the home. This relationship includes the teacher, the child's classroom and the parents (Sontang 1996). Bronfenbrenner (1998) argues that there has to be a relationship between the child's family and the school as this relationship is vital for the development of a child. The literature reveals that street children stay in shelters, in Child and Youth Care Centres and with friends; therefore there is no biological parental involvement in the education of a street child to directly interact with educators in order to ensure that the child is developing. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner (1979) encourages the importance of 'mutual trust, positive orientation and goal consensus between the parent as a linkage person and teachers.

As the researcher in this case is a teacher in the school I argue that these former street children do not stay in their parental homes, therefore the school and the parents are not in a position to communicate and be engaged in any dialogue in as far as the development of the child is concerned. From the researcher's experience these children are brought by the social workers to a child's home and teachers do not have direct contact with the social workers, which make it difficult to discuss matters pertaining to the scholastic development of a child. There is thus a huge vacuum in the mesosystem due to a dysfunctional family context.

3. **Intersetting communications:** This includes the relations between the two microsystems i.e. the school and the home through correspondence and newsletters.
4. **Intersetting knowledge.** This involves the information the school has about the family or the family about the school (Bronfenbrenner cited in Sontang 1996). When street children enrol at school after spending some months and years as street dwellers they do not have records to provide the school with relevant information about the child and his/her family. The school depends largely on the information given by social worker or by the child since not all of these children are assigned to a social worker.

c. The exosystem: The exosystem includes processes taking place between different settings, some of which do not contain the child but the child is affected by the events taking place in these settings, for instance the relationship between the child, home and workplace (Sontang 1996:330). The exosystem embraces the concrete social structures of the learner, these can be formal or informal structures which involve the greater or larger institutions of the society such as the world

of work, the neighbourhood, mass media, agencies of government, the distribution of goods and services, communication and transport facilities and informal networks (Bronfenbrenner 1994, 1976). These vulnerable children are thus in a deprived situation.

d. The macrosystem: This layer is the farthest in the child's setting. It consists of cultural values, customs, and laws, economic, social, educational, legal and political systems and is where the local micro-, meso-, and exosystems are demonstrated (Bronfenbrenner 1976, Paquette and Ryan 2001). The macrosystem is where the patterns of beliefs are transmitted by institutions of culture including family, school, church, neighbourhood, workplace, and government structures (Sontang 1996).

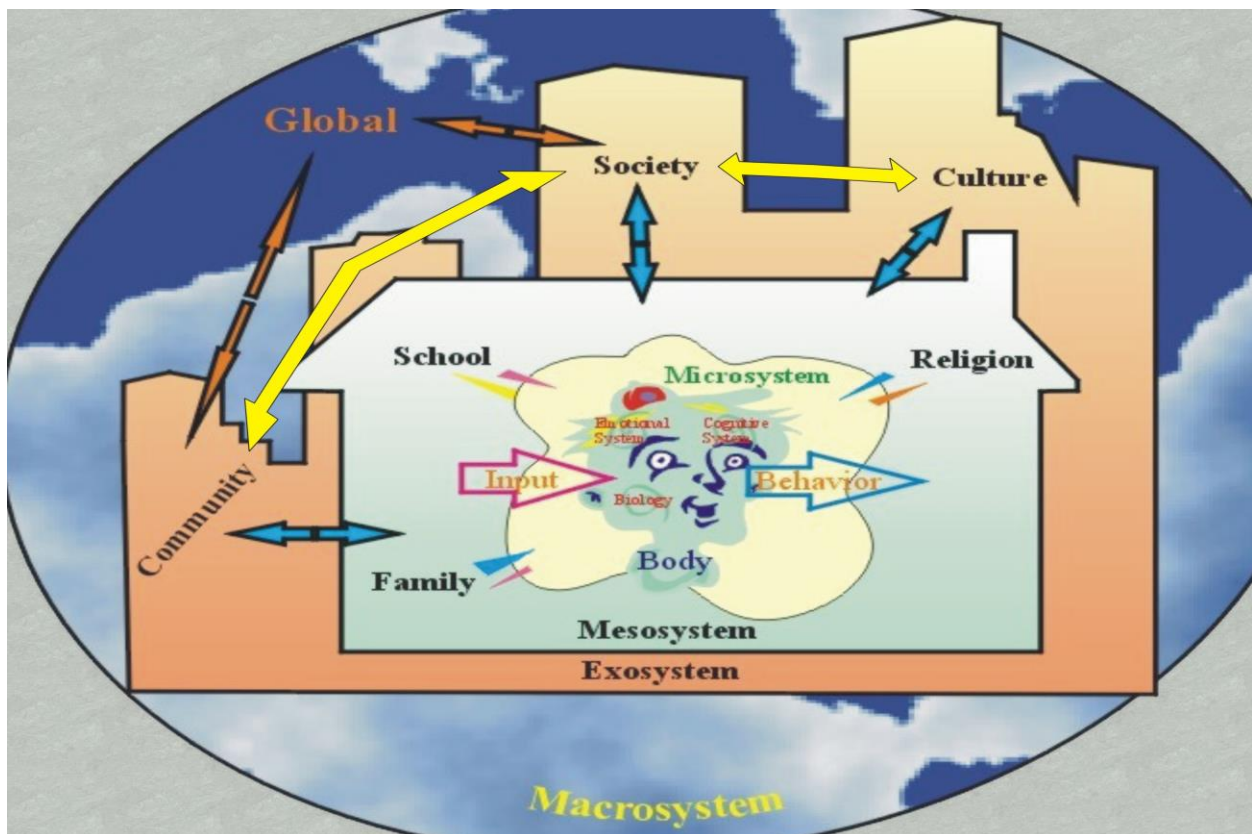


Figure 2.1: Layer of Child's Environment

Diagram reproduced from Paquette and Ryan (2001)

According to Paquette and Ryan (2001) Bronfenbrenner created these systems to enable researchers to determine the influences that the family, economy and political structures have on the development of the child towards adulthood. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory examines the environment of the child in so far as its quality and context is concerned in society (Paquette and Ryan 2001)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory explains the differences that exist in an individual's knowledge, development, and competences through the support, guidance and structure of the society in which they live. The overlapping manner in which these ecosystems interact has a tremendous effect on an individual and the development of a child (Paquette and Ryan 2001).

In order to understand how the child develops it is vital to firstly understand how these ecological systems relate and are interrelated in human development. Addison (cited in Paquette and Ryan 2001) states that if the family life of the child is unpredictable and unstable children will not have enough time to interact with their parents in a meaningful way. The lack of a meaningful relationship between the adult and the child tremendously hampers the child's development.

With reference to Bronfenbrenner in,(Paquette and Ryan 2001), if there is a breakdown in the child's microsystem, as in the case of street children, the child will not be in a position to adequately explore alternative areas of his environment from a family perspective. If the child is not properly supervised or does not receive love from the people around them they will look for attention in the wrong place, which will increase the chances of counter problems when the child reaches adolescence. The child will manifest signs of ill-discipline, lack of self-direction, and anti-social behaviour because there is a vacuum in the development of a child (Paquette and Ryan 2001).

Literature reviewed in this study revealed that street children left their homes because of abuse and domestic violence which means parents were not taking good care of these children. According to Bronfenbrenner there has to be a sustainable relationship between a child and the parent and this kind of relationship cannot be replaced by any other support system. Supporting the primary relationship is the key to better human development. Educators should strive to support these relationships by creating an environment that welcomes and nurtures children within a family context (Paquette and Ryan 2001). It is indisputable that teachers cannot be parents to the

children they teach but they are in a better position to educate parents about what children need in order to develop (Paquette and Ryan 2001). Street children grow up into dysfunctional families where they are deprived of parental love and care which means they are domestically deprived.

2.2.2 Conceptualizing social deprivation

Social deprivation can be conceptualized as a state of being deprived of many of the advantages of society such as proper medical care, proper nutrition, especially during growth years, good education, a decent life and all that a stable happy family enjoys in society (Monge 1968:1). Monge (1968: 6) argues that social deprivation not only involves the absence of things but also involves a way of life, learned by one generation and passed on to the next. He further states that the structure of the social system and the structure of the family shape communication and language, and language shapes thought and cognitive styles of problem solving. In cases where a child is brought up in a deprived family where there is a lack of communication, the child will grow up lacking these skills.

Research has revealed that children growing up in socially depriving institutions develop in a manner different from children raised in their own home environment. According to Tharp-Taylor (2003:3) social and emotional interactions are crucial for children to develop normally, if this is not the case it is presumed that the child will suffer atypical development. Studies have also shown that social environment plays a significant role in child development (National Institute for Health and Human Development 1968).

When those involved in the socialization of a child neglect the needs of children, as may be the case in deprived environments, the child is likely to try to look for a place where he can satisfy his needs by himself in whatever way. As the National Institute Health and Human Development (1968:37) states, these premature efforts to be independent of others can have dysfunctional consequences, including the development of attitudes or mistrust towards socializing agents such as care givers and teachers.

Furthermore deprivation has specifically damaging effects upon the capabilities of a child. This damage is said to be irreversible, and suggests a permanently negative effect upon mental

capabilities as a result of early deprivation. Experiences of poverty, violence and of discrimination damage the emotional-intellectual capability of the individual, making it difficult if not impossible for the child to recover fully (NIHD 1968:97).

According to the NIHD (1968:96) children coming from impoverished backgrounds may have poor learning patterns, little practice in abstraction, and bad discipline, but it is also true that teachers are ignorant of the children's needs, have a poor perception of their capabilities and lack the necessary skills to teach these children. Street children come from socially deprived environments and come to school with behaviour characteristics that are contrary to the school environment based on rules of self-respect, respect for the law, rules for propriety of verbal behaviour and social skills acceptable to society. All these are values that are needed by the school yet are in conflict with the "vernacular culture" of the deprived community (NIHD 1968).

2.3 THEORETICAL CATEGORIZATION OF STREET CHILDREN

Panter-Brick (2002:151) strongly argues that the term 'street child'

has powerful emotional overtones, has a stigmatizing effect, since the child is allocated to the street and to delinquent behaviour, furthermore the term neither gives consideration to the experience or testimony neither of the children in question nor, to other facets of their identity, which do not necessarily have any relevance to the street, thus it becomes a cause of discrimination of children and triggers or strengthens negative social reactions.

According to Panter-Brick (2002:149) defining the term "street children" is somehow problematic in that street children do not share common experiences, conditions and qualities. Even though they live on the streets they need not be put in the same category, therefore in trying to define the term a generalization for street children needs to be avoided. There are children of the street and children on the street. Nwoke (1998:85) argues that children of the street are those who have permanently left their homes and have no ties at all with their families, while children on the street are those who work on the streets but have not completely cut ties with their families as they sleep at home.

Roux and Smith (as cited in Nwoke 1998) categorized street children as follows:

1. Children with continuous family contacts, who work on the street, usually go home to school and go home to their families at the end of the day.
2. Children with occasional family contacts, who work on the street, do not go to school and seldom go to their families.
3. Children without family contacts, who consider the streets their home, and it is there that they seek shelter, food and a sense of belonging among peers.

According to Chetty (1997:13) in countries such as United Kingdom (UK), America, Europe and Australia ‘street children’ are categorized by the following:

1. Runaways: children who leave home without the consent of their families. They run away with the intention of escaping the unbearable conditions of their homes.
2. Throwaways or push outs: children who have left their homes not because they want to but because they have been abandoned by their families.
3. Homeless: children who have no shelter or a place to stay.

These children tend to congregate in inner-city areas. Their reasons for being on the street vary, as do their probable educational and adjustment outcomes.

Apteek (as cited in Nwoke 1998:87) argues that the term ‘street children’ embraces a diverse group of young people dislocated at various degrees from family, school and community. These children tend to congregate in inner-city areas. Their reasons for being on the street vary, as do their probable educational and adjustment outcomes. This will be discussed further in this study.

2.4 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STREET LIFE

As far back as 1987 the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF 2006) indicated that the contributing factors to the phenomenon of street children worldwide are as follows:

1. Factors at the macro level: these include politics, economy, housing, health and welfare services, unemployment and urbanization.

2. Factors at the meso level: these include the breakdown or disintegration of the family structure, single parent families, remarriage, desertion, poverty, child abuse, child neglect, family violence, lack of bonding, lack of parental discipline and a general lack of adequate care and attention.
3. Factors at the micro (individual) level: these include escape from an intolerable situation, failure at school, lack of money or feeling unwanted and a burden on the family (Grudling and Grudling 2005). These factors concur with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development. These contributing factors clearly impact on a) the child, b) the child as a social entity, c) the child as a scholar, and d) the child in terms of vulnerability. This draws the researcher into developing an understanding of street children from a global perspective.

2.4.1 Global context

In Brazil it is stated that poverty is not the core reason for street children. A study revealed that the major factor that contributes to street children in Brazil is psychological, emotional and sexual abuse. Twenty-three percent of street children reported abuse and domestic violence as the reason for them roaming the streets. Another contributing factor of street children as a phenomenon in Brazil is migration from rural areas to the cities to seek job opportunities (Fernandes and Vaughn 2008:272). Also contributing to the escalation of street children in Brazil are socio-economic problems as the income only benefits a minority group of the total population, and there is a lack of infrastructure, lack of proper public service, and corruption (Fernandes and Vaughn 2008:669).

A study carried out in Russia revealed that street children left their homes because of unhappiness as they were exposed to family disputes and abuse which made them feel as though the entire world was against them. They also felt isolated as they had no one to turn to. The study also revealed that there are those who leave their homes not because they are unhappy but simply because they want to experience how it is to roam the streets free from parental control and meet different people (Iudashina, 2004:41). An example of this is a child who runs away from home, leaving behind the comfort of her home because her parents refused her freedom such as having boys as her friends, yet her appearance resembled that of a male (Iudashina 2004:41). This is why

Vogel (2001) argues that children decide to be street strollers simply because they feel they do not fit into society and that resorting to street life will enable them the opportunity to manage their lives where no one is going to tell them how they should live their lives. Little do they know that street culture is not child-friendly, it is where children are most exploited.

Le Roux (as cited by Vogel 2001) defines the anti-child culture as:

1. anti-child socio-educational surroundings where the child is raised;
2. an educational situation in which the child's development is earnestly restrained by educational and social elements;
3. a society where the child finds himself/herself in a situation where he/she is not adequately provided for (Vogel 2001:229). This locates the researcher into studies close to home, namely in Africa.

2.4.2 African context

In a study carried out in Namibia the most common cause for children to become street children in Namibia is poverty which is a result of unequal distribution of economy (Grudling and Grudling 2005:174; Fernandes and Vaughn 2008:272).

In Zimbabwe children find themselves on the streets because of abuse in their homes. Unemployment also contributes to the escalation of street children in Zimbabwe. The other contributing factor to the street child phenomena in Zimbabwe is the HIV and AIDs epidemic, family poverty, persistent droughts, family breakdown and crime (The Consortium for Street Children 2005).

In Kenya pull and push factors contribute to street life. Children are pushed to the streets by the escalation of population, urbanisation, economic issues, abuse and neglect. Others resort to street life because they are attracted by city life. They go there with the aim of improving their lives (Dowling 2008).

According to Human Rights Report (2006) thousands of children in Congo DR find themselves on the street because of various reasons. Some of the reasons include continuing armed conflict in the country, socio economic difficulties as well as family breakdown. Children in DRC also resort to street life because of poor living conditions in their homes, the war and AIDS as well as economic crisis which have plagued the country for the last 30 years are also a contributing factor in the escalation of street children in the DRC. (World Street Children News 2008).

2.4.3 South African context

According to Le Roux (2001) the Group Areas Act in South Africa which was used as a measure to control urbanization impacted negatively on the black population of South Africa, and he argues that it should be blamed for the generation of street children. Le Roux (2001) states that the Land Act of 1913 restricted blacks from owning the land, as a result people were made to stay in densely populated villages where they could not farm. Blacks at that time were totally depended on tilling the land to survive (Le Roux 2001).

Due to the Land Act of 1913 men were obliged to leave their families and go to the cities to seek employment opportunities as they were supposed to provide for their families. As if this was not enough, the act known as the Influx Control Act was passed which prevented blacks from rural areas moving to the cities. The Group Areas Act followed in 1950 which meant separate residential areas. According to this Act the so-called natives, whites and coloureds were to stay in separate residential areas. Blacks were relocated in major cities which resulted in the emerging of street children as many children refused to leave their neighbourhood (Swart and The Urban Foundation cited in Le Roux 2001). According to Le Roux (2001:101-105), as a result of resettlement and migrant regulations the following occurred:

1. The traditional social support system was broken down.
2. Family life was seriously disrupted as wives and children were disallowed by law to follow their husbands or fathers to the cities and contact between families was consequently restricted to a limited number of weeks a year.
3. Family ties were weakened because of the household head.

4. Authority structures within the family were undermined.
5. Children lacked a father figure and male role model.
6. Migrants spent more on themselves than was sent back home to their dependents, and in many cases the man entered into a second urban marriage and the limited income had to be shared between the two families
7. Migrants' interests became urban-oriented to the detriment of the rural family system.

Le Roux (2001) states that urbanization brought about black families and children who are in dire need of support. This is not only confined to rural areas but is also prevalent in urban areas. This clearly explains why the majority of street children are predominantly black. Eighteen years into democracy we are still conscious of children on the street.

According to Le Roux (2001) HIV/AIDS which is currently a major concern in South Africa at present contributed towards the increase numbers of street children. According to him there are a number of reasons that contribute to the increase of HIV/AIDS that is currently "viewed as a social issue other than a health issue". Reasons for the escalation of HIV/AIDS include the inferior status of women, poverty and unemployment (Le Roux 2001). According to UNICEF, there are approximately 700,000 children who are orphans because of parental mortality due to AIDS. Le Roux (2001) therefore argues that since South Africa does not have the capacity to take care of AIDS orphans it is possible that these children will turn to the streets for survival where they are likely to become prostitutes and sexually exploited, thus increasing their chances of contracting HIV/AIDS and causing a further escalation of the disease (Le Roux 2001)

2.5 GLOBAL AND NATIONAL FIGURES REFLECTIVE OF THE NUMBERS OF STREET CHILDREN

According to Panter-Brick (2002:153) it is difficult to know the accurate number of street children. The difficulty lies in the fact that there is no clear definition of street children as their categories vary. He argues that on one hand there are those children who are categorized as children on the street, while on the other hand there are those who are categorized as children of

the street. This makes it difficult for the welfare agencies to know who should be included and who should be excluded when statistics are revealed.

Panter-Brick (2002:153) further states that in some countries estimates of street youth tend to be inflated by welfare agencies because they want to substantiate their role of caring for street children as valuable. At the same time the bureaucratic institutions have a tendency of minimizing the number of street children to alleviate subsidization of the agencies caring for street children.

Fernandes and Vaughn (2008:669) state that according to the United Nations (UN) estimate there are about 150,000,000 street children in the world, approximately 40 percent of whom are homeless while 60 percent work on the streets to support their families. Research shows that these children do not attend school and are capable of sexual abuse, violence, sexual exploitation, neglect, chemical addiction and human rights violations (Fernandes and Vaughn 2008).

Statistics show that there are 160,000,000 people in Brazil, with 50,000,000 children and adolescents. Forty percent live below the poverty line. Reports show that there are approximately 200,000 to 8000,000 street children in Brazil (Fernandes and Vaughn 2008:669).

UNICEF (2006) estimates the number of street children in Latin America to be more than 40,000,000. A study carried out in Turkey showed that 97 percent of street children in Turkey are male and their level of education is very low. For example about 73 percent went as far as primary school while only 18 percent went to middle school (Duyan 2005:449).

UNICEF (2006) revealed that there are about 11,000,000 street children in India. Of this number, about 314,700 are believed to be in the metros such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur, Bangalore and Hyderabad, with about 100,000 street children are in Delhi. There are approximately 40,000 street children in Bangladesh. A study in China showed that there are 150,000 street children in China. Indonesia has 170 street children while Vietnam has 23,000 and in the UK it is estimated that 100,000 children run away from home or places of safety each year.

A study carried out in Ethiopia revealed that there are about 150,000 street children in Ethiopia of whom 60,000 are in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government estimates that there are approximately 150 working children in Ethiopia, while the Non-Governmental Organizations

(NGOs) believe that the number of street children is more than that, they estimate the number of street children to be 600,000 with 100,000 in Addis Ababa (Consortium for Street Children).

A study by The Consortium of Street Children showed that there are about 1,000,000 street children in Egypt, 70 percent of whom are school dropouts, and 30 percent of whom had never attended school. There are about 300,000 street children who live and work on the streets of Kenya: over 50 percent are in Nairobi. In Ghana there are 21,140 street children and 6,000 street babies. A study carried out in South Africa estimated that there are about 12,000 street children in South Africa (Human and Thomas 2008; Le Roux 2001; Chetty 1997).

Street children in South Africa and elsewhere range between the ages of 7 and 18 years (Le Roux 2001, Grudling and Grudling 2005, Human and Thomas 2008), while in Namibia street children are between 6 and 18 years old. The average age is 12 and 13 years and the majority of street children are between the ages of 10-15 years (Grudling and Grudling 2005)

Literature reveals that in Africa street children are predominantly male (Le Roux 2001; Grudling and Grudling 2005).

Table 1 shows the profile of male street children as revealed by a study carried out in Namibia by Grudling and Grudling (2005).

COUNTRY	% OF MALE STREET CHILDREN
Angola	84
Ethiopia	76
Namibia	78.8
Sudan	100
Zambia	70
Zimbabwe	95

Table 2.2: Statistics of street children in African countries

A study by Le Roux (2001) showed that there are approximately 12,000 male street children in South Africa and they are predominantly black. According to Le Roux (2001) the majority of street children in South Africa start life on the street at about the age of 10. Girls who opt for street life turn to prostitution and drug dealing once on the street, hence there are few numbers to supply the literature. They live in hotel rooms and brothels where they operate from.

2.6 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT STREET CHILDREN

Street children are called by various names which describe their characteristics and circumstances to life on the street (Le roux 2001, Hecht 1998). In Northern Brazil they are known as ‘street urchins, street Arabs and garatos’. In Cape Town they are known as ‘strollers’, in Johannesburg they are called ‘twilight children, malunde and omalalephayiphini’(Chetty 1997, Le Roux 2001). In East London they are labelled as ‘ingubulayi, omaqwayipile, skydos and amarhuzu’. In other parts of the world they are labelled as “terrorists, criminals, and good for nothing children who should be dumped way out of sight of decent citizens” (Chetty 1997:7).

Chetty (1997:7) states that

The applicability of the labelling theory to street children is abundantly clear. From the time the child abandons or is abandoned by family and community, the label ‘street child is applied. This label has negative connotations since it emphasizes his street status rather than his child status. There appears to be wide spread normative consensus by those in position of power that street children are deviant, hence the hard options adopted in respect of them. These hard options indicate to the street child the negative perceptions of those in power, with the result that the deviant behaviour is accepted by the child, and followed by secondary deviance and further victimization.

This statement by Chetty (1997) has a demeaning connotation on the child because if a child is labelled in this manner he will accept the label and eventually engage in more unbecoming behaviour.

2.6.1 Marginalization

Street children form part of the most marginalized groups in society (EFA 2006). These children do not have good relationships with their families, the public education or health institutions. For the most part of their street life they are exposed to harsh environments. Their lifestyle makes them vulnerable to the use of illegal substances which is a major threat to their mental, physical social and spiritual well-being. For the most part street children are discriminated against, consume unhealthy food, are exposed to physical injuries, and have health problems which include sexual diseases and reproductive health problems which contribute to a threat to normal development (WHO 2000).

2.6.2 Health and safety

The EFA (2006) report states that street children live a lonely life or stay with friends. They do not get enough food as they get food from left over meals from restaurants, hotels and other public eating places in the areas in which they hang out. In order to survive street children are forced to work in the worst forms of child labour which in itself is abusive. Some of the money they make contributes to their families, food, basic necessities, and entertainment. EFA (2006) claims that some street children buy clothes, drugs, alcohol, medicine, and go to watch movies while others spend their money on smoking, glue sniffing, marijuana and heroin. In a study carried out in Nepal Street children admitted that that they share syringes and hence expose themselves to HIV/AIDS. They also have health issues such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), an unhygienic living environment, overcrowded surroundings, skin ailments, bacterial and parasitic infections and malnourishment. The reasons for not taking care of their health include financial problems and they argue that they have been ignored by government facilities and social services therefore they are not willing to make use of them. A significant number stated that carrying money exposes them to trouble as men, vigilantes, drug addicts, peers and even police harass them (EFA 2006).

2.6.3 Legal issues

According to EFA (2006) street children also encounter problems such as protection, survival, health and legal issues as they are under age and have no guardianship. Furthermore, abuse, social hypocrisy, police harassment, influence of crime, emotional insecurity, accidents and urban pollution indicate that street children encounter a number of challenges as they are unprotected in society.

A study revealed that street children often face legal problems when they have been involved in robberies. They also experience problems obtaining legal documents such as identity documents, driver's licences and other relevant documentation.

2.6.4 Self-concept and personal identity

The report further elicits that street children also experience social and emotional problems as life on the street is not structured (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006). Street children are often looked upon as delinquent and untrustworthy, and as a result many people are reluctant to employ them based on these biased perceptions. This rejection by society impacts negatively on street children such that they feel no obligation to society, and they have no faith in the system of education, law enforcement officials or the government to help solve their problems (EFA 2006). They suffer from low self-esteem and this impact negatively on their personal identity with and in society.

2.6.5 Inhumane treatment of street children

In many countries the public perception of and attitude towards street children is overwhelmingly negative. Street children are subjected to mental and physical abuse by police, their peers and fellow citizens. The government treats them as a plague that is to be eradicated rather than as children who need to be nurtured and protected by law. There is a tendency by some law enforcement personnel and civilians, corporate society and their private security firms, to view street children as almost sub-human. They are frequently detained by police simply because they

are homeless, or criminally charged with vague offenses such as loitering, vagrancy, or petty theft. Street children are often tortured by police or held for long periods in poor conditions without any form of trial or legal process to protect their vulnerability.

Girls are sometimes sexually abused, coerced into sexual acts or raped. There are few advocates who are keen to speak up for street children and few of these children have family members or concerned individuals willing to intervene on their behalf (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006). Girls become prostitutes while boys seem more vulnerable to fend for themselves on the streets.

According to Aptekar (1994) street children are viewed as children who are in difficult circumstances. As a result of war and hardship their mental health is affected (Aptekar 1994). It is stated that street children receive the worst treatment from the public. For example girls are sexually abused and boys are treated in a hostile manner. Studies reveal that street and working children have been beaten to death because of petty crimes and their undesirable behaviour. For instance one boy was shot and killed by a police reservist for stealing a signal lens from a car (Aptekar 1994). He goes on to say that in almost all cultures street children are labelled as children who have violated the values of the family by choosing to stay on the street away from their biological families and by working on the streets when they are supposed to be at school.

Aptekar (1994) states that those who murder street children are presumed to be doing justice to the society as it is believed that they are trying to restore cultural values and morals in the time of moral decay. The media portrays them as the most delinquent group in society. The media also portrays street children as “psychopathological, delinquent, carriers of AIDS and drug abusers” (Aptekar 1994). In other words street children manifest psychological malfunctioning as a result of social misplacement and rejection in society.

2.7 PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF STREET CHILDREN

Lusk (cited in Nwoke 1998:86) in his analysis of the psychological characteristics of street children discovered that:

1. Street children who work on the streets but turn their back on their families at the end of the day and who attend school, rarely show delinquent behaviour.

2. Those who work independently on the street and have broken their relationship with their families display delinquent behaviour and they attend school in an irregular fashion.

According to Iudashina (2004:43) children who beg on the streets act such that those who look on may sympathize with them and give them money. They do not use the money for their needs but they give it to their families. They start begging while still very young, the habit develops until the child becomes a victim of his behaviour. Iudashina (2004) further argues that the blame should not be put on the child; rather his parents should take the blame as they are the ones who introduce the child to such a behavioural dependency on the welfare of society lifestyle. Also to be blamed for encouraging the habit are the passers-by and the religious communities (churches) who reinforce the behaviour by supporting and giving money to these children (Iudashina 2004:43).

According to Iudashina (2004:44) children on the street are taught these social roles by their parents. They are taught how to dress in an appropriate manner so as to draw attention by potential passers-by. The children also learn how to approach those who are likely to give money and to avoid those who are likely to chase them away and by so doing discredit them. The children are also taught how to conduct themselves, showing humility when taking money from sympathizers and learning what language they should use so that people would pity them.

Iudashina (2004:44) further states that children need to have a strong character to survive on the street because if they do not they will suffer and this will impact negatively on their psyche but if they are strong they will learn how to defend themselves against the harsh realities of street life and learn to survive, although they are likely to become thieves and criminals due to forced circumstances.

According to Le Roux (1998:2) studies reveal that children under stress are resilient. Their resilience does not necessarily mean they are not affected by their traumatic experiences but that they are able to overcome them. Le Roux argues that these children may recover when exposed to an environment that will provide them with an opportunity to recover from their traumatic experiences.

Yet according to Wachs in (Le Roux 1998:2), if and when the child recovers from trauma depends largely on the extent of his exposure to such an occurrence: the greater the exposure, the greater the chances of that child to engage in deviant behaviour. Hence Nwoke (1998:87) argues

that it might happen that there are people who have tried to accommodate these children, giving them jobs but, because they are used to freedom and controlling themselves they run away from an orderly environment. This is why Swart-Kruger (as cited in Le Roux (1998:2) states that street children value freedom; they do not want to be institutionalized. Swart-Kruger therefore warns those who work with street children to take these attributes into consideration (Le Roux 1998).

According to Keen (as cited in Le Roux 1998:4) a significant number of street children display severe emotional and behavioural problems. As these character traits are not visible, these children are not recognized as suffering from psychiatric disorders, and consequently they are not given help. Yet according to Speck (as cited in Le Roux 1998:4) street children, especially runaways, show aggressiveness, their self-esteem is poor and their intelligence is low.

Pringle (in Le Roux 1998:4) states that street children have psychosocial needs such as the need for love and security, and for praise and recognition. If those needs are not realized or are ignored it is likely that such children will be at risk of developing behavioural and emotional problems.

One study according to Fernandes and Vaughn (2008) showed that street children are exposed to drug abuse. They use drugs such as glue, nail-polish remover, lighter fluid, spray paints, deodorant, hair sprays, whipped cream canisters and cleaning fluids as inhalants. The study suggests that children who use these kinds of inhalants are likely to use alcohol and marijuana. The reasons they use drugs is that these narcotics help them cope with challenges of street life and hence forget about their psychosocial problems such as poverty, abuse and neglect (Fernandes and Vaughn 2008). According to Ridenour (as cited by Fernandes and Vaughn 2008:274) inhalants can cause liver toxicity, renal failure and death. Studies show that inhalants affect the nervous system, and can result in health problems and psychiatric damage. In conclusion of this section it is clear that health and physical issues are a problem for street children.

2.8 PHYSICAL FACTORS THAT CHARACTERIZE STREET CHILDREN

In view of the above-mentioned issues there are factors which characterize physical defects in street children. According to Van Niekerk, Coetzee, Monyeki and Pienaar (2007:127-128) street children are not physically well developed largely because of their unhealthy lifestyle. One study

revealed that factors such as malnutrition impact negatively on the growth patterns of street children which make them appear younger than children of the same age. Further research revealed that street children demonstrate developmental deficiencies such as sensory–motor and cognitive–perceptual development (van Niekerk et al 2007:127-128), which means that street children are mentally and physically underdeveloped.

A study carried out in South Africa by Van Niekerk et al. (2007) aimed at determining the anthropometric and motor developmental profile of street children. The study revealed that street children are lighter and shorter and their body mass index was lower, their skin folds were smaller than other children of their age (van Niekerk et al. (2007). According to Van Niekerk et al. (2007:131) this can be blamed on poor socio-economic conditions and poor living conditions during their early childhood years. This study also revealed that as far as motor development is concerned, street children are deficient in comparison to normal development. Street children also displayed deficiencies in neuro-motor components as well as visual components (van Niekerk et al. 2007:133). Yet according to Hulme and Lord (as cited in van Niekerk 2007:133-134) visual problems influence general motor development and movement execution abilities, and if these components are not functioning properly this will affect a child's performance at school.

2.9 EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STREET CHILDREN

According to the Education for All (EFA) Global and Monitoring Report (2006) it is estimated that there are 100 million children of primary school age who are not enrolled in primary school. This is problematic in that it will make it impossible to achieve Education for All by 2015. According to this report many governments committed themselves to achieve the EFA goal by 2015 but as it stands there are many children, particularly from disadvantaged groups, in this instance, street children who are not included in the basic education program hence their basic needs including education are provided by charitable organizations and not by the state (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006).

The report also revealed that although it is a matter of priority to provide basic education to all children including those who are marginalized, it is unfortunate that education for street children is not even part of the national EFA action goals. In this report it is recommended that efforts to

reach this group of socially excluded and marginalized out-of-school children should be given priority (EFA 2006). This means that there is nothing in the EFA document that makes provision for street children. I argue that there has to be a provision of accessible quality education for street children, whether formal or non-formal. Furthermore I argue that means and initiatives to involve those who work with street children should be in place so that the diverse educational needs of street children are accommodated.

Education is very important for street children (World Health Organization 2000). The World Health Organization believes that the needs of street children can be addressed and possibly met through education. According to Van Niekerk (2007:7) “Education constitutes an essential social process and has a potential to shape the future of the society”, therefore street children have a right to be educated as they form part of the society.

In selected case studies undertaken and reported on by UNESCO (1995) in Africa, Asia, and Latin American countries, measures are put in place to reinstate street children into the community through education. Countries that have taken an initiative to educate street children include India, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Uganda. In India, for example, the type of education that is offered includes carpentry, engineering and training to drive a variety of vehicles for older learners. When the trainers are assured that the learners have acquired the skills they begin the process of rehabilitation so that the child may be ready for employment or self-employment (UNESCO 1995).

In Sri Lanka educators believe that literacy is the magic that opens doors to employment and to a reasonable standard of living and hence it is essential for street children to enter into the formal education system. The Sri Lankans therefore provide literacy classes for street children between the ages of six and fourteen years. These classes are aimed at helping street children gain admission to the formal school system at a grade appropriate to their age (UNESCO 1995).

In a study carried out in Kampala, visual methods such as mental and depot maps, thematic and non-thematic drawings, daily time lines and photo diaries were used for oral description and information. Visual methods such as mental maps and aerial photographs have often been used by researchers to demonstrate the spatial development of a child by age and gender and have proved to be effective (Young and Barrett 2001:143).

In Uganda at Ketawe centre 50% of 4,000 street children who benefited from a project aimed at reinstating street children through education started out illiterate. Street children who have been on the street and have readapted are used to help those who are still struggling with the use of marijuana, solvents, sniffing of glue and stealing (UNESCO 1995).

In the Philippines, most children find formal education boring and time-consuming, on the other hand they find informal education, conducted through dialogue, comparatively interesting, but unfortunately the program is not recognized by the Department of Education (UNESCO 1995). The researcher argues that conformity to formal education is not applicable to all children's modes of learning.

Epstein (1996:289) argues that schools and the Department of Education (DoE) fail to provide education to all children in an inclusive way although they have been mandated to do so. This leaves a question: why do institutions of learning fail to respond to the mandate? Epstein mentions the problems accompanying programs meant to address the educational needs of street children. Firstly, he states that street children are not a homogenous group therefore educational programs should not be generic. Secondly, street children live in an unhealthy environment, which hinders their holistic development at formal school. When at school they will manifest poor organizational skills and will find it challenging to conceptualize and to complete tasks. Furthermore, when they attend school for the first time from the street they will be ashamed of where they stay, they will find it difficult to adjust to the school setting and will be overwhelmed by fear of failure (Epstein 1996:291).

According to Epstein (1996:291) teachers also face challenges in dealing with street children. For instance on attending school after spending some months or years on the streets, these children do not bring with them their previous school records, they do not have proper documents which makes it difficult to keep their records and to assess them. Another challenge will be that of absenteeism or high dropout rate as street children do not stay in one school for a long period. Furthermore, the curriculum offered at school, methods of teaching, and lack of parental support will be a challenge for these learners. Usually a social worker acts as a parent to these children (Epstein 1996). From my experience street children are taken by NGOs and placed at places of safety, court orders are organized by social workers and then the children are sent to school.

Teachers do not communicate with social workers, they only communicate with child and youth care workers on a part-time basis.

According to Tower and White (as cited in Epstein 1996:291) teachers should be prepared to accommodate street children at school by providing a friendly environment. They also suggest that teachers:

1. should give street children their personal space,
2. should allow them to bring their culture to the classroom,
3. should give them work for shorter periods,
4. should not have high expectations,
5. should have a plan of how they will handle regression, and
6. Should allow street children to express their experiences as well as their frustrations freely.

2.9.1 Non-governmental organizations and government

According to Epstein (1996:292) the plight of destitute children is not given a priority by those in political power. One reason is because they do not want to be directly involved in addressing the issue of street or homeless children, and they distance themselves by making them the responsibility of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or voluntary agencies. These agencies use the ideology of self-reliance. Institutions of formal education also reinforce the same ideology as they treat the issue of destitute children as a matter of temporary abnormality. This is evident in the manner in which formal education expect street children to blend into the formal schooling system without adapting the system to the needs of street children. This shows how inflexible the system is and that it is not inclusive. Epstein (1996:293) further states that although street children come to school with no previous school records, no parental support and behavioural adjustment issues, the system expects them to overcome these barriers and compete successfully in a system that is based on an ideology of achievement.

2.9.2 School curricula and street children

Lave (as cited in Epstein 1996:293) argues that

The lack of curricula sensitivity to these issues is not accidental, for such an effort would contradict basic mainstream functionalist, psychological assumptions governing learning and development. Educators assume that conceptual understanding is generalizable, that cognition can be easily abstracted from everyday experience when taught in the classroom and that psychosocial development and maturation are largely deterministic, progressive phenomena that allow for the internal resolution of conflict on an individual basis.

This means that when these children are enrolled at school they are compelled to do the curriculum that is offered at the mainstream schools regardless of the duration the street child has spent out of school. They are also subjected to assessment similar to learners who have not been on the street and are expected to excel. These curricula are not street child friendly.

Iudanisha (2004:44) suggests that teachers should design programs that include didactic games, travelling games and adventure games that would enhance the development of the child's imagination without the pressure that would perhaps harm his mind.

According to Macalane and Niyika (2012:72) for most part the traditional role of schools is to promote academic, behavioural and cognitive development in learners, but there is a need for a paradigm shift on the part of schools. Schools need to enforce relationship-building, school spirit, activity involvement, a health-promoting school climate and safety. Citing Mampane and Bouwer (2006), Macalane states that schools are expected to provide intense support to vulnerable learners so as to enhance their resilience (Macalane 2012).

Various ways to encourage resilience for street children have been suggested. For example Martin and Marsh (as cited by Macalane 2012:72) suggest that “schools should create anxiety free learning environments that promote self-efficacy, enjoyment of school, healthy classroom participation, self-esteem and motivation in order to prevent learners from dropping out of school and adopt streetism.” Covell (as cited by Macalane 2012) argues that when learners are given a chance to take part fully in school activities they are motivated intrinsically.

Furthermore Brooks (as cited by Macalane 2012) suggests that “schools should encourage personnel to pay attention to each learner, know their names, encourage them to fully participate in class, listen to learners with problems, express respect, have high expectations for learners and maximize opportunities for relationship-building.”

A study conducted by Aronowitz in Macalane (2012:72) revealed that “caring and competent teachers could promote positive development in learners by believing in their learner’s potential, coaching learners to set high expectations, making learners feel valued and competent and encourage them to envision the future.” Gracia-Reid et.al states that “vulnerable learner’s including street children, who feel supported by positive adults, avoid trouble at school, get good grades, and pursue future success” (Macalane 2012:72).

In sum, I have related literature to uncover all the issues that impact on teaching and learning.

2.10 TEACHING AND LEARNING

According to Gunter (1985) “whenever teaching is mentioned, one immediately thinks of the school, as the formal , systemic and organized teaching, is a very important educational institution to which children go specifically to acquire knowledge and skills”. He goes on to argue that school is not the only place where teaching and learning take place, children come to school having been taught at home in their early years. The only difference between school and home is that teaching at school is conducted in a more formal manner while at home a child is taught in a less formal, not so organized and less systematic fashion (Gunter 1985).

Leach and Moon (2008) and Moll et al. (2001) argue that learning and teaching is a process such that even adults continue to learn new things and suggest that learning should not be taken for granted. Leach and Moon (2008) also state that if leaning is a social process then learners need one another in order to learn. Moll et al. (2001) go on to argue that because learning is natural teachers have a tendency of forgetting to ask how and why people learn. They emphasize the importance of understanding “why different kinds of learning are important in different context and to understand why and under what condition, learning does not happen when we expect it to happen” (Moll et al. 2001:3).

According to Moll et al. (2001:36) learning takes place in various ways, for example we learn through questioning, guessing and imagining. During a learning process children should not be afraid to make mistakes because fear of making mistakes hinders them from learning new things yet as far as Moll et al. (2001) are concerned learning about knows new things. In a school setting learners are faced with the challenge of learning new information, and new ways of thinking as well as doing things they have never done before. Learning new things may generate interest and excitement but at the same time it can cause anxiety if the learner is afraid to make mistakes (Moll et al. 2001).

Moll et al. (2001) argue that teachers should not forget that when they were learners they were in the similar position of fear and feeling of helplessness when they were faced with difficult and challenging tasks. They accuse teachers of expecting their learners to know everything, forgetting that when they were students they learnt by making mistakes and by taking risks. Moll et al. (2001) state that the task might look simple to the teacher but that may not be so to the learner.

As far as Moll et al. (2001) are concerned learners are sometimes reluctant to take risks because they are afraid of making mistakes which will be an embarrassment. They are also afraid of being labelled as failures, or of being punished if they make mistakes. Moll et al. (2001) blame teachers for instilling fear in learners in that they have a tendency to take learners' mistakes as an indication of laziness or of not making enough effort on their work or sometimes as failure. Also teachers get frustrated and angry when learners make mistakes, and that alone hinders learners from making mistakes. Dennett (cited in Moll et al. 2001) states that willingness to guess and make mistakes is key to learning, as making mistakes leads to productive learning as against correct guesses. If we are not willing to make mistakes we deny ourselves the opportunity to learn (Moll et al. 2001:41).

According to Moll et al. (2001:42) "we use our past experiences and knowledge to guess about the future and anticipate likely outcomes of our actions. We can only assume that the process of anticipating, guessing, and moving ahead of what is already known occurs in all learners regardless of who they are and what they are trying to learn." This means that a secure past forms the foundation for the future.

2.10.1 Different perspectives pertaining to teaching and learning

According to Leach and Moon (2008:48), before 1990 teaching was more concerned with memorization and recollection of facts. The state determined what career paths learners should follow, and the teacher was portrayed as the “omniscient teacher”.

Educational philosophers such as Whitehead, Dewey, Freire and Rogers have different views about learning and the role of the teacher in the classroom (Gill 1993:231). Whitehead is of the opinion that the teacher is the dispenser of knowledge and the learner is the absorber of knowledge (Gill 1993:231). Leach and Moon (2008:52) state that during Hoxha’s time “learners were seen as empty slates essentially imitative beings”. During this period learners were drilled and had to learn by imitating those who were considered experts, while critical thinking, deep knowledge and understanding had no place in that system.

Dewey (in Gill 1993) differs from Whitehead in that in his view the role of the teacher is to challenge the learner by posing a problem and the student is expected to respond by solving it. In Dewey’s opinion learners are not absorbers of facts and ideas but their role in the teaching and learning situation is to learn skills and information that will enable them to solve problems. It is however the duty of the teacher to be knowledgeable about the difficulties the learner may encounter in solving those problems and the relevant skills the learner should possess in order to solve such problems (Gill 1993:232).

Piaget who is a social constructivist and Dewey (in Leach and Moon 2008) emphasize the importance of allowing learners to take part in problem solving and critical thinking activities during a teaching and learning process. Both are of the opinion that learners need to be afforded an opportunity to “construct their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, by applying these to a new situation, and then by integrating the new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs” (Leach and Moon 2008:58). According to Leach and Moon (2008:58) constructivism calls for teachers to play the role of a facilitator in the teaching and learning situation with the intention of supporting learners to think effectively and to eventually reach a higher level of understanding.

Freire (in Gill 1993) shares the same sentiments as Dewey in that he believes that the learner ought to be actively involved in problem solving. His approach is specifically designed for illiterate and oppressed people. Freire believes that the teacher and the learner should be engaged in a dialogue, but the teacher should be responsible for creating an environment where both the teacher and the learners are given an equal opportunity to achieve their educational goal (Gill 1993:232). Freire also believes that the teacher should be more knowledgeable in order to give guidance to learners on how to solve the problems they encounter.

Fenway has a social view of learning: according to him learning is a social process in that he sees learners as “inherently agentic, proactive, curious, creative, and seriously committed” in the society where they reside (Leach and Moon 2008:53). There is a strong belief that learners learn more if they are given an opportunity to participate critically in different cultures in and out of school. Learning helps to bring people together, therefore it should not be an individual subject (Leach and Moon 2008:53).

Roger also views the teacher as a facilitator. In his opinion the teacher is not solely responsible for controlling the environment and the process of learning because if the teacher does so he will be interfering with the freedom of learners to exercise their full potential. Roger’s opinion of the role of the teacher is that the teacher ought to help with the removal of all the “barriers and the hindrances” learners might encounter in a learning environment (Gill 1993:232). By so doing, Roger believes, the learner will be able to learn on his own and would be able to select what he believes is relevant to him.

Vygotsky viewed learning as a socio-cultural process. In his opinion meaningful learning takes place when learners are engaged in social activities. It is through relationships with others that a learner’s consciousness is built. From Vygotsky’s perspective a learner’s mental thinking develops through “interpersonal communication mediated by shared psychological and physical tools” (Leach and Moon 2008:60).

Piaget and Vygotsky had different views in as far as the learning mechanism is concerned. Piaget “saw cognitive restructuring as occurring between equals in peer interactions” while Vygotsky argued that “ideal partners in learning are not equal but that this inequality is of expertise and understanding rather than power” (Leach and Moon 2008:60).

Dewey and Freire are of the opinion that a learner's motivation to learn should come from within. If learners are allowed to solve their problems they will take pride in their learning (Gill 1993). Roger also believes that a learner's motivation to learn should come naturally. He believes that allowing learners to participate actively in learning will enable them to tackle whatever problem they encounter during the learning process. In this case the role of the teacher would be that of teaching the subject matter, not of providing motivation (Gill 1993:233).

According to Leach and Moon (2008:54) research reveals that educationalists' claim that learning is a process whereby learners create their own meaning instead of being receivers of knowledge is just a mere say in that the practice of transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the learner is still dominant. Furthermore learning is still characterized by "educational policies and assessment practices based on the assumptions that learning is an individualistic, mental process that takes place independently of social context. Classrooms continue to be arranged so that students focus on their teachers and respond to carefully devised step-by-step exercises, activities exemplified by the government guidelines. To assess such learning common standards are devised and regular testing procedures have to be used whereby individual knowledge must be demonstrated and tested in the de-contextualized settings of silent classrooms or imposing halls" (Leach and Moon 2008:54).

2.11 HUMAN RIGHTS IN PERSPECTIVE

After the democratic government had come to power in 1994, a sound legislative policy framework aimed at the transformation of education was created (Beckmann and Prinsloo 2007:54). Policies promoting values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism, and access to basic education as stipulated in the Constitution of 1996 were developed. Section 7 of the Constitution (1996) urges the state to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights and which apply to the right to education. In so far as section 7 is concerned the state has:

1. The duty to respect: this duty forbids the government to act in a manner which will
1. deprive children of their right to education,

2. deny or obstruct the right to education,
3. Unfairly discriminate against certain learners, for example learners with special educational needs the right to education.
4. The duty to protect: the state is supposed to protect children from work as this would deny them their right to education.
5. The duty to promote: it is the duty of the state to keep people informed of their right to education and to explain in explicit terms how to gain access to this right.
6. The duty to fulfil: according to this duty, the state is obliged in terms of section 34 of the South African Schools Act to fund public schools so as to ensure that learners exercise their right to education (Beckmann and Prinsloo 2007:90).

Section 9 states that everyone has a right to an equal treatment. This section provides that:

1. Everyone is equal before the law and has a right to equal protection and benefit from the law.
2. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedom. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.
3. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
4. No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination (Beckmann and Prinsloo 2007:90).

The Bill of Rights Section 9 in the SA Constitution of 1996 is aimed at protecting individuals from discrimination. It says that people no matter who they are or where they come from or what their status in society is should not be discriminated against.

In terms of section 10, Chapter 2 of the SA Constitution (1996) “Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected.” According to Davis, Halton and Hayson (as cited in Beckmann and Prinsloo 2007:92) “the right to dignity is core fundamental human right which is reflected explicitly in many public international law instruments and constitutes the moral justification for many other universally accepted human rights”.

Glover (as cited in Beckmann and Prinsloo 2007:92) argues that social stratification in many cultures has resulted in people treating a certain class of people with dignity while others are treated in an unjust manner. Section 10 of the constitution is therefore aimed at eradicating this type of unjust act by ensuring the dignity of each person and his or her right to protect and defend his or her dignity.

Section 28 of Chapter 2 of the SA Constitution (1996) deals exclusively with children’s rights and is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) of the United Nations (Beckmann and Prinsloo 2007:97).

Section 28 stipulates that:

Every child has the right:–

1. to a name and a nationality from birth;
2. to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
3. to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services;
4. to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation;
5. to be protected from exploitative labour practices;
6. not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that

1. are inappropriate for a person of that child's age; or
2. place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development.

Section 29 guarantees the right to a basic education by stating that:

1. Everyone has the right
 1. to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
 2. to further education, which the state, through reasonable measure, must make progressively available and accessible.

Section 20(1) of the South African Schools Act (SASA) stipulates that educators, parents, and the state ought to account to learners and their parents for the quality of education the school provides to its learners. The quality of facilities, the qualifications, commitment, dedication, professionalism and performance of educators is what determines the quality of education (Beckmann and Prinsloo 2007:114). Learners in return are expected to exercise their right to learn by showing commitment to their learning and by not interfering with other learners' right to education. In order to show their dedication to learning learners are expected to consistently do their work, demonstrate obedience and partake in a disciplined and purposeful learning environment.

According to Beckmann and Prinsloo (2007) research reveals that if parents play a major role in the education of their children, their performance at school is boosted, they get high marks on their tests, which will lead to them getting more chances for higher education. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 stipulates clearly that parents ought to ensure that their children go to school. The Act also gives parents an equal opportunity to have a say in determining school fees as well as to serve in the school governance. Beckmann and Prinsloo (2007:115) argues that the role of parents should not end in serving in the school structures, but should extend beyond that by performing other duties which include

1. helping with the development of home environments that are conducive to learning;

2. enhancing communication between the school and the home by alerting the school of incidents that would have a negative impact on a child's performance at school, these would include incidents such as sickness, disease, trauma in the family and others;
3. playing an active role in decisions that affect the child;
4. participating actively in policy development of the school;
5. taking an interest in what is happening at school and ensuring that the school is fulfilling its duty to act in and promote the best interests of the child; and
6. making it a point that is fairly treated in as far as disciplinary measures are concerned.

2.12 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ACT

Universal children's rights are based on children's needs: these needs must be met for children to have a happy and fulfilled childhood, so that they are able to grow up to be strong, independent, caring and responsible citizens.

2.12.1 Human rights begin with children's rights

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it is stated that every member of the human race is entitled to dignity and to fundamental rights that are equal and inalienable. Children are human beings therefore they are entitled to fundamental rights, and have the right to dignity and to be valued as human beings. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that childhood is entitled to "special care and assistance". It is for this reason that the Convention on the Rights of the Child was drawn up to defend the needs of children for special care and assistance in upholding their rights (Children's Right Resource Handbook and Children's Rights Centre).

2.12.2 Principles in determining children's rights

1. Children's needs must be individually and developmentally understood, looking at the whole child.
2. All rights and needs apply to every child without any discrimination by race, culture, religion, gender, class, ability or age.
3. Rights must also take into account the fact that every child is unique and has special needs according to his or her individual age, character and development stage; and these needs change as the child grows.
4. Children with special needs, such as those who are physically and mentally less able or more able, have the right to have their special needs met. Other children with special rights are those in especially difficult circumstances.
5. Developmental rights at the appropriate stage: as they grow and develop, children need to complete the developmental tasks that are their priority at each stage of their lives. They need to have opportunities, at certain optimal developmental periods, to learn such things as language, social skills, cognitive skills, and fine motor skills. If the optimal stage is missed, they need special help to try to make it up.
6. Rights and responsibilities and children's participation: children's rights are often paired with children's responsibilities but rights are inherent. We cannot refuse to give a child something that is his or her right because we disapprove of certain behaviour.
7. Rights are reciprocal: what children should learn is that rights are part of a pattern of human relationships. Everyone has rights, and we need to respect these, and to negotiate when rights conflict. For example the child has a right to have a voice but he or she has a responsibility to listen to others. As the UN Convention states in the Preamble; children have a right to be brought up in a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity (Children's Right Resource Handbook).
8. Age and capacity: children have a right to have their decisions taken into account, according to their age and maturity but they should not be burdened with responsibilities

that are beyond their capacity. For example, they have the right and duty to participate and share in family and school chores, and other group responsibilities according to their capacity. Children whose rights have been respected and protected grow into adults who respect the rights of others (Children's Right Resource Handbook).

2.12.3 Human rights and street children

According to Panter-Brick (2002:154) the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) declared numerous rights for children globally which made concern for children in adversity to be a legal responsibility of the state. The Convention led to the development of The Human Rights for Street Children by The Consortium for Street Children as a guideline towards the implementation of the Convention.

The Convention also led to the addition of other rights for children outside society and normal childhood which, according to Panter-Brick (2002:154), are not yet written. These include the right of street children not to be labelled, to be correctly researched and counted, to work and have their support systems respected, the rights to privacy and respect for individuality (including sexuality), and the right to be protected from exploitation by the media, activists, or fundraisers (through an exaggeration of children's weaknesses and vulnerability) (Panter-Brick 2002:154-155).

The Convention also brought about changes in the manner in which the street child phenomenon was perceived in that there was a significant shift from "highlighting the needs of vulnerable children to defending their rights as citizens. According to Panter-Brick (2002:155) street children continue to be socially shut out as they are still denied access to birth certificates and registration documents, they do not have proper places to stay, proper education or health care. In all fairness, street children do not have rights to citizenship.

The Convention also emphasized the importance of understanding that when it is stated that children's interests need to be promoted and recognized means not only they should be protected and provided for but that children need to be listened to and to be given an opportunity to participate. There has to be a balance where these rights are concerned. It is unfortunate to notice

that those in power are reluctant to allow street children to exercise their right to participation (Panter-Brick 2002:156).

According to Ennew (as cited in Panter-Brick 2002:156) intervention programs aimed at reintegrating street children with school or family have not yielded better results largely because they ignored the views of concerned children and all that they have achieved for themselves. It is for this reason that the Save the Children publication has stressed that “street and working children are not ‘objects of concern but people. They are vulnerable but not incapable. They need respect not pity” (Ennew cited in Panter-Brick 2002:156).

In conclusion, this literature focus is applicable to this study.

2.12.4 Rights-based child-friendly schools

According to Orkodashvili (2010:1) UNICEF developed a framework for rights-based, child-friendly educational systems and schools that are characterized as inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities.

The framework ascertains that:

1. The school is a significant personal and social environment in the lives of its learners. A child-friendly school ensures every child an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling.
2. Teachers are the single most important factor in creating an effective and inclusive school.
3. Children are natural learners, but this capacity to learn can be undermined and sometimes destroyed. A child-friendly school recognizes, encourages and supports children’s growing capacities as learners by providing a school culture, teaching behaviours and curriculum content that are focused on learning and the learner.
4. The ability of a school to be and to call itself child-friendly is directly linked to the support, participation and collaboration it receives from families.

5. Child-friendly schools aim to develop a learning environment in which children are motivated and able to learn. Staff members are friendly and welcoming to children and attend to all their health and safety needs.
6. A child-friendly school does not exclude, discriminate, or stereotype on the basis of difference.
7. A child-friendly school provides education that is free and compulsory, affordable and accessible, especially to families and children at risk.
8. A child-friendly school respects diversity and ensures equality of learning for all children.
9. A child-friendly school responds to diversity by meeting the differing circumstances and needs of children.

This framework informs this study significantly as all schools ought to comply with this framework.

2.13 EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6: SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION – Supporting learners with special education needs

2.13.1 Conceptual framework

The release of the Department of Education's White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System heralded a new approach towards organizing support within a single, integrated education system. The policy framework outlines the commitment of the Department of Education to the provision of educational opportunities, in particular for those learners who experience barriers to learning and development or who have dropped out of learning because of the inability of the education and training system to accommodate diversity of learning needs, and those learners who continue to be excluded from it. This refers to learners who have never been to school, who enter school late, or who are considered to be over age and are stuck in the GET band with no support and little scope for progressing to FET or to the world of work. The category of such learners includes children or youths living on the streets.

In order to ensure that street children and other vulnerable children are included in the system and get the support they need, and to address barriers to learning and exclusion, the Department of education came up with a Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (DOE 2005).

2.13.2 Inclusive education model

This model moves away from disability theories, assumptions, practices and models to a non-disability, inclusive system of education. The Education White Paper 6 (2005) stated that educationists are aware of the impact of psychological theory as quite a number of special education discourses are located within educational psychology frameworks and departments. It is stated that many psychological theories of understanding learning breakdown have a belief that problems are located within learners. It is also argued that very little is said about system deficiencies, social systems and their problems, exposure to intellectual work and poverty.

Special education theory differs from psychological theories in that it is located within a predominantly functionalist paradigm and is concerned both with learners who experience learning breakdown and with those who are regarded as disabled. It is stated that the old thinking believed the system worked and any breakdown and failure of it was the fault of individuals within it. Inclusive Education means rethinking our attitudes towards disability (DOE 2005:7).

White Paper 6 suggested that the first step is to move from seeing disability only in medical terms to seeing it in terms of the right of the marginalized group within the system. The second step is to identify barriers to learning in the system and interventions that need to be made. It is said that barriers to learning could include poverty, physical inaccessibility to schools, an inflexible curriculum, and inappropriate language and communication channels. Furthermore, barriers can be located within the learner, within the site of learning, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context. These barriers manifest themselves in different ways and only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs, when learners drop out of the system or when the excluded become visible. It is also suggested that the only way to prevent barriers from taking place is monitoring and meeting the different needs among the learner population and within the system as a whole (DOE 2005:8).

2.13.3 Identifying learner needs and aspirations

The policy suggests that the provision of support system start with the learner. Teachers are discouraged from making assumptions about the special needs of a learner but are advised to see each learner as an individual, coming with his own strengths, aspirations, experiences and possible specific barriers. It also does not encourage the evaluation of learner needs before actual teaching and learning has taken place to determine what needs the learner has (DOE 2005:18).

2.13.4 Identifying and assessing contextual barriers

The teacher has first to observe learners in the teaching and learning situation. When observation has taken place a process of identifying the barriers that the learner might be experiencing begins. The process includes teacher self-reflection, parent consultation and involvement, identifying contextual barriers, planning learning and teaching adjustments, and identifying whether an improvement in school effectiveness, provisioning, planning and collaboration will not improve teaching and learning to the benefit of all learners. The support should be implemented in an effective way to ensure that support from other agencies outside the classroom is not required (DOE 2005:18).

After the first stage of screening, observation and baseline assessment and a closer understanding of the learner needs have been discovered; further assessment by the Institution Level Support Team (ILST) with consultation with the teacher concerned will take place. The ILST will therefore recommend external support provision when necessary, where the legal framework of verification by the District Based Support Team (DBST) will commence (DOE 2005:22).

2.13.5 Redefining support

The policy urges that support given to learners with special educational needs should not be perceived as focusing on deficits that have been diagnosed in individual learners who are thought in need of remediation through individual attention by specialist staff. Support should rather be defined as all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to diversity. Support is given to individual learners in order to make learning contexts and lessons accessible to all

learners. When teachers plan their lessons in such a way that all learners are accommodated, then support is rendered. All in all, support ought to pay attention to the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs (DOE 2005:23).

2.13.6 Supporting curriculum access

Educators as well as all education officials need to be aware that inclusion is nothing else but a curriculum issue since most barriers to learning are as a result of the curriculum. There are different barriers to learning embedded in the curriculum which includes the content of learning programs, the language and medium of teaching and learning, the management and organization of the classroom, learning style and pace, time frames for completion of curricula, materials and equipment which have to be available, and assessment methods and techniques. In Education White Paper (6:20) it is suggested that support must be organized in such a way that a range of barriers to accessing the curriculum is uncovered and addressed (DOE 2005:23).

2.13.7 Purpose of assessment procedure

As far as White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education is concerned the main aim of all assessment within the education is to promote effective teaching and learning. Assessment can also be conducted for

Contributing towards the development of profiles of learners, educators and institutions, this can then be used for the following purposes:

1. Determining learning needs and whether learning is successfully occurring;
2. Identifying barriers to learning, and pointing to where and how these barriers could be addressed. This could include various interventions at any level of the system: an intervention with the learner or educator, transformation of some aspect of the curriculum, development of the institutional environment, or addressing particular family, community or social factors; and
3. Contributing to strategic management planning and decision-making within the Department of Education, including identifying support needs for the purposes of post-

provisioning and resourcing, and informing where and how learners can obtain the most appropriate learning programs (DOE 2005:27).

2.14 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter reviewed literature on matters related to the street child phenomenon with reference to theoretical categorization of street children, factors that affect street life, global and national figures reflective of street children, perceptions about street children, psychological manifestations of street children, physical factors that characterize street children, educational needs of street children, school curricula, and street children teaching and learning, different perspectives pertaining to learning, human rights in perspective, Children's Act, Human Rights and street children, and Education White Paper 6 (Special Needs Education).

The following chapter discusses research methods that were adopted by this study such as phenomenology and qualitative research methods. Data gathering techniques such as observation and in-depth unstructured interviews are also discussed and show how these methods are best suited to this research study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The study is a qualitative study: it focuses on phenomenology, which is consistent with qualitative research study. Learners will be the main source of inquiry and empirical data collection through in-depth interviews and observation. From this data, key issues in relation to former street children's personal experiences will be determined. The researcher is assuming that the participants will share and reflect upon their lived experiences as learners. Through data collection I hope to develop new knowledge in terms of the 'voices' of these learners as their voices have not been heard, respected or catered for in an inclusive mainstream schooling context.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of former street children as learners. Unstructured in-depth interviews and observation were used to explore the beliefs, feelings and thoughts of the participants in relation to their context and thoughts on learning. The qualitative study is an attempt to uncover and understand the research question: what are the experiences of street children as learners in a formal school context? This chapter represents a discussion of the research method and design aligned to purposive selection of the participants for this study. Data collection procedures and ethical issues will also be explained.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative approach was best suited to this study which is consistent with phenomenology due to the exploratory nature that this approach represents. The qualitative approach was applied so as to determine the variances in perspective and experiences of children formerly from the streets in a school setting and to investigate how they perceive learning in a school context.

Hancock (2002:1) states that the aim of qualitative research is to understand the world that we dwell in, and to actually understand why things are the way they are, in other words to contextualize a situation. As far as Hancock (2002:1) is concerned, qualitative research establishes the social aspects of our world and answers questions with regard to "why people behave the way they do, how opinions and attitudes are formed, how people are affected by the events that go on around them" (Hancock 2002:1). The researcher adopted a qualitative research method because

she wanted to develop an understanding of how the former street children feel as learners, therefore adopting qualitative approach was suitable for this purpose, as it aligns to a deeper understanding of the life world of these learners in a school context.

When undertaking qualitative study, the participants are usually not controlled as the freedom to express and share their learning experiences with the researcher and natural development of action and presentation that is researched needs to be captured and analyzed. Qualitative studies aim for depth, knowledge and understanding rather than quantity of understanding (Henning 2004). McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 36) state that qualitative research involves relatively small-scale studies for in-depth investigation, with the aim of understanding the social phenomena from the participants' perspectives, using interactive strategies in a real-life situation. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) further state that qualitative research is a form of enquiry whereby the researcher collects information in a one-on-one basis by engaging dialogically with selected individuals in their environment. It was therefore essential that the researcher conducted the interviews in person (as an insider-teacher, outsider-researcher) within the school context associated with teaching and learning.

Wiesma (1995:111-112) defines qualitative research as a form of inquiry which aims to inform the researcher about the phenomenon using narrative and description as key elements of enquiry. Therefore data collection was done in a natural and normal schooling environment using specific data collection instruments such as interviews and observation (Wiesma 1995). The researcher had a one-on-one interview with the participants where these learners shared their experiences about self (identity), learning in relation to their schooling academic performance and teaching, and strategies applied in the classroom.

In qualitative research, researchers “do not impose their assumptions, limitations, delimitations or definitions or research design upon emerging data”. Hence the role of the researcher is to record their observations or data collected from the subjects in their natural setting” (Wiesma 1995:211-212). Through unstructured interviews the researcher sensitively gathered information about the experiences, thoughts and actions of these former street children in order to develop a deeper understanding of how these children perceive formalized school education in relation to their personal experiences as former street children aligned to schooling system.

According to Hancock (2002:2) qualitative research differs from quantitative research in the following ways:

1. Qualitative research is concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals producing subjective data.
2. It describes social phenomena as they occur naturally.
3. Data collected in qualitative research is used to develop concepts and theories that enable researchers to understand the social world and personal issues related to the participants' lives.
4. Data is collected through direct encounters with individuals, through one-on-one interviews or group interviews or by means of observation.
5. Qualitative data collection is time-consuming as it is not structured in nature.
6. Qualitative methods use different sampling techniques e.g. purposive sampling.

Quantitative research is based on quantifiable statistics in a contrived or formal manner.

In sum, qualitative research is the most appropriate approach for this study as it shapes and develops an understanding of the life world of former street children through the knowledge, insight, emotional understanding, perceptions and views of former street children.

3.3 INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

This study is located in an interpretive paradigm which allows the researcher to focus on the contextual meaning-making, as the central endeavour within the context of an interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Peshkin 1993; Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2001). The researcher will interpret the data sensitively to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of former street children as learners in a formal school context. An interpretive paradigm will enable the researcher to gain significant insight, knowledge and understanding into the nature of a particular phenomenon, developing new understandings and

concepts the theoretical perspectives alluded to about the phenomenon, and the problem that exist within the phenomenon (Leedy and Ormrod, 2000).

An interpretive paradigm seeks to understand how individuals interpret the world around them, and to understand how reality goes on at one time and in one place and compare it with what goes on in different times and places (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2001), which is appropriate for this study. The interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to study a situation without prior theory (Leedy and Ormrod 2000). This means that the theory and themes emerging from the data collected will be analyzed according to a theoretical and thematic framework significant for this study, as interpretive paradigmic knowledge is not to inform interventions, but to develop a deeper understanding of the situation (Leedy and Ormrod 2000). Since the researchers' aim is to understand the manner in which street children interpret learning in a school environment, this approach is an appropriate methodological presentation for this study.

Cohen et.al (2001:22) states that an interpretive paradigm's main concern is that of the individual as the aim is to understand the subjective world of human experience. In an interpretive paradigmic approach to research, efforts are made to penetrate the individual's thoughts so that the researcher gets to understand the respondent's inner thoughts (Cohen et.al 2001:22). It therefore differs from the normative paradigm, where the researcher strives to make use of a universal theory that would enable them to account for human and social behaviour (Cohen et.al 2001:23).

In conclusion, those who criticise interpretive qualitative research design argue that the findings are based on a small number of individuals therefore; it is difficult if not impossible to show that the findings and conclusions are "applicable to other situations and environment" (Shenton 2003). Furthermore generalisability of the results is not easy. According to Mawati (2008) the other limitation of interpretive paradigm is that it is not easy to adopt an objective stance in human research compared to scientific methods. The subjective nature of the reports makes it difficult to establish trustworthiness of the findings (Cohen et. al (2004).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: PHENOMENOLOGY

A phenomenological research design is located in an interpretive paradigm of phenomena. A researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the study of conscious experience as experienced by an individual from the first person perspective (Groenewald 2004). Phenomenology is interested in studying the experience from the individuals' point of view, where presumptions and ordinary ways of perceiving are bracketed (Lester 1999). Epistemologically phenomenological approaches "are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such phenomenology is powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom" (Lester 1999:1). For this study, the researcher is interested in exploring how former street children interpret their life world as learners through unstructured in-depth interviews and observation, and seeks to gather first-hand information directly from the participants. This approach is therefore consistent with the interpretive paradigm and is appropriate and relevant for this form of research.

Furthermore phenomenological research allows the researcher to apply various methods in the design including interviews, conversations, observations, focus meetings and analysis of personal texts (Lester 1999). The researcher therefore used methods such as interviews and observation as data gathering methods. Lester (1999) states that phenomenology as a research method has the least structure but the greatest possibility of depth, meaning that phenomenology affords the researcher the opportunity "to strike a balance between keeping focus on the research issues and avoiding undue influence by the researcher" (Lester 1999:2). The researcher remained focused on the purpose of the study and avoided her biases as a teacher in the school, retaining the ethics of insider-outsider research.

According to Morrissey and Higgs (2006:162) and Groenewald (2004) the role of phenomenologists is that of investigating life events as they are experienced by people and describing exactly the meanings that those involved attach to such events. Phenomenology is

therefore relevant to this study. The main aim of the researcher is to understand and describe such experiences, as lived and experienced by former street children in a school context.

Phenomenology is based on two premises: the first premise ascertains that “experience is a valid, rich and rewarding source of knowledge” (Morrissey and Higgs 2006:162). Becker (as cited in Morrissey and Higgs 2006:162) states that experience is “the source of all knowing and the basis of behaviour. Experience, of what we are aware of at any point in time, is the foundation of ourselves, of other people and the world in general. Without experience there would be no human world”.

Therefore phenomenologists such as Morrissey and Higgs (2006) perceive experience as a reliable source of information for it is key in understanding human events (Morrissey and Higgs 2006). The shared experiences of former street children in their life world as learners will be used as primary data and valuable information in developing an understanding of how former street children perceive teaching and learning in a formal school environment.

The second premise is that “phenomenology lies in the view that the everyday world is valuable and a productive source of knowledge, and that we can learn much about ourselves and reap key insights into the nature of an event by analyzing how it occurs in our lives” (Becker cited in Morrissey and Higgs 2006:163). These learners, who were formally street children and have since enrolled as learners through the intervention of social workers and care givers, participated in this study. These particular learners described their experiences, developing an understanding of their life world as learners, and explained through interviews how they perceive their life world in a formal school environment accompanied by researcher’s observation for this purposive group of learners.

Phenomenologists are also concerned about exposing the nature of experience, while ensuring that the integrity and the perception of the individual are maintained (Morrissey and Higgs 2006). This means that the researcher as an insider-outsider researcher is required to interview and observe from a non-biased position the learners’ truths.

According to Crotty (cited in Morrissey and Higgs 2006:163) phenomenologists seek to address, identify, describe, understand and interpret “the experiences children have in their day-to-day lives...precisely as those people have the experiences and understand them” (Morrissey and Higgs

2006:163). In other words phenomenologist seeks to unpack the true stories as lived by individuals. Since these learners have been exposed to the harsh realities of street life which is believed to psychologically scar the brain (Le Roux 1998), the researcher argues that there is a need for a comprehensive and rich research that will enlighten us as to how these learners think about their life in general as learners, and about teaching and learning in a formal school environment, in other words there is juxtaposition between the experience of life on the street and the impact it has on formal teaching and learning for these children in school. This study therefore presents a specific case relevant to the design of this study.

3.5 A CASE STUDY APPROACH

The researcher has adopted a case study approach as it is relevant to the design of qualitative interpretive method of research (de Vos et al. 2005). De Vos et al. (2005) state that a case study can be regarded as an exploration or in-depth analysis of a bounded system, bounded by time and/or place, a single or multiple cases over a period of time. The case being investigated may refer to a process, activity, event, or programme, an individual or multiple individual (de Vos et al. 2005). Using a case study method affords an opportunity to provide an in-depth description of the nature of the study.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994:106) a case study allows the researcher to observe the characteristics of an individual, be it a child, a class, a school or a community. The researcher's aim was to examine the experiences of former street children in depth and to create a deeper understanding of the experiences of street children as learners. The case in question relates to a special school as well as to a specific cohort of learners (former street children in Grade 8 and 9) whose social, personal and developing presents, diversifies and presents challenges within a learning context.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

3.6.1 Unstructured interviews

Interviews are categorized into three different types: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (Zhang and Wildemuth 2006:1).

1. A structured interview is a kind of interview with predefined questions, asked in similar sequence for all the interviewees.
2. Semi-structured interviews “are easily adapted to the purpose” (Zhang and Wildemuth 2006:1). Questions asked include close-ended and open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews are more flexible in that they allow the interviewer an opportunity to “adjust the sequence of the questions to be asked and to add questions based on the content of the participant’s response” (Zhang and Wildemuth 2006:1).
3. Unstructured interviews differ from structured and semi-structured interviews in that the researcher using unstructured interviewing does not come to the interview with predefined questions. The fact that questions asked do not follow a predetermined pattern and that the questions are not fixed, does not mean that there is no preparation involved (Cohen and Manion 1994, Zhang and Wildemuth 2006). It is for this reason that Zhang and Wildemuth (2006:2) state that unstructured interviews “cannot be started without knowledge and preparation if the researcher hopes to achieve deep insight into people’s lives.

Kringer (cited in Cohen and Manion 1994) stated that “although the research purposes govern the questions asked, their content, sequence, and wording are entirely in the hands of the interviewer. This does not mean unstructured interview is a more casual affair, for in its way it has to be carefully planned” (Kringer cited in Cohen and Manion 1994:273). The researcher was well aware that this form of interviewing needs the researcher to gather as much information as possible from former street children through conversation in a natural way and a natural setting.

Unstructured interviews have little structure (Hancock 2002:10). The aim of the interviewer in unstructured interviews is to discuss few topics with the participant, and from the discussion the framing of questions with regard to the response of the interviewee takes place. The fact that only one or two topics are discussed means a lot is covered in those discussions because the topics are dealt with in detail and in depth. The interviewer simply probes to uncover the feelings, attitudes and thoughts of the participants.

According to Hancock (2002) unstructured interviews “are exactly that, interviews where the interviewer wants to learn but has no structure” (Hancock 2002:10). Hancock advises that qualitative interviews should be as informal as possible to allow the participants to get a feeling that they are engaged in an informal conversation or discussion. For this to be achieved the researcher has to be skilful in carrying out the interviewing process (Hancock 2002).

Interviews in general are a widely used tool to access people’s experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality (Zhang and Wildemuth 2006:1). Cohen and Manion defined interviews as “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information” (Cohen and Manion 1994:273). The main purpose of this research is to gather as much information about the thoughts, experiences, attitudes and beliefs of former street children as learners.

The researcher conducted in-depth unstructured interviews, combined with learner observation and journal entries in an informal, natural context. The aim of the interview was to develop a better understanding of the street children’s experiences in a school environment. According to Churton (2000: 201) in unstructured in-depth interviews the interviewer does not rely on pre-determined questions, but simply works from a broad starting point and attempts to gather data that is as incredible as possible. This approach probably offers the greatest insight into the uniqueness of human attitudes and behaviour. Unstructured interviews are a useful tool for obtaining in-depth or detailed information that is high in credibility, reliability and validity (Churton 2000).

3.6.2 Observation

Observation was used in gathering data in this research since it is consistent with phenomenology. “A variety of methods can be used in phenomenology based research including interviews, participant observation and analysis of personal texts (Lester 1999:1). According to Cohen and Manion (1994:110) participant observation methods are suitable for data gathering in that they are higher in quality than experiments and surveys. They allow the researcher to distinguish an ongoing behaviour as it takes place instead of presenting second hand information, thus enabling the investigator to make suitable notes of the characteristics being projected by the individual.

Observation enables the researcher to observe instances in context the researcher might have not been aware of or would have missed completely. Observation also helps the researcher to see and reflect on the participant(s) and what the participant is reluctant to talk about in an interview situation.

Information collected through observation is current compared to questionnaires (Cohen et al. 2000:305). The researcher had time to observe learners in context, particularly the variables of interest to the study. The researcher teaches English in Grades 7, 8 and 9 and Life Orientation in Grade 8 at the school, and was therefore in a position to observe the actions, feelings and attitudes of the participants. The researcher-teacher remained focused to avoid being biased, as she is a teacher in the school (insider and outsider research role).

Morrisson (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Cresswell 2000:305) argued that observation enables the researcher an opportunity to gather information on the following:

1. The physical environment and its organization (school environment, community centred);
2. The organization of people, the characteristics and make-up of the groups or individuals being observed, for instance gender, class, age, race; and
3. The interactions that are taking place: formal and informal, planned and unplanned, verbal and non-verbal.

This lends me into discussing why the researcher chose a case study. Case study observation takes place over an extended period of time, thus enabling the researcher an opportunity to develop close and informal relationships with the participants as this will be taking place in a simpler environment compared to experiments and surveys (Cohen and Manion 1994:110). The researcher is a teacher and actually teaches the participants in the school under investigation. Therefore the researcher was able to spend quality time with the participants that enabled her to observe the behaviour patterns, actions and attitudes of these former street children as learners in the school.

3.7 SAMPLING

According to Cohen et al (2000:92) researchers should decide during the planning stages of the research the kind of sample they will use because the quality of the research depends not only on the methodology and instrumentation but also on the choice of sampling technique. In this case study the researcher chose purposive sampling to identify the participants. The researcher's interest is to develop an understanding of the experiences of former street children as learners. Therefore the choice was based on the purpose of the research to focus on this particular group. The researcher should take into consideration factors such as expense, time, and accessibility as these factors have a tendency to hinder researchers from acquiring information from the whole population (Cohen et al. 2000).

Cohen et al. (2000:93) suggest that it is important for a researcher to have the smallest quantity of sample size that will be a "correct" representation of the targeted population. The size of the sample is usually determined by the research style. For example, if a researcher is doing a survey it will need a huge sample size because survey style need a large sample, but a qualitative style is appropriate and was adopted by the researcher as it allows for a sample size that is smaller (Cohen et al. 2000). This study has adopted a qualitative style therefore a minimum of four participants were invited to take part in the study for in-depth data collection and repeated interviews. Only learners who have been street children were selected to participate in the study as the study is an investigation of the experiences of street children as learners in a school context.

3.7.1 The research site

The study was conducted in a school that was formerly for street children but it now accommodates other categories of vulnerable learners in and around the East London district of the Eastern Cape Province. This particular school was selected for this study because it is the only special school in the East London district formally catering for street children. At present it has an enrolment of 107 learners. The ratio is 1:7.8 given the special needs of these learners. The school is geographically situated in the East London district on the premises of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

For this study, the researcher sought the participation of learners from this school. These purposive sample learners reside in various Child and Youth Care Centres in the East London

district: some move from one place to another, they do not have a permanent place to stay since they ran away from a children's home, some stay with friends. The learners who are selected to participate in this study are specifically those who were street children and have since been placed in places of safety and enrolled at this particular special school catering for such children and other vulnerable learners. The teachers at the school are employed by the Department of Education.

3.7.2 Sampling of the respondents

The researcher used purposive sampling to identify the participants. According to Cohen and Manion (1989:103) in purposive sampling the researcher handpicks the participants to be involved in the study according to the needs of the researcher. A total of four learners were interviewed. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to choose a case study because it illustrates some of the features in which the researcher is interested, and in terms of its relevance to the study (Silverman 2005:104). For the interviews, learners who had been formerly on the streets were identified by the researcher and invited to participate in the study.

The researcher applied purposive sampling in collecting data by means of interviews and observation. The purpose of the study was to understand the perceptions, thoughts, emotions and self-understanding of the participants about learning in some depth.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The design of the study leads to a particular form of approach, namely phenomenology, as discussed earlier in this study. Phenomenological analysis was employed to analyze the interview transcripts. According to Lester (1999:12) researchers using phenomenological research encounter problems in as far as data analysis is concerned. This is largely because phenomenological research produces a large amount of in-depth unstructured interviews, notes, tape recordings, jottings or other records for data collection that need to be analyzed in order to enrich and inform this study. When data is analyzed it tends to be a mess as there is a tendency for data to fall over the place (Lester 1999).

Lester (1999) suggests that if the data happens to be all over the place, in order to organize it, the researcher needs to begin by reading the interview transcripts, unstructured notes or personal texts. This will help the researcher to understand better what was said and to identify key themes and issues in each text (Lester 1999:2). The researcher audio-taped the interviews and each interview were given a code: L1, L2, L3, and L4. The researcher listened to the audio tape immediately after each interview. Each interview was recorded on a separate cassette and a label was assigned to the cassette. The researcher made notes soon afterwards.

Groenewald (2004:15) states that field notes are another method by which data can be stored in qualitative research. This is crucial because the mind of a human has a tendency to quickly forget (Lofland and Lofland as cited in Groenewald 2004), therefore the researcher has to bear in mind the importance of recording information as soon as possible. The researcher has an obligation to immediately record the following: “what happened and what was involved? Who was involved? Where did the activities occur? Why did an incident take place and how did it actually happen?” (Groenewald 2004:15). The researcher, for this study recorded what she observed from the participants. According to (Groenewald 2004) field notes “are a step toward data analysis.” In this study field notes constructed supported data analysis.

3.8.1 Handling data analysis

Hycner (cited in Cohen, Manion and Cresswell 2000:285) presented a summation of how to analyse phenomenological interview data. The first step is the transcription of the interview tape and taking note of both literal and non-verbal statements as well as paralinguistic communication. The researcher needs not only to bracket his or her meanings and interpretations but also to understand what the interviewee is saying rather than what she wants the participant to say.

In order to get a holistic sense of what the interviewee is saying and to establish themes and specific units, the researcher has to listen to the tape repeatedly and read the transcripts several times, with an open mind. The researcher needs to examine what is expressed in spoken (interviews) and non-spoken (observation) gestures so as to draw forth the meaning that is communicated by the participant. When the units of general meaning have been elicited they are brought down to units of meaning aligned with the research question which is: what are the

experiences of former street children in a formal school environment? The researcher has to eliminate unwanted information leaving only the relevant data to avoid redundancy or repetition (Moustaka cited in Groenewald 2004; Cohen et al. 2000). Step two is to check whether the units of the relevant meaning clustered together relate to common themes aligned to the research question. Thereafter the examination of all the clusters of meaning takes place to ascertain one or more central theme or themes. A summary of each individual interview with the themes that have been noted from the data is written (Cohen et al. 2000:285).

Data analyses for this study focused upon identifying recurrent themes across the transcripts. The emphasis in the analyses was on the commonality of themes, the essence and structures of the phenomenon of teaching and learning that is experienced by learners formally from the street.

3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The researcher as inside teacher-outsider researcher has to be conscious of validity threats from the design stages, alluding to data gathering, data analysis and data reporting stages. According to Patton (1990:14) in a qualitative inquiry “the researcher is the instrument”, therefore validity and reliability lies in the skills and competence as well as the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher doing the field work. According to Cohen et al. (2000) “threats to validity can be minimized in the design stage. Furthermore the researcher will make sure that each interviewee understands the question, but will not change the question to elicit the desired data. Also the researcher will read the transcripts back to the interviewees for validation and accuracy of research recordings.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Golafshani (2003:106) it does not matter whether the study is quantitative or qualitative, the researcher is still required to test and demonstrate that his or her study is credible. In quantitative studies the credibility of the research relies on the manner in which the instrument has been constructed (Patton cited in Galofshani 2003:106).

According to Kotch (cited in Morressey and Higgs 2006) “a study is credible when it presents faithful descriptions, and when readers or other researchers confronted with the similar experience

can recognize it” (Kotch cited in Morressey and Higgs 2006:168). The researcher made every effort to remain truthful and faithful to the words and descriptions of the participants. Verifications were made with the participants to verify that the transcripts truthfully reflected their experiences at school.

Shenton (2004) states that in order to ensure credibility the researcher should incorporate “correct operational measures for the concept being studied” (Shenton 2004:63). This means the researcher should look at the methods and techniques that have been tried and tested in previous projects of a similar nature to achieve credibility for the study. This study involved the use of various methods such as observation, individual interviews for data gathering, this helps in enhancing the validity of the findings (Shenton 2004). The researcher used different data collection strategies to verify that the data that was supplied by the informants was credible.

Engaging with the participants for a period of time before the first data is collected is helpful in that the researcher gets to understand the organization and to bring about trust between the researcher and the participants (Shenton 2004). The researcher is a teacher in the institution under investigation therefore there is a common understanding between the organization and the teacher as an insider-outsider researcher.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.10.1 Informed consent

For this research to be ethical, the researcher adhered to the principles that serve as a guideline in conducting a research that involve human beings.

The principle of respect reflects a moral concern for the autonomy and privacy rights of those recruited for research participation. In its most fundamental form, it embodies the moral necessity of obtaining consent to participate in the research that is informed, rational and voluntary. The informed requirement requires that prospective participants are provided with all information about the study that would be expected to influence their willingness to participate (Alasuutari, Bickman and Brannen 2008:99).

Due to the sensitivity of this study, the researcher approached this research sensitively so that identity and confidentiality will always be at the forefront of the educator's ethical approach to the study and the anonymity of these particular learners. The researcher wrote a letter asking permission from the school principal to conduct research at the school as consent of this nature is of utmost importance to the ethical notion for this study. Ethical research behaviour was applied at all times as the researcher remained professional throughout this study. At no stage were the learners in the purposive group under pressure but the sensitivity and consciousness of these particular learners was of the utmost importance to respect and consider when undertaking a study of this nature in order not to expose or exploit these learners.

3.10.2 Privacy and anonymity

Cohen et al. state that "if researchers want to probe into the private aspects of individuals' lives their intentions should be made clear and informed consent should be sought from those who are involved" (Cohen et al., 2000:61). For this study official permission to conduct the study was obtained in writing from the Department of Education. The true purpose of the study was revealed from the start and no incentives were used to entice the learners' participation.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994:366) if the data to be collected is sensitive, measures to protect the privacy of the research participants should be considered. Furthermore, the information given by the individual should not disclose their identity. The participants in this study were informed in writing that their anonymity and privacy would be treated ethically and confidentially. Permission to use a tape recorder was requested from the principal as well as the participants before doing the interviews.

The participants were also assured that none of the information for the purpose of the study would be used to compromise their identity in any way and would be used solely for the purpose of this study as trustworthy information for academic purposes.

The researcher has an ethical obligation to protect the research participants and to keep research data confidential at all costs. This obligation has to be fulfilled by the researcher unless an arrangement with the participants to disclose the information has been made during the initial

stages of data collection (Cohen and Manion 1994). Furthermore the information provided by the individual should by no means disclose their identity (Cohen et al. 2000). When conducting this research, the researcher ensured that confidentiality was maintained and that the safety and welfare of the participants was central and key to this research.

3.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher presented an overview of the methods used in the research design, the phenomenological research and the qualitative research methods. The use of the data collection methods such as unstructured interviews and observation were also described. The chapter also describes the suitability of qualitative method in the study, the choice of the research site and participants. Procedures that the researcher adhered to in the analysis of data were described.

Themes that emerged from data analysis will be described in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three various research instruments such as unstructured interviews and observation were described. In this chapter the researcher presents the data that was collected. The data is discussed according to the themes that emerged when the data was analyzed. The data presented in this chapter responds to the research questions that were posed by the researcher to the participants. The profiles of the participants as well as their life stories are also included in this chapter.

Reference to the research questions:

1. What are the experiences of street children as learners in a formal school?
2. What sort of implications do these experiences have for teaching and learning?

4.2 PROFILE OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS IN 2011

GRADE	AGE	GENDER	RACE	YEARS ON THE STREET(S)	YEARS AT THIS SCHOOL
L1 GRADE 8	15	MALE	BLACK	3	2
L2 GRADE 8	18	MALE	BLACK	5	2
L3 GRADE 9	18	MALE	BLACK	5	4
L4 GRADE 9	18	MALE	BLACK	5	4

Table 4.2: Profile of the learner participants in 2011

Table 4.1 shows there were four participants who participated in this study. L1, L2, L3 and L4 refer to the learner number. All four participants are enrolled at the school under investigation.

Two are in grade 8 and the other two are doing grade 9. Grade refers to the grade which the learner is in. All the participants were males, therefore M is for males, and all the participants were black, B in this table refers to black. Learner 1 came to formal education in 2011 at the age of 14, learner 2 came to the research site at the age of 17, and learners 3 and 4 came to school in 2009 at the age of 15.

The researcher conducted a total of three interviews with each learner participant. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes. In interview 1 the researcher asked the participants to tell her about themselves. Below are the told verbal narratives of the participants as reported indirectly by the researcher.

4.3 LIFE STORIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

4.3.1 Participant Learner 1

Learner 1 is from Tsholomnqa, outside East London. His mother died when he was still very young. He stayed with his mother's stepmother and grandmother. He left home in 2009 because he was made to look after cows alone while other children who were biologically from this family were doing nothing of the sort. He left for Cambridge to stay with another grandmother. He did not go to school but was selling oranges for his grandmother in the township.

He was not happy with his life. In the process of selling oranges he met with some street children and he became friends with them. They took him to Cambridge next to OK. He saw someone who was begging and asked him how he was doing it. He told him if he cannot speak English it is not going to be easy for him. This street child taught him to say "Please mam or sir can I have money to buy bread", he also showed him how he should use his hands when begging for money. After some time at Cambridge they were chased away from OK.

He went by the robots at Hemmingways, "*Wagida*", which means he begged there, and went as far as Vincent Park in East London. There he was begging and selling cigarettes at the same time so as to make more money. People who said they were from a children's home came by and asked him who he was and if he wanted a place to stay. He did not hesitate to say yes. He was taken to one of the children's homes in East London. He was not alone when he was taken from the street.

On arrival at this children's home they were told that they were going to be sent to school. On hearing that, many left because they did not want to go to school. He remained in the place of safety and in February 2011 he was enrolled at the school.

4.3.2 Participant Learner 2

Learner 2 reported that he is originally from Mdantsane. He is eighteen years old and is in Grade 8. He left home because of the influence of his school mates. It started with smoking during break time. Initially he did not want to smoke but if you refused to smoke other boys would say you are from a rural area or a countryside boy. He did not want to be seen as a 'bari' i.e. backward and also wanted to prove that indeed he was from a township, he therefore decided to join in smoking as he wanted to be accepted by his friends and to belong to a group.

This habit grew and one day he and his friends left for the city centre of town. They looked for a place where they could get money. He met with those who were already street children, and after making friends with them they told him that Kennaway is a great place to make money. There he looked after cars. Sometimes he would make R200.00 and sometimes he would get nothing. Days were not always the same. If you made good money those older than him would take his money and give him only R10.00. The money they got was used to buy tobacco, not something to eat. During the night he did not know where to sleep as he was a newcomer on the street. He will be grateful if he sees another day as life on the street was unlike home. He did not have time to wash in the morning as he was in a hurry to make some money.

At times white people with cameras would come with girls and order them to sleep with those girls and promise to give them money. Sometimes they would meet coloured street children and fight would erupt if you tell them you are a street child from Mdantsane because coloured street children were chased away by Mdantsane street children while begging in Mdantsane.

While on the street he would think about home but that did not last long as he was making good money as a street dweller. Those who stay in the flats at Quigney would take them to their flats, order them to take a shower and have sex with them and they were given R50. He became obsessed with street life such that he forgot about home. Using a drug called rock on Fridays made them not sleep the whole night because no one wanted to sleep on a Friday as this was a day to make good money.

Street life is not easy: he has seen street children beaten and if you are beaten nobody comes to your rescue. He has seen children dying on the street while others are taken to jail by the police. Others stay on the street until they are too old such that they forget where they are from. He has witnessed girls from the street taken by people from other African countries for prostitution. He and other street children sniffed glue so that they would not think about their challenges on the street.

One day two women and a man came to Quigney and took them to a place which he has forgotten. He and his friends stole all the groceries in that place and sold it and bought dagga with the money they got. The place was sold and he was taken to Vergenoeg they did not listen to the commands they were given in that place and they used to smoke so much that they were always 'high'. The place was also closed and they moved to another place where he noticed that the place was even worse than the one in Vergenoeg because there was no electricity, there were no doors, the windows were broken, there were no beds and they slept on the floor. The place was situated in a separate area, there were no houses around.

He was used to a place with many people going up and down. The place was quiet and they were used to the noise of the cars and people. In the street there was freedom of movement and in that place they were required to sleep at eight and wake up early and if you are still asleep you would be woken up. He decided to go back to the street. In June 2010 he decided to go back to that place where he now stays because life on the street was rougher than before. In February 2011 he was taken to school.

4.3.3 Participant Learner 3

Learner 3 is from Ndevana outside East London. His parents died while he was still very young. He went to stay with his grandmother who relocated to Stutterheim and he was taken back to Ndevana. For the first three weeks life was good but after three weeks he was not given food: he was given one meal and was told he did not have a government grant to contribute to buying food. Life became difficult for him, and he saw what to do for himself. In 2003 he was given R100 to buy bread and other things. He decided to take that money and take a taxi to town. In town he saw children of his age begging, he made friends with one of them who is here at school now. They

discussed issues pertaining to their lives at home and noticed that there was commonality in their problems and thus they became friends. They called each other ‘accused’, a name used to describe a person who is your friend on the street who will die where you die.

On the street he begged for money from the white people because black people chase them away and tell them to go back to school. He also looked after and washed cars. After seeing that they were not making much money they decided to go to a place called ‘ebuhlanti’ to make fires for the people who went to the eastern beach to braai meat and charged them some money. They made lots of money during the festive season.

In 2005 a certain man collected them and bought a house for street children in Quigney, East London. the house was overcrowded with street children. He collected clothes and food for the street children in the house. In 2008 he noticed that the house had a board written ‘for sale’, after a few months the place was sold and they had to go back to the street. He heard that the man only took them in so as to make money. After few months they saw this man driving a new car and he had also bought a house.

While still living in the streets of East London two women asked if he did not want to go to a shelter, he said he wanted to, he and others were taken to a place of safety in Cove Rock. He stayed for a year and they relocated in 2009. They were asked if they did not want to go to school, they responded by saying yes. In March 2009 he went back to school.

4.3.4 Participant Learner 4

Participant 4 told the researcher that he is from Camridge in Area 5. He was staying with his friends who were older than him. He was schooling at one of the primary schools in Camridge. He sometimes brought R10.00 to school and big boys used to take his money and buy cigarettes to smoke during break time. He realized that he was not using his money therefore it was better for him to join in smoking. He ended up hiding his uniform on the way to school and changed into private clothes as he was no longer attending school. His grandmother was not aware that he had stopped going to school.

His friends knew all the corners in town, they would go to town and meet with people called ‘ncum’ (people who would give them food or bread). He and his friends saw it was useless to beg for bread therefore they went to Vincent Park to beg for money. By that time he had dropped out of school and from time to time he would go home and enter through the window when his grandmother was not home. He would steal his clothes and food. He said stealing from home is easy because even if you are caught nobody is going to beat you. One of his friends had a shack at the back yard of his home and they would go to his shack to sleep at night but the shack was burnt down by the community members because it was alleged that one of his friends had raped a girl in that shack. He went to live on the streets permanently after that incident.

He met with different street children, some were from East London and King William’s Town and one was from Durban. He was going to look for his long gone father but had decided to join them. Thereafter robbing people of their belongings began.

They knew that there was a white lady who was running a shelter and he would go there for blankets and clothes. They would also go to River Park for food. One of his friends told him that they could be accommodated at the shelter. One day he went there alone with no ‘accused’ (a name used in prison to refer to someone who is your buddy). The lady at the shelter asked him about his family and gave him food and asked him to take a shower and change into clean clothes. He phoned ‘Mr. B’ to come and fetch him and he was placed in a children’s home at Cambridge. At the children’s home he was told about a school that has small numbers and the practical subjects that were done at this school besides the eight learning areas. He was also told that he was going to catch up easily because the school he was going to attend was giving individual attention to its learners.

From what the participants shared with the researcher it is clear that their life in their homes was not pleasant at all. It can be noted that participants 1 and 3 did not have parents therefore they were forced to stay with extended families where they were treated unfairly because they were denied food which is one of the basic needs. It is clear that they left because of poverty. Participants 2 and 4 did not say whether they have parents or not but participant 4 mentioned that he was staying with his grandmother. From these narratives it is clear that these participants came from broken, dysfunctional homes, where there is no parental guidance. Yet in Bronfenbrenner ‘s

(1994) ecological theory of human development, a home is a place where the child spends most of his time and it is where the child is taught how to behave in an appropriate manner.

4.4 DATA PRESENTATION: OBSERVATION

According to Cohen and Manion (1994:110) participant observation methods are suitable for data gathering in that they are higher in quality than experiments and surveys. They allow the researcher to distinguish an ongoing behaviour as it takes place, enabling the investigator to make suitable notes of the characteristics being projected by the individual. Observation as a data gathering tool is important in that it affords the researcher to collect information based on what is actually happening at the present moment instead of presenting second-hand information.

The researcher had ample time to observe learners' actions both in and outside the classroom. Observation was done for a period of nine months and only the purposive sample was observed; that is, only the variables of interest to the study were observed. What emerged from each individual participant is presented below.

4.4.1 Participant Learner 1

Participant 1 was born on 1997-04-02. He is a 15 year old boy in Grade 8, and he came to this school in February 2011. During the first four months participant 1 was very reserved. He was not expressing himself in class even when provoked. He was struggling to read and his spelling was terrible. This was due to the fact that he had been out of school for almost two years. He was shy to express himself in class and was poor in pronouncing words and others used to make fun of him. This made him remain in a cocoon, not willing to show his strengths. I noticed that he was good at numbers and at mathematics. This might be because he had been living in the street washing cars and guarding cars and was getting money which he had to count to ensure that he was not robbed.

In 2012 he has come out of his cocoon and is now expressing himself in class, and he no longer cries each time he is teased by his classmates. He likes to be the first one to give answers but the

researcher has noticed that even though he shows willingness to express himself he does not find words to express what he is thinking. He voluntarily cleans the chalkboard. He has showed tremendous transformation although he does not like attention. He expresses his feelings: whether he is happy or unhappy he now lets you know. He likes to ask many questions when he is corrected, he wants to understand why he is being reprimanded. He does not like to be blamed or accused of something he feels strongly that he did not do.

The researcher observed that he has a language barrier; he prefers to answer orally in class. Written work is a problem for him unless the teacher reads for him word for word, line by line and question by question. The teacher needs to be patient with him. The teacher's attitude is crucial with him: as long as the teacher displays a good attitude, he feels safe. If the teacher displays an unpleasant attitude he becomes vulnerable. This might be because he has never had any home security therefore his security needs were not fulfilled. He does not trust adults and the teacher has a duty to assure him about his safety. Sometimes he is perceived by educators as an attention seeker. To me his attention seeking is as a result of growing up without parental love.

One time the researcher was teaching about the types of nouns and was explaining to the class the 'Abstract noun'. The researcher made an example of the word love using his name "Azola" (pseudonym) gave his friend **love** and she responded with **respect** and **obedience**. He laughed and hid himself under the desk and the researcher said, "I love you Azola" this time he was hysterical and was also shocked. He said to the researcher "no, no mam, that can't be". It was obvious that nobody had ever told him that they loved him, it was the first time he had heard it, which explained his reaction. When the researcher told him that she was going to say it each time he comes to her class, he begged her not to, showing that he was not comfortable. After that he felt free to ask assistance with his reading challenge and to come and have a chat about anything. He now fits well in a learning situation, and his reading and writing have improved slightly.

4.4.2 Participant Learner 2

Participant 2 is an 18-year-old boy in grade 8 which is not peer group appropriate. The researcher has observed that he is very quiet in class. He sits in the corner and keeps quiet, even in the absence of a teacher. He is a very slow learner in fact it looks as if he has reached his ceiling.

When he arrived in 2011 he was promising but in 2012 he does not seem to be coping at all. He struggles to write and gets confused easily when given an activity to write or to perform even when the teacher explains to him he does not understand.

Reflecting on this learner, at one time there was going to be a reading competition organized by the Department of Education. The activities to be performed included reading, praise singing, poetry, drama and role play. He wanted to take part in poetry and role play. The researcher asked him to come up with his own poem and what he was going to role play. He said he was going to demonstrate street life. In poetry he came with a rap song, the researcher tried to direct him towards poetry but could not change him. He is somehow good with reading though. The researcher has observed that the participant is good in acting because when it is drama or role play he shows much interest and is very keen to participate.

Another occasion was when they were doing physical education in life orientation activity. The activity required that they use hand and eye coordination and team work. They were using small rocks as a tool to perform the activity. One has to circulate the rock to the person next to him following the rhythm of the song. He just was unable to perform the activity. Because the activity was performed outside the classroom other staff members joined in to watch and also tried to help him but they were not successful. He was unable to pass the rock on time such that the pattern of the activity was disturbed. He was the first to be eliminated.

The researcher also observed that the participant is struggling with spelling, comprehension and grammar but he is good at narrating a story. He can narrate the story in a way one has never imagined. Marking his work is not easy therefore the teacher has to be lenient when marking his work. He just writes without asking the teacher to clarify the questions and from time to time he gets all the answers wrong. He is always asked to redo his work with the assistance of the teacher.

He does not have someone you can call his friend. He is very protective of his territory; with him 'a touch is a move'. He stays at a children's home. Other learners like to narrate stories when they come back from a weekend or from holidays, whether good or bad things they were involved in during holidays. He just listens but never laughs even when the story is amusing. He is very careful; he does not speak about his likes or dislikes. He does not like to complain about school or the children's home where he stays. He would be spotted looking at the learner who exposes what

is happening in the home with eyes that say “shut up or...”. The learner would immediately stop narrating the story if he comes into contact with his eyes. It looks as if he has learnt not to trust anyone. He is not free to talk even in class discussion, he is always suspicious. The researcher’s observation is that the participant bottles up his feelings, he is unable to communicate his feelings but when he is fed up with being a target he resorts to fighting. He has threatened to leave school because of learners who constantly make fun of him but he was spotted and stopped by security. When the researcher asked him why he was leaving he said that that he is tired of being looked down upon by his peers and he does not want to report them because he knows that there is no corporal punishment at school, learners who mess up with others receive verbal warnings all the time.

4.4.3 Participant Learner 3

Participant 3 is an 18-year-old boy in grade 9 which is well above the peer age. He is an average learner. When he first came here he was staying at a children’s home. The researcher has observed that he has been chased away from the two homes three times because he likes to fight and to take other learners’ belongings without permission.

He was thrown out of a children’s home and was suspended from school because he had a big fight with other boys. He had also dropped out of school for a whole term and came back in August and he managed to proceed to grade 9 because of his age. The participant shows willingness to participate in class, more especially in role play.

In 20012 he has not been attending school on a regular basis. He does not do his schoolwork and his performance has been badly affected as a result. He also did not write June exams and came back late. He comes to school at least twice per week. The participant has social problems; he does not have a permanent place to stay as he has recently been chased away by an extended family relative because he stole R100. His school performance is affected by absenteeism which can be blamed on being homeless and on lack of food as he sometimes cannot come to school on an empty stomach. He does not use deodorant and sometimes his smell is hard to tolerate. This affects his self-esteem and sometimes he cannot look straight at the teacher as if he is hiding something. His basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing and security are compromised.

The researcher has observed that because of moving from one place to another the participant skipped schooling. His personal hygiene is compromised: his school uniform is not clean sometimes he comes to school with a bag full of his dirty clothes because he had been chased away from a friend's place. The participant has no family support and does not get any financial support from the Department of Social Development (DoSD) because he does not have an identity document. He does not have a birth certificate and is unable to get an Identity Document (ID) from home affairs department because his mother died without having registered him.

The researcher has also observed that the participant does not like to be taken for granted by other learners, especially girls but is always caught in the act with girls. One morning a girl slapped his face and he did not hesitate to kick that girl in the face. The girl's uniform was red with blood as she was bleeding from her nose. He is often involved in fights but always justifies his actions by displaying an innocent look.

He is always accused of stealing the property of other learners. Recently he disappeared with R250.00 of his classmate who had initially asked him to bring it to one of the staff members. He was absent from school for approximately eight weeks including the June holidays. When he came back he admitted taking the money and said he used it to pay for his circumcision because when he came back end of July this year, he was 'ikrwala'.

In mid-August he took a grade 8 learner's cell phone and claimed that he had given it to another learner. Besides being cornered by almost all senior phase educators and the security he denied that he had stolen the phone, though it transpired that he had initially said he was going to sell it and buy 'indanda' (drugs). He never returned the cell phone but claimed that he must have lost it because he does not remember the other boy giving it back to him. He also tells lies but one would easily believe him because he would appear innocent. He is manipulative at the same time he easily takes the opportunity when he sees that teachers sympathize with his ordeal. He is told one thing and politely and respectfully agrees to change and to attend school but the following day he is nowhere to be seen at school.

4.4.4 Participant Learner 4

Participant 4 is an 18-year-old boy in grade 9. He arrived in 2009, he is an optimistic learner and is very talkative, argumentative and an investigator. He does not do anything without asking why he must do it. If he perceives that something does not make sense he does not hesitate to tell the teacher. He is very sarcastic and very skeptical. He argues all the time he would cross-question the teacher especially in matters related to religion and politics. He always wants to know why he should waste his time at school instead of being out there pursuing reaches. He would say that he is tired of being poor and thought that joining the 'illuminati' religion was preferable and he influenced other learners to join it. He is very influential. His argument is that people in that religion are rich and famous.

He wants all the time in class to be spent debating or discussing this issue. He would mention the names of the celebrities who belonged to this religion. He does not believe in Jesus Christ and he would show that in his drawings where he would put Satan above Jesus Christ. His drawings are scary. He does not concentrate in class as he is always busy drawing pictures of scary animals and of Satan. Few learners see him as a hero, so that when he is present at school learners misbehave. He likes to borrow books from the library and the books he borrows contain scary content and he would analyze every picture in the book especially if it is satanic. He is a good researcher and likes to share about the things he read, he is a keen reader and has a good memory. He is very strong and stood firm to what he believed in. He believes that school is a waste of time as rich people do not have university degrees and would mention a few politicians who are less educated but are rich and hold very high positions in the country.

He was not doing his homework after he had been thrown out of a children's home because he was staying with friends. He would copy the work of other learners in the morning and the researcher would easily notice that and when she called him and his co-accused, the learner who had done his work would be reluctant to expose him. When he is caught he is quick to apologize. He was frustrated that he did not have a permanent place to stay.

From the researcher's observation it can be argued that these learners display lack of self-confidence, lack of coping skills, have low self-esteem, and are ill-disciplined. What was prevalent from the researcher's observation was that learners from the street are socially deprived hence they find it difficult to adjust to the school environment and its demands. This leads us to social deprivation where it is stated that deprivation has specifically damaging effects upon the

capabilities of a child. This damage is said to be irreversible, which suggests a permanently negative effect upon mental capabilities as a result of early deprivation. Furthermore the literature reveals that experiences of poverty, violence and discrimination damage the emotional-intellectual capability of the individual, making it difficult, if not impossible, for the child to recover (NIHD1986). The researcher observed that the other participants need to be loved: as Pringle (cited in Le Roux 1998) states, children have psychosocial needs such as the need for love, and security, and the need for praise and recognition.

4.5 INTERVIEWS HELD WITH THE PARTICIPANTS

The researcher conducted unstructured interviews with the participants. Three interviews were conducted with each participant. The following themes emerged out of the data collected through interviews.

1. First impressions and thoughts about the school
2. Classroom based experiences
3. Subject related matters
4. Relationship with peers
5. Relationship with teachers
6. Extracurricular activities

4.5.1 Feelings and thoughts about the school

All the participants said that they were afraid to go to school since they had been out of school a long time.

Participant Learner 1

Participant learner 1 reported that he thought that he was going to run away. He said:

When I arrived at school I felt like running away as I was very, very terrified at the sight of the school. I noticed that the school is different from the schools outside in that the way it is built is as if its houses because there are many buildings around the school and I thought we were still going to see a building like the schools I know. Later I noticed that other children were staying in these houses around the school. Seeing people I did not know made me afraid. I know that when other learners do not know you, they bully you therefore I was afraid that I was going to be bullied. I was afraid of the teachers, when the teacher got into the class I was shaking. I prayed that they do not talk to me. The other reason why I was terrified is because Kasta [pseudonym] who was here at school before me told me about the teachers in this school. He said that teachers in this school do not take nonsense you have to go by the rules.

Participant Learner 2

I said to myself what is this? I did not know I was coming to a formal school, I thought that it was a school where I was going to do handwork. I also noticed that the buildings are not the same as those of other schools and I was not sure if I would like my friends to see where I go to school. What I liked about being in this school is that you come to school with only your school bag and you get books, ruler, lid pencil and a pen or I can say everything mem without paying. I also liked the fact that in this school we do not pay school fees. I thought about this deeply because I was not so sure if I wanted to go back to school. I even considered running away from the Children's home so that I may not go to school. On my arrival, when I assessed the situation I noticed that if you are quiet other children think that you are afraid of them. So I had to think and make a decision of whether I have come to the learners or to school and later I noticed that these learners are just like children from [Sikho Children's home] so what I should concentrate at is school. One other thing that disturbed me is the school yard. I noticed that it was too small, and I thought what is going to happen when I want to bank classes. I thought that even if I may consider banking classes I would be found within 3 minutes. This kind of made me reluctant to stay at school. I noticed that in this school everybody knows everybody's affairs and knows almost everyone in the school. I also saw that I know few of the

learners from the street. I also did not like this thing of seeing learners making groups at school because I was thinking that they were planning to chase us away as they were laughing at us. You know what happens in a group is that one from the other group would come to your group and pretend as if he is your friend while he is actually listening to what you are saying and then take it to his group and fight will begin from that. And since I am a quiet person if school children know that you are quiet and you do not want to be involved in any bad things at school, they will deliberately provoke you so that you get into trouble with teachers. I was thinking about those things and I was not sure how I am going to react if this happens to me.

Participant Learner 3

On my first day at school we went to assembly I was shown to the grade 6 line. I was ashamed to look at other learners because I had not been to school for quite a long time. I did not know what to do and what not to do and I was afraid that other learners will notice that and laugh at me. It was learners that I was most scared of. I went to Grade 6, in that class there was a girl called Sandi [pseudonym] she asked many questions about my background and I did not want to tell her because I was afraid he was going to laugh at me. After two to three weeks I was fine but other children saw themselves better than us who are from the street and they would call us names saying that we are coming from being 'ingubulayi', the 'bergies' and 'omawwayipile' but there were those who saw us as the same as them. I was not feeling good because of this but I told myself that I would remain at school until I change.

Participant Learner 4

When I came at this school I had already been told about the school that there were few learners and that I would catch up easily and that I was not going to be able to bank classes because teachers easily notice when a learner is not in class. I already knew that there were practical subjects and other learning areas. On my arrival I noticed that what I was told in the centre where I was coming from was true because in my class we were only 12. I was not impressed

because I hated the fact that I was not going to bank classes and that in this school you know almost everyone by their names because we are few. I also noticed that the practical subjects were only done by grades 7, 8 and 9 and I only came to do grade 7 and I was disappointed. I was happy though when I was told that every learner is allowed to go and borrow books from the library because I was very interested in politics and when I went to the library I saw that there were so many books not only story books but big books.

Three of the four participants reported that they were afraid of the people they do not know, more especially learners. They were afraid to disclose that they were from the street and that they had not been to school for quite a long time. One mentioned that he did not have a proper school uniform and was not properly dressed and was afraid that other learners would laugh at him. Two reported that they were afraid of being labelled as street children. The fact that these children did not want to disclose their background tells the researcher that they are ashamed of their street identity, supporting Panter-Brick's (2002:15) statement that the term street child has a "stigmatizing effect and has a negative connotation".

4.5.2 Classroom-based experiences

Participant Learner 1 said:

When the teacher entered the classroom I was terrified. When she was teaching I prayed that he does not ask me a question. I really struggled with reading and writing. When I was given a task I would not write it because I did not understand the question. I was also afraid to ask for help from the teacher because I thought that the teacher was going to shout at me and learners would think that I am stupid if I asked too often. I struggled when it was English period because I did not know how to write and read in English. I also did not know how to translate what is written in English to isiXhosa. Other learners asked for help if they did not understand but I listened when the teacher is explaining but unfortunately they would be asking for clarity in the question I was far away from. I used to see other learners asking the teacher repeatedly and I became more afraid. Sometimes I would notice that they are asking question four to make an example and I would still be in question one because I am slow. I would just tell myself that I am not going to ask for help because other learners would say wow he is still writing question

one and we are in question four. I did not know that there are learners who are also slow in my classroom. I used to leave other questions unanswered. I did not do my homework and when the teacher asked why I did not do my work, I would tell her that I forgot my book at school. The teacher would be mad at me. I did not do my work because I did not understand the activity. Nobody assists us with homework at home even if you ask they will tell us that they do not understand it.

I now feel much better because I was told to ask for help if I do not understand. I noticed that the teacher does not shout at you if you ask for her assistance and other learners also benefit if they too do not understand. I am no longer afraid of the teachers and learners. I can say my performance is better because when I first arrived here at school my scores were very low I would get 15% or 20% but now I do get 30% in English and between 40% 50% in Maths. I sometimes get a total in my Maths classwork.

I love Maths and Technology, Art & Culture, isiXhosa and Life Orientation. I like Life Orientation the most because we do not do much writing, we talk about things that affect our lives and we do physical education. I like to play and in Life Orientation there are different games that we do. I find English difficult but I am improving because my English teacher told me to borrow reading books from the library and that I must choose the ones with pictures and big and bold letters for starters and to read for pleasure not to read only when I am going to be given marks. Eish mem I did not want to read a story book in front of other learners because I was really not good at reading. Other learners used to laugh at me and I would be embarrassed such that I used to ask the teacher to allow me to read during break time in the absence of other learners when we are doing a reading task. It is better to read when it is only me and the teacher, but when other learners are present yo...mem I shake and tremble I don't know why but I think it is caused by the thought that when I come out of the class everyone is going to laugh at me and say I am unable to read. I also struggle with Social Science I do not understand it even when the teacher is trying to explain it to me.

I am good in acting and role playing because there I have to act as though I am jumping the fence or washing the car or communicate using sign language. There is not much that you do in role playing so I like it. Presenting in front of the class is not easy because I would sometimes love to present when we have been doing group work but as I immediately stand in

front of the class I don't know what happens, I lock and no word would come out of my mouth and the teacher would ask my group mates to help me. I become very frustrated and embarrassed because I don't know what blocks me. I am a person who does not want to fail when I am doing something; I do not want to make a mistake I always think about what other learners and the teacher are going to say when I do not do right. I feel as if they will always think about my failure and laugh at me. I also felt that there was too much work more especially when we were doing formal tasks, one teacher would come and say we are writing a test tomorrow and another and another... wow mem I find that too much for me. I asked myself how I was going to cope with all this work. I even thought of leaving school and go back to street.

Participant Learner 2

In the classroom I was afraid because of the new people I met and because I saw learners I knew from the street. I thought that they are going to ask me many questions as to why I am here and why I have left the street. I also thought that they were perhaps going to introduce me to their friends and tell them this and that about my past, like things we were doing on the streets. I also had mixed feelings that may be if I go and greet them they are going to pretend as if they do not know me.

What I noticed when the teacher were teaching is that, I had forgotten most of the things they were teaching because of the time I was not at school. I tried to be attentive and to be always in the classroom when the teachers are teaching so that I regain my memory. I had to teach myself to forget about my past and to look forward to a new challenge. I found that other subjects were difficult for me and others were a little bit better. For example Life Orientation and isiXhosa were not difficult. The difficult ones were Maths, Social Science, EMS, and Technology. I cannot say English was difficult but it required one to be a fast thinker. I mean mam, you understand when maybe a teacher is reading a listening comprehension my mind had to think fast and remember all the important things the teacher was reading so that I remember them when the teacher gives us questions to answer. It required that a person is a good listener and understands what is being asked. I would say I got few correct, but it is not

easy. When I was given tasks to do at home I find it difficult to complete all the work because I could not cope with the work load. I would just tell myself that I would do a teacher is reading a listening comprehension my mind had to be fast so that I am able to answer the questions when the teacher gives us questions. It required that a person understands what is being asked. I would say I got some correct but it was only the amount of work I can manage to do. When the teacher asks me why I did not do my task I would simple say I had forgotten. I do not ask for help when I do not understand the task, I can say, I am not used to that because I get the feeling that may be what I am going to ask is weak and the teacher is going to say I ask a lot. Sometimes the teacher would look at me and say but this is easy while I am stuck with the question. I do not want to be subjected to that experience. I sometimes choose to do the work even if I do not understand it so that it is the teacher who sees that I did not understand and then help me. When we were given a group work I was unable to work in a group more especially if I am grouped with learners who do not come from a children's home I am coming from because I was not socializing with them in class or outside the classroom so mam it was not easy for me to contribute in group work. I am a shy person and it is difficult for me to talk in the classroom because I just think that other learners are going to laugh at me when I make a mistake. I don't like it when all eyes in the classroom are looking at me. May be mam...we are asked to sing in the classroom and the song wants us to make some moves, I find it difficult because I am not good in movements. When I am not doing the activity the teacher would notice that and order me to do it or ask me why I am not cooperating I tell the teacher that I am unable to do the task or I would say I am talking in the group yet I know that what I am saying is not true. Yoo ... that is not easy I am not a cheeky person but the teachers have noticed that I am shy. You see mam ... when we are doing a group work I feel reluctant to give my opinion because my classmates always laugh when I give an answer so I always think that I am going to make a mistake. Teachers have advised me not to concentrate on what other learners are doing but to give it a try and my best and ignore learners. This has helped me. I am now responding but only when I am asked to respond not just anytime.

Participant Learner 3

When I entered the classroom I was confused. This thing of changing of the periods was confusing me because when I was still listening to this teacher the bell would ring and another teacher would come in. She/he would come in when I am still trying to complete the work of the previous teacher. I used to write all the work in one book because ... hee . mem I did not know the names of these learning areas. I did not understand which subject is supposed to be written in which book. When it was time to write a test I did not know what to study because everything was a mess. It was really difficult for me. Although I was afraid to ask for help I eventually asked one of my classmates to help me yoh ... the one who had asked me about my past when I first arrived at school she is the one I was afraid of because she liked to bully other learners and every one in my class was afraid of her. She laughed at me but explained to me that there were different learning areas and each learning area had its own note book, test book and class work book. It took me some time to learn that. I find that there was too much work to do and I was hee...e confused at first such that I was not doing well at school. It was not that difficult after that because I managed to achieve in grade 6.

When I got to grade 7 wow ... things changed. The standard was higher and I began to struggle with English, Maths, Social Science and EMS. I was also afraid of new teachers. I was told that I must always try to express myself in English during English period so that I might be able to understand it and communicate better and be in a position to understand other learning areas. I find it very difficult to understand comprehension more especially listening comprehension because mam in listening comprehension the teacher reads the story and learners listen while she is reading and take down key points eish ... mem it is not easy. There was a white teacher who was teaching us Pottery and Art & Culture I did not understand her and the other one was teaching Mechanics and Woodwork I did not understand them especially the pottery teacher because she was not very good in isiXhosa although she understood it. The mechanics teacher was better he could understand what I was saying in isiXhosa. I wanted to learn and understand English so that I am able to express myself when I am in their classes. Yoo ... mem you know that it is difficult to understand a white person because they are fast. The only English I knew was that of begging from the white people in the street like saying “please mam can I have money to buy bread”. I had to read the question repeatedly in order to understand what was required of me and it took me some time to grasp it. My other classmates used to laugh at me when I was not able to give a correct answer. I did not like that because it made me to be afraid to answer the question.

The teacher told me not to mind them and that helped me a lot. I also find EMS challenging because it has got accounting. I can say my performance was much better when I was still staying in a children's home. After I left there, my performance dropped a lot because I do not attend school on regular basis, I do not do my home works and other tasks because I do not have a permanent place to stay. I can say my classroom performance started to drop the time I left school for the whole term. I cannot say I am a top student but I am trying because I have not repeated a grade.

Participant Learner 4

I can say mem, my classroom experience was good and bad. The reason why I say so is that you know when you are in a class where other learners are younger than you, you don't feel comfortable, and you always have to work harder. It was better because although I was older in grade six I was also not a slow learner. I like history a lot. When I do not want to learn I would ask my history teacher questions so that he is disturbed. He would leave the class without having taught his lesson for that day. I would ask him about Louis XIV like why he killed people and why he would not give people food while he was eating a cake. I wanted to know why other people were suffering because I know that here in South Africa people were also not treated equally and many people especially we blacks were suffering while others were enjoying many privileges. There were times when I would not concentrate in class. The cause of this mam ... wow it's a long story. I would want to bunk classes but I would realize that it is not easy to do so because we are few in my class. I would be distracted and not work properly. You know mam Jo this would happen when I know that in the morning one of my friend had a cigarette and we were going to have a smoke but disturbed by the bell I would wish the teacher would stop teaching and leave the class so that I would quickly go to the forest and smoke. There was one of my friends he would not concentrate at all without smoking. He would ask to live the class and when he leaves I would also leave the class so that we would share a smoke. Things began to change when I was in grade 7, all senior phase teachers are very strict they do not take nonsense. When one has asked to leave the class and you ask to leave at the same time they would say you have to wait until the other one has come back then you would go out. Sometimes they refuse, they are always suspicious. I did well in the classroom but the only problem I had is that of absenteeism, you know mam this thing

of circumcision. We are not allowed to stay in a children's home after we have been initiated. I did not have a place to stay I would not do my homework and copy it from other learner and submit it later. Yoo mam you know teachers are good at seeing the work that has been copied they would call me and the learner whom I have copied his work, and would promise to give both of us a zero if we deny that one of us has copied. I would eventually agree that I copied and I would be given a chance to redo my work.

Three of the participants reported that they were confused in class and complained about the workload which was a challenge to them. It also transpired some of these learners still crave narcotics and find it difficult to concentrate in class if they do not have a smoke. One reported that he deliberately delayed the teacher by asking too many questions so that the teachers focus on the discussion and forget about the lesson they had prepared for the day. A high rate of absenteeism from the participants who no longer stay in a children's home was noticed. Most participants struggle with school work and they do not receive help from care givers. Literature revealed that under normal circumstances parental involvement plays a vital role in the education of a child. The performance of a child who is helped by a parent to do their school work is different from that of a child who has no relationship with their parents (Evante 1993). Evante (1993) states that formal education is good but it is not recommended for street children because not all street children cope or become reintegrated into the formal school education. Therefore the fact that some of the participants struggle with their school work, suggest that they have not fully adjusted to formal education.

4.5.3 Relationships with other learners

All participants mentioned that they have managed to make friends with other learners at school, some have managed to make friendship with learners who do not stay in the same youth centres as them. One mentioned that he is very cautious of who he befriends as he does not want to be influenced in a negative way. Two of the participants have not been in good relationships while one prefers to keep to himself as he does not want to be in trouble.

Participant Learner 1

My relationship with learners at school is good. I have many friends here at school but my best friend is Aya [pseudonym] he has helped me to be confident and not to be shy any more. He told me to tell other learners how I feel like when they attack each other with words because all of us have problems that brought us here even if they are different. I sometimes feel like leaving school because I use to think that as I am progressing it is becoming difficult and would have feelings that it is going to be harder as I go to the next class. When I see the amount of work that is done in grade 9 I become afraid and think that I will not cope. I sometimes doing work during break time and they would be complaining about the load of work and I would say this is a class of death and I would feel like running away even though I am still in grade 8. When I tell my friend about these feelings he would advise me not to give up. He feels sorry for me when I do not understand in class such that when I am left behind in class when doing my reading activity with my English teacher he comes and stay with me to give me support. I now fit well in the school because of the friendship I have with other learners. My relationship with learners who do not stay in children's home but are here at school is good but I do not want to spend much time with them because they would most of the time talk about things that are happening outside and when I listen to them I would end up attracted to what is going on outside and want to go there and my plans of finishing school will be affected. I am afraid that I would go back to what I was and to things I was doing before I came back to school.

Participant Learner 2

I relate well with other learners but there are those who would talk things that are offensive and things that I see I cannot tolerate. When I do not like what they are saying I tell the person, some would stop but others don't, they continue and I would notice that they want me to do something; they are provoking me because they want me to be angry. I feel that to some students it's as if I am not acceptable. I do not have many friends I can say I have 1 or 2 friends here at school. There are those I know from the streets and when I arrived here at school I noticed that they are 'fly' attention seekers, I mean mam ... they like eyes. Yet while they were living in the streets they were cowards or must I say shy. I do not want to associate myself with such people. You see mam there is a word that is used in the street to call those

who are very naughty and who do not care. This word is 'skydo' I noticed that there are those who are naughty here at school and they call themselves 'skydos' even though they were not 'skydos' whilst in the street. When they have done something wrong here at school and are asked about it they would say never mind you know that I am a skydo. The only thing I have noticed is that they get angry when other learners refer to them as 'ingubulayi' but they do call themselves with those names that are used in the street. I told myself that I was going to disassociate myself with such person, which is why I prefer to be alone. I have been into trouble because there was a BVD [short worn under your pants] it was used in class to wipe a wet floor and one learner was hanging up the short asking to whom the short belongs to. One of the learners told me that it has been said that it belongs to me. When I asked him about this he denied it and I suspected that he wanted a fight the way he was talking. I told him that it would be better if he is going to be able to fight me because I do not like people who talk too much and shy away when it is time to take the talk to another level. He kept on talking until such time I hit him. I thought that when they saw that dirty short they associated it with me and I wanted to send a message to him and his friends that they must not mess with me. They have now learnt a lesson that if you mess with someone you have to sure that you are tough and that your friends who have encouraged you to be disrespectful are not going to assist you when you are in trouble.

Participant Learner 3

I have many friends here at school, some of them are from the street. We call each other 'accused'. This word mam simple means friendship. You know mam what happens is that it emanates from prison where if you are convicted with someone you call them your 'accused', because if you are there you stay together, you become friends and you share same numbers for example number 26, 27 or 28. I have experienced bad relationship with one of the girls here at school. You remember mam there was a fight one day because of the name 'ingubulayi'. This word comes from a louse this lice is called a 'jananda or 'ingubulayi' so someone who lives on the street is called ingubulayi. I and my friends we were talking about Virgin Active in Quigney. This girl asked us if we know the place and we said, "yes". She then said we are obviously supposed to know the place because we were once the "Ngubulays". I

was so angry that such that the fight began. The case was taken to the teacher who is the head of department and she asked the girl how she knows about the name she said that she herself once lived in the streets. She was told never to call other learners names. We knew that she was once a street child and we knew the things she was doing in the streets but did not want to disclose her secrets to other learners. I have been beaten and was close to death because of associating myself with bad friends. We were fighting about cigarette and I had stolen cigarette that belonged to another group of learners and they discovered that it was me who knew they had it and they attacked me badly but the problem was solved at school and I learnt my lesson.

Participant Learner 4

I have many friends here at school, good and bad. At first I did not like to have friendship with girls because in the children's home where I used to stay we were mainly boys. They would say nasty things like wow ... mam you know ... saying they love me when I really did not like them. Here at school we are few and we would mix with girls in the morning, break time and after school. I did not like this kind of attention and interest they showed me. I liked to hang out with boys during break time but I noticed that some of my friends did not think about the future, they only thought about the now. My closest friend was not talkative but liked cigarette, girls and 'honey' dagga. One of my friends is good in books he helps us with the stuff we do not know in class. Although it is not easy to bunk classes we would go to the forest where we would smoke until I have chest pains. After having a smoke I would be able to concentrate in class and I would be talkative and my friend who is not talkative would open up in class such that teachers would commend us saying that we participated well in discussion not knowing that we are 'high'. We did not want to hang out with boys who were not smoking because they would be telling us this and that. If we are not high we would be bored, cheeky and did not want to be disturbed especially by young boys. I would feel like kicking and slapping them but that was just a thought I did not hit them. I can say mam the relationship I have is not helping me to be a better person because the things we doing with my friends are not constructive.

This participant revealed that they go to class having smoked dagga, which they call honey. It transpired that they smoke dagga so as to be able to cope in the classroom when the teacher is teaching. It also emerged that some teachers at this particular school do not notice that these learners go to class having consumed narcotics and that at this particular school learners bring dagga to school. These learners are at school so that they may be rehabilitated but it seems that the habit of taking inhalants prevails even though they have been removed from the street. Although the participant displays characteristics of resilience, studies reveal that children under stress are resilient but their resilience does not necessarily mean that they are not affected by their negative experiences but, because these character traits are not visible on these children, they are not recognized as suffering from psychiatric disorders (Keen cited in Le Roux 1998). It is clear that even though some of these learners have been enrolled at this particular school for two to four years, they have not yet overcome the habit of taking drugs or inhalants.

4.5.4 Relationships with educators

All participants reported that they have good relationships with teachers. They said that teachers have been very helpful in assisting them to adapt well to school life and they have been encouraged to transform their lives for the better.

Participant Learner 1

Teachers here at school treat us equally they do not discriminate say for example this one is from the street and this one is not from the street. In the classroom we have a teacher who is also a parent she knows how things happen for example leaving school because of teasing and bullies. Teachers are very protective they do not want us to leave school because of what is said to us by other learners. They teach us respect and tolerance. Outside there is no such. There is no one to protect you are taken as a liar even if you did not do the thing you are accused of doing. They would stick together and accuse you of something you did not do. Here at school, the teacher listens to both sides and makes a judgment after both learners have made their statement. When I am not feeling well it is easy for me to go to certain teachers and tell them how I feel. I do not go to some teachers because they are not that friendly and the manner in which they talk to other

learners makes me to be afraid of them and not want to share my problems with them. There are teachers who give themselves sometime to come to me and explain what I did not understand in class so I relate well with those teachers.

Participant Learner 2

I relate well with teachers, I have not had any issues with them but if you do not listen they too are able to put you in your place. I would see a teacher telling a child to behave and the child would continue to do what they have been told not to do and the teacher would tell the child that she too can behave in the manner the child is behaving. I can say me mam don't see anything wrong with that because learners are naughty therefore sometimes it is alright to deal with them in a harsh manner because when the teacher does not say anything these learners think that teachers are afraid of them. I behave in class, I respect my teachers and I do not make noise in class even if the teacher is not there therefore my relationship with teachers is good all the time.

Participant Learner 3 said:

Teachers have been helpful to me even though I have not been good. They helped me gain confidence as my self-esteem was very low. They told me that I should not be shy in asking for help when I need one. When we are going for an outing they help me with toiletries and one gave me shoes as I was going to miss a trip to the Science Festival which the school attends every year because I did not have shoes. I remember I was afraid to tell them the reason why I did not want to go to the trip. One of the teachers asked to talk to me aside and I was free to tell him my problem. I have never repeated a grade here at school even though I don't attend school regularly. This is because here at school you are given a chance to do the work so that you can get marks. Teachers do tell us that we must be grateful that the school has a low learner teacher ratio because when we go to big schools it is not going to be easy because there won't be a chance for teachers in the schools outside to give us an extended time to do our work. In the four years that I have spent in this school I can say teachers are different from teachers in the schools outside because they know our problems and we feel free to share them with them. They are quick

to notice when something is wrong. One teacher would say, 'I am a detective, you would not lie to me'. She is able to uncover the truth and has her special way of handling cases. She has saved me many times when I have been in trouble. She does not look at the end result of the action but at the cause and everybody would understand her argument. She is able to attend a case where if it was in the schools outside you would be immediately suspended but she would sit down with you and highlight where you were wrong and what you should have done differently. Teachers in this school are not the same as teachers from outside, they are more patient with learners. But not all of them are kind others help you but their help is accompanied by strong words. Now that I am doing my last grade here at school I don't feel good because I don't know what life is going to be like in those schools. Here teachers are able to give us individual attention and give us time to finish our work. I wish there was grade 10 in this school so that I do not go to the schools outside. Teachers here are like parent, social workers, psychologists and nurses to us.

4.5.5 Feelings about practical subjects

The participants had different feelings concerning practical subjects that are done in this school. These practical subjects include pottery, woodwork, gardening, sewing and computers.

Participant Learner 1

There are computers but I cannot say we use them effectively because in grade 8 we are 14 in our class and there are only 7 computers in the library. We share them and we only have one double period per week. Sometimes you go out of the library without touching it because other learners who know how to use computers just want to be the ones who are operating the computer when we are taught. Sometimes you will find that only 5 computers are working. The time that we spend in computers I can say mam it is not enough. I would love to know how the computers work so that when I am old I don't start from scratch. I want to know the basics. I enjoy playing games in the computer and we use it when we are doing research because there is internet. It would be better if there were at least 20 computers and more periods. I know that the grade 9s are using computers unfortunately for us we will still be 14 or more next year which means we won't have

enough time even next year. We do go to the garden but there is nothing that we have planted as grade 8. I think this is because the teacher who was teaching us gardening went for retirement at the end of April and now I do not know who is responsible for gardening. I last did gardening last year and we managed to sell vegetables to the teachers and other staff members. I saw that there is money in vegetables and vegetables are healthy. Pottery, wow mam, Mrs. K who was teaching us pottery also left last year and at that time I was still new in this school I was still learning and there is no one who is teaching it now because we were told that the school is still waiting for the Department of Education to give us a teacher. I hope we will get one next year. I would love to do more practical than other work that we do in class because it is not easy.

Participant Learner 2

I know that there is woodwork and gardening but I haven't done any work in woodwork because woodwork is only on Wednesday and we usually go to sport during that time. Even if we do not go to sport because it is not all the Wednesdays that we have sport I cannot say I know what is going on there because even when we go there is nothing we do. I would like to see us doing more work in woodwork, and to see it taken seriously. Practical work is easy compared to the work done in the classroom because there you use your hands most of the time. I like woodwork because I will have a skill to do my own things and sell them to get money. With sewing I can say yoo mam! I do not like it. I don't know how it works. I love practical subjects but not all of them. I struggle with computers, when it is time to go to the computer lab I become bored and feel like not attending the period. This is mainly because I am not familiar with computers I find it difficult to operate them even if we are given instruction I simply don't get them. I like the fact that they are few because it gives me time to learn from others who like computers. If there were many computers and I find that I am supposed to operate it on my own I don't think I would be attending its class. I can see that when it is time to go to the computers other learners get excited because they know how to use them. When I am in the library I hardly touch them because other learners jump first. I want to know more about how to use computers may be when I am in grade 9 because grade 9 is always working on computers so that I may be able to do my research and to use internet and email. I know that there is pottery but at the moment there is no one who is teaching it because

Mrs K left in 2011 I was still new at this school and we had only done few things but I was enjoying it.

Participant Learner 3

I like practical subjects more especially pottery because I learn how to use clay in making animals such as crocodiles, bird, and snakes. I also learn how to make a coffee mug, a vase and other stuff. I also learn how to use different paints to make my work beautiful. I think pottery is good for me because when I leave school I will be able to do my own things and I would sell them and make some money. I like pottery because the work that we do is given back to us at the end of the year to show our care takers or parents what we have done at school. Sometimes if your work is beautiful teachers buy it and you get money. But I think it would be better if we were not using the machine in firing our work because that machine is expensive I would not afford to buy it. I am not happy at all now that we do not have a teacher who is teaching us pottery because Mrs. K left, that is a problem for me. I like computers because I do my work more especially for English activities and we have internet to search for information when teachers have given us a research. The English teacher give us activities to do on the computer like e-mail, cv, application letter, minutes and agenda so that our work is neat. We also do exercises that are in the computer like grammar. I like gardening a lot because it teaches me that I can make a living by selling vegetables and vegetables have vitamins and minerals which are needed by my body so as to be strong. I can go to the township and plant my own vegetables to eat and to sell.

Participant Learner 4

Yoo ... mam I like gardening it is fun to go out there and be outside the classroom. When I am in the garden I don't feel like going back to the classroom. You know mam in the garden we also have time to play and sing while we are working. The mood is not like in the classroom. You get some time to relax. I like gardening because it teaches me about different kinds of

vegetables, how they are planted and those that need more water. I also learn that I need to take care of my plants by removing weeds in the garden. Gardening, I think is a skill that I would use even when I am at home I mean to plant my own vegetables and sell them to make some money. Unlike pottery gardening does not need much money and you don't need to have big space you can use the little that you have. I also like gardening because the money that we get for selling our vegetables to teachers is divided amongst us at the end of the year and is put in the envelopes that have our reports and we take it home. But mam I don't think we are going to get money this year because Mr our gardening teacher left and there is no one who is responsible for gardening. I think you should do it mam because when I arrived here you were doing Agriculture and our garden was doing well at that time. I do like pottery because it teaches me how to make vase, bowls and cups and we can make money if we have an exhibition. We take our work with us at the end of the year or sometimes sell it to teachers and get money. These skills teach me that I can make a living out of hand work.

From what the participant shared with the researcher regarding practical subjects it is clear that they enjoy being in the garden and other practical related subjects. They complained that as much as they want to do these skills related subjects they are not well accommodated in the school timetable. It also transpired that there are no teachers who are teaching these subjects because there is no teacher who is qualified to do pottery since the one who was teaching was transferred in 2011, and the one who was doing gardening retired in 2012. These learners are also aware that they can make a living out of the skills they got from practical subjects as two mentioned that selling vegetables has helped them make money at the end of the year. They also mentioned that while they were still doing pottery they were able to sell their work to teachers and get some money. Studies revealed that in a case study that was conducted by UNESCO (1995) in Asia, Africa and Latin American countries there are measures that have been put to place to reinstate street children to the community through education. For example in countries such as India the type of education they offer includes carpentry, engineering and training to drive a variety of cars. In Sri Lanka, they provide literacy classes to street children so as to help their learners to gain admission to the formal school system at a grade appropriate to their age. In the Philippines studies revealed that street children find formal education boring but they found informal education conducted through dialogue comparatively interesting.

4.5.6 Sports-related issues

All participants reported that they like sport and would love to make a career out of sport, although three of the four reported that they find it difficult to play in competitions where they can get an opportunity to showcase their skill and be selected to represent the district or the province and maybe make a career out of sport. The reasons they cited are that they do not have identity documents and others are over age.

Participant Learner 1

I am good in sport more especially cricket but other players that stay inside didn't want me to play because they were saying I am a weak bowler, my balls are too slow. It is better now because I am their friend I am no longer new in this school. I now play soccer and I am good but I play as a reserve. I do go when we travel to other schools because my friend is a captain he makes sure that he picks me when they are choosing reserves. I told the coach that I play leagues against other children homes but he told me that I must show how dedicated I am before I get a first team jersey. I now go to practice regularly and I show how serious I am about sport so that I can play for the first team because mam I am tired of being a reserve. We do not play cricket any more although we have a new cricket pitch that has been donated by lotto. I don't know why may be it is because the pitch was not ready for us to play on it since it is new. We have not played a single match yet I heard other learners saying that in 2010 they went to George representing the Eastern Cape Province under-15 cricket team. I also saw their medals in the office so I thought that I was also going to be selected and represent my province if there was going to be another tournament because I do have a birth certificate.

Participant Learner 2

I like soccer and I am very good in it. I only play when we are playing friendly matches against other neighbouring schools and our sister schools. When we are playing tournament it is a different case because there are rules there. For example man I can say when the under-17s

are playing they want something that proves that the player is actually under 17. I suffer because I do not have documents like ID. I feel bad but I would pretend as if I am okay when I am actually suffering from the inside.

Participant Learner 3

I like sport, more especial soccer. It is very nice when we are playing friendly matches because no IDs or birth certificates are required. But when we are playing tournaments, league and trials we encounter problems. When selections are going to be done there are problems there because they want certificates if you are playing for the under-16 and ID if you are over 16 because they want to ensure that the player is really that age. I suffer a lot because I do not have an ID and I have never had a birth certificate. I have tried but I am told that I was never registered with the Home Affairs Department and my mother passed away therefore when I go to Home Affairs they say I must come with a death certificate or her ID and I was very young when she passed away and they say I cannot be helped without these documents. I remember one official who has recently visited the school to arrange that we get IDs he told me that I am going to encounter problems because if I do not have an ID I am going to be deported and be placed in the borders because I am not a South African without an ID. I remember in 2011 we were playing trials with another school, after 10 minutes of play the game was stopped and we saw teachers talking in a group. We were called and they demanded to see our birth certificates or IDs and most of us did not have them and we were disqualified then and then. We were very disappointed because we thought that we were going to be selected.

From the conversation about sport-related matters it transpired that some participants do not get game time because they do not have identity documents and simply because they are eighteen and according to the rules if a learner is over 15 they need to produce an ID in order for them to be allowed to participate in sport, more especially when it is tournaments where a team that is going to represent Border or the district may be selected. It was clear that these learners like sport and one day they want to see themselves playing professional football and sometime wearing national colours. The problem of some of these learners is that they were orphaned at young age and their mothers or parents did not register them at birth. The researcher, from her experience argues that the school has tried to

communicate with the Department of Home Affairs but it is not easy because some of the participants do not have proper relatives, so to speak. The department would want at least a death certificate of a parent but there would be none. Social workers and the student social workers from the University of Fort Hare have tried to help but their help yielded no better results. This means that former street children at this school would find it difficult to get jobs even if they can manage to complete their studies because if one does not have a South African Identity Document he is regarded as a foreigner which means one day they will find themselves deported because they are not be in possession of legal documentation. It is also obvious that these learners are deprived the opportunity of displaying their potential in sport because of ID which is somehow not fair but it is a rule .

4.5.7 School influence

Participant Learner 1

I am much better than I was when I first arrived at school. When I arrived here I was afraid, I did not want a teacher to ask me a question. When I was asked a question my whole body was shaking because I was afraid to make a mistake because learners were going to laugh at me. I learnt that if teachers notice that you are struggling they assist you and make you feel at ease to ask for their help. They told me that we learn by making mistakes so I must keep on trying it is going to be better. As I am continuing with my schooling I am becoming better each day. My performance has improved I am improving in reading and writing. When I arrived here I was not able to read and write even though I was in grade 7, at least now there is little improvement. I had a low self-esteem and I used to cry each time somebody has said something I did not like or has accused me of something I did not do. I did not have confidence to defend myself when teachers confront me and tell me to say something about the accusation I would simply cry. Teachers told me that I should learn to stand up for my rights because if other learners notice that I am weak they will continue to bully me. That helped me a lot. What has also helped me is that I have made many friends here at school and my friends have not been to the street so I am learning how to be a good person like them. Others do not have parents like me but they did not go to the street. I have learned to persevere even if it is hard sometimes. I remember one time I ran away from a children's home because the home was struggling, there was no food. The teachers discovered

that I was not staying in a children's home and told me to go back and ask for forgiveness. I took their advice and now I am still at school. If I had not taken it I would not be here now. Many who left are back in the streets. Teachers here are like our parents, they do not give up on us. They want us to succeed in life but only if we listen to what they are telling us. I learnt that here at school there are those who are very naughty and I don't want them to be close to me because I don't want to do things like smoking and stealing. My ways have changed, now I can feel that I am a human being and a learner not a street kid.

Participant Learner 2

The school has taught me how to communicate with people, especially those who speak English like white people. The school has taught me to know my rights and how to defend myself from people who want to rob me of my rights. I have also learnt that coming to school is like going to work because when I am working I will be required to wake up early in the morning and go to work. It is the same even at school; I have to be at school on time and every day. I have also learned that it is not right to drop out of school because when you see children of your age going to school or successful in life you remember that if I had persevered it would have been a different story. I have learnt to persevere.

Teachers and my peers have played a major role in changing my attitude and behaviour. Looking at other learners at school who were always smart and clean made me to aspire to be like them. There was a boy in grade 9 who was very clever, who did not associate himself with wrong group. His behaviour encouraged me to be very careful of whom I relate with. I am a positive minded person because of him. I now feel good about myself. I now know who I am and where I want to go. I mean mam I know why I am at school that I am here to gain knowledge so that I may impart it to other people. I see much difference between the life I was living before I came to school and the life I am living now. Before, when I had money I always wanted to use it on tobacco and liquor but now when I have money I buy important things like roll on and spray. I can proudly say my life has changed because of school influence. I have learnt to respect old and young. The school has helped me to discover that I want to be an actor and I want to write plays. The script I would like to write is about the topic which says when days are dark friends are few. For example

I can say if you caught doing something with a friend say we say let us rob a shop and when we are caught by the police the friend denies everything and live you in jail and never come back to see you. The lesson of the play would be to teach people about friends who are not reliable that they should not be trusted.

Participant Learner 3

I have learnt that if you associate yourself with bad people you always find yourself in trouble. Teachers have always told me to change my behaviour so that I become a better person. They always told me that I am not going to stay in this school forever therefore I must change because life outside is not fair. If I fail to change my life while I am given a chance to change I will always find myself on the wrong side of the law. I have learnt that teachers here are not the same as teachers from outside. Here they act as our parents; you are taught how to conduct yourself when talking to the adults, something I did not know since I left home for street life. They go an extra mile to assist us in our studies, they give us an opportunity to redo our work until we get it right and they do not give up on us. When you are lacking things like deodorants they do not embarrass you in front of other learners. They call you and say you do not smell good, what is the problem? You tell them and they assist you. They are patient and do not give up on me even though I don't attend school regularly and am always in trouble. They always tell me if I do not stop now it is going to be worse and difficult for me as soon as I leave school. They are truthful and honest. I am trying hard to change but this thing of not staying in a children's home has affected my behaviour at school as teachers have told me that it will be difficult for me outside if I do not change. I am glad though because here at school I have learnt confidence, something that I did not have when I first arrived at school. I have also learnt how to read and write and now I am in grade 9 and I have never repeated a grade because of the help I received from my teachers. Now that I am about to leave here I am worried but I will always remember the lessons I have learnt here at school and I will always try to apply them even when I am out there. I hope these lessons will help me not to go back to the streets next year. But I am afraid because my situation at home is the same, nothing has changed, it would be better if I had a certificate that says I have this and that skill so that I would be able to find a job because next year I will be 19 years old. Nobody is going to pay my

school fees so that I continue with school. That is why I was saying it would be better if there was grade 10 here at school.

Participant Learner 4

When I arrived here I was frustrated because the school yard is very small, the numbers are small. But now I think this helped me a lot because I did not have time to bunk classes. I also noticed that here at school teachers immediately intervene when they see that I am displaying a bad character or I am about to make a mistake about my life. I also learnt that if you associate yourself with wrong people you get influenced easily. For instance when I arrived here I was neat but look at me now. I do not have school uniform and I do not have a proper place to stay. Teachers always told us that we should not rush to go to initiation school and we should learn to say no when others influence us to do bad things or things that are not going to help us. But mam when you go to the township you see children your own age having already been to initiation school, they demand that we say 'bhuti' yet others are younger than me. Again mam when you are reunited with your family they tell you that you have to go to circumcision then everything goes wrong. It goes wrong in that mam here at school you teach us to wait until we are released from children's home so that we finish school but we do not listen. In a children's home if you have been to an initiation school you are not allowed to stay there but we do not listen to you and we are chased away. When we have been chased away our families are unable to provide for us then we suffer. I have learnt that I should listen to my teachers when they give advice. Teachers have told me that we come to school without families and when they see that we have changed they show up and we get excited and want to go and live with them and later discover that things have not changed hence many of us end up going back to the street when they leave school. I would like to live by the rules I learnt here at school even when I am no longer here. Like respect and perseverance and to always know what I want in life. School has brought back my confidence now I know what I want to do when I am old and now I am no longer called a street kid but I am called a learner.

All the participants reported that their experiences at school have had a positive impact in their lives. Schooling has helped them to discover who they are, and has helped them to reclaim their childhood. School has helped them to bond with other learners and with teachers. All the participants reported that the school focuses not only on academics but on developing the whole person because teachers at this school play a role of being a teacher, a parent, a psychologist and a social worker. It can be argued that these learners see the school as a safety net, they feel protected and important, and they feel secure at school. The participants reported that school life has changed their lives for better. It can also be said that these learners feel intrinsically motivated to continue with schooling although there is a fear of workload. It transpired that although some have complained about small numbers which they said was an obstacle as they had intentions of bunking classes, as was the case in their previous school, it has yielded better results as they reported that small numbers have helped them to stay focused in class and they got individual attention, something that is rare in schools where there are bigger learner numbers in one class. Although the participants had earlier reported that when they first arrived at school they had feelings of running away from the children's home so that they may not go to school, as time went on the school influence changed their attitudes. Some even reported that they wish there was grade 10 so that they could continue attending this particular school. Participant 3 raised fears of going to another school as he was not sure if he would find caring teachers as these at this school. The participants reported that the school has taught them perseverance, obedience, honesty, tolerance and trustworthiness. It is clear that schooling has given these learners hope for the future because others reported that they would love to be actors and to write plays. The school has in a way helped these learners to be dreamers. Some participants reported that their performance was low when they started schooling but now they can see an improvement. Other participants reported that the school has taught them about their rights and to speak up and to stand up for their rights. Others were not good at communication but they reported that the school has helped them to communicate with their fellow peers.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The study presented the experiences of former street children as learners in a special school in a formal school setting. The data was discussed and analysed qualitatively. Each section was summarized under the following headings:

- Feelings and thoughts about the school
- Classroom based experiences
- Subject related matters
- Relationship with peers
- Relationship with teachers
- Feelings about practical subjects
- Extracurricular activities

The above mentioned headings provided clear themes relating to the experiences of former street children as learners.

The following chapter presents the summary, findings, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter data was presented, analyzed and discussed. This chapter presents the summary of findings. Implications for teaching and learning, recommendations and conclusions are also covered. Limitations of the study are discussed at end of this study.

5.2 SUMMARY

The study reported the experiences of street children as learners in a formal school environment. The participants shared their interesting thoughts and feelings about their schooling experiences. The participants reported that they were overwhelmed with mixed feelings about the school. Some were afraid and confused while some were not so sure if they wanted to be learners. All the participants reported that they do not regret being at school as the schooling experience has changed their identity from being known as street kids to being known as learners.

The research question for this study was asked and the respondents responded to the research question through unstructured in-depth phenomenological interviews. The themes that emerged from the study were clustered, analysed and discussed.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of this study and the implications of the findings for teaching and learning of street children in formal school are highlighted. Four learners who were formally street children took part in the study. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of street children as learners. In-depth unstructured interviews and observation were used to explore the beliefs, thoughts and feelings of the participants in relation to their context and thoughts on learning. The following discusses the thematic findings of the study, which were:

1. Feelings and thoughts about the school
2. Classroom experiences

3. Relationship with learners (peers)
4. Relationship with teachers
5. Feelings about practical subjects
6. Sport related matters
7. Lessons learnt from the school

5.3.1 Feelings and thoughts about school

From the data presented in the previous chapter in matters related to participants' feelings and thoughts about school it can be deduced that learners who are from the street are overwhelmed with fear, uncertainty, disappointment and confusion on their re-enrolment at school. The participants reported that they were afraid of schooling such that on their first few weeks at school they thought of leaving the shelter so that they did not have to go to school. The sight of teachers and learners brought fear to the participants such that they prayed that teachers did not talk to them. The participants had mixed feelings when they saw other street children at school who they had been with in the street. They were not so sure if these children would accept them, or would want them to show that they knew them from the street as they were uncertain if these learners had told other learners at school that they were once street children.

The size of the school, the number of learners in the classroom and the buildings seemed to be an issue for the participants. They felt that the school buildings were not the same as those of the schools they are familiar with. It means that the school environment was a little bit disturbing to them as they thought that they were perhaps going to see a big and well-built school such that 25% of the participants felt that they would not like their friends to visit them at school.

They reported that they could not separate the school from the children's home during their first few weeks at school. This means there was a sense of confusion in that when it is your first time in this school you cannot immediately tell that this is a school as it is surrounded by houses where children stay. Some participants were confused when they went to assembly as they did not know which row they were supposed to join in assembly. They were also afraid to ask as they did not

want other learners to think that they did not understand. Participants reported that they were concerned about learners who were walking in groups as they were of the opinion that they were planning to chase them away. The researcher felt that street children on enrolling at school are overwhelmed with fear and uncertainty.

They were also concerned about the number of children in this particular school. Their main concern about the smaller numbers in the classroom was the fact that they were not going to be in a position to dodge classes. They felt that they were going to be easily noticed by teachers when they were not in the classroom. They used to be in big classes where it was easy for them to stay away from the classroom where teachers were not able to notice them. The participants were also disappointed when they realized that they were not going to do practical subjects as promised by the child care workers when they were telling them about the school. In this particular school only grades 7-9 do practical subjects apart from gardening.

5.3.2 Classroom-based experiences

From what the participants have reported concerning their classroom experiences, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and lack of coping strategies were prevalent from the participants. Some of the participants reported that they were afraid to ask for teachers' help when they were given a task to do because they thought that other learners were going to label them as stupid and slow. They preferred to get low marks and not to do their homework at all as they felt that teachers would shout if they asked too much. They would wait for the teacher to discover that they did not understand the activity when marking their work and then the teacher would clarify the activity once more. Most participants were concerned about the amount of work they are required to do at school. They reported that they find it difficult to cope with the workload, more especially when it is time to do formal tasks and exam as this means studying.

The researcher found that most of the participants preferred subjects such as isiXhosa, Art & Culture, and Life Orientation to other subjects. Life Orientation and Art & Culture were preferred because they do not involve too much writing while isiXhosa is the participants' mother tongue and they understand it better. Some of the participants felt that English is difficult for them because they do not understand it. Exercises such as listening comprehension and writing were the

most difficult. They preferred role play and acting as they reported that these activities do not involve writing and in role play you sometimes do not talk too much but you act. Some of the participants mentioned that the only English they understood was that of begging from the street which is informal English.

Some reported that they were unable to concentrate in class if they did not have a smoke in the morning. Some of the participants reported reading and conversation activities as the most challenging and the fact that they cannot read is disturbing to them. They fear that when they come out of the classroom fingers that say this one cannot even read would be pointed at them. It can be noted that the participants struggle with written work and the fact that they get low marks and cannot read lowers their self-esteem.

Fear of progressing to grade 9 was also reported by the participants citing the amount of work they see the grade 9s doing. They feel that they will not be able to cope in this grade. They feel that the more they progress the harder it becomes such that they have thoughts of dropping out of school because of the work load which they will not coping with. The researcher established that the participants have no self-confidence and anxiety manifested itself from the participants.

5.3.3 Relationships with learners and educators

The study discovered that most of the participants have good relationships with their peers and teachers. From what the participants have shared it is evident that those who have established friendships with learners who have not been to the street have change their behaviour for the better. It helped them to have a sense of belonging, something they did not have when they arrived at school. The relationship they have has helped them to gain self-confidence and has changed who they were in a positive way.

It is also evident from the participants' report that relationships with learners who were street children at this particular school failed to change their street ways whereas those who associated themselves with learners who are not from the streets managed to change their street life behaviour. They have been subjected to beatings and accusations for stealing, and most of them are no longer staying at the children's home because of the influence of their friends as they have

been chased away from the shelter for unruly behaviour. This has resulted in absenteeism from school and not doing their school work. Some participants reported that they felt insecure of the attention they got from girls and did not want to associate themselves with boys who did not smoke as they did not want to be reminded that what they were doing was wrong.

The study also established that some participants did not want to associate themselves with learners who display unbecoming behaviour and preferred to be loners but to watch whoever comes and interferes with their space and deal with them accordingly. Some participants reported incidents of being called names by their peers, names such as ‘ingubulayi’, ‘jananda’ and ‘bergies’. The researcher learnt that these are the names which refer to street dwellers. This means the participants have experienced incidents of labelling at school. The study discovered that some participants call themselves by the names they used in the street. These include names such as ‘skydo’, which refers to those with unruly behaviour, and ‘accused’, which refers to the person who is your closest friend, the person who would die where you die, the person who is prepared to defend you no matter what. The researcher learnt that this name is used in jail to refer to your co-accused.

Most of the participants reported that they have good relationships with their teachers. They see teachers as parents because they assist them whenever they need assistance. Some teachers have gone to the extent of providing the participants with their basic needs. Some reported that teachers give them advice and reach out to them when they are struggling academically even if they have not asked for help. The researcher found that the participants feel secure around such teachers.

Some reported that they do not feel free to open up to other educators because they are discouraging, they have seen these teachers reacting negatively to their peers and felt intimidated by this kind of behaviour and decided that they would never ask for help from such teachers. The researcher discovered that the participants are afraid that they would get the same treatment as they have experienced incidents of verbal abuse even if it was not directed at them. This report by the participants indicates that some educators do not treat these learners appropriately and this can impact negatively on their learning.

5.3.4 Sports-related issues

The participants reported that they like sport and some would like to make a career out of sport. The researcher found out that there are obstacles when it comes to participating in tournaments and league games. These include lack of legal documents such as identity documents and birth certificates as participants are unable to take part in such events without these documents. Some reported that they are not selected in the team even though they attend practice but because of the friendship with the captain they secure a place in the reserve side. It emerged that having a friend who is in a leadership position is beneficial to the participants.

5.3.5 Feelings about practical subjects

Some of the participants indicated that they like practical subjects and would prefer them to academic subjects because there is no writing involved in practical subjects. The researcher found that participants enjoy doing practical subjects and that some participants take the time out to cool their minds when going to the workshop. Some of the participants saw skills-related subjects as a stepping stone towards self-employment or job opportunities. It emerged that the skills they would get from these subjects would help them to make a living.

Some felt that when they are in the workshop or in the garden it is not as intense as it is in the classroom. They find the atmosphere relaxing and there is less pressure. It was discovered that some of the participants were not happy because they are no longer doing practical subjects. The fact that there are no teachers for gardening and pottery is impacting negatively on learning for the participants. It also emerged that the participants would be much happier if they could get certificates which indicate that they possess certain skills.

5.3.6 Lessons learnt from schooling

The study has revealed that the participants reported that they have had pleasant experiences at school. The study showed that the school has helped them to understand that they have rights and that they should exercise those rights. It transpired that some of the participants have been falsely

accused and bullied but were afraid to exercise their freedom of speech, instead they resorted to crying. Therefore teachers in this school told them to speak up.

The study also discovered that being in the environment where the participants meet with learners who do not come from the same background as theirs has helped them change their lifestyle and their appearance for the better. The participants revealed that looking at other learners who were clean and smart has changed them. The study also revealed that the participants mix with learners who have encountered the same problems as theirs, such as being an orphan at a younger stage but who has not resorted to street life. This has taught them that running away to the streets will not save the situation.

The participants reported that the school environment has taught them to persevere even in hard times because giving up on life is not a solution. It emerged that the thoughts of dropping out from school are something of the past. The study showed that the participants are now thinking about the bright future whereas at first their future was bleak and some never thought about the future. The study showed that teachers have played a major role in helping the participants regain their self-confidence, self-appreciation, high self-esteem and self-worth.

It also emerged that the participants value the advice that is given by teachers and it transpired that where they have not taken their teachers' advice things turned out ugly for them. For example, some of the participants reported that they were influenced by their peers and family members to do something that saw them chased away from the shelter which in turn impacted negatively on their school attendance and their performance at school. The participants reported that they would like to take teachers' advice seriously in future.

The participants also reported that the school has helped them to regain their childhood identity and to change their status. The study showed that the participants were called by names such as street children but their identity has changed drastically because now they are called learners. Some have reunited with their families because of the lessons they learnt at school, such as respect for the young and old and those in authority. The study also showed that some participants are worried that they are about to leave the school and are also anxious as they do not know if teachers from the main street schools would be as accommodating as this school under investigation. The study also found that some participants have concerns about their family

situation and fear that they might not be going to school the following year because of money-related issues.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the study presents the following recommendations and suggestions:

1. It is a constitutional right of every child in South Africa to receive an education. Education should be adapted to meet the needs of learners from the street. It is essential that any education program for these children should aim at developing the whole child, thus restoring a sense of self-worth which enables them to begin to believe that a worthwhile future awaits them.
2. A basic curriculum of isiXhosa, Mathematics, Life Orientation and English, and more time for practical subjects, should be provided for former street children who are older learners and those who experience barriers to learning. This would benefit these learners as this would reduce the workload which seems to be a problem for these learners. Relevant education is needed that would educate for employment and equip them to be independent adults.
3. The curriculum should cater for mother tongue instruction.
4. Academic should be parallel with vocational skills so as to prepare learners, more especially LSEN learners, for the world of work.
5. South Africa should keep in touch with countries in Asia, Latin America, the UK and other countries in the African continent who have reintegrated street children through education and are offering programs that include vocational skills.
6. Learners doing practical subjects should be given certificates which state the skills they have acquired so that they may be employable.
7. The Department of Education should fill the vacant skills posts so that these learners are taught the relevant skills.

8. The DBST and the ILST should work hand-in-hand so that these children are not left floundering or worse returning to the streets. There is a dire need for post-school education and vocational training for these learners.
9. Some learners from the streets do not have legal documents such as birth certificate and IDs, therefore a provision for them to participate in tournaments and league matches or athletics should be made by the Department of Education as sport can enrich the lives of these particular learners.
10. Provision should be made for services of psychologists and social workers as teachers cannot play all these roles.
11. Anti-bullying policies should be in place and should be implemented.
12. Drug rehabilitation services should be introduced by the school.
13. The school working together with DBST should organize workshops whereby former street children at school can be trained on aspects such as conflict resolution, anger management and ways in which these particular learners can develop interaction skills thus improving their chances of successful reintegration to school and the society at large.
14. Relations between DBST and the ILST should be strengthened so that services reach all learners that experience barriers to learning.
15. The recommends that educators teaching vulnerable learners such as former street children should be more sensitive towards the educational needs of these learners.
16. Teachers of vulnerable learners should be adequately trained.
17. Training and mentoring of educators on curriculum differentiation and adaptation should be done.
18. Curriculum advisors and subject advisors should be equipped with knowledge about the learning barriers that are experienced by these learners.
19. An accredited vocational qualification should be introduced.

20. In addition to the curriculum the following role players should be involved in the education of a street child so that the child is developed as a whole:

- Police,
- Health,
- Church,
- Welfare, and
- Industries.

5.5 ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study investigated the experiences of street children as learners in a formal school environment. Learners narrated their stories concerning how they experience teaching and learning, nevertheless teachers' experiences of teaching learners who were street children is a matter yet to be explored.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study sought the participation of only four participants; therefore what they reported as their experiences of schooling cannot be generalized.

5.7 CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that street children who re-enrol at school after spending some years and months on the street are faced with many challenges. These include fear of failure, insecurity, and lack of parental support, labelling, exclusion, and incompetency. Street children at school need to be supported by care-givers, teachers and their peers so that they do not drop out from school and go back to the street.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

30A 8th Avenue
Gonubie
5256

The Principal
Amasango Career School
East London
5200

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to undertake research

I am currently registered for Master of Education Degree (MED) at the University of Fort Hare. My research topic is “A case study on the experiences of street children as learners: Implications for teaching and learning. The main purpose of the study is to build an insightful and a knowledge base in understanding how street children perceive their learning context.

I would like to request learners who were once street children and have since re enrolled in formal school to participate in this study. Unstructured in-depth interviews will be used to gather information from the participants. An informed consent will be requested before the respondents’ participation in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured. The information by the respondents could help in improving teaching and learning for the participants and could be relevant in informing policy making for both social and educative purposes. The research findings will be distributed to the Department of Education.

Yours faithfully

N. Boyana

APPENDIX 2

30A 8th Avenue
Gonubie
5256

The District Director
Department of Education
East London
5200

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to undertake research

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Yours faithfully

N. Boyana

APPENDIX 3

30A 8th Avenue
Gonubie
5256

Dear learner

I am currently registered for Master of Education Degree (MED) at the University of Fort Hare. My research topic is "A case study on the experiences of former street children as learners: Implications for teaching and learning. The main purpose of the study is to build an insightful and a knowledge base in understanding how street children perceive their learning context.

I would like to request you as a learner who was once a street child and have since re enrolled in formal school to participate in this study. Unstructured in-depth interviews will be used to gather information. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the process.

Yours faithfully

N. Boyana