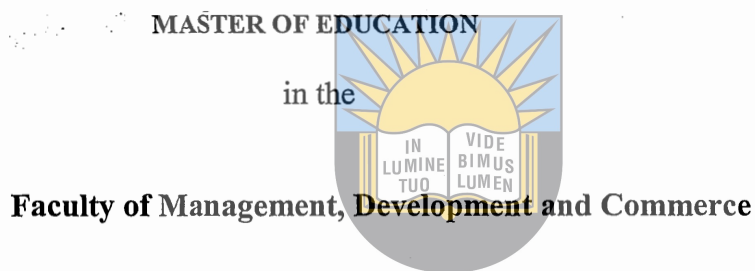


Topic: *Factors associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners: A study of selected secondary schools in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe.*

By

LIZZIE MUTANDA

A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of



University of Fort Hare
of the
Together in Excellence

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

Supervisor: Professor B R G Lindeque

November 2003

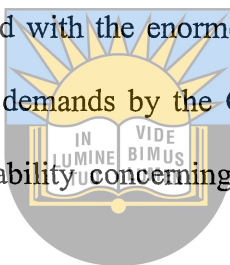
7000 819
b 17149058
i 21062869



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Abstract

The Zimbabwe Education system has been beset by problems emanating from the colonial system of government. At independence in 1980, the Government of Zimbabwe initiated major expansions in the education sector at all levels. The main aim was to fulfill political promises to transform an elitist, racially and socially biased educational system to one that will provide universal access to education. While education was increasingly being seen as providing a major contribution to the national economic and human development, this trend, coupled with the enormous public expenditure that are devoted to education, has precipitated demands by the Government and the public for higher levels of scrutiny and accountability concerning the academic performance in schools.



University of Fort Hare *Together in Excellence*

This study, in line with the need to make schools effective, looks on the literature on school effectiveness and the factors associated with the academic performance of learners. The research also examines the factors associated with the academic performance of learners in a selected group of secondary schools in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe. Three schools were selected using random sampling. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research were used. A total of 77 respondents responded to the questionnaires and interviews. Data was collected from 4 categories of respondents namely: School heads, educators, parents and learners.

The study established that learners are performing badly because of lack of resource materials and facilities, family circumstances, parental involvement, learner characteristics and ineffective leadership.

Apart from the factors identified by the researcher, results indicated that there are more factors associated with the performance of learners. Further areas of research have been identified.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

DECLARATION

I, Lizzie Mutanda, do hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is entirely my own work with the exception of such quotations or references, which have been attributed to their authors and sources. I drew all tables, sketches and graphs. The author or anyone else has never submitted this topic: "Factors associated with the academic performance of learners", at any university for a degree.

Dated at the University of Fort Hare this ^{1st} day of ~~DEC~~^{DEC} 2003.

Signed Mutanda



Lizzie Mutanda

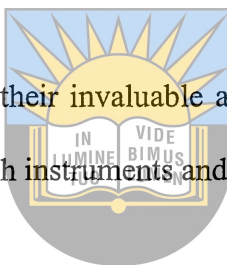
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude and appreciation go to the following:

Professor B R G. Lindeque, my professor and supervisor, for the generous and sympathetic manner in which he assisted me with his considerable ability, rich experience and expertise, and his encouragement that has seen me sailing through in the process of generating this piece of work.

Mr. G. Moyo and Mrs. S. Rembe, for their invaluable advice, guidance and assistance, particularly in the preparation of research instruments and data collection.



Members of the Library staff of Fort Hare, for their assistance in the search for literature.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

My special thanks extend to my fellow students and colleagues: Patricia, Beginner, Hazviite, Shava, Makondo, Richard, Michael, Benjamin, Mandeya, Michael, Learnmore, Chipunza, Sekai, James, Daliwonga and Paddington for their support and discussions of this final product.

To God Almighty, for the guidance throughout the study period.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Mrs. V Mutanda and my father, the late Mr. J. Mutanda, and all the members of my family, and my daughters, Tarisai and Patience, for the unwavering support, love and concern they gave me while working on this study, more so far away from home.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
Title	
Abstract.....	(i-ii)
Declarations.....	(iii)
Acknowledgements.....	(iv)
Dedication.....	(v)

CHAPTER 1

1. Background and aims of the study.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the research problem.....	3
1.3 Statement of the research problem.....	11
1.4 Critical assessment questions.....	11
1.5 Purpose of the study.....	11
1.6 Objectives of the study.....	12
1.7 Rationale of the study.....	12
1.8 Delimitations of the study.....	12
1.9 Limitations of the study.....	13
1.10 Assumptions.....	13
1.11 Operational definition of key terms.....	14
1.12 Overview of the study.....	16

CHAPTER 2

2 Literature Review.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Theoretical framework.....	18
2.3 Quality assurance.....	28
2.4 School improvement.....	29
2.5 The effects of socio-economic factors on academic performance.....	31
2.5.1 Parents' income, wealth and occupation.....	32
2.5.2 Family structure and the academic performance.....	34
2.5.3 Parents' education and academic performance.....	35
2.5.4 Summary.....	36

2.6	The impact of home background factors on academic performance.....	37
2.6.1	Family size and academic performance.....	38
2.6.2	Parental attitudes and support on academic performance.....	39
2.6.3	Family instability and academic performance.....	42
2.6.4	Summary.....	43
2.7	School environmental factors influencing academic performance.....	43
2.7.1	The impact of ineffective leadership on academic performance.....	44
2.7.2	The effects of lack of resources on academic performance.....	47
2.7.3	Learner characteristics on academic performance.....	49
2.7.4	The impact of educator ineffectiveness on academic performance.....	51
2.7.5	Summary.....	52
2.8	Conclusion.....	52

CHAPTER 3



3	Research methods.....	53
3.1	Introduction.....	53
3.2	Research design.....	53
3.2.1	Qualitative approach.....	55
3.2.2	Quantitative approach.....	56
3.3	Population of the study.....	56
3.3.1	Sample of the study.....	56
3.3.2	Data collection plan.....	58
3.4	Research Instruments.....	59
3.4.1	The questionnaire.....	60
3.4.2	The interviews.....	61
3.5	The pilot study.....	63
3.6	Validity and Reliability.....	64
3.6.1	Reliability.....	64
3.7	Validity.....	65
3.7.1	Construct validity.....	65
3.7.2	Content validity.....	65
3.7.3	Concurrent validity.....	66
3.7.4	Predictive validity.....	66
3.7.5	Criteria-related validity.....	66
3.8	Data analysis procedures.....	67
3.9	Conclusion.....	68

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

CHAPTER 4

4	Data analysis and presentation.....	69
4.1	Introduction.....	69
4.2	Demographic questionnaire data	70
4.3	Socio-economic factors associated with academic performance.....	73
4.3.1	Family circumstances and academic performance.....	74
4.3.2	Summary.....	78
4.4	Home background factors associated with academic performance.....	78
4.4.1	Family background and academic performance.....	80
4.4.2	Summary.....	83
4.5	School environmental factors associated with academic performance...	84
4.5.1	Learner characteristics and academic performance.....	84
4.5.2	Resource materials and academic performance.....	87
4.5.3	Ineffective leadership and academic performance.....	90
4.5.4	Summary on school environmental factors.....	93
4.5.5	Summary.....	94
4.6	An overview of general remarks by respondents.....	94
4.6.1	School heads.....	94
4.6.2	Educators.....	96
4.6.3	Learners.....	99
4.6.4	Parents.....	101
4.6.5	Conclusion.....	102


University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

CHAPTER 5

5	Summary, conclusions and recommendations.....	103
5.1	Introduction.....	103
5.2	Summary.....	103
5.3	Conclusions.....	106
5.4	Recommendations.....	108
5.5	Suggested areas for future research.....	109

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Tables

1.1	'O' level results analysis chart by schools (2001-2002).....	2
1.2	Distribution of primary & secondary schools by authority.....	4

1.3	Distribution of schools and enrolment 1980 and 1981.....	6
1.4	'O' level results analysis (School A).....	8
1.5	'O' level results analysis (School B).....	8
1.6	'O' level results analysis (school C).....	9
3.1	Sample of the research.....	57
4.1	Sex of school heads and educators.....	70
4.2	Age of respondents.....	71
4.3	The academic and professional qualifications of respondents.....	72
4.4	Experience of school heads and educators.....	73
4.5	Perceptions of respondents on family circumstances.....	75
4.6	Perceptions of respondents on parental involvement.....	81
4.7	Perceptions of respondents on learner characteristics.....	85
4.8	Perceptions of respondents on lack of resources.....	88
4.9	Resources and facilities.....	89
4.10	Perceptions of respondents on ineffective leadership.....	91
4.11	Enrolment in the sampled schools.....	95
4.12	Perceptions of educators on academic performance.....	97

Figures



2.1	The domain of effectiveness.....	23
4.1	Perceptions of respondents on family circumstances.....	75
4.2	Perceptions of respondents on parental involvement.....	81
4.3	Perceptions of respondents on learner characteristics.....	85
4.4	Perceptions of learners on resource materials.....	88
4.5	Perceptions of respondents on ineffective leadership.....	92
4.6	Summary of the perceptions of respondents on school factors.....	93

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	110
--------------------------	------------

APPENDICES

- A. Sample of interview guide for school development committee members/parents.
- B. Sample of questionnaire guide for school heads.

C. Sample of interview guide for learners.

D. Sample of questionnaire guide for educators.

E. Letter seeking permission for research.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

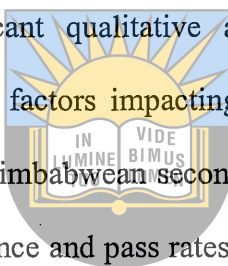
Chapter 1

TITLE: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF 'O'LEVEL LEARNERS: A STUDY OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MUTASA DISTRICT IN ZIMBABWE.

1 Background and aims of the study

1.1 Introduction

Whilst Zimbabwe has achieved significant qualitative and quantitative developments in education, there is need to analyse some factors impacting on the academic performance of learners at secondary school level. Most Zimbabwean secondary schools are performing poorly especially at 'O' level, and pupil performance and pass rates at the "O" level cause even greater concern (World Bank, 1994:17). The most affected are the rural secondary schools, which continue to struggle with the poor management focuses and poor school facilities. Attention needs to be paid to improve the effectiveness of schools so as to improve the academic performance of learners. Increased access and enrolments are meaningless if not accompanied by improvements in the effectiveness of schools.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

At independence in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe initiated major expansions in the education sector at all levels. The main aim was to fulfill political promises to transform an elitist, racially and socially biased educational system to one that would provide universal access to education. While education was increasingly being seen as providing a major contribution to the national, economic and human development, this trend, coupled with the enormous public

expenditure that is devoted to education, has precipitated demands by the government and the public for higher levels of scrutiny and accountability concerning the academic performance in schools.

The table below provides supporting evidence on the academic performance of learners in Mutasa District in the years 2001 - 2002 respectively:

Table1.1 'O' level results analysis chart by schools (2001 –2002)

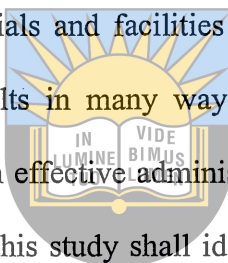
School	No. Of candidates		% Pass rate	
	2001	2002	2001	2002
A	194	176	34	42.6
B	111	103	27	29
C	142	140	14.5	16.4
D	280	285	26	29
E	105	110	3	4
F	161	178	22.5	24.2
G	59	61	3	3.2
H	164	168	21	19
I	60	65	13	13.8
J	102	107	16.5	7.8
K	162	*	84	*
L	64	*	15.6	*
M	106	*	15.9	*
N	186	192	19.3	17
O	125	144	12.1	12
P	149	158	98	100
Q	91	91	9.8	6.6
R	17	19	0	1
S	140	123	30	6
T	89	88	19	17
U	127	144	12.6	13.9

Source: Mutasa District education results analysis chart (2001-2002)

** These figures for 2002 were not available to the researcher.*

In the majority of Mutasa District secondary schools, the performance of students is generally low (as indicated above). This is due to a number of contributing factors. Nyagura (1993:24) argues that rural district community schools are seriously constrained by shortages of classrooms, classroom furniture and textbooks. Research carried out by Nyagura (1993:25) and Chivore (1994:27) established that secondary schools produce low academic results due to some school environmental factors.

Even though shortages in resource materials and facilities may be contributing factors some schools can improve their academic results in many ways. Therefore, schools need to be effective and this can be enhanced through effective administration, which includes monitoring and supervision. It follows therefore that this study shall identify and analyse socio-economic, home background and school environmental factors influencing learner performance in the selected schools in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

1.2 Background to the research problem

Before the political independence in 1980, the provision of secondary education laid mainly in the hands of various church missionaries such as the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, and the London Missionary Society, among others. This was particularly so in the rural areas. The church-run rural secondary schools offered boarding facilities and there were virtually no day secondary schools in the rural areas. It was quite an honor to attend a missionary secondary school since graduates were highly respected by the society at large, because they could get better employment opportunities.

The table below shows distribution of primary and secondary schools by responsible authority in 1995:

Table 1.2 Distribution of primary and secondary schools by responsible authority (1995)

Responsible authority	Primary schools		Secondary schools	
	Number	%	Number	%
Government	266	6.0	193	12.6
Non-government	4367	94.0	1342	87.4
Total	4633	100.0	1535	100.0

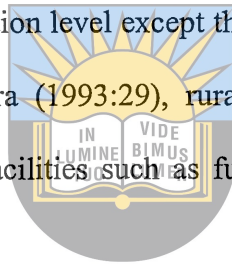
Source: MOE, (1996: 3) Education in Zimbabwe- Facts and information.

Analysis of data in the above table revealed that there were 6,168 schools in Zimbabwe in 1995, 7.4 % of which were government and 92.6% non-governmental.

A major contributing factor was the Rhodesian Government Policy on selection into secondary schools. As provided in the New Education Act (1996:5), the Zimbabwean government allowed only 12,5% of grade 7 pupils entry into Form 1 secondary schools with

37,5% going to Form 2 schools which offered a biased curriculum towards practical subjects. The other 50% were left to pursue their education through correspondence. In Zimbabwe, studies were made to determine educational needs and problems. Their findings indicated that the provision of education was neither adequate nor of an acceptable standard.

According to Nyagura (1993:29), the phenomenal expansion in secondary education and the huge financial inputs into education have not been matched with satisfactory achievements. The performance of rural day schools has continued to be poor as shown by the performance of pupils at 'O' level national examination level except those schools with boarding facilities (see table 1.1). According to Nyagura (1993:29), rural secondary schools are seriously constrained by insufficient physical facilities such as furniture, libraries, textbooks, sports facilities and classrooms.



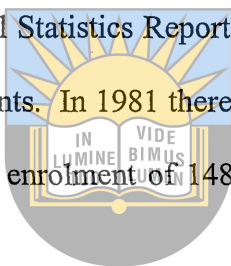
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

This seemed to suggest that the education offered in mission schools was of a higher quality and yet the reason behind the story was the rigorous selection process or rather the intake of pupils.

Upon the attainment of political power, the ZANU (PF) leadership redressed the educational imbalances that had existed before independence in 1980. One way of correcting this imbalance was to legislate for rapid expansion in education. The new government set out to dismantle all the 'bottle necks' that had characterised the African division of education. All pupils were now able to proceed to 'O' level unlike the bottleneck system whereby one

should end in Grade 7 or in Form 2. The Education Act of 1987 is the official policy that tried to redress this imbalance.

One of the chief causes of low academic performance is the rapid expansion of the education system. As pupil-teacher ratios increased and pupil-performance declined, and the proportion of untrained teachers increased, the quality of education also fell in the 1980s and has not improved significantly in the 1990s. The human and material resources were overstretched and this necessitated the recruitment of untrained teachers to come in and help out. For example, according to the 1991 Annual Statistics Report, there were 197 secondary schools in 1980 and enrolments of 74321 students. In 1981 there were 694 secondary schools which constituted a 352,3% increase with an enrolment of 148690 students which was a massive 200,1% increase (see table below):



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Table 1.3 Distribution of schools and enrolment in the years 1980 and 1981

YEAR	NO. OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS	NO. OF STUDENTS
1980	197	74 321
1981	694	148 690
% INCREASE	352,3	200,1

Ministry of education: Research Policy No. 1 (1991:3)

Because of the rapid expansion in secondary education in the rural areas and the general poor performance of pupils at 'O' level (Mutasa District Results Analysis 2001-2002), the researcher found it imperative to investigate the factors contributing to poor performance in Mutasa District. It is however realized that the acquisition of basic learning competencies, life skills, and literacy is still low Nyagura (1993:29). Most secondary students are going to school and coming out unprepared for life. The poor performance of students at "O' level examination level has resulted in the majority of them failing to secure places in well equipped 'A' level schools. Considerations permitted girls to be admitted with slightly lower examination results than boys. This is part of the government's strategy to encourage more women to enter the field of education.



There seems to be a number of factors that affect the performance of students. These could be school environmental factors, family backgrounds, school management focuses, ineffectiveness of teachers (Chivore 1994:31), Nyagura (1993:24) and Chinapah (1997:101). Evidence on the level of available resources in schools indicates that the intended government policies of promoting equity in the distribution of educational resources are yet to make an impact. National efforts to redress the existing disparities in the quality of education call for a critical analysis of the operating educational policies with a view to intentionally formulate policies that favour the disadvantaged schools.

The information presented in the tables below shows the academic performance of 'O' level learners in three selected schools in Mutasa District. Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 show the

analysis of 'O' level results in three schools from 1995 to 2002. This information has been gathered from school heads that provided the documentation.

'O' level results analysis (1995-2002)

(Table 1.4) School A

YEAR	NO.OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF LEARNERS WITH 5 'O' LEVELS OR BETTER	% PASS RATE
1995	171	21	12.3
1996	181	31	17
1997	189	37	19.6
1998	147	26	17.7
1999	153	28	18.3
2000	168	20	11.6
2001	186	35	18.8
2002	192	37	19.3

University of Fort Hare

Together in Excellence

Source: Gatsi Government Secondary School results analysis

(Table 1.5) School B

YEAR	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO.OF LEARNERS WITH 5 'O' LEVELS OR BETTER	% PASS RATE
1995	104	15	14.4
1996	122	14	11.5
1997	124	39	31.5
1998	123	34	28.5
1999	138	40	29
2000	142	32	22.5
2001	194	66	34
2002	176	75	42.6

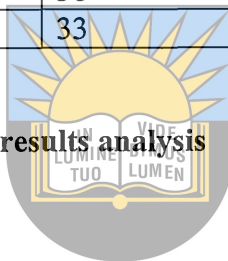
Source: St. Columba's Secondary School results analysis

(Table 1.6)

School C

YEAR	NO.OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF LEARNERS WITH 5 'O'LEVELS OR BETTER	% PASS RATE
1995	95	24	24
1996	97	23	23.7
1997	105	25	23
1998	151	39	29.8
1999	155	32	20.6
2000	136	36	20.4
2001	164	38	24
2002	168	33	19.6

Source: Sahumani Secondary School results analysis

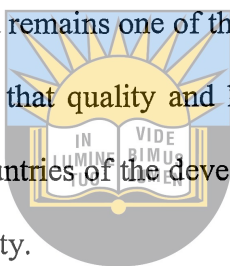


The information presented in the tables above shows that since 1995, the academic performance of 'O' level learners is generally poor although some schools are improving and doing quite well. School B provides some evidence that schools can make a difference and the reasons for this shall be investigated in this study.

Effective schools are mainly concerned with how best to bring about the desired pupil learning through some educational activities. There is a consensus that these schools promote pupil learning and high levels of achievement. They depend on the society in which they are placed, the leadership styles, facilities and management of the schools. This is the reason why schools make a difference (Murgatroyd and Gray) in Reynolds and Cuttance (1992).

Even though the majority of schools in Mutasa District are performing badly, there are some, which are doing very well. This is because of learner intake, and also the level of day-to-day school management, which is different from school to school. It is important for the management to look at the situations and the settings of that school, and then introduce characteristics that really suit that particular institution.

The need for high academic performance and quality outcomes has been the center of educational research and debate in Zimbabwe. Achieving high academic performance, however, has become the main goal and remains one of the greatest challenges in educational management. Bellany (1999:11) argue that quality and high outcomes topped the national agenda of many newly independent countries of the developing world in the 1980s as a core strategy to escaping the country's poverty.



University of Fort Hare

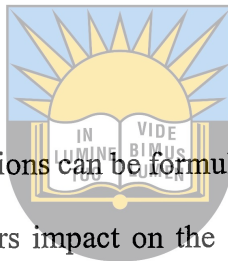
Together in Excellence

A lot needs to be done to schools for them to be effective so that they become viable organizations that enhance higher academic achievement. Programmes involved with improvement in education are advocated by the Zimbabwe National Department of Education and will be discussed later. Most of these programmes in Zimbabwe were formulated so that they improve schools and their effectiveness to address the anomalies of the past.

1.3 Statement to the research problem

The intention behind the study is to investigate the socio-economic, home background and school environmental factors that are associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners in secondary schools in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe. The core question is: What socio-economic, home and school factors are associated with the academic performance of learners at "O" level in secondary schools in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe?

1.4 Critical assessment questions



The following critical assessment questions can be formulated:

- 1) What socio-economic factors impact on the academic performance of 'O' level learners?
- 2) Are there any home background factors associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners?
- 3) What school environmental factors are associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners?

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

1.5 Purpose of the study

The principal purpose of this study is to investigate factors that are associated with the academic performance of learners in secondary schools in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Investigate socio-economic factors that affect the academic achievement of 'O' level learners.
- 2) Investigate home background factors that are associated with the academic performance of learners at 'O' level.
- 3) Identify school environmental factors that influence academic achievement of 'O' level learners.



1.7 Rationale of the study

The ultimate rationale of this study of factors that are associated with the academic performance of learners is to provide policy makers and educational managers with the necessary analytic tools to raise the performance of learners in schools. Depending on the nature of the findings, reasonable recommendations could be made to all parties such as the School Development Committees (SDC), school heads and educators who are all concerned with the performance of learners.

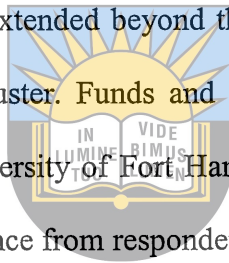
1.8 Delimitation of the study

This research covered 3 schools in one cluster. The study concentrated on factors influencing academic performance of 'O' level learners. The data was collected in three secondary

schools in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe. It was the concern of this study to investigate on issues like, family circumstances, resource materials, parental involvement, ineffective leadership and learner characteristics and their impact on learner performance in the three schools. The actual distribution of questionnaires and conducting of interviews was carried out during the months of June and July in the year 2003.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Findings from this study may not be extended beyond the population sampled since it was concentrated in the schools in one cluster. Funds and time are always inadequate as the researcher had to travel from the University of Fort Hare to Zimbabwe for data collection. The existence of factors such as resistance from respondents and illiteracy among community members may limit the investigation.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

1.10 Assumptions

This research proposal is based on the assumption that:

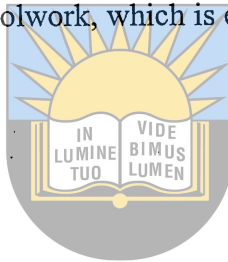
- 1) There are socio-economic, home background and school environmental factors associated with the academic performance of learners in secondary schools.
- 2) The improvement of schools promotes student learning, quality and high levels of achievement.
- 3) Besides the limitations sited above, interviews will provide insight, which outweighs the risk of personal bias.

1.11 Operational definition of key concepts

Some technical terms were explained in this section. These explanations attempt to bring the study into context by clarifying a few terms. These terms are easy to define at face value though meaning something different in the study presented.

Academic Performance

This is the outcome of a learner in schoolwork, which is evaluated as either poor or good at a given level of school achievement.



Factors

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

These are reasons or circumstances leading to good or poor academic performance of learners in schools.

Effectiveness

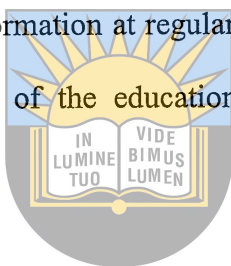
According to Schreerens (1991:3) effectiveness can be described as the extent to which the desired output is achieved. It is also the extent to which the set goals or objectives of a school programme are accomplished. Thus, in this research, effectiveness is mainly concerned with the ways in which school activities are carried out and how best to bring about the desired academic performance through educational activities to reach certain standards.

Instructional Leadership

This is the purposefulness aimed at the achievement of group objectives and efficiency aimed at the satisfaction of personal striving for achievement of objectives. It refers to inspiring all stakeholders to accomplish set organizational goals by involving them in management.

Monitoring

This is defined as the collection of information at regular intervals by the school head or by administrators about different aspects of the education system, projects or programmes within the school system.



School climate

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

This is the manifestation of a well-managed school in which there is clear structure, procedures and people with confidence to know what to do and who to go to for help or advice.

Inputs

These are the resources used in the teaching-learning process. These could be instructional materials, equipment and facilities.

1.12 Overview of study

The dissertation will be presented in the following manner:

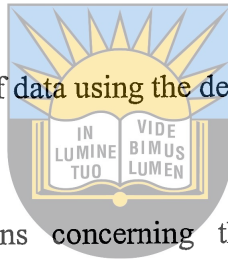
Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: This chapter describes the methodology of the study incorporating ways of gathering data and data analysis.

Chapter 4: Analysis and interpretation of data using the descriptive survey method.

Chapter 5: Summary and conclusions concerning the factors influencing academic performance and the researcher's recommendations for improvements, and areas identified for further research.



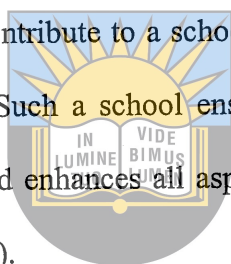
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

CHAPTER 2

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

School effectiveness is a fast growing subject in educational research. It aims at discovering why learners of one school achieve better outcomes than those of other schools. Research on school effectiveness has grown from work to show that schools could make a difference. It also aims at finding out what factors contribute to a school reaching its objectives so that it achieves high academic performance. Such a school ensures that each pupil achieves the highest academic standards possible and enhances all aspects of students' achievement and development (Stoll and Wikelly 1998:48).



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

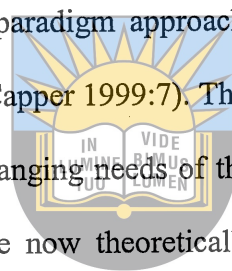
A review of other studies on factors associated with the academic performance of learners (with reference to Zimbabwe) was carried out. In reviewing the literature, an attempt to cut across all stages has been adopted in the sense that the researcher starts with the domain of effectiveness that encompasses all the theories of school effectiveness, school improvement and quality assurance. This chapter, therefore, examines some of the theories put forward and major factors said to be associated with the academic performance of learners.

There are several references that have been written on this topic and it is realized that even though these authors are from developed countries, their findings and analysis bear strong relevance to situations in developing countries. It is the purpose of this review to examine

research that has investigated the complexities of the associations between the socio-economic status, home background, schools and learner performance. This chapter also provides examples of the ways a multi-paradigm approach can guide administrative practice, which considers societal diversity.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

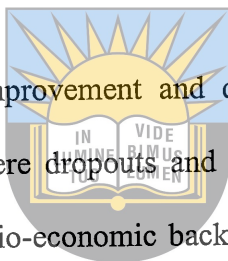
Structural-functionalists view the relationship between organizations and their environment rooted in systems theory while multi-paradigm approach is one way to view educational administration in a pluralistic society (Capper 1999:7). Thus, educational administrators need to be attuned to the complexities of changing needs of those that are the core of education. Therefore, administrative strategies are now theoretically much richer, more diverse and more complex than in its history.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Effective schooling is mainly concerned with how best to bring about the desired pupil learning through some educational activities. Therefore, school effectiveness is a result of effective administration, which includes monitoring and supervision. It looks at in-school factors and external factors that affect both teacher and pupil achievement. It also looks at monitoring and evaluation of inputs, processes and outcomes (Postlethwaite and Tuyman 1994:24). Thus, what can be monitored can differ somewhat different from one system to another, depending on factors such as maturity, financial condition, and resources, among others.

Organizational theorists have viewed the relationship between organizations and their environments from a positivist perspective rooted in systems theory. Burrell and Morgan (1982:26) explains: “The functionalist approach to science tends to assume that the social world is composed of relatively concrete empirical artifacts and relationships which can be identified, and measured through approaches derived from the natural sciences”. Educational administration tends to view the existing social order and its institutions as legitimate and desirable. While they often seem to make improvements in the operation of education, they accept its basic structures and roles and the nature of the societal context schools serve.

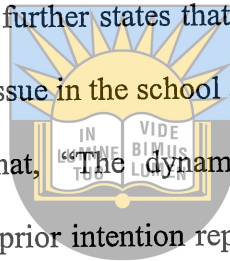


The need for school effectiveness, improvement and quality has been at the center of education in developing countries, where dropouts and repetition rates appear to be most common among students from low socio-economic backgrounds of which Zimbabwe is no exception. While school effectiveness is generally concerned with outcomes such as examination results, staying on rates or learner attitudes, the work of school improvement is with the introduction of change into schools so as to promote better academic performance. All the three theories of investigation (school effectiveness, improvement and quality) has considered the variable of leadership.

The school effectiveness research examined the impact of the school leader on the ability of the unit to invent, adopt, or adapt practices that would make the school more responsive to contemporary knowledge in education. Leadership is consistently recognized as being a vital factor in school effectiveness. The purposeful leadership of the staff by the headmaster heads a list of factors necessary for effective schooling.

One should not lose sight of the fact that a school head plays a pivotal role in the school setting so it is upon him or her to manage change with the help of the subordinates. According to Van der Westhuizen (1991:648) the head plays a strategic role in initiating change. The staff of a school is inclined to accept programmes of change more readily if the school head actively supports them in implementing the changes.

Swanepoel (1997:4) views the role of the school head as one to do with decision-making and helping teachers to be empowered. He further states that this person should understand that one cannot successfully address every issue in the school and it is important that delegation is considered. Fullan (1993:30) adds that, "The dynamic system perspective thus leads managers to think in terms, not of the prior intention represented by objectives and visions, but of continuously developing agendas, issues, aspirations, challenges and individual intentions."



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

There is some consensus that effective schools promote pupil learning and high levels of achievement. An effective school is "one which responds to individual pupil and staff needs to the changing face of the community in which it is placed" (Murgatroyd and Gray 1993) in Reynolds et al (1992:3). They also highlight the importance of the nature of the leadership of a school. Goal accomplishment and efficient use of resources are necessary conditions for effective performance of pupils. An organization that fails to accomplish its identified goals or that uses resources inefficiently is considered to be ineffective. Educators and

administrators are held accountable for the three achievements: efficiency, effectiveness and quality.

The researchers who were involved in the school effectiveness movement saw the need for the creation of a comprehensive model of educational effectiveness. Schreerens (1989:94) had emphasized the school level and Creemers (1990:56) the classroom level. They accepted that there is a formal relationship between what goes on in the classrooms and between the school level and underpinning this relationship are the concepts of consistency, cohesion, constancy and control (Creemers 1990:57).



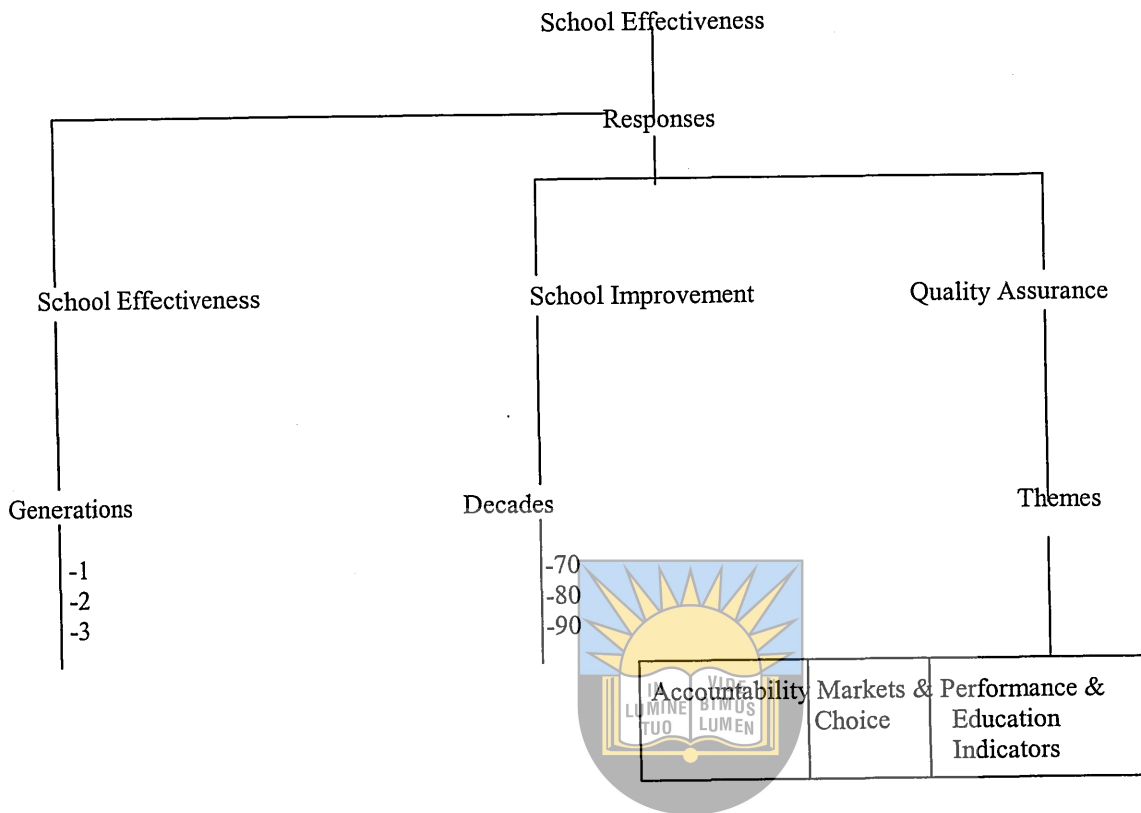
Recognizing the complexities of effectiveness, Hoy and Miskel (1996:253) advocated a synthesis of two commonly applied models of organizational effectiveness: the goal model and the system resource model. The goal model postulates that organizations are effective to the extent at which they achieve their goals, whereas system-resource model is concentrated with the internal aspects of organization to compete for scarce resources that promote harmony and efficiency and enable the organization to compete for scarce resources. Both internal harmony and goal attainment are important aspects of organizational life. Building on the work of Hoy and Miskel (1996:95), Ulline, Miller & Tschannen Moran (1998:462) proposed a model of school effectiveness that deal with objective, instrumental outcomes of school achievement as well as the more subjective, expressive activities of harmony and cohesiveness.

In this research, the researcher's perspective of school effectiveness is in keeping with the underlying dimensions explicated by Ulline et al (1998:462). Although the study doesn't deal with all aspects of their model, both instrumental (student achievement) and expressive outcomes (school climate and perceptions of flexibility and adaptability) will be examined. This framework of effectiveness combines student performance with perceptual measures of school quality and efficiency.

A vast amount of research has been conducted in the United States of America, Great Britain, Netherlands and Canada on school effectiveness, improvement and quality. In the USA effective school programmes began in the 1980s with federal funding to implement school effectiveness factors.



Following the domain of effectiveness as observed by Watermeyer (1997:7), as shown in the diagram below, the origins of the effective school movement began with concerns in the United States of America to demonstrate that schools did make a difference. The first generation of research was concerned with the influence of socio-economic factors on educational outcomes.



Watermeyer (1997:7)

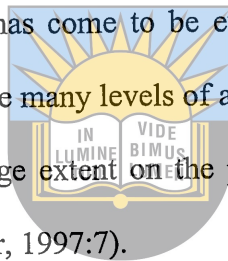
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Figure.2.1: The Domain of effectiveness

The results of Coleman's (1996:256) work, which showed that home background was more powerful than school as an explanation of outcome, was widely interpreted to mean that schools did not make a difference. The second generation demonstrated that schools were important and how they could be changed by following examples of schools that had succeeded despite the apparent disadvantage of their intake. The report by Coleman et al (1996:257) pointed out that schools had little or no effect on pupil achievement once family background variables are controlled, hence the different ways of the organization and working schools and teaching had little bearing on academic success.

The school improvement paradigm in large part represents a response to School Effectiveness (SE) research: firstly, it is a paradigmatic difference that favoured qualitative rather than quantitative methodologies and, secondly, it is a field that illustrates a shift from equity ideal, which dominated school for all regardless of background.

The quality assurance field has developed as a response to the demands for accountability in education from parents and politicians. With public auditing and parental choice being the frame of the nineties, quality assurance has come to be exemplified by the development of performance indicators. There are of course many levels of accountability, and the development of various measures will depend to a large extent on the political and economic frame with which such measures are enacted (Gilmour, 1997:7).



University of Fort Hare *Together in Excellence*

Studies have been carried out on the effects of teaching in general and on the influence of different teaching methods on the performance of students (Gage, 1993:56). There was likewise a line of study regarding the economic and social benefits that education provides the individual, and yet another on the influence on school autonomy on pupils' academic results (Reynolds et al 1994:5). Thus, as a synthesis of empirical research, there are some factors that condition the effectiveness of schools to enhance better academic outcomes (Townsend and Sammons 1998:90). These are: professional leadership, shared views and goals, learning environment, teaching and learning as the main school activity, high expectations, positive reinforcement, monitoring student progress, school-home collaboration and the school as a learning organization.

The amount of schooling received by learners has an effect upon their academic and social development. Fogelman et al (1983:70) noted that school attendance had an independent influence upon levels of children's attainments and patterns of behaviour and children's attainment is related to the quantity of schooling they have received. The question of schools making a difference refers to whether variation in the quality of their educational institutions has effects upon students.

Whether effective or ineffective, there is a move from correlational studies to enquire more deeply into the "how" rather than the "what", not simply what the characteristics are but how they are acquired. Not simply what do effective and ineffective schools look but how they get that way? According to the Tizard (1967:49), in Britain, there are little differential effects of schools on students, and that parental factors such as social class and parental attitudes are the key determinants.

In Zimbabwe, differences in schools can be caused by many factors. The effectiveness of a school can enhance the development of that community, for instance, a school without adequate resources may perform badly and those students may not be very helpful to the community as compared to one with all the best conditions (see tables 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6). Mortimore et al (1998:98) found that disadvantaged students were more progressive in more effective schools than their counterparts in the least effective schools.

However, it is not only due to parental, academic or social background that makes schools and academic performance differ (Reynolds and Cuttance 1992:6), but also by the quality of intakes of pupils. Data has been collected concerning the intakes into different schools but still found large differences in the outcomes of the schools, even though allowance has been made for differences in intake. The analysis of that relative importance of home and school contributed to be the most comprehensive factors available. He concluded that what pupils bring to school with them is considered more important than what schools can do to them or with them.

Coleman (1966:259) also pointed out that “the resources devoted by family to the child’s education interact with the resources provided by the school and there is a greater variation in the former resources than in the latter”. This means that the disparity of cultural and social capital is not merely a matter of income disparity between the rich and the poor but is related to and affected by what families can afford. The analysis of that relative importance of home and school contributed to be the most comprehensive available. Coleman (1966:257) concluded that what pupils bring to school with them is considered more important than what schools can do to them or with them.

Reynolds et al (1994:43) points out what is effective may vary by learner intake, the stage of development of the school and the outcome being measured. Significantly, Reynolds et al (1994) notes further that even the characteristics of the effective schools are found to be similar across contexts; these characteristics at the level of day-to-day school management may be different.

Watermeyer (1997:8) says that there is room for some skepticism regarding universal truths about schooling effects. Given the nature of the educational enterprise this is not surprising. However, what this review does illustrate is that with increasingly sophisticated techniques becoming available, the ability to work with fine grain of education is increasing such that the crude sledgehammer policies should become redundant. To some degree, this latter aspect is evidenced in research in developing countries.

Riddell (1997:23) in Lewis 1998 suggests that a particular set of factors like climate, resources and caliber of learners makes for an effective school and as a result high academic achievement. The initial stage for promoting quality outcomes would be to produce a multilevel baseline study that identifies the inputs, factors, contexts and processes that contribute to student academic achievement. The characteristics of an effective school cannot be picked and implemented in all schools. It is crucial for the management to look at the situations and the settings of that school, and then introduce characteristics that really suit that particular institution. Also the question of quality has to be appreciated by the stakeholders in the school.

Poor performance of learners at 'O' level is a topical issue in Zimbabwe; the need to identify the causes has become an urgent necessity. Studies carried out by Mupawaenda and Nyagura (1994:95); on factors affecting the education of women and girls in commercial farming areas in Zimbabwe have revealed the following:

- a) that learners' performance was determined by the amount of support given by parents

- b) that parents found it a waste of time to educate girls since the girl's family did not enjoy the benefits of education when she is married and
- c) that many schools lacked the basic resources, which were essential for the smooth running of the school.

2.3 Quality assurance

Quality is very difficult to define especially when one looks at organizations. This term is used extensively in the literature on effective schools. However, the literature on school effectiveness is an attempt to explain the concept of quality. Quality education refers to the basic educational skills that students need to have for their survival and to develop their potential to improve the quality of their lives. Blaug (1976:54) regard the quality of education as measurement of effective use of input resources. It is determined by the interactions between intra and extra school environments (Dove, 1989:72). Chivore (1994:35) also believes that the interaction at school level determines the quality of education.

The need of primary clients, the learners, are determined in part by societal requirements, in that one goal of school education is to equip them for employment, higher and further education and lifelong learning. The government, particularly through the medium of the National Curriculum, determines other important needs.

Fuller (1986: 12) pointed out some distinct views on schooling that are important for the running of the school:

1. The essence of the school quality lies in the relationship between the teacher and the student supported by a positive school climate, and the normative beliefs and atmosphere of the school.
2. School quality is a function of classroom and school organization, which can only manifest in what happens in the classroom and school and a well-managed school structure.
3. School quality is more symbolic than real, thus, the signals emanating from the school, that schools promote accepted values such as moral virtue and hard work are more important than substantive results or conditions



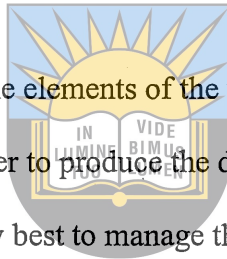
From these observations it seems that quality depends on the school that an individual or student is exposed to or attends. It is important that the climate of the school is conducive to learning so that the students can feel at home and be able to grasp all that is being taught by teachers. Principals need to create a climate in which the expertise and enthusiasm of staff and others in the wider school community can be used to help the school achieve its goals to enhancing the academic performance of learners.

University of East Hornu
Together in Excellence

2.4 School Improvement

School improvement has recently been defined as, “an approach to educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school’s capacity for managing change” a focus for educational change that improves learners’ outcomes in addition to reinforcing the school’s ability to manage change (Hopkins, Winslow and West, 1994:3).

The focus of school improvement and school effectiveness is essentially on learner achievement: 'in schools as places where primarily learning takes place, the objectives of education are primarily students' learning outcomes' Creemers (1996: 32). Creemers concedes that these outcomes can be found not only in the cognitive domain but also in the affective and social domains, but that, the cognitive objectives are crucial for the educational system in general. Schools are subject to so many pressures that for some it is a difficult task to maintain stability, let alone demonstrate improvement.



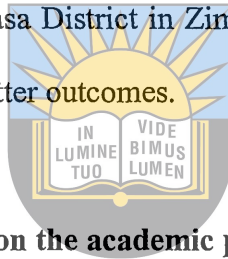
Indicators for school improvement define the elements of the whole school development that schools can put into effect in schools in order to produce the desired outcomes. This support educators as they make decisions about how best to manage their schools. School improvement provides a data –driven, research based framework for defining goals and objects for learning and for implementing strategies to improve the instructional and organizational effectiveness of every school.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Factors that influence the development of the school also determine the possibility of change. Therefore, school improvement is not produced by models, planning schemes or regulations, but by people working in that unity of change. A vital indicator for the school's capacity for improvement is its increased learning ability, because as we move towards the learning organizations, the culture of the school becomes the knowledge carrier, spanning generations of staff (MacBeath 1996:56).

Improvement and restructuring in schools should bring about or enhance equity for all learners regardless of colour. Educational reforms do not comprehensively address the real problems experienced by schools, much more needs to be done to improve education in general especially in the area of student performance which is the focus of educational institutions (Foster 1997:138). Administrators should aim at increasing student performance and raise the standards of excellency.

In this study literature review focused on the socio-economic, home and school factors affecting academic performance of learners in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe. All this was done so as to make schools more effective to produce better outcomes.



2.5 The effects of socio-economic factors on the academic performance of learners

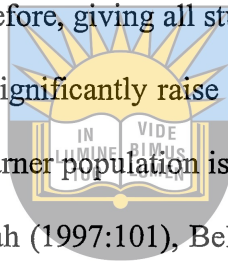
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Socio-economic status can be defined as “a person’s overall social position... to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute” (Ainley et al 1995:9). It is determined by an individual’s achievements in: education, employment and occupational status, income and wealth.

The socio-economic status (SES) of a family contributes to a great extent towards the performance of learners in a school. There has been no more consistent finding of educational research that the paramount importance of a school’s socio-economic factors makes up on academic achievement. Summarising the enormous body of research, Richard (2000:28) writes: “What makes a good or bad school is so much the physical plant and facilities as the people

involved in it –the learners, parents and the teachers. The portrait of the nation’s high poverty schools is not just a racist or classist stereotype: high poverty schools are often marked by students who generally are less active, exert less clout in school affairs, and garner few financial resources for the school, and teachers who tend to be less qualified, to have lower expectations, and to teach a watered-down curriculum”.

When a pupil with an advantaged background transfers from a low social class to a high social class school, the contextual effect is strengthened for the chosen school and weakened for the school the child left (Willms 1997:3). Therefore, giving all students access to schools with a core of middle class students and parents will significantly raise the overall quality of performance. The socio-economic status of a school’s learner population is the primary factor that is related to academic performance of learners. Chinapah (1997:101), Bellany (1999:73) and Chivore (1994: 36) established that the factors influencing learning achievement behave differently and the socio-economic factor is the most powerful predictor.



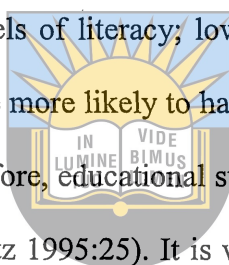
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

2.5.1 Parents’ income, wealth and occupation

Parental income is significantly correlated with school achievement and a powerful correlate of social malaise, but it offers a less telling story than the one whose account interweaves the cumulative inequities of inadequate housing, dangerous communities, ill health, poor diet, and day-to-day struggle for survival. Therefore, it requires the school to find the articulation between family and school needs. It means recognizing commonalities and differences in priorities and expectations between school and home.

Ezewu (1983:43), Smith, (1955:417) and Ugwuegbu (1985:22) argue that children from rich families are likely to progress well at school. The reason being that children from rich families have chances of attending nursery schools with well trained staff and with the best facilities. This on its own gives the child a strong educational background. This means that the parents, quite apart from the wealth or status that they are able to provide, occupy a central position in the child's education.

Children from lower SES have lower levels of literacy; lower retention rates, higher levels of problematic school behaviour, and they are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes to school. Therefore, educational success depends very strongly on the SES of one's parent (Edgar, cited in Graetz 1995:25). It is well known that access to radio and television can support educational goals and improve general knowledge.



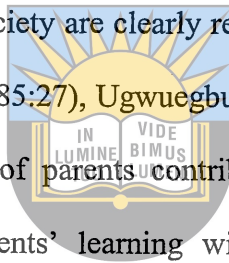
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

The relationship between family and socio-economic status (SES) and the academic performance is well established in sociological research. Most studies indicate that children from low SES families do not perform as well as they potentially could at school compared to children from high SES families (Graetz, 1995:57). This is because families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children because they provide higher levels of psychological support for their children (Williams et al 1993:21).

Data (1984:153) noted that the socio-economic difference lead to distinct patterns of behaviour

and can be correlated to educational achievement. Tamara (1997:527) states that the economic class continues to be a powerful predictor of academic performance for learners. Learners from higher socio-economic status who score higher on standardized tests are more likely to finish primary school and are more likely to advance to postgraduate education than their less advantaged peers.

Occupation of parents is an important variable in determining the socio-economic background, because so many aspects of economic, political and social life are reflected by it Legotlo (1988:44). Income, power and status in society are clearly reflected by occupation and the level of education. According to Blackledge (1985:27), Ugwuegbu (1985:22), and Chivore (1994:37), family circumstances and the education of parents contribute significantly to the academic performance of learners. However, students' learning will be enhanced when the school environment and home environment are also supportive.



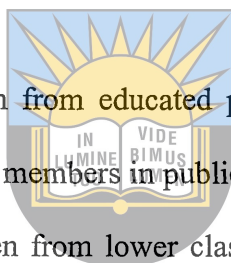
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

2.5.2 Family Structure and academic performance

As sole parent families have lower levels of income and headed by parents with lower educational attainment, the children are likely to have lower educational performance (Rich, 2000:39). In these families there is reduced contact between the child and non-custodial parent. The custodial parent has less time to spend with children in terms of supervision of schoolwork and maintaining appropriate levels of discipline, and also the lack of appropriate role model, especially for males. It is more detrimental when children in sole parent families also experience a range of other risk factors such as low income (Sparkes, 1999:70).

The effects of school social context are not the same for all pupils. A school, as a high social context has a greater effect in improving attainment of a pupil whose own family background is relatively disadvantaged than of a pupil whose family background is advantaged. Conversely, a school with a low social context has a more depressing effect on the attainment of pupils whose own family backgrounds are relatively disadvantaged (Croxford and Cowie 1996:5).

2.5.3 Parents' education and academic performance



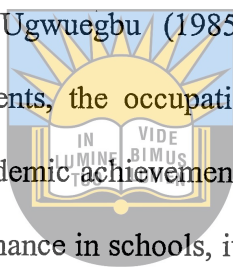
Musgrove (1966:28) suggest that children from educated parents often read newspapers and magazines. Their parents are registered as members in public libraries. He went on to argue that in their vocabularies and attitudes, children from lower class or children from lowly educated parents differ widely from those who come from middle class or educated parents. Thus, a learner from a family where both parents are teachers may be better able to cope with some classroom tasks than a student from a home where both parents are illiterate.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Home education-related factors, such as number of books in home, number of hours watching television, shared activities, and so on, have been found to be correlated with successful performance at school (Lapointe et al 1992:31). In a family environment where children have access to books, radio and television and where some reading materials are available, students do not have difficulties with reading. This is because the parents have a positive attitude to education, to read to their children and both tend to be connected with parental education and

social background as well as resources. These children are likely to perform better in school than their counterparts.

Musgrove (1996:28) argued that, in America there is more positive evidence that working and educated mothers may foster educational ambitions and promote higher attainment in school. This according to Musgrove (1996:28) suggests that poor education between parents has been held to account for the backwardness and poor academic performance. A comprehensive study of poor academic achievement as a result of family circumstances was also carried out by Blaug (1970:56), Blackedge (1985; 27) and Ugwuegbu (1985:22) who concluded that family circumstances and the dedication of parents, the occupations and income of the father and mother contribute significantly on the academic achievement of students. This means that when dealing with the issue of academic performance in schools, it should be acknowledged that there is a special encouragement and opportunities for the sons and daughters to follow in their parents' footsteps.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

2.5.4 Summary

In this study, the socio-economic factors that are to be investigated are parents' income, wealth and occupation and family structure. The effects of these socio-economic factors will be discussed later in chapter 4 and 5.

2.6 The impact of home background factors on academic performance of learners

Bellany (1999:73) argued that, “The better the care and stimulation a child receives, the greater the benefit for the national economy as well as the child.” In most societies, the home and family are the most powerful socializers of children. Children’s learning begins at birth and continues through early childhood, serving a strong preparation for schooling. Chinapah (1997:101), argues that, “factors influencing learning achievement behaves differently and the home background factor is the most powerful predictor of all three learning domains.”



Within the past three decades, the home environment has been identified as being a contributing factor in a child’s educational and cognitive development. Bloom (1990:45) hypothesized that the home environment had significant effects on the level of student learning. The home background and family processes exerts direct and indirect effects on the child’s academic performance, therefore they provide a network of physical, social, and intellectual forces and factors which affect students’ learning. The family’s level of encouragement, expectations, and educational activities in the home is related to SES, and different socio-economic groups create different learning environments that affect the learners’ academic performance (Bloom 1990:61).

Chinapah (1997:104), Bellany (1999; 73) and Chivore (1994:36) argue that the importance of the home on learners’ achievement must not be neglected. Parents play an active role and the more the family is associated with the roles and functions of educational institutions, the more profitable it will be for the clients namely, educators, parents and learners.

The combined influence of school and home background factors is not simply the sum of school factors and the background factors. Many school characteristics are closely associated with the characteristics of the families of their learners. This means that some of the effects of family background on academic performance are mediated by the school characteristics. In most cases, the separate impact of the school factors become smaller once family background is taken into account, because many of the factors related to school quality are correlated with the school's economic, social and cultural status.

2.6.1 Family size and academic performance of learners



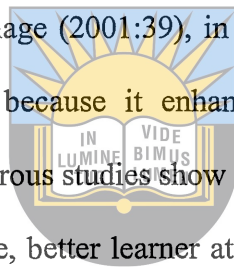
Data (1984:164) and Tamara (1997:529) indicated that one way in which the family can influence the education of the child is through the environment with which it is associated. There is lack of food, no electricity, no clothes, and many others. These conditions together with the size of the family and the nature of the relations within it greatly influence the academic performance of the learners. Data (1984:165) went on to argue that the size of the family is said to affect the progress of the child at home, because it is assumed that, the larger the family, the less attention the parent can give to her individual children.

Chivore (1994:27) established that there are certain family or home background factors that affect the academic performance of learners. It was established that smaller families tend to have more successful children than larger families. Such families fail to take an active attention in their children's education and this may contribute to the low performance in school.

The number of children in a family lowers the educational achievement for all the siblings. This is because as the family grows larger, more resources will be needed. Disadvantaged parents probably save little for their children's education and so the addition of another sibling has an impact on their savings.

2.6.2 Parental attitudes and support on academic performance of learners

Parental involvement concerns the utilization of numerous family processes which in turn create opportunities for learning. Bush and Gamage (2001:39), in Griffith et al (1998:95) pointed out that parental involvement is necessary because it enhances accountability of schools and promotes the learning environment. Numerous studies show that parent involvement is correlated with higher learner academic performance, better learner attendance, and more positive student and parent attitudes towards education (Griffith, et al 1998:95).



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Parenting, volunteering, and supporting home learning result primarily from the efforts of parents, but communicating, participating in decision-making, and collaborating with the community also require commitment and effort from schools. Current emphasis on parent involvement is rooted in the belief that parents and the home environment play a critical role in the children's intellectual and social development (Eccles and Harold, 1996:45), in Griffith, (1998:97).

These authorities argue that families, schools and communities have "overlapping spheres of influences" on student learning and development. These three spheres provide valuable support

for children, reinforce the importance of education, and contribute to a holistic environment for child development. In addition studies report that parent involvement in schools positively influences the parents themselves by increasing their community connections and empowering them in areas of their lives in Griffith, 1998:97).

The homework done with a parent or a family member present is associated with the highest attention levels and better academic performance. According to White (1997:284), the greatest difficulties with which educators have had to content, is the failure on the part of the parents to co-operate in administering the discipline of the school.

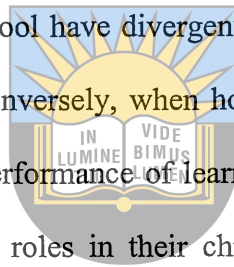


Decker E and Lemmer E (1993:153) who carried out their studies in South Africa and Waterman and Zellman (1998:370) who also carried out his studies in Uganda noted that the quality of parental attitudes towards their children's education is an important factor contributing towards the learners' academic performance. These authors argue that educative teaching necessitates a partnership between the parents and the school in order to uphold the standards of performance and produce better learning outcomes. When parents are involved in school affairs there are likely to be outstanding achievements in the child's academic performance. Thus, improved learner academic achievement is very possible if parents are co-operative and supportive.

Parent involvement in learner education appears to be associated with a range of positive outcomes for secondary school learners including fewer behaviour problems and lower dropout rates. Griffith (1998:371) and Waterman (1998:371) pointed out that parental involvement in

school activities and in the learners' schoolwork is an integral condition for learners' success. Thus, parent participation in a learner's education is essential for effective teaching and learning. In this case, the home and the parent function as the most salient out of school context for student learning, amplifying or diminishing the school's effects on learning.

Maryjoribank (1994:181) argued that, "It is generally agreed that the children's learning outcomes will be enhanced when family and school environments are supportive of learning and in harmony with each other." Thus, the parents are powerful determinants of students' achievement and when the home and school have divergent approaches to life and to learning, students are likely to perform poorly. Conversely, when home and school have similar shared goals, there will be a higher academic performance of learners. Learner achievement improve when parents are able to play four key roles in their children's learning as pointed out by Maryjoribank (1994; 181):



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

As teachers: Parents create a home environment that promotes learning, reinforces what is being taught at school, and development in life skills, children needs to become responsible adults.

As supporters: they contribute their knowledge and skills to the school, enriching the curriculum, and providing extra services and support to students.

As advocates: Parents help their children to negotiate the system and receive fair treatment, and work to make the system more responsive to all families.

As decision makers: Parents serve on advisory councils, curriculum committees, and management teams, participating in joint problem solving at every level.

2.6.3 The influence of family instability on academic performance

While factors like parental attitudes, family size and parents' education have been seen as major factors affecting the academic performance of learners, Musgrove (1966:58) sees family instability as another factor that can influence the academic performance of learners. He argued, "Regular geographical instability by moving from one place to another now and again resulted in children performing badly in classes." Parents may move to other places in search of fertile land, relocating in farms (for example the land redistribution and resettlement programme), or for better accessibility. Musgrove (1966:60) supported this idea by noting, "Of course such a history of family instability is not a necessary condition for academic performance." Therefore these movements should not disturb learners.



Dryden and Gordon (1995:29) also noted that family difficulties are often a primary source of distress, giving rise to conflicts, and disruptions both within the family as well as in school. Divorce or separation of families, or death of a parent may cause this instability. Learners from families in which there has been little parenting suffer from lack of psychological inputs from parents (Dryden and Gordon 1995:29). This in turn may limit their capacity to make use of the resources available to them whether in school or at home.

2.6.4 Summary

Literature reveals that home background factors such as family size, parental attitudes and support and family instability are associated with the academic performance of learners. The extent to which each of them influences the performance of learners will be examined later.

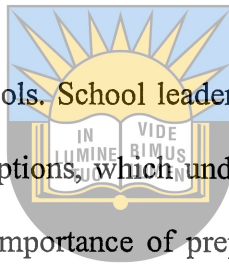
2.7 School environmental factors influencing the academic performance of learners

The effects of school social context are not the same for all learners. A school with a high social context has a greater effect in improving attainment of a pupil whose own family background is relatively disadvantaged than of a pupil whose own family background is advantaged. Conversely, a school with a low social context has a more depressing effect on the attainment of a pupil whose own family background is relatively disadvantaged (Croxford and Cowie 1996:5) in MacBeath (1996:53). Therefore, the combined effects of school and family background factors on academic performance are not simply the sum of influence of school factors and that of home background factors. This is because many characteristics of schools are closely associated with the characteristics of the families of their learners. This means that some of the effects of family background on schools results are mediated by the school environmental factors.

The instructional leaders in schools have heavily let down the education system as a whole (Farrant, 1980:133). Farrant further maintains that the roles of the school administrator are many, but the major one is that of improving the performance of educators by offering

encouragement, guidance and motivation. This is because when learners fail, educators are blamed yet they are not supervised for effective and quality teaching. Nyagura (1991:53) argued that good leadership of a school is positively related to high academic performance. He argued that for as long as the head has no vision, educators and learners lose direction resulting in poor academic outcomes. Dove (1989: 35) noted that educators need constant supervision and staff development to update them with the latest developments in the education system.

2.7.1 The impact of ineffective leadership on the academic performance of learners



Effective leadership creates effective schools. School leaders need professional development to improve their skills. These are the assumptions, which underpin all the research that has been done on effective schooling and on the importance of preparation for, and instruction in, the necessary qualities of school leadership Benjamin (1997:102).

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

As a matter of fact several papers mentioned the role of leadership as a key determinant for academic performance of students (Lezotte and Leithwood 1989:814). The proven effects of educational leadership, principally associated with the role of the head and the management team, have been increased. The clearest significance is not only of the quality of leaders but their style and the role they play in the school. It is often underlined in the existence of a shared, professional and integrative leadership around common goals in effective schools. This occurrence of shared goals put into practice in a collaborative way is another effective factor that benefits learners both of high and low socio-economic status.

The unity of goals and values of the school does however require, and at the same time give rise to a positive and suitable work climate, which appears constantly as an important factor. Thus, a good climate is favoured by the parents' involvement in the education of their children, thereby indirectly affecting pupils' achievement (Coleman, 1994:112). Contributing to the creation of this atmosphere and to students' academic achievement or performance, is the setting of learners' rights and responsibilities whereby effectiveness increases when students raise their self-esteem, have an active role in the classroom and school, and consider themselves responsible for their own learning.

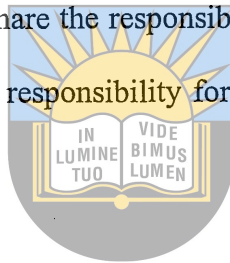


Studies carried out by Reynolds et al (1992:4) suggested that a comparison of the academic outcomes of school showed that poor administrative approaches accounted for 80% of the variations in student academic performance. Reynolds et al (1992:4) argued that there is a high inter-correlation between school academic effectiveness and leadership styles. Reynolds et al (1992:9) also noted that in the system of rewards and punishment, ample use of rewards, praise and appreciation are associated with favourable outcomes. The school environment, good working conditions, responsiveness to the distribution of human and material resources, parental involvement, poor management focuses, among others contribute to the effectiveness of a school.

Educational management theories present a number of leadership styles that can be used in educational settings. The most striking is Sergiovanni's latest leadership approach as advocated by Caldwell et al, (in Bush and West Burnham 1994:154). Sergiovanni suggests that the

technical and human facets of leadership, by themselves, may simply ensure that the school will not be effective. He also says that to ensure the highest level of achievement over time, an important aspect of excellence, there must be symbolic and cultural leadership. To illustrate the symbolic leadership, he refers to the leadership that calls for communicating vision in a way that ensures commitment among all in the school community. Symbolic leadership includes the words, which are symbols for the meanings and value we wish to communicate.

Although the school head is ultimately responsible for the quality of the school, it is both necessary and appropriate that educators share the responsibility for instructional leadership. As a result, educators work together to share responsibility for helping each other learn and grow (Hoerr, 1996:20).



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Sergiovanni, quoted by Caldwell et al (1992:57) advocates “value-added leadership” which calls for empowerments in four major respects: empowerment of other leaders, empowerment in decision-making, empowerment through professional development and training programmes so that all in the school community have the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in a self-managing school.

West-Burnham (1989:116) in Sergiovanni T J (1991:78) acknowledges that all schools that are perceived as being effective are properly being managed, more or less successfully, rather than led. Management is a crucial determinant of organizational success and operates within a context and criteria. Management works as a team responsible for helping others to fulfill the set goals of high academic achievement. This exercise can be useful if the leadership has some of the

essential components mentioned by West-Burnham (1997:117), in Bush and West Burnham 1994:160). There are four components, which are not hierarchical, but interdependent with each being fully effective, namely, vision, creativity, sensitivity and subsidiary.

Another component that is central in leadership is managing change. This is because education is not static and over years education has had to change. To be able to manage change is a component of effectiveness in school leadership, but that in improving change should not be seen as a different thing to be managed because there are times when it is not necessary to change but it is a central abiding process.



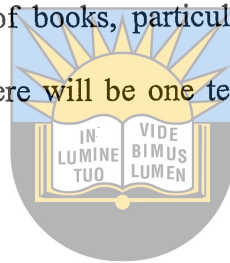
2.7.2 The effects of lack of resources on academic performance of learners

Problems of inadequate resources in school are an important factor influencing the academic performance of students. Kgobe (2000:39), Bellany (1999:10), Nyagura (1993:34), and Chivore (1994:37), identified that the lack of material resources affects academic performance of learners. Poor physical facilities and lack of learning and teaching materials are the key factors. Nyagura (1991: 28), in his studies in Zimbabwe established that schools that are well equipped with enough facilities such as libraries, textbooks, adequate human resources, machinery and stationery, did far much better than those without.

Bellany (1999:10) noted that, in many countries, particularly in low-income countries, the situation is pervasive grimness in the physical environment and the intellectual atmosphere of the learning environments. Sometimes there is not even a chalkboard. Classrooms in most rural areas

tend to be roughly constructed, and have no electricity. This needs the creativity of the teacher so that his or her goals can be achieved.

Chivore (1994:37), “Common sense suggests that well educated and trained teachers are, rendered less effective if schools lack facilities, equipment and materials necessary for quality teaching and learning.” He went on to argue that, only too often teachers in training learn how to use overhead projectors only to be posted to schools where seating, blackboards and chalk are lacking. Teacher in Zimbabwe Magazine for June (1996:12) says, “In almost every Zimbabwean rural school there is a chronic shortage of books, particularly textbooks and other essential reference books. In some poor schools there will be one text book per subject between sister schools.”



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

It is therefore important that, for a teacher to be effective there is need for effective schools. This enhances better academic achievement in schools. In the majority of rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe, and the same in developing countries, the academic performance of learners is affected by shortages of resources. Shortages of library facilities, textbooks, laboratory equipment, classroom and furniture, teacher accommodation, funds and many others have contributed to the decline of academic performance in rural schools. In addition, teacher support services are totally inadequate and the learning process is a bit difficult in most schools.

2.7.3 Learner characteristics and the academic performance of learners

Motivation and interest in learning are some of the factors influencing the learning process that help learners acquire and achieve learning goals. Mc Coombs (1996:94) noted that learning tasks should be related to learner interests and this would encourage and increase their own control and choice in fostering the development of learning skills. In most cases educators are faced with teaching unmotivated learners, and many of them have experienced limited success in trying to meet them. This has led to loss of interest in learning among learners (McCoombs 1996:94). Learners who are more involved in delinquent behaviour, for instance, physical fights, vandalism, and trouble at school, are more likely to perform poorly.

Evidence indicates that problem behaviour and communities contribute to the development of problem behaviour by failing to provide the necessary social skills and support and by modeling inappropriate behaviour (Lewis et al 1998:446). This means that children may enter school with a learning history that sets them for further behavioural problems. It is therefore, necessary for schools to respond proactively and consistently. Unfortunately, current school discipline practices often exacerbate and contribute to children and youths' pattern of challenging behaviours (Lewis et al 1998:447). However, Moles (1990:3) adds to this by including all behaviour that obstructs successful learning, including teacher incompetence as discipline.

Examples of learner behaviour range from not concentrating in the classroom and neglecting to do homework, not adhering to the dress code of the school, theft and acts of violence and vandalism.

Educators argued that some learners are ill- disciplined and difficult to work with (Legotlo et al 1996:115). This also affects the relationship between teachers and students. It was observed that an atmosphere of no work was the order of the day, and expecting them to do well in the classroom and examinations would be a miracle. It was also observed that the level of student disruptive behaviour is increasing at a higher proportion and this impacts negatively on their commitment to work. Students sometimes ignore the instructions of teachers and promote a culture of 'no work'.

The other problem that makes students lack commitment is unemployment. Lack of job opportunities and high rates of unemployment among educated people is demotivating students, e.g. many teachers in Zimbabwe are unemployed which encourages the students to overlook the value of education (Legotlo et al 1996:116). Evidence indicates that parents and communities contribute to the development of problem behaviour by failing to provide the necessary social skills and support and by modeling inappropriate behaviour (Lewis 1998:446).

However, literature shows the following variables as important determinants of learner attitude towards school: Parental influence, peer influence, the media, age, gender, and type of school, political violence and parental socio-economic status.

2.7.4 The impact of educator ineffectiveness on the academic performance of learners

In the teaching process, educator performance in affective, cognitive and behavioural domains can directly affect the students' learning process and their affective, cognitive and behavioural development. Therefore, the consideration of teacher effectiveness should include the quality of teacher competence and performance in these domains and their effects on learners' development (Cheng and Tsui 1998:343). Effective educators must have a body of knowledge essential for teaching, know how to apply it and use the competence appropriately to achieve the expected educational outcomes.



Chivore (1994:37) noted that a successful educator (an effective educator) would be a person able to discern from alternatives what makes instruction successful and what does not, and to that end, this person would hold views on what teaching seeks to achieve. The most fundamental condition underlying the process of school achievement and quality learning is the educator who operationalise at the classroom level. The success of learners in the examinations is seen as dependent on the hard work and motivation of the educators rather than pre-existing differences in ability, intelligence, and personality. Educators should be capable of creating the most suitable environment for learners to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Another important factor is of trained and untrained educators. Chivore (1994:42) summarized major findings based on studies in countries such as India, Iraq and Sierra Leone. According to these studies, trained educators are more effective and have more positive influence on learner performance both in primary and secondary schools. The success or failure of learners in school

is largely determined by the ability of the educator to deliver goods. Educator training is therefore seen to have positive influence on the academic performance of learners.

2.7.5 Summary

In this study, school environmental factors such as lack of resource materials, effective leadership, learner characteristics and poor management focuses were investigated. Literature reveals that these are some of the factors that influence the performance of learners in secondary schools.



2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has attempted to establish from major theorists and authorities, some of the major factors associated with the academic performance of learners in schools. The review established that there are socio-economic, home and school factors associated with the academic performance of learners. The variables established from the review of related literature were to be focused in this study. The extent to which each factor influences the performance of learners was examined.

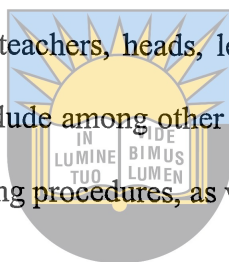
The following chapter on research methodology shall briefly and clearly show how the researcher carried out the study on factors that are associated with the academic performance of learners.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

In designing this research, the researcher considered the aim of the study as a guideline to this crucial stage of study. Thus, Miller (1979:12) sees the research design as the planned sequence of the entire process involved in conducting research. As mentioned previously, the aim of the study was to investigate the factors associated with the academic performance of learners. The researcher will use the perceptions of the teachers, heads, learners and parents of the selected communities. The research design shall include among other aspects, the type of study, research instruments, population, sample and sampling procedures, as well as data collection instruments.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

3.2 Research Design

Research design consists of answers to a series of questions such as: will the study be theoretical or empirical? Will it rely on available data or surveys? How and from whom will data be collected and what instruments will be used? (Acker, 1997:216). This study will employ the descriptive survey design. Surveys allow widespread opinion to be ascertained and they also gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions (Cohen and Manion, 1994:83). Further, surveys ask many respondents about their beliefs, opinions, characteristics and past or present behaviour (Newman, 1997:228). For these reasons, the survey will be appropriate for investigating factors that influence the academic performance of students at 'O' level. The descriptive survey research will make it possible to

collect data from a relatively large number of teachers, school heads, learners and parents by probing their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and experiences, through interviews and questionnaires. However, inherent in survey designs are some problems. Surveys can be reactive and misleading. Standardised questionnaires may miss out what is most important to the respondents. Surveys also only access those who are willing and co-operative. They may make the respondent feel special, thereby producing responses that may be artificial or inaccurate.

The sampling will be made to produce a sample that is representative of the population. Interviews will be employed to have a fuller understanding of respondents' views, beliefs and perceptions on the factors associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners. Questionnaires will be both open-ended and close-ended. The design shall be non-experimental.

Keeves (1990:21) indicated that the person using quantitative methods must make many qualitative decisions regarding the question to pose. Thus, when using qualitative methods, certain quantitative summaries, classifications, and analysis are a useful part of the research. Interviews and focus group discussions are to be conducted with the above-mentioned people so as to obtain their views about factors associated with the academic performance was concerned.

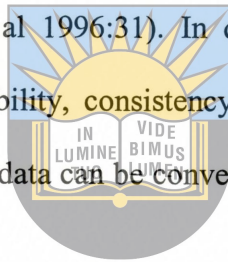
The research design is a non-experimental independent group design. The design is appropriate for the following reasons:

- The nature of the research problem does not allow for the manipulation of any independent variables.
- Respondents from each group was selected and assigned randomly.

- Respondents from each group could be exposed to the same stimuli (items in the questionnaire) and differences between them be compared.
- There is very little control of extraneous variables.

3.2.1 Qualitative approach

Qualitative research design is grounded on the assumptions that features of the social environment are constructed as interpretations by individuals and that these interpretations tends to be transitory and situational (Gall, et al 1996:31). In quantitative research, reliability is traditionally associated with accuracy, stability, consistency and repeatability of the research (Nieman et al; 2000:284). The quantitative data can be converted into numerical form by coding and scoring procedures.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Thus, qualitative research design is multi-method in its focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its matter. A qualitative researcher studies things in its natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to the researcher. The researcher will build theory from questionnaires and interviews by gaining the insider's perspective, and the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive, expressed in words rather than in numbers.

3.2.2 Quantitative approach

Using a quantitative approach, facts, claims and assertions are presented in numerical forms. Quantitative research methods are generally associated with systematic measurement, experimental and quasi-experimental methods, statistical analysis and mathematical models. It is a positivist orientation where knowledge is gained through scientific and experimental research and is objective and measurable. It assumes that social facts have an objective reality and variables can be identified, relationships measured and data is reduced to numerical indices. In this research, both qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation will be used:



3.3 Population of the study

According to Nkapa (1997:33), a population refers to all of the events, things or individuals to be represented. The population of the study will be 27 secondary schools, which is the total number of secondary schools found in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe. In the district, only 3 schools have boarding facilities and the rest are rural day schools with characteristics that are common and these are of much interest to the researcher.

3.3.1 Sample of the study

Usually the target population is too large for the researcher to work with. The geographical area may be too widespread and the number of respondents may be too many for the researcher's limited resources. According to Best and Khan (1993:54) a sample is a small proposition of a

selected population for analysis. Thus, from the population of 27 schools, a purposeful sampling of 3 schools will be done. All the 3 secondary schools are in one circuit and one of the schools is a mission school, the other is a council school and the last one is a government school. From each school, 7 educators, 6 parents, 3 school heads or deputy heads and 45 learners will be selected using random sampling. The total number of respondents that are expected to complete the questionnaires and interviews is 77. The table below shows the sample of the research:

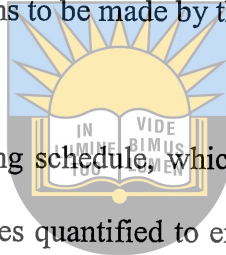
Table 3.1 Sample of the research

School	Head or Deputy	Educators	'O' level learners	SDC chairperson/parents	Total
A	1	6	3 groups (5 in each)	3	25
B	1	7	3 groups (5 in each)	3	26
C	1	7	3 groups (5 in each)	3	26
Total	3	20	45	9	77

Learners and parents will be interviewed, while a questionnaire will be administered to educators and school heads to obtain their perceptions on the factors associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners in Mutasa District. Data will be collected from 77 respondents.

3.3.2 Data collection plan

In this study interviews and questionnaires will be used. Questionnaires will be personally distributed to the respondents and the researcher will retrieve the completed questionnaires after a period of about 4 to 7 days. Face- to- face interviews with parents and learners will be ideal to obtain their perceptions on the factors impacting on academic performance while questionnaires will be administered to school heads and teachers. This code guarantees a positive delivery and return. Personal administration of questionnaires provides opportunity for clarifying questions to be asked by respondents and for explanations to be made by the researcher.



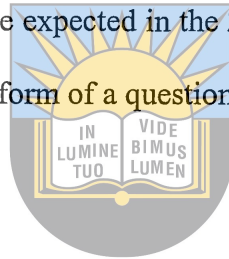
The data will be rated by means of a rating schedule, which will be presented in the form of interviews and questionnaires with responses quantified to enable analysis with SPSS. The use of this method is preferred as the information will be easy to analyse using the computer if presented in terms of responses. The mean scores will be correlated to each factor to find out which factors are more associated with the academic performance of learners in the selected schools.

The study will use stakeholders, namely parents, learners, educators and school heads to rate the factors in terms of their influence to academic achievement. In the rating instrument there are indicators of effectiveness that are advocated by John MacBeath (1996:6). The following 5-factors/ pointers will be selected for this study:

- Parental involvement
- Leadership

- Student characteristics
- Resource materials
- Family background

The quality indicators mentioned above, extracted from John MacBeath's instrument of 1996, help in determining the effectiveness of the school and as a result promote learner achievement in school. The fact that the instruments will be shaped by the discourse, the literature on effective schools as well as the people's own individual experiences of schools, is reason enough to presuppose that the same results will also be expected in the Zimbabwean situation. In this study the rating schedule will be presented in the form of a questionnaire and interview guides.



3.4 Research Instruments

University of Fort Hare

Together in Excellence

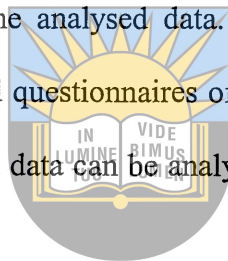
Attempting to solicit stakeholders' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs is problematic in that most data collection instruments are unreliable. Two main types of research instruments shall be used. These are the questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires will make use of both open ended and closed-ended items and the interviews will consist of structured open-ended items. Both instruments will seek to elicit the same data whereby interviews will explore further, issues brought up in the survey questionnaire.

The present study will take full cognizance of the involvement of people as subjects. Approval to carry out the study will be sought from the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology as well

as form the District. Individual consent of respondents will be obtained through an introductory letter, stating that participation is voluntary.

3.4.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire is the instrument that is going to be used for collecting data from the teachers and the school heads about the factors that influence academic performance in secondary schools. Questionnaires shall be open-ended and closed-ended. The closed-ended questionnaires will be used to quantify the analysed data. This is in line with Oppenheim (1975:43) who noted that the use of closed questionnaires often means that more questions can be asked within a given period of time and data can be analysed easily. The questionnaires will be used because of the following reasons:



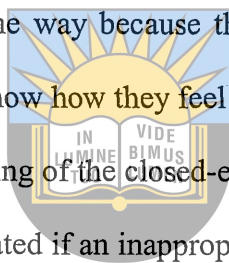
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

1. They allow the collection of a large amount of data.
2. It is economical in terms of money and time
3. The use of questionnaires enables the respondents to remain anonymous and be honest in their responses

According to Gall and Borg (1999:297) a well-designed questionnaire can elicit in-depth information, and allows for a measure of quantification. Questionnaires tend to be more reliable, and encourage honesty from respondents, as there is anonymity. Furthermore, questionnaires are appropriate to people who are literate. Therefore, respondents will be able to complete the questionnaire with minimum assistance from the researcher. Each respondent will be given the

same set of items as everyone else, phrased in the same way and the data obtained from questionnaires is more comparable as compared to that obtained by means of interviews.

Interfering attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions from expressed opinion however has limitations. Respondents may conceal attitudes and express socially acceptable opinion (Best and Khan 1993:122). The tendency of asking respondents to answer all questions in a specific direction regardless of the content of the questions, response set is another problem (Newman 1997:161, Bless and Higson-Smith 2000:115). The response bias is the tendency of some people to respond to a large number of questions in the same way because they may consult each other out of laziness. Moreover some people may not know how they feel about the issue, never having given the idea serious thought. Another shortcoming of the closed-ended items is that, it is easy for one to guess. A respondent may also feel frustrated if an inappropriate response category is not given or if there is no room for clarification.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Some of the problems encountered in open-ended questions will be included in the questionnaire. These questions solicit information-requiring respondents to further explain or clarify issues. Open-ended items are however, demanding in terms of handling, interpreting, coding and analyzing.

3.4.2 The interviews

The interview is an instrument that is going to solicit data through face-to-face sessions with learners and parents. The reports present findings of the study based on these instruments. The

decision to use interviews was based on the following advantages: Firstly, interviews are holistic in that they enable individuals to conceptualize their careers within their total life experiences, taking account of historical influences on career development.

Secondly, interviews allow flexibility, depth of clarification, and permit probing in order to obtain more complete data. They also provide a frame within which to react without placing any constraints on the reaction. Thirdly, unexpected responses, which may reveal significant information not anticipated by the researcher, cannot be incorporated. The fourth advantage is that the researcher is able to establish and maintain rapport with the respondents, to assess the respondents' level of knowledge, and to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of communication. With a small representative sample of the population, interviews can afford an indispensable way to learn about the nature of variation and how to go about operationalising it.

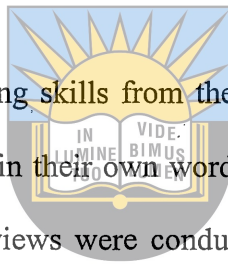


University of Fort Hare *Together in Excellence*

Using a structured interview schedule, interviews are considered the most appropriate form of interview. Such guides provide an outline of themes to be covered to make data collection more systematic and comprehensive for each respondent, while providing sufficient flexibility to explore concepts as fully as necessary (Bless and Hingson-Smith 2001:105). In this way interviews will remain both conversational and situational. The interviews will be structured on the basis of clusters of factors emerging from the literature review on school effectiveness and the factors affecting academic performance of students.

Interviews have several disadvantages. Personal interviews are costly in terms of time and money. The interviewer spent a lot of time interviewing one person and also had to travel

extensively to reach respondents. These constraints resulted in a small interview sample for the study (Bless and Higson-Smith 2000:101). The presence of the interviewer can also be perceived as a handicap as far as anonymity and respect for the private lives of interviewees are concerned. Respondents can also be embarrassed by the questions which touch their private issues in front of the interviewer, whereas they would respond more freely and honestly if left alone to fill an anonymous questionnaire. Also, due to stress, the respondents may forget important information. Moreover, such factors like the social status, sex and age of the interviewer can affect the respondents' answers (Bless and Higson-Smith 2000:109).



Interviews do not require reading or writing skills from the respondents. The respondents can explain in a natural and spontaneous way in their own words or language, and literacy is not a restriction. Therefore, in this study, interviews were conducted to learners and parents of the selected schools.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

3.5 The Pilot study

Whichever method of data collection a researcher uses, trial testing of the measuring instruments should be undertaken using a few subjects whose characteristics are similar to those in the sample. The pilot study was carried out in one secondary school from Mutasa District. Its purpose was to ensure a satisfactory level of functionality, to estimate reliability, to obtain new insights and eliminate ambiguities. Questionnaires were administered among 1 school head and 6 educators while interviews were administered to 1 parent and 10 learners of a selected school.

The pilot study was administered to determine whether instruments were adequate. It was also meant to reveal whether the research situation was plausible, and how long it would take to respond to the questionnaire.

3.6 Validity and reliability

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



3.6.1 Reliability

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Oppenheim (1992:159) observes that adequate reliability is a precondition to validity. Reliability is concerned with consistency of measures (Bless and Higson-Smith 2000:126). It also refers to the degree of internal consistency of a measuring instrument. In this case, a reliable instrument yields the same results for the same individuals regardless of when it is administered and who the researcher is.

In order to arrive at a measure of reliability during the study, evidence was derived from different data collection techniques and each instrument was used to the best current state of art. In this research reliability was established from the pilot study, which was conducted. It should

be noted that to have a valid and reliable research, depends on meticulous steps and plans taken from the day such research is conceived to completion of it.

3.7 Validity

Validity refers to whether the researcher is measuring what is intended by using given instruments or procedures. To have valid and reliable research depends on the steps and plans taken from the day such research is convinced to completion of study. Fundamentally, all procedures for determining validity are concerned with the relationship between performance in the test and other independently observable facts about behaviour characteristics under consideration. There is no one validity in this research and the most important classification of types of validity is:



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

3.7.1 Construct validity

Nkapa (1997:71) argued that construct validity is the extent to which an instrument measures a hypothetical construct, which it sets to measure. To take care of construct validity, the researcher shall carry out a factor analysis after the administration of the instruments after a large pool of items than required for the final version of the instruments. A comparison of findings will also made to check the construct validity.

3.7.2 Content validity

Content validity involves essentially the systematic examination of the content of questionnaires, interviews or observation guides to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behaviour domain to be measured. This is the extent to which the items of an instrument are representative of the content and behaviour specified by the theoretical concept being measured. Content validity shall be established through estimated comparisons of the sample of items with the content and behaviour, which they should represent. If the sample of items covers all aspects of the content and behaviours, a high degree of content validity is attained.



3.7.3 Concurrent validity

Concurrent validity is applicable when a new instrument is administered at the same point in time as well as the well-known instrument is needed.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

3.7.4 Predictive validity

This is the extent to which the predictions made by an instrument are confirmed by the later behaviour of respondents. It is concerned with the prediction of future performance.

3.7.5 Criteria-related validity

Criteria-related validity indicates the extent to which an instrument yields the same results as a more widely accepted measure. The degree of criteria-related validity was obtained by correlating the results obtained from the administration of the instruments. The resulting correlation coefficient is an estimate of criterion-related validity. Criterion-related validity is of two types, namely: concurrent validity and predictive validity.

3.8 Data analysis procedures

Analysis will be made through summarizing, describing, and interpreting the findings. Information will be presented in tables and graphs for easy analysis. Question items shall be entered on the data sheet for which it is easy to establish the number of respondents who will identify a particular factor. All this will be done after the collection from the interviewee's answer sheet and questionnaire answer sheets. Most data will be tabulated, summarized and integrated to provide a comprehensive ethnographic analysis.

The researcher shall use the regression model to explore some of the implications of the results, and can calculate the predicted values of the dependent variable for various assumed values of the explanatory variable. Regression towards the mean involves a subtle sort of data mining. If one wants to estimate some expected score or see whether the dispersion in the scores is increasing or decreasing, then a random sample should be used. The correlation method, which seeks to determine how well a linear or other equation explains the relationship between variables, will be looked at.

The collected data will be presented in written form, graphs and tables. This will be drawn from responses captured from the completed instruments. The overall strategy to be used in the analysis thus will provide space for the research to remain loyal to the views and perspectives of the interviewees while at the same time drawing on the critical perspectives of the researcher.

Most data will be tabulated to determine the results and their significance and conclusions will be drawn from numerical information. Also data will be entered in the SPSS from which it will be easy to establish the number of respondents who will identify a particular factor.



3.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the design to be used in this research. In the process, issues like the pilot study, instruments, the population, the sample, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, reliability and validity were discussed. The problems, which were identified, will be discussed.

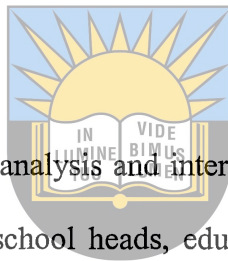
The researcher is quite satisfied that given the steps that are going to be taken from the research design to the completion stage, which is the data analysis, the findings in this research are likely to be a true reflection of the situation in Mutasa District rural schools. It is also a true representation of the factors associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners in the district. The following chapter on research findings gives an overview of the responses given as factors associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 4

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the methodology and design of the study. The population, sample and sampling procedures were also described. Questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection methods.



This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the following categories of respondents: school heads, educators, learners and parents. These respondents gave their views on the factors associated with the academic performance of learners in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe. The results are based on the following critical questions:

- 1) What socio-economic factors impact on the academic performance of 'O' level learners?
- 2) Are there any home background factors associated with the academic performance of learners?
- 3) What school environmental factors are associated with the academic performance of 'O' level learners?

4.2 Demographic questionnaire data

The following data was obtained from 77 respondents comprising of 3 school heads, 20 educators, 45 learners and 9 parents. Out of the subjects issued in the questionnaire and the interview guides, all of them responded.

Table 4.1 Sex of school heads and educators

(N=23)

	Educators	%	Heads	%
Male	12	60	2	66.7
Female	8	40	1	33.3
Total	20	100	3	100

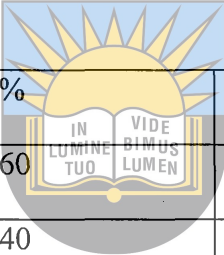


Table 4.1 shows the number of school heads and educators and their sex. Two (66.7%) of the school heads that responded, were male while 1 (33.3%) was female. 12 (60%) of the educators that responded were male and 8(40%) were female.

Table 4.2 Age of respondents

(N=23)

Age Range	School Heads	%	Educators	%
20-29 years	0	0	4	20
30-39 years	1	33.3	15	75
40-49 years	0	0	1	5
50-59 years	2	66.7	0	0
Above 60 years	0	0	0	0
Total	3	100	20	100

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Table 4.2 shows the age of respondents. It shows that 66.7% of the school heads are in the range of 50-59 years. One (33.3%) of the school heads revealed that he is in the range of 30-39 years. The data in the table also shows that most educators (75%) are in their middle age of 30-39. 20% of the educators are below 30 years.

Table 4.3 The academic and professional qualifications of respondents

(N=32)

Qualification	School heads	%	Educators	%	School development Committee	%
Below standard 5	0	0	0	0	4	44.4
Standard 6	0	0	0	0	3	33.3
Junior certificate	0	0	0	0	1	11.1
Ordinary level +training	0	0	3	15	1	11.1
Advanced level +training	0	0	7	35	0	0
B/A BSc	1	33.3	5	25	0	0
B.ED	0	0	4	20	0	0
M.ED	2	66.7	1	5	0	0
Total	3	100	20	100	9	100

Table 4.3 shows that 2 school heads have Masters degrees and 1 head has a Bachelor of Arts degree. Most of the educators (35%) have 'A' level and training whilst others have 'O' level and training and Bachelor of Arts and Science respectively. Only 1(5%) educator has a Masters degree in Education. Most parents (77%) have either standard 5 or below and only 1 parent has one junior certificate and the other has an ordinary level certificate.

Table 4.4 Experience of school heads and educators

No. of years experienced	School heads	%	Educators	%
Less than 1 year	0	0	1	5
1-5 years	0	0	6	30
6-10 years	2	66.7	7	35
11-15 years	1	33.3	6	30
16-20 years	0	0	0	0
Over 21 years	0	0	0	0
Total	3	100	20	100


University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

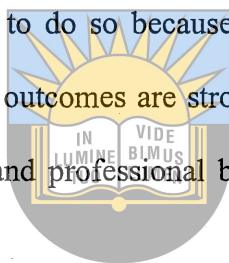
Table 4.4 above shows that most school heads and educators have between 1-15 years of experience. Two school heads indicated that they have 6-10 years of experience and one indicated that he has 11-15 years of experience. This shows that most heads and educators in Mutasa District are well experienced in their profession.

4.3 Socio-economic factors associated with the academic performance of learners.

The socio-economic status (SES) of a family contributes to a great extent and is the primary factor towards the performance of learners in schools. Parental wealth, income, occupation and family structure give learners of better-educated parents a wide range of advantages. Chinapah

(1994:101), Bellany (1999:73) and Chivore (1994:36) established that the factors influencing learning achievement behave differently and the socio-economic factor is the most powerful predictor.

The findings of this study reveal that family circumstances such as parental income, wealth, occupation and family structure were a serious constraint on the academic performance of learners, especially in rural schools. It should be noted however, that results on this item could be an indication of socio-economic class, as parents may be willing to offer what they have and participate in school activities but unable to do so because they do not have money. As one educator indicated, differences in learning outcomes are strongly associated with differences in the level of the SES, parental education and professional backgrounds. This finding was also established in the literature review.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

4.3.1 Family circumstances and academic performance

Table 4.5 and figure 4.1 below shows the respondents' perceptions on the question whether family circumstances are associated with the academic performance of learners. On this issue, 35 (51.4%) of the respondents agree totally and strongly that family circumstances are one of the factors that are associated with the academic performance of learners in schools. Like most respondents indicated, families with parents who are educated rely on very low income as most of them are not working and depend on peasant farming.

Table 4.5 Perceptions of respondents on family circumstances.

(N=68)

	Totally agree		Agree but not strongly		Disagree totally		Disagree but not strongly		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Family circumstances contribute to academic performance												
School heads	2	66.7	0	0	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	3	100
Educators	3	15	8	40	2	10	4	20	3	15	20	100
Learners	16	17.7	6	4.4	19	20	4	4.4	0	0	45	100
Total	21		14		22		8		3		68	100

University of Fort Hare

Together in Excellence

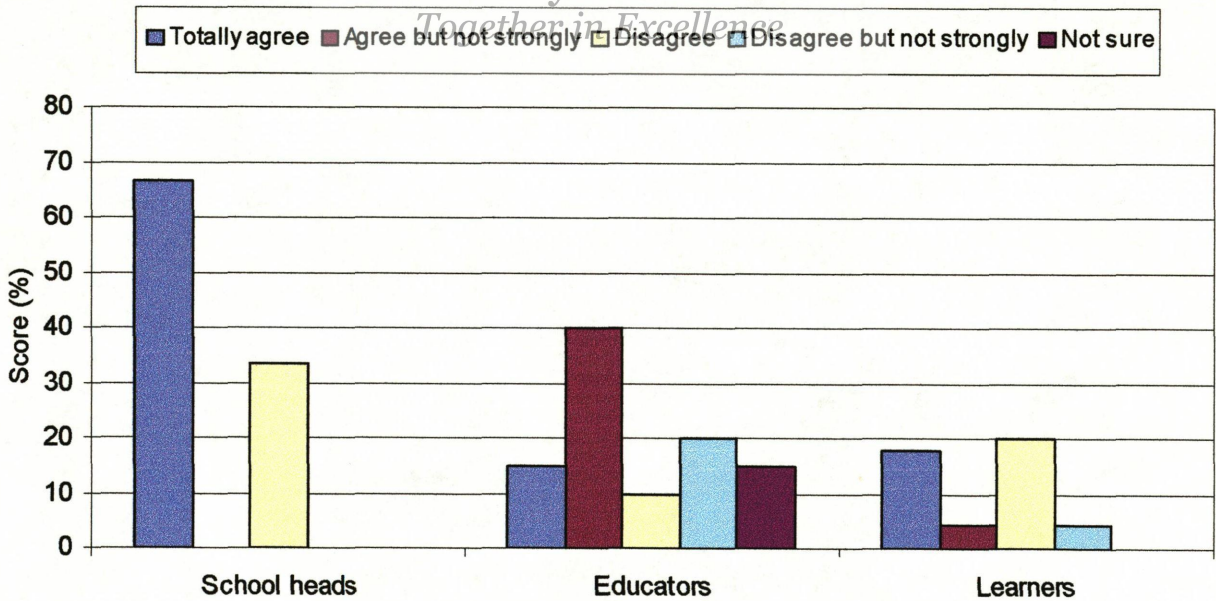
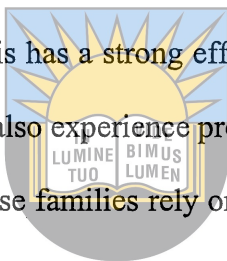


Figure 4.1: Perceptions of respondents on family circumstances

According to school heads, 66.7% of them totally agree that family circumstances are one of the factors that are associated with performance of learners. A typical response from one school head was:

“Most learners complain that they leave their homes without eating breakfast, walk long distances to school and are not attentive in class because of hunger. I’ve witnessed 2 students who collapsed because of hunger.”

This means that some families don’t have food or do not have money to buy food and struggling very hard for their children to attend school. This has a strong effect on the academic performance of the learners from those families. School heads also experience problems with these poor families. Parents have problems in paying school fees as these families rely on very low income mainly coming from subsistence farming.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

However, one school head (33.3%) disagrees that family circumstances are associated with academic performance. He indicated that some learners are very lazy and lack determination in their work hence they perform badly in class.

Some learners (21%) agree that their performance was influenced by family circumstances. They also experience difficulties with facilities, which enable them to do schoolwork at home. One of the learners supported this by indicating that:

“There is shortage of paraffin at home as we use paraffin lamps to do our homework”.

Another respondent: There is no studying at home since there will be always a lot of work to do after school.

Learners are engaged in working in the garden, fields, cooking, and any other work that is to be done, leaving no time to study. These are the parents who do not monitor and assist their children's homework.

The majority of learners (79%) disagree that their performance was influenced by family circumstances. This is a response from one of them:

" I don't think it is family circumstances which makes us fail. I think it is the problem of teachers and school heads that do not supply us with the necessary materials and homework. Some teachers never give homework."

Some educators indicated that most learners fail to do well and to participate in class because of an inferiority complex as their parents cannot afford to buy school uniforms. These learners are shy to participate fully in many activities because they will not be presentable enough like their counterparts. Educators also indicated that some learners go to school late especially in winter because they don't have shoes, they walk barefooted in gravel roads. The socio-economic status (SES) is different from family to family and it is very difficult for educators to change it.

However, 22 (32.3%) of the respondents disagree that family circumstances are associated with academic performance. These families have many facilities at home, which enable learners to do homework. They have tapped water, electricity, and books to read at home. Despite the fact that most families are constrained with lack of income, some learners work hard to improve themselves rather than waiting to be spoon-fed.

The research established that SES, parental support and the education of parents contribute a lot to the performance of learners. Most homes have no libraries because the parents have no money to buy books and some never think about it. Therefore, children cannot do well without the support of parents.

These findings coincide with (Williams et al 1993:21) who indicated that families where parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children because they provide higher levels of psychological support for their children.



4.3.2 Summary

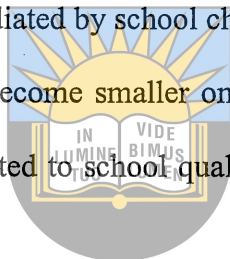
Respondents identified the following factors on socio-economic status: family circumstances such as parent income, occupation, wealth and family structure. Most of them agreed that the socio-economic status of a family or community contribute to the academic performance of learners. Therefore, the socio-economic difference leads to distinct patterns of behaviour and can be correlated to educational achievement. This finding was also supported in the literature review.

4.4 Home background factors associated with the academic performance of learners

The home background exerts direct and indirect influences on the child's performance. It provides a net of physical, social and intellectual forces and factors, which affect children's learning. The family's level of encouragement, expectations and educational activities in the home is related to SES, and different socio-economic groups create different learning environments that affect the learners'

academic performance (Bloom 1990:61). The importance of the home on learners' achievement must not be neglected. Parents play an active role and the more the family is associated with the roles and functions of educational institutions, the more profitable it will be for clients namely; educators, parents and learners.

The combined influence of school environment and home background factors is not simply the sum of school environment and the background factors. Many school characteristics are closely associated with the characteristics of the families of their learners. This means that some of the effects of family background on academic performance are mediated by school characteristics. In most cases, the separate impact of the school environmental factors become smaller once the family background is taken into account, because many of the factors are related to school quality and are correlated with the school's economic, social and cultural status.



University of Fort Hare

Together in Excellence

The findings of this study reveal that home background factors such as family size, family instability, parental attitudes and support are contributing factors to the performance of learners. Literature reveals that parental involvement is correlated with higher performance, better learner attendance, and more positive students and parent attitudes towards education (Griffits et al 1998:95). Parenting, volunteering and supporting home learning result primarily from the efforts of parents, but communicating, participating in decision-making, and collaborating with the community also require commitment and effort from schools.

4.4.1 Family backgrounds and the academic performance of learners

Table 4.6 and fig.4.2 below shows the perceptions of school heads and educators on whether parental involvement has an effect on the performance of learners. On this factor, 100% of the school heads of the school heads agree that parental involvement is associated with the academic performance of learners. According to them, the homework done with a parent or a family member present is associated with the highest attention levels and better academic performance. The greatest difficulties the school heads and educators have had to contend with this are the failure on the part of the parent to co-operate in administering the discipline of the school.



Therefore, when parents are involved in the school affairs, there are likely to be outstanding achievements in the child's progress. Thus, improved learner achievement is very possible if parents are co-operative and supportive. Two school heads indicated that parents are not participating very well in school activities because of SES and family backgrounds that are different in every family.

However, one school headmistress indicated that her school was performing better than other schools in the circuit. This is because the SES of her community is also better than other schools and the community also is very supportive. Learners are also encouraged to work very hard and to utilize the few resources they have in the school.

Table 4.6 Perceptions of respondents on parental involvement

(N=23)

	Agree totally		Agree but not strongly		Disagree totally		Disagree but not strongly		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Learners perform badly if parents are not actively involved.												
School heads	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	100
Educators	15	75	4	20	1	5	0	0	0	0	20	100
Total	17	-	5	-	1	-	0	0	0	0	23	100

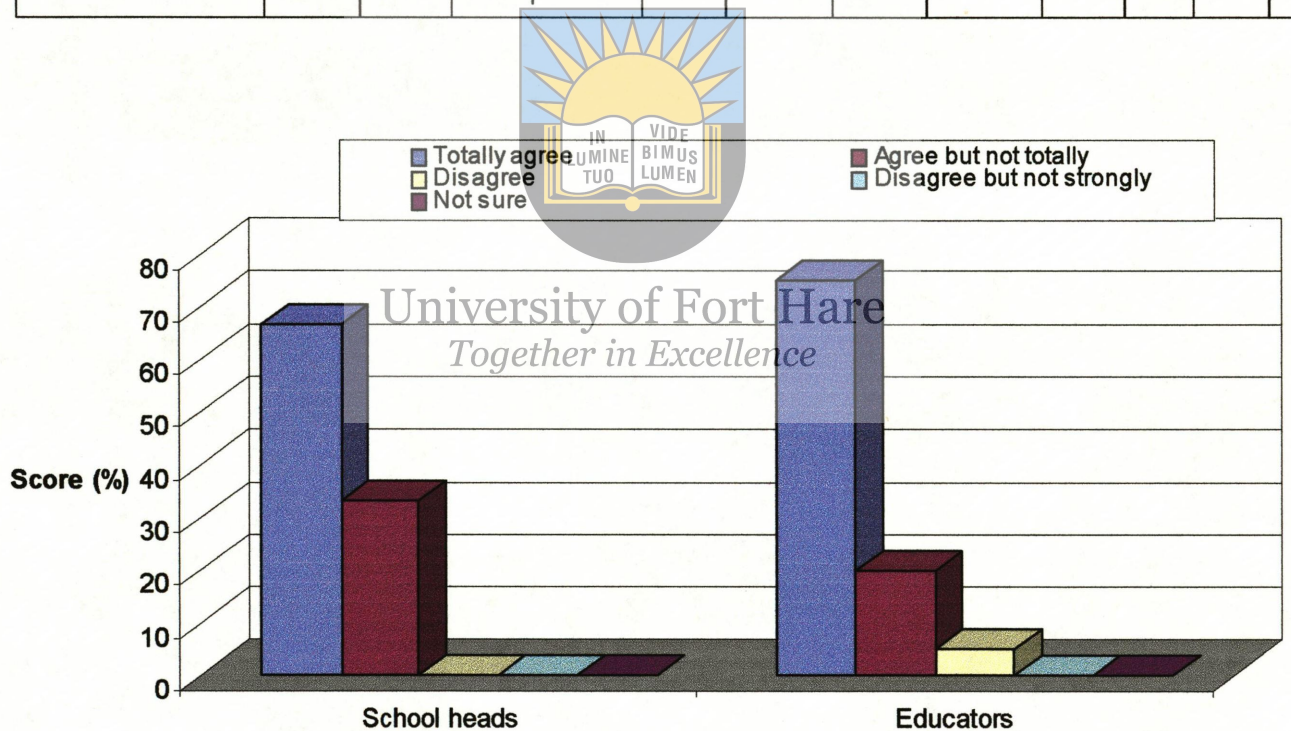


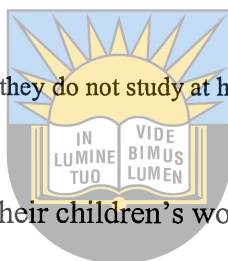
Figure 4.2: Perceptions of respondents on parental involvement

From the educators who responded to the question, 95% agreed that parental involvement influences academic performance. One educator pointed out that a school is a unit within the society and can only exist through the operation of a school community. Legotlo et al (2002:117), also supports this

finding: Establishing a good school community relationship is a key ingredient to success in securing mutual participation of parents in decision-making, school activities, problem solving and offering services to a school.

Some educators indicated that most learners do not live with their parents; hence no one encourages them to work hard. Thus, in this case, most learners lack parental support. Some learners who indicated that they do homework on their own because there is no one to assist at home evidence this.

A typical response from one educator on this question was:



“Most learners lack parental support, hence they do not study at home. There is no one to monitor them.”

Therefore, it is the duty of parents to monitor their children’s work at home.

University of Fort Hare

Together in Excellence

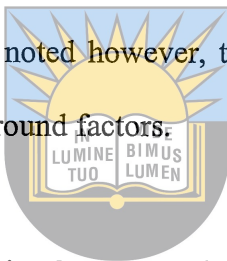
Family size is one of the factors identified by educators. It is clear that the size of the family has an effect on the progress of the child at home. This is so because it is assumed that the larger the family, the less attention parents can give to their individual children. It was established that smaller families tend to have more successful children than larger families. The finding is revealed in the literature review.

Family difficulties were also a primary source of distress, giving rise to conflicts and disruptions both within the family as well as the school. Many families have social difficulties such as fights. It also affects children in their academic work. However, divorce or separation of families or death of a parent was identified as the main cause of instability, hence some learners stay alone. This situation is more detrimental when children from sole parent families also experience a range of other risk factors such as low income. One educator indicated:

“ The custodial parent has less time to spend with children in terms of supervision of schoolwork and maintaining appropriate levels of discipline and also the lack of appropriate role model”

Family instability was identified as one of the home background factors affecting performance. Parents who move from place to place frequently contribute to their children’s performance. This finding was supported by Musgrove (1966:60) when he noted that such a history of a family instability is not a necessary condition for academic performance.

From the data obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews, parental involvement in schools and in learners’ work is inadequate. It should be noted however, that the results of this item could be an indication of socio-economic and home background factors.



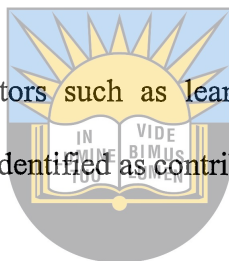
The SES and parental involvement become major factors causing a decline in the academic performance of learners. Learners’ achievement improves when parents are able to play their roles as teachers at home, as advocates, as supporters and as decision-makers.

4.4.2 Summary

In this study the following home background factors were established by respondents: parental involvement, family size, family instability, family disputes and divorces. All these factors are associated with the academic performance of learners. Literature reveals these findings.

4.5 School environmental factors associated with academic performance

The combined effect of SES, family background and school environmental factors are closely associated with the characteristics of their learners. There is need for schools to be effective because these schools promote student learning and high levels of achievement despite the fact that some schools do not have enough resources. Education administrators should empower and share power with staff, learners and the community, which in turn, transform the society. Thus, school heads play a very pivotal role in the running of schools.



In this study the school environmental factors such as learner characteristics, resource materials, ineffective leadership, and many others were identified as contributing to the performance of learners.

4.5.1 Learner characteristics and the academic performance

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Table 4.7 and Fig 4.3 attempt to give the perceptions of school heads, educators, parents and learners on learner characteristics and the academic performance. Learners' characteristics and behaviour is a factor associated with both socio-economic factors and the school environmental factors.

Table 4.7 Perceptions of respondents on learner characteristics

(N=77)

	Agree totally		Agree but not strongly		Disagree totally		Disagree but not strongly		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Learner characteristics has contributed to poor academic performance												
School heads	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	100
Educators	12	60	7	35	1	5	0	0	0	0	20	100
Parents	6	66.6	2	22.2	1	11.1	0	0	0	0	9	100
Learners	1	17.7	4	13.3	16	35.5	10	22.2	5	11.1	45	100
Total	29	-	15	-	18	-	10	-	5	-	77	100

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

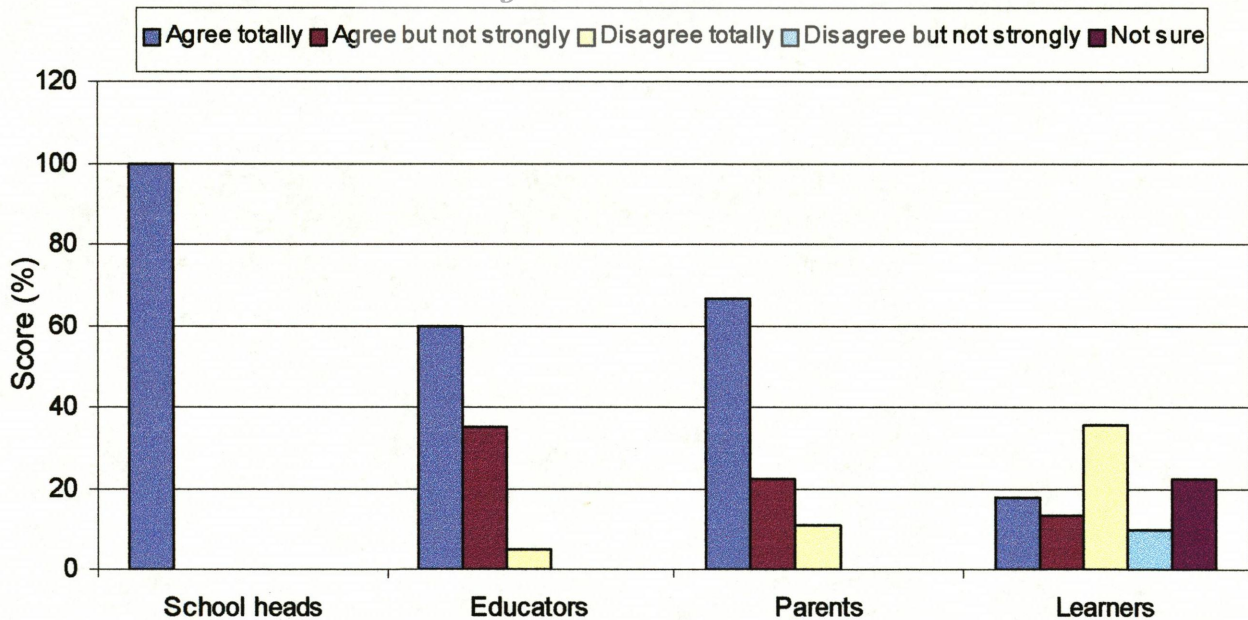
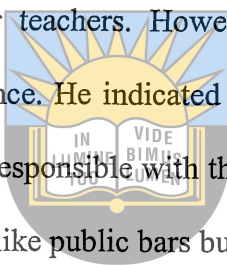


Figure 4.3: Perceptions of respondents on learner characteristics

All the 77 respondents answered the question on whether learner characteristics contribute to the academic performance. Most school heads, educators and parents indicated that learners are performing poorly because of peer pressure and family backgrounds. Learners are involving themselves in different types of behaviours because of the people they associate with.

The response from parents was almost the same as those of educators and school heads. Out of the parents who responded to the question, 88% of them agree that the characteristics of learners contribute to their performance in class. They noted that children lacked determination to study; hence they don't want to listen to their teachers. However, one parent disagrees that learner characteristics have an effect on performance. He indicated that it was the responsibility of parents and teachers to make sure all children are responsible with their lives because learners are associated with drunkards, smokers and public places like public bars but nothing is done about it.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

A response from one of the parents was:

Learners are performing poorly because of drug abuse and they are not eager to learn.

According to this respondent, learners are associated with drunkards, they go to public places like discos and as a result they are not eager to study. Another parent indicated that it is the problem of children's rights, which makes learners perform badly. He pointed out that children of today don't want to listen to their elders, parents and educators. These children's rights are spoiling them to an extent that they affect their performance in class.

One of the factors indicated by an educator was the distance their learners walk to and from school. Because of this, they end up renting in homes that are nearer the school. These children have no one to

monitor them as they live on their own; this is to say they lack parental support. However, 60% of the learners denied the fact that it is the learner behavior that makes them perform badly. They give reasons like teacher ineffectiveness, lack of resources and mostly the problem of long distances, which they walk to and from school.

About 5% of the learners indicated that they are not sure whether it is their behaviour that makes them perform poorly.

4.5.2 Resource materials and academic performance



Problems of inadequate resources in schools were an important factor in this study. The findings on this item showed that most rural schools were seriously constrained by lack of resource materials. The evidence provided was that learners share textbooks in all subjects, shortage of furniture, and shortage of teaching aids for educators, inadequate accommodation, and a lot more.

Table 4.8 and fig 4.4 below shows the perceptions of learners on whether the lack of resource materials and facilities has an impact on the academic performance of learners. More than 90% of the respondents agree totally that poor academic performance is caused by the shortage of resource materials in schools. The 3 school heads indicated that they totally and strongly agree. All the 3 schools are constrained by lack of textbooks. One school head pointed out that:

“My school is seriously constrained by the shortages of basic resource materials such as the library, laboratory, video machine, telephone and photo copier. Learning becomes difficult for us because of this”.

Table 4.8. Perceptions of respondents on lack of resource materials

(N=77)

	Agree totally		Agree but not strongly		Disagree totally		Disagree but not totally		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lack of resource materials has affected the academic performance of learners												
School heads	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	100
Educators	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	100
Parents	7	77.7	1	11.1	1	11.1	0	0	0	0	9	100
Learners	30	66.6	12	26.6	3	4.4	0	0	0	0	45	100
Total	58	-	15	-	4	-	0	-	0	-	77	100

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

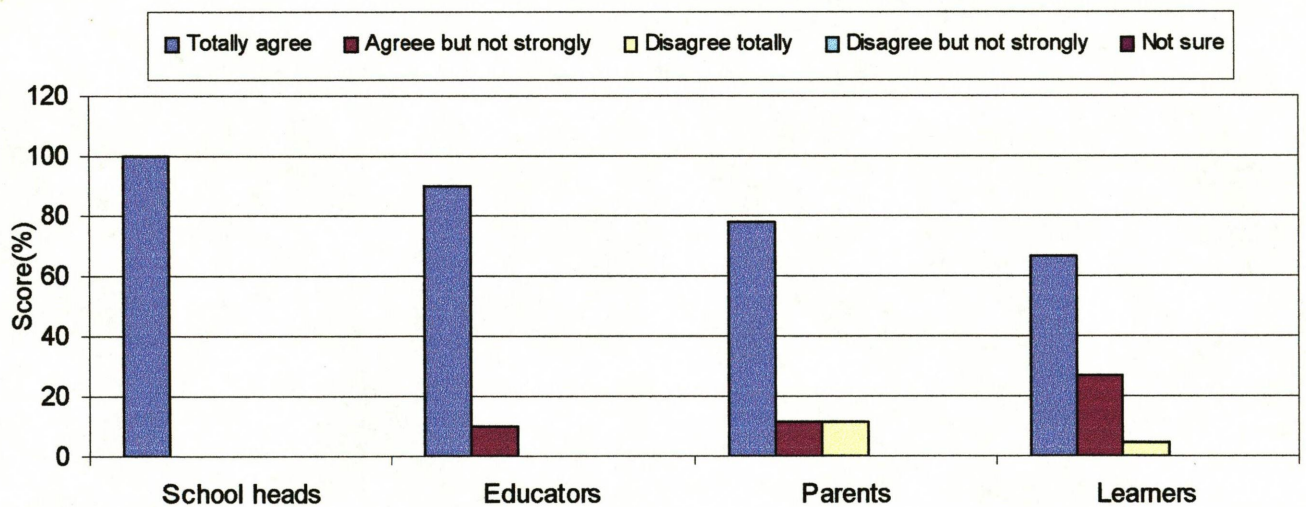


Figure 4.4: Perceptions of respondents on resource materials

Although the problem of resource materials affects all the schools, the other 2 schools have better facilities. This can be evidenced by their past examination results which were better. At least they can photocopy some basic textbooks, which reduce the learner-textbook ratio from 1:4 and 1: 10 to 1:2. At least it is better for 2 learners to share a textbook.

All school heads indicated that their schools are seriously constrained by lack of resource materials such as textbooks, meaningful infrastructure, and accommodation for teachers, furniture, telephone, and photocopier, laboratories and mostly funds. These resources are very essential in the day-to-day running of the school. This shows that the declining academic performance in schools is due to lack of resources.

The table below shows the resources and facilities present in the 3 schools:

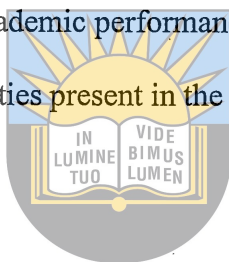


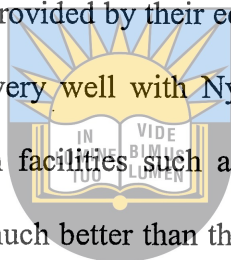
Table 4.9 Resources and facilities

(Y=Exist) (N=Don't Exist)
 University of Fort Hare
 Together in Excellence

Resource	School A	School B	School C
Piped water	Y	Y	Y
Other sources of water	Y	Y	Y
Electricity	Y	Y	Y
Computers	Y	Y	Y
Library	Y	Y	N
School Laboratory	Y	Y	N
Video machine	N	N	N
Telephone	Y	Y	N
Photocopier	Y	Y	N

The communities cannot afford to raise large amounts of funds needed for the purchase of many important resources, so they wait for donors to help. This means that the number of learners is more than the resources available. Some educators indicated that they couldn't teach well without teaching materials such as charts, chalk, overhead projectors, and pens in a situation where learners are crowded in classrooms. They also need electricity in classrooms to facilitate evening studies.

In school C in the table above, the same problems affect the learners, as they cannot look for information in the library, they have to rely on the notes provided by their educators. Most of the time they don't do homework because of this. This coincides very well with Nyagura (1991:28), who established that schools that are well equipped with enough facilities such as libraries, textbooks, adequate human resources, machinery and stationery did far much better than those without. The same is found in table (1.5) that school B is performing better than other schools because of better learning resource materials and facilities that exist in the school.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

4.5.3 Ineffective leadership and academic performance

The most fundamental condition underlying the process of school achievement and quality learning is the educator who operationalise at the classroom level. It is through good management focuses, which generates higher achievement. School administrators have the responsibility to make sure there is a good working environment at the working place.

The need for supervision is also important. Educators cannot produce good results if they do not receive adequate supervision, services and inputs from their management. The findings of this item reveals that there is inadequate supervision and poor management focuses in schools. Table 4.8 and fig.4.5 below shows the respondents' views on whether ineffective leadership has an effect on the academic performance of learners.

Out of the 68 respondents, most educators (50%) and learners (40%) agreed totally that poor administration focuses like ineffective leadership contribute to the academic performance of learners. Other educators and learners agree but not strongly. One school head agreed to tally but 2 (66.7%) indicated that they disagree.



Table 4.10 Perceptions of respondents on ineffective leadership

(N=68) University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

	Agree totally		Agree but not strongly		Disagree totally		Disagree but not strongly		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ineffective leadership has an effect on academic performance of learners												
School heads	1	33.3	0	0	2	66.7	0	0	0	0	3	100
Educators	10	50	7	35	2	10	1	5	0	0	20	100
Learners	18	44.4	8	22.2	3	6.6	4	8.8	8	17.7	45	100
Total	21	-	17	-	7	-	5	-	8	-	6	100

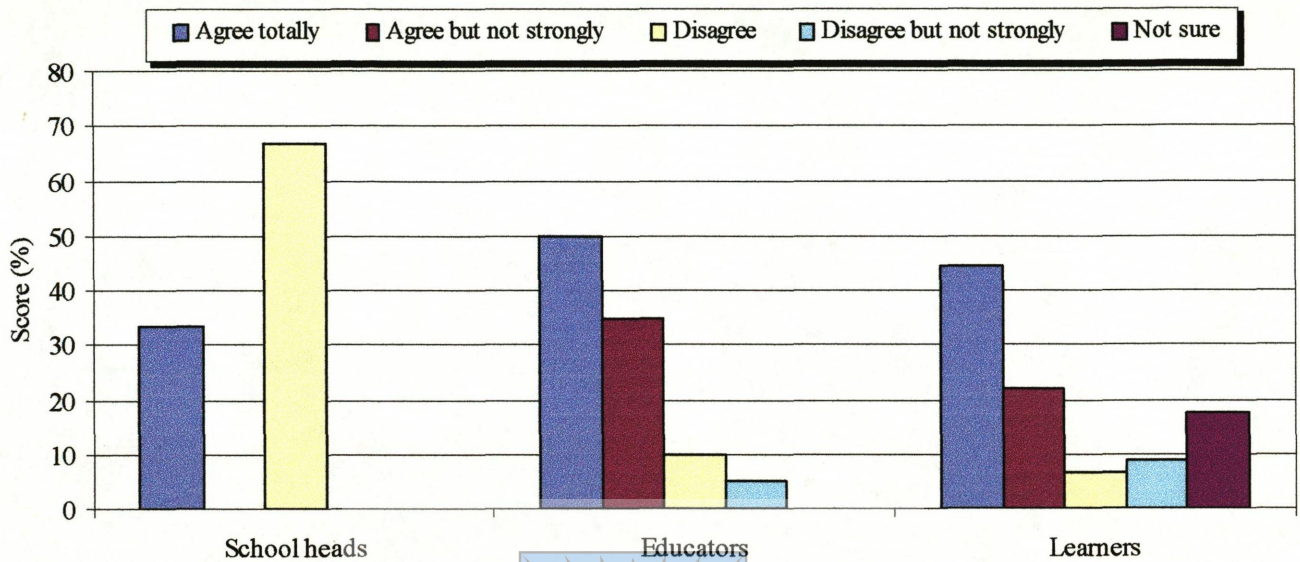


Figure 4.5: Perceptions of respondents on ineffective leadership



Most educators, who agreed that ineffective leadership contributes to poor academic performance, indicated that their school heads do not supervise because they are always absent from the school. One educator indicated that his head can spend a week away from the school, and this gives her problems when an immediate problem needs to be solved. Another educator pointed out that:

“When the school head is around, he concentrates on the educator’s social issues rather than professionalism. Decisions are only passed by him and his deputy head without consulting us”.

Some learners indicated that they are not happy about the way their headmaster runs the school because at the school there is more work than learning. A typical response from one of the learners was that:

“Instead of learning he gives us more general work and he is very harsh. He allows corporal punishment and we are tired of this”.

Others noted that their headmaster doesn't want to listen to their problems or assist them. According to some learners, there is no order in the sense that there is no strictness as far as school uniform is concerned and every learner wears what he/she wants. Hence most of the learners are not satisfied with the work of their school heads. This as a result demotivates the learners and at the same time makes them dislike the school.

4.5.4 Summary of perceptions of respondents on school environmental factors associated with the academic performance of learners.

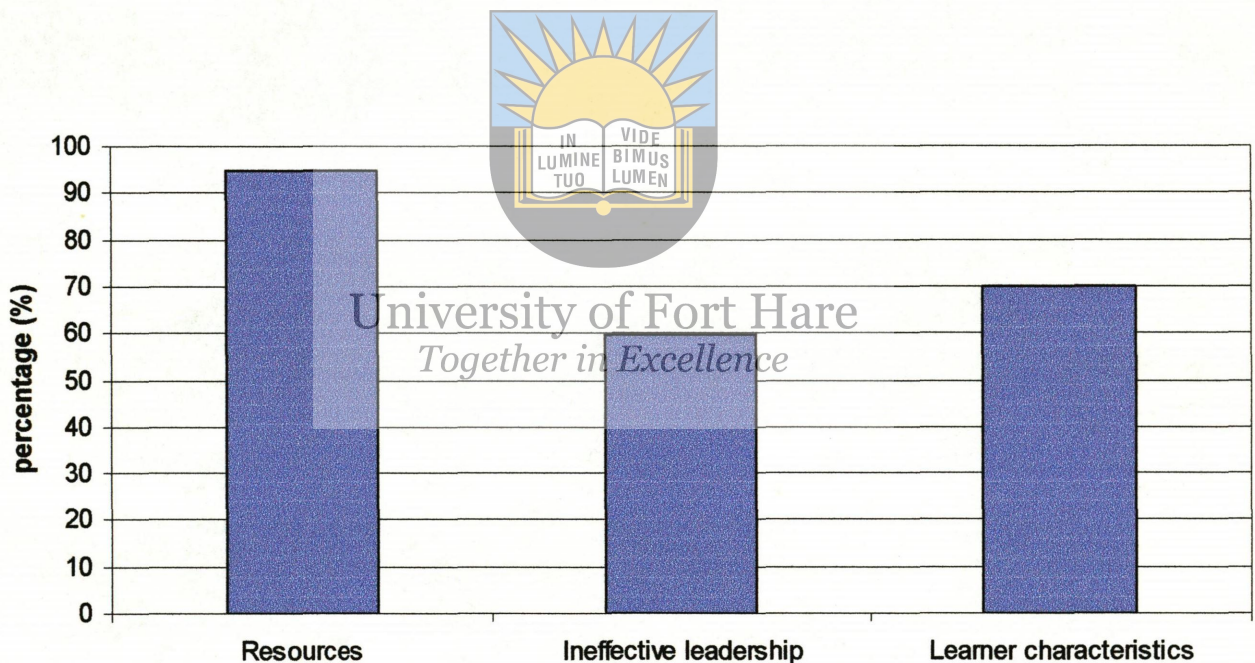


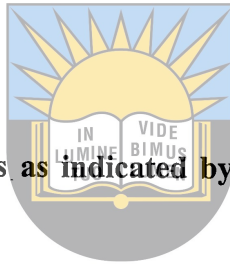
Figure 4.6: Summary of perceptions of respondents on school environmental factors

From the information above, inadequate resource materials and facilities was identified as the major factors associated with the academic performance of learners. Rural schools are constrained with lack of resource materials and facilities that enable the learning process. Learner characteristics or behaviour was identified as the second major factor. The main cause for this was identified as peer

pressure. Poor management focuses and inadequate supervision in schools was identified as another school environmental factor influencing the performance of learners.

4.5.5 Summary

Besides these factors, the respondents also identified more factors. These are: lack of determination to study, indiscipline, too much work rather than learning, meaningful infrastructure, poor teaching, teacher quality, absenteeism and distance to and from the school. Literature on school environmental factors supports this finding.



4.6 An overview of the general remarks as indicated by school heads, educators, parents and learners

4.6.1 School heads

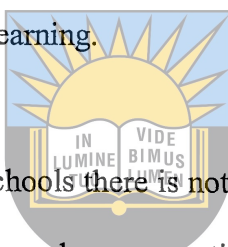
University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

All school heads indicated that their schools are seriously constrained by lack of resource materials such as textbooks, meaningful infrastructure, and accommodation for teachers, furniture, telephone, and photocopier, laboratories and mostly funds. These resources are very essential in the day-to-day running of the school. This shows that the declining academic performance in schools is due to lack of resources. The communities cannot afford to raise large amounts of funds needed for the purchase of many important resources, so they wait for donors to help. This means that the number of learners is more than the resources available. The table below shows the enrolment of learners in the 3 schools in 2003:

Table 4.11 Enrolment in the sampled schools

School	No. of boys	No. of girls	Total
A	514	426	940
B	580	476	1056
C	453	375	828

School B has the largest number of learners as indicated in the table above but it is the school with better academic results (see table 1.5) as compared to the other two. This is because the schools have better resources and facilities, which enable better learning.



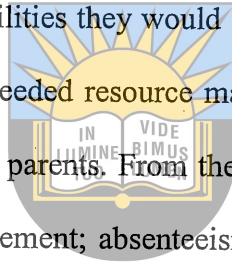
All the school heads indicated that in their schools there is not enough classroom accommodation. Two school heads indicated (66.6%) that the learner-classroom ratio was 1:50 and 1(33.3%) mentioned that in his school it was 1:52. This illustrates that learners are crowded in classrooms and this environment is not conducive for learning. The problems of accommodation also affect the educators. The 3 school heads indicated that there is not adequate accommodation for educators. Most of them share houses and each educator occupies one or two rooms. This situation demoralizes educators to the extent that they won't do their work as expected.

All the school heads agreed that they involve parents in everything they do at school. The School Development Committee (SDC), School Development Association (SDA) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) have this evidence. One school head indicated that he meets the SDCs once per month and the other 2 indicated that they meet them 4-5 times per term and when necessary. All the

heads indicated that their School Development Committees are very supportive even though they are constrained by very low income.

On supervision, the District Education Officers visit the schools quarterly but the Regional Education Officers never come. This means that supervision of schools is inadequate. In the schools, 2 school heads indicated that they supervise their educators monthly together with continuous assessment and one said that she supervises her educators daily as well as carry out continuous assessment.

When the school heads were asked what facilities they would like to acquire that will enhance teaching and learning, all heads indicated that they needed resource materials in terms of textbooks, computers and financial help from the government and parents. From the responses of the school heads, 2 school heads agree that factors like parental involvement; absenteeism and family background are associated with the academic performance of learners. However one disagrees that family background affect the academic achievement.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

The school heads identified many more factors associated with the academic performance of learners. These are: poor teaching, poor health, indiscipline, teacher quality and administration, long distances, poverty and stress.

4.6.2 Educators

Educators from the 3 schools were among the chief respondents. Twenty educators responded to the questionnaires. All the educators were qualified and permanent. Most of them (75%) are in the age range

of 30-39 years and have teaching experience ranging from 5-15 years. This means that in most schools, educators are well qualified and well experienced.

On the question of what facilities they would want to acquire that would enhance teaching and learning, all the educators (100%) indicated that they want the schools to provide adequate resource materials and facilities such as textbooks, library, electricity in some classes (to allow evening studies), laboratories, overhead projectors, more computers, more classrooms and furniture. It is very difficult for educators to teach without these teaching aids.

When teaching, 75% of the educators indicate that they use a combination of teaching methods. These are the lecture method, the question-and-answer method and the discovery of activities. They indicated that for them to be effective they have to combine teaching methods because they have learners with different capabilities. Other educators (25%) indicated that they use the lecture method and the question and answer daily and the discovery of activities weekly. All the educators assess their learners everyday. It is very important for educators to choose the best method of teaching that will enhance better understanding of all learners.

The table below shows the perceptions of educators on learner performance:

Table 4.13 Perceptions of educators on academic performance

Item	Good		Average		Poor		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How are your learners performing compared to other schools?								
Total no. of respondents	1	5	13	65	6	30	20	100


Most of the educators (65%) indicated that their learners are performing fairly well compared to other schools. A typical response was:

“The difference is not very significant because the learning facilities and exposure are almost the same”.

Another respondent:

“Percentage pass rate is lower as compared to other schools”.

Some 35% of the educators indicated that their children are performing badly as compared to other schools in the district. The reason for all this is the lack of resource materials in schools. In cluster examination learners are performing poorly because of lack of exposure and lack of enough time to study. This means that because they are not exposed to these cluster examinations, they are shy to give answers when they mix with other schools. Some learners lack determination and some panic before they write examinations. One educator pointed out that although they come first in cluster examination, there is not enough practice and enough time to study. The main problem for this failure is that schools do not have enough resources for the preparation of cluster examinations.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

However, one educator (5%) indicated that the learners are performing quite well. Even though the performance is better, it is not very different from other schools. There are many factors associated with this. According to the educators, absenteeism has an effect on the performance of learners because students fail to catch up with already covered material and there is no time to look back on part of the educators, they miss out important explanations and concepts. Another important factor identified was administration focuses. The government through the administration is imposing subjects on particular

learners. Learners are forced to sit for subjects in which they have no interest in only because it is mandatory. Examples of these subjects are History, English and Shona as well as Mathematics.

Apart from the factors discussed, educators identified factors such as poverty, indiscipline, lack of study, distance to and from school, curriculum not suited to mental capabilities of learners, drug abuse, government policies and socio-economic status.

4.6.3 Learners

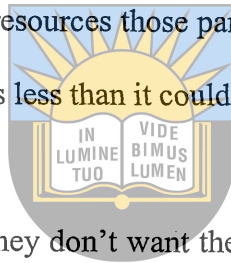
Interviews were conducted with learners. This was done in groups of 5 learners to obtain their perceptions on the factors associated with their academic performance. The first question on whether they are satisfied with the work of their class teachers was responded to positively. They indicated that the reason is that these class teacher's give them advise, guidance and counseling. Some pointed out that class teachers encourage them to work hard and solve their problems before they are handed over to the school head.

On the question on whether learners are satisfied with the work of their School Development Committees, 55% said that they were satisfied because they help in the development of the school. 22% indicated that they are not happy about how the SDC runs the school. This is because of shortages of important resources. One learner said:

“Some of the classrooms are not built in a proper way and this affect us during winter time”.

However, 23% of the learners said that they don't know whether the SDC exist because they don't know them and they also don't know the work they are responsible for.

Most learners said that their educators give them homework daily, some once per week, and others twice per week but they face problems of assistance. At home, 44,4% of the learners indicated that they are assisted by their brothers and neighbours, 57.7% indicated that they do their homework alone and 8.8% indicated that their parents assist them. This shows that parents are not very much involved in their children's' work, instead, they just leave them unattended and expect the educators to do all the work. Therefore, if the level of home support and resources those parents are able to provide for their children are less, the level of academic achievement is less than it could be.



About 57.8% of the learners indicated that they don't want their children to learn at the school they are attending. The reason being that these schools are still developing and because of that they do not have enough resources that will enhance teaching and learning. In most schools more work is done than learning. A few learners indicated that there is no discipline in the school. Other learners (42%) responded positively. They indicated that it is because the school fee is affordable, teachers are giving extra lessons, the schools have qualified teachers and there are practical subjects. Even though there are a number of learners who are satisfied with the schools they are attending, most learners prefer boarding schools to rural day school, given the opportunity to choose, because of the advantages in boarding schools.

Besides the factors discussed above, learners also identified more factors hindering their performance. These are flooded rivers during summer time as the bridges are poorly constructed, poor living

conditions, peer pressure, lack of study, shortage of food, distance to and from school, too much work at home and at school and inadequate library facilities.

4.6.4 Parents

Interviews were conducted with SDC members and parents to obtain their perceptions on the factors associated with the academic performance of learners. Out of the 9 respondents interviewed, 7 are not working, one is a councillor and one is a retired educator. Three of them did standard 6, 1 did Ordinary level and others range from standard 1-5. The most interesting thing about them was that most of them could read and write except one.



Most parents (77.7%) are happy with their children's school. This is because the schools and parents work together in the development of the school and at least learners are passing. They are also happy about the practical subjects that are offered by the schools. These practical subjects are fashion and fabrics, agriculture, computers, building and food and nutrition. According to them, practical subjects will help learners to be self-reliant in future. However, 22% of the parents indicated that they are not happy with their school. They said that there is no discipline in schools as learners are involved in drinking beer, prostitution, and love affairs with educators. One parent said:

"I had no option because that was the only school I could afford school fees. One could prefer a boarding school to day school if it were not for poverty".

This means that parents know what is happening in schools even though they cannot say it. Also because of low income, they have no other option; they are forced to send their children to the school that is affordable.

All parents indicated that when learners come home from school, they wash plates, cook, and play. They do their homework during the evening and when a family does not have paraffin, it means the homework won't be done.

Apart from school fees, parents are having additional contributions to their schools by brick molding, seeking donors, fund raisings, and different projects such as backyard farming and tuck shops. This shows that the communities of the selected schools are very supportive because this money is used to purchase resources and building.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

According to parents, there are many factors associated with the academic performance of learners.

These are children's rights, distance to school, poverty, poor nutrition and student behaviour.

4.6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher analysed, presented and interpreted data, which was collected. It was established that there are socio-economic, family background and school environmental factors associated with the academic performance of learners. The major factor associated with the academic performance of learners was identified as lack of resource materials and facilities. The following chapter provides a summary, conclusions and recommendations for improvement.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study of factors associated with the academic performance of learners in Mutasa District proposed to identify the socio-economic status, home background and school environmental factors that affect the performance of learners in secondary schools. This chapter provides a summary of the research findings so as to give a conclusion. Recommendations are also presented for improvement.



5.2 Summary

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

The previous chapter has focused on data presentation, data analysis and interpretation of the study in relation to the objectives and critical research questions outlined in chapter 1. The research findings show that there are several factors that are associated with the academic performance of learners in Mutasa District secondary schools. The main findings can be summarised as follows:

Review of literature and past studies established that there are many factors hindering the performance of learners. Parental involvement is correlated with higher learning academic performance as parenting, learners in secondary schools. Socio-economic status (SES) is determined by the community's achievement in: education, income, wealth and occupation status. Children from low SES have lower levels of literacy, school behaviour and usually

display a negative attitude towards school. Therefore, educational success depends very strongly on the SES of one's parents. If the level of home support and resources that parents are able to provide for their children are less than it should be, then the level of academic achievement is less.

Parental involvement is correlated with higher learner academic performance as parenting volunteering and supporting home learning resulting primarily from the efforts of parents. Communicating, participating in decision-making, and collaborating with the community also require commitment from the school. Current emphasis on parental involvement is rooted in the belief that parents and the home environment play a critical role in the children's development. Without the collaboration of the community and the school, the academic performance will continue to decline.



University of Fort Hare *Together in Excellence*

The combined influence of SES, parental involvement and school environmental factors on academic performance is great because many characteristics of schools are associated with the characteristics of their learners.

School environmental factors were observed as major factors associated with the academic performance of learners. This study established that learners are not doing well mainly because of lack of resources in schools. Even if the educators are well trained, permanent and well experienced, they are rendered less effective if schools lack the basic resources and facilities necessary for teaching and learning. These basic resources are mainly textbooks, computers, photocopiers, classroom accommodation and educator accommodation. Thus, a school with all

the best resources and technology in a strong community is better equipped to provide the best type of learning opportunities and is able to attract and hold qualified teachers more easily.

The research also established that learner characteristics contributed to the poor academic performance of learners. Apart from drug abuses, lack of study and lack of determination, there is also a problem of learners' rights that is spoiling them. Learners now have an active role in classrooms and in the school and they now consider themselves responsible for everything. This is a big problem, as learners do not want to listen to educators or to their elders/parents.

Another important factor is leadership in schools. School heads are not being exemplary and effective enough. This was revealed in their supervision strategies, which are inadequate.



Though most of the schools in Mutasa District are performing poorly, there are some schools that are doing very well. One example of these schools is school B (table 1.5) that is a rural day school with better facilities. The reason for this is the strong community support given to the school and the effective leadership and management by the school headmistress.

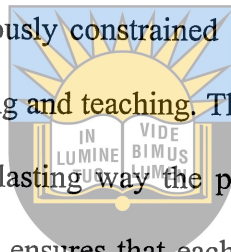
Although the school head is ultimately responsible for the quality of the school, it is both necessary and appropriate that educators share the responsibility for instructional leadership. As a result, educators work together to share responsibility for helping each other learn and grow (Hoerr, 1996:20).

Besides the factors discussed above, many other factors were raised. All the findings were in line with the researcher's objectives of the study and critical assessment questions.

5.3 Conclusions

Literature reveals that there are socio-economic, home background and school environmental factors associated with the academic performance of learners and the SES is the most powerful predictor. However, in this study the SES contributes a lot but the lack of resource materials and facilities was most powerful and was more associated with the performance of learners.

The findings of the investigation showed that learners are constrained by many factors in their academic performance. Schools are seriously constrained by shortages of basic resources and facilities that hinder the process of learning and teaching. Therefore, schools need to be effective because effective schools promote in a lasting way the progress for all its pupils above and beyond what is expected. Such a school ensures that each pupil achieves the highest standard possible and enhances all aspects of learner achievement (Stoll and Wikey 1998:54).

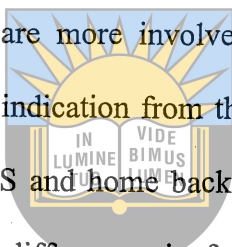


University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

The research also revealed that the SES and parental involvement in schools have an impact on the performance of learners. The SES of a school's learner population is the primary factor that is related to academic performance. This agrees with Mupawaenda (1994:95), who revealed that learners' performance was determined by the amount of support given by parents. Learner achievement improve when parents are able to create a home environment that promotes learning, reinforces what is being taught at school, developing life skills, such that children become responsible adults.

Learner characteristics were observed as another factor contributing to the decline of learner performance. This is mainly due to peer pressure and lack of study and determination. Supervisory methods are also inadequate in schools. The District and Regional officers as well as school heads are not supervising their staff. This coins well with Dove (1987:35) when he noted that well-trained or educated teachers might be, there is need for constant supervision and staff development to update them with the latest developments in the education system.

Some learners don't concentrate in class, neglect to do homework and some have acts of violence and vandalism. Learners who are more involved in this delinquent behaviour are performing poorly. However, there is an indication from the above findings that there was not much influence from the school. The SES and home background plays a powerful role in the performance of learners. This is due to differences in families as far as income; education, occupation, family size, family instability, distance from school and many other factors are concerned.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

The major limitations of the investigation have been identified as:

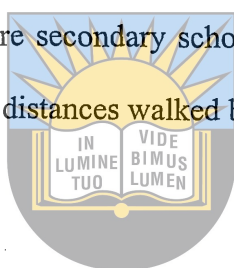
1. The use of 3 schools that had implications for generalisability of results.
2. Information of the "O" level analysis results of the past academic years in the whole district was inadequate and not available at the regional and district offices except for the years 2001 and 2002.
3. Lack of re-validation of the questionnaire used in the investigation.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher suggested the following recommendations:

- The community and the school have to work together to try and solve the problem of the declining performance of learners. Parents should understand the needs of their children for them to be actively involved in their children's learning.
- Parents should serve on advisory councils, curriculum committees and management teams, participating in joint problem solving at all levels.
- The government, through education officers and school heads should make effective follow-up in schools such that they are aware of what is taking place and what is needed to enhance effective teaching and learning.
- The rural electrification programme should be speeded up in schools. Although some schools have electricity, they do not have enough computers for learners. The government should help instead of waiting for donors only.
- The Zimbabwean government should produce a multilevel baseline study that identifies the inputs, factors, contents and processes that contribute to learner academic performance.

- The funds given to the under-privileged learners should be clearly monitored to avoid nepotism and to uplift those who are really disadvantaged (low SES class) in terms of failing to pay school fees and buying school uniform.
- Schools in the same cluster should meet regularly such that learners are exposed to such examinations and activities. By so doing, they gain confidence in preparation of the final examination at the end of the year.
- The government should build more secondary schools (including boarding schools) in the rural areas so as to cut on long distances walked by most learners to and from school.



5.5 Suggested areas for further research

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

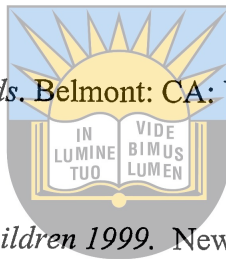
The following areas were suggested for further research:

- More research is needed to find out why some schools produce better results than others whilst operating in the same conditions as those schools that are producing poor results.
- There is need to research on why there is inadequate supervision in rural schools and at district level. Does the government have an influence on this?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acker J 1990. Hierarchies, jobs and bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and society*, 4:139-155.

Ainley J, Graetz B, Long M and Batten M 1995. *Socio-economic status and school education*. Australian Council for Education Research. Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.



Babbie E R 1973. *Survey research methods*. Belmont: CA: Wadsworth.

Bellany C 1999. *The state of the world's children 1999*. New York: Education UNIEF.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Benjamin Y M 1997. Parental participation in school councils in Victoria. Australia, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 11(3): 102-110.

Best J W and Khan J V 1993. *Research in Education*. London: Ally and Bacon.

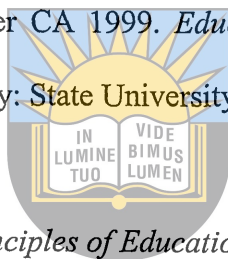
Blackledge M 1985. *Sociology Interpretation of Education*. London: Routledge Publishers.

Blaug M 1976. *Rates of Return to Investment in Education Around the World Comparative Education*. New York: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Bless C and Higson-Smith C 200. *Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective* (3rd Ed). Cape Town: Creda Communications.

Bloom B S 1990. *The home environment and school learning*. Paper commissioned by the Study Group on the National Assessment of Student achievement. (ERIC Document Reproductive Service No. ED 279663)

Burrell G and Morgan G 1982. In: Capper CA 1999. *Educational Administration in a pluralistic society: A multiparadigm approach*. Albany: State University of New York Press.



Bush T and West -Burnham 1994. *The Principles of Educational Management*. London: Harlow.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Bush T and Gamage D 2001. In: Griffith et al 1998. Parental involvement and attitude. *Review of educational Research*, 72(4): 549-576.

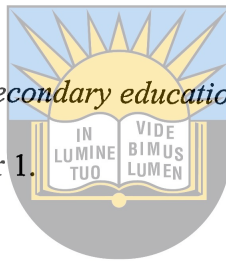
Caldwell S H, Jeffers L J and Norula O S 1992. In: Bush T and West- Burnham J 1994. *The Principles of Educational Management*. London: Harlow.

Capper C A 1999. *Educational administration in a pluralistic society: A multiparadigm approach*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Cheng Y C and Tsui K T 1998. Multimodels of teacher effectiveness: Implications for research. *Educational Research*, 92 (3): 140-150.

Chinapah V 1997. *Monitoring Learning Achievement, towards capacity building*. Paris: United Nations Education Scientific Organization.

Chivore B R 1994. *The effectiveness of the Primary school teacher in Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo Press.



Chung F 1989. *Policies for Primary and Secondary education in Zimbabwe: Alternative to the World Bank*. Perspective ZJER, Volume 1 number 1.

Clark K 1989. In: Bush T and West-Burnham J 1994. *The Principles of Educational Management*. England: Longman Publishers.

Coombs J 1969. Time for a change of strategy. In: Beeby CE (eds). *Qualitative Aspects of Educational Planning*. Paris: UNESCO, 11Ep.France.

Coleman J S 1966. *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington DC: US Government Printing Office.

Coleman P 1994. *Learning about school: what parents need to know and how they can find out*. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Cohen L and Manion L 1994. *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge.

Creemers B P M 1990. *School Effectiveness and effective instruction: The need for a further relationship*. Jerusalem: Paper presented at ICSEI 1990.

Creemers B 1996. The School Effectiveness Knowledge base. In: D Reynolds and Cuttance, Making good schools. *Linking school effectiveness and school improvement*. London: Routledge.

Creemers B P M and Scheerens J 1989. **Developments** in School Effectiveness research. *International Journal of Research*, 13: 691-707.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Creswell J W 1994. *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.

Croxford L and Cowie M 1996. *The effectiveness of Grampian Secondary Schools, Briefing note to Grampian Education authority*. Edinburgh: Pollock Halls.

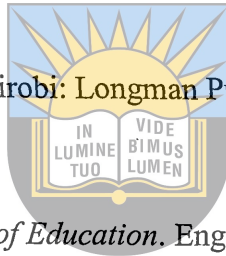
Data A 1984. *Education and Society: Sociology of African Education*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Decker E and Lemmer E 1993. *Critical issues in modern education*. Durban: Butterworth Publishers.

Dove L 1989. *Teachers and Teacher Education in Developing Countries, Issues in Planning Management and Training*. London: Groom Helm Publishers Ltd.

Dryden W and Gordon J 1995. *How to cope with difficult parents*. London: Shelton Press.

Eccles J and Horold S 1996. In: Griffith 1998. Parental involvement and attitude. *Review of Educational Research*, 72 (4): 549-576.



Ezewu E 1983. *Sociology of Education*. Nairobi: Longman Publishers.

Farrant J S 1980. *Principles and Practices of Education*. England: Longman group

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Fogelman G 1983. *Growing up in Great Britain*. London: Cassell.

Fogelman K 1978. The effectiveness of schooling. In: Armystage WHG and Peel (Eds). *Perimeters of social Repair*. London: academic Press.

Foster F S 1997. In: Capper CA 1999. *Educational Administration in a pluralistic society: A multiparadigm approach*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

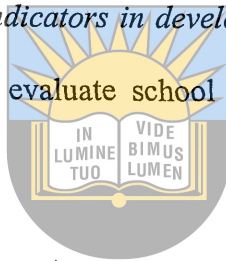
Fullan M 1993. *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*. London: Falmer Press.

Fuller B 1986. *Raising School Quality in developing countries: What Investments Boost Learning?* Washington DC: World Bank Discussion Papers series.

Gage N L 1993. *Handbook of research on teaching*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Gall M G and Borg W R 1996. *Educational Research An Introduction*. New York: Longman.

Gilmour J D 1997. *School Performance indicators in developing countries*. National workshop on the use of indicators to monitor and evaluate school performance. Johannesburg: 25-26 November 1997.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Goldstein H 1987. *Multilevel Models in Educational and social Research*. London: Oxford University Press.

Graetz B 1995. Socio-economic status in education research and policy. In: Ainley 1995. *Socio-economic Status and School Education*. Canberra: DE ET/ ACER.

Griffith L K 1998. Parental involvement and attitude. *Review of Educational Research*, 72 (4): 549-576.

Griffith J 1996. Relations of Parental Involvement, Empowerment and School Straits to Student Academic Performance. *Educational Research*, 90 (2): 33-37.

Hoerr T R 1996. Collegiality: A new way to define instructional leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(5): 380-381.

Hopkins D, Ainscow M and West M 1994. *School improvement in an era of change*. London: Cassell.

Hoy W and Miskel C 1996. *Educational Administration: Theory, research, and practice* (4th ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.



Jencks C 1972. *Inequality: A reassessment of the effect of family and schooling in America*. New York: Basic Books.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Keeves J P (Ed) 1988. *Educational Research, Methodology, and Measurement. An International Handbook*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Kerlinger S W 1965. *Foundations of behavioural Research; Educational and Psychological inquiry*. New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

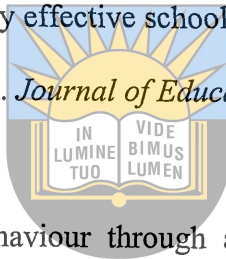
Kgobe M P 2000. *Transformation of the South African System*. Braamfontein: Centre for Education Policy Development Evaluation and Management.

Lapointe E 1992. Pupil- level factors. In: *Educational Research* 14 (3): 30-31.

Legotlo M W 1988. *Survey of occupational outcomes of Std 10 graduates in Bophuthatswana with specific reference to the employment problem*. Mmabatho: MED dissertation, University of Botswana.

Legotlo M W and Van der Westhuizen P C 1996. Problems facing new principals in developed Countries: *Education, Management and Administration*, 24: 401-410.

Levine D U and Lezotte L W 1990. Usually effective schools: A review and analysis of research and practice: An agenda for future research. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 28 (4): 5-31.



Lewis C S 1998. Reducing problem behaviour through a school wide system of effective behaviour and support. *South African Journal of Education*, 21 (3): 190-200.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Lezotte L W and Leithwood K 1989. School improvement based on the effective school research. *International Journal of Research*, 13 (7): 815-825.

MacBeath J 1996. *Schools speak for themselves. Towards a framework for self-evaluation*. London: The National Union of Teachers.

Makwati G J T 1994. *Problems of providing educational services to teenagers in rural Zimbabwe*. Harare: Med Unpublished dissertation.

Maravanyika O E 1990. *Implementing Educational Policies in Zimbabwe*. Washington: World Bank.

Maryjoribank M 1994. A study of children's learning environment. *International Journal of Educational Research, Families and children's learning*, 106 (13): 181-189.

Mc Coombs J 1996. In: Richard DK 2001. *Altogether now: Creating a middle class school through public school choice*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.



Meijnen G W. In: Reynolds D and Cuttance P 1992. *School Effectiveness: Research, Policy and Practice*. Great Britain: Redwoods Books.

Ministry of Education 1987. *The Education Act of 1987*. Harare Head Office: Government Printers.

Ministry of Education 1991. *Annual statistics Report 1991*. Harare Head Office: Government Printers.

Ministry of Education 1991. *Research Policy No.1 1991*. Harare Head Office. Government Printers.

Ministry of Education 1996. *New Education Act 1996*. Harare Head Office: Government Printers.

Ministry of Education 1996. *Teacher in Zimbabwe Magazine for June 1996*. Harare Head Office.
Government printers.

Ministry of education 1996. *Education in Zimbabwe-Facts and Information*. Harare Head Office.
Government Printers.

Miller J 1979. *Research Methods in Social Work*. London: BED Publishers Limited.



Miles M 1986. *Research findings on the stages of school improvement*. New York: Center for
Policy Research.

Moles O C 1990. Student discipline strategies: Research and practice. *South African Journal of
Education*, 21(3): 190-200.

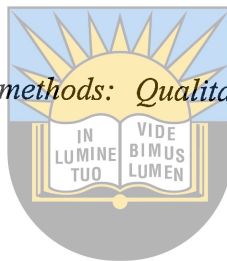
Mortimore P and MacBeath J 2001. *Improving School Effectiveness*. Great Britain: St
Edmundsbury Press Ltd.

Moyo G 1995. Educational Research to Educational Policy. *International Journal of Educational
Research*, (23): 4-100.

Mupawaenda A C and Nyagura L M 1994. *A study of factors affecting the Education of Women and Girls in Commercial Farming areas of Zimbabwe*. Harare: Human Resources Centre.

Murgatroyd K 1993. *Total Quality Management and the school*. London: Open University Press.

Musgrove F 1966. *The Family, Education and Society*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.



Newman W L 1997. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Needham Heights: Allan and Bacon

Nkpa N 1995. *Educational Research for modern scholars*. Forth Dimension Ltd, Enugu Publishers.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Nyagura L M 1993. Quantitative development, quality and equity concerns in Zimbabwe Primary and Secondary Education Sector. *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research*, 5 (1): 21-36.

Nyagura L M 1991. *Multilevel investigation of effects of schools, classroom and student's characteristics on academic achievement in Zimbabwe primary schools*. Harare: Human Resources Research Center.

Oppenheim A N 1975. *Questionnaire design and attitude measurement*. London: Heinemann Publishers.

Postlewaite T N and Tuyman A C 1994. *Monitoring the standards of Education*. United Kingdom: Pergamon Publishers.

Reynolds D, Hopkins D and Stoll L 1993. Linking Schools Effectiveness Knowledge and School Improvement Practice: Towards a Synergy. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 4 (1): 37-58.



Reynolds D and Cuttance P 1992. *School Effectiveness: Research. Policy and Practice*. Great Britain: Redwoods Books.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Reynolds D, Creemers B, Nesselrodt P, Stringfield S and Teddlie C 1994. *Advances in school effectiveness research and practice*. Oxford UK: Pergamon Publishers

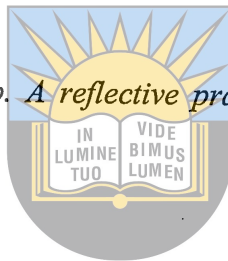
Lewis C S, Sugai G and Colvin G 1998. Reducing problem behaviour through a school- wide system of effective behaviour and support: Investigation of a school-wide social skills training program and contextual interventions. *School Psychology Review* 27, 446-459.

Rich A 2000. *Beyond the classroom: How parents influence their children's education*. Sydney: CIS Policy monograph 48, Center for independence studies.

Richard D K 2000. *Altogether now: Creating a middle-class school through public school choice* Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

Rutter M 1979. *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Saha L J, 1997. (Eds) *International Journal of the Sociology of Education*. Oxford, New York, and Tokyo: Elsevier Science Ltd.



Sergiovanni T J 1991. *The Principalship. A reflective practice perspective*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Schreerens J 1991. *Effective Schooling: Research, Theory and Practice*. London: Cassell.

Schreerens J and Creemers BPM 1989. Conceptualizing School Effectiveness. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 13(7): 671-706.

Shava G N 2002. *Factors Affecting the Provision of quality Primary Schooling in Zimbabwe: A case study of Mberengwa West District Schools*. University of Fort Hare, South Africa: An unpublished MEd Dissertation.

Smith P 1955. *Psychology in Teaching*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Sparkes J 1999. *Schools, Education and Social Exclusion*. CASE Paper 29, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion. London: London School of Economics.

Stoel W G R 1980. In: Reynolds D and Cuttance P 1992. *School Effectiveness: Research, Policy and Practice*. Great Britain: Redwoods Books.

Stoll L and Wikely F 1998. In: Reynolds D and Cuttance P 1992. *School Effectiveness: Research, Policy and Practice*. Great Britain: Redwoods Books.



Swanepoel B J 1997. Managing employment relations in a strategic way. *South African Journal of Education*, 21(3/4): 4-6

Tamara G 1994. In: Griffiths 1998. Parental involvement and attitude. *Review of Educational Research*, 72 (4): 549-576.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

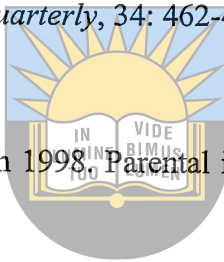
Teddlie C and Stringfield S 1989. Effective versus ineffective schools: Observable differences in the classroom. *American Journal of Education*, 97 (3): 221-36.

Tizard J 1967. *Curriculum organization and classroom practice in primary schools. A discussion paper*. London: Department of Education and Science.

Townsend T and Sammons P 1998. What makes schools effective? A comparison between school communities in Australia and the USA. *School effectiveness and school improvement*, 8 (3): 311-326.

Ugwuegbu D C 1985. *Educational Psychology in a changing world*. London: George Allen Union.

Ulline C, Miller D and Tschannen-Moran M 1998. School effectiveness. The underlying dimensions. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 34: 462-484.



Van der Westhuizen P C 1991. In: Griffith 1998. Parental involvement and attitude. *Review of educational Research*, 72 (4): 549-576.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Waterman M and Zellman G L 1998. Understanding the impact of parent involvement on children's educational outcomes. *The Journal of Educational research*, 91(6): 370-379

Watermeyer J W 1997. *Quality assurance in high schools through regression analysis*. University of Cape Town, South Africa: Unpublished MEd Dissertation.

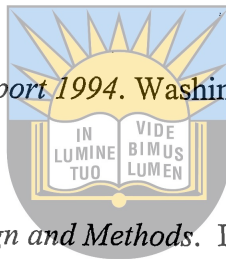
West- Burnham J. 1989. In: Sergiovanni TJ 1991. *The Principalship: A reflective practice perspective* (2nd edition). Massachusetts, USA: Simon and Schuster Ltd.

White EG 1997. *Counsels to Parents, teachers and students*. California: Pacific Press.

Williams T, Long M and Hayden M 1993. *Year 12 in the 1980s*. Canberra: AGPS.

Willms J 1997. In: Mortimore P and MacBeath J 2001. *Improving School Effectiveness*. Great Britain: St. Edmundsbury Press Ltd.

Willms D 1995. The Balance Thesis contextual effects of ability on pupils' 'O' level examination result. *Oxford Review of Education*, 11 (1): 33-41.



World bank 1994. *World Development Report 1994*. Washington D.C: The World Bank.

Yin RK 1994. *Case Study Research, Design and Methods*. London: Thousand Oaks.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence



APPENDICES

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND PARENTS

1. Date

2. Membership to SDC/SDA and designation

3. Your highest academic qualification

Standard 6	[]
J.C	[]
“O” Level	[]
BA/BSC	[]

4. Occupation
Other (specify)

5. How many children do you have?

6. How many are attending school?

7. Are you happy with your child’s school

Yes	[]
No	[]

8. Please give reasons for your response

.....

.....

.....

9. Are your children doing well in school?

Yes	[]
No	[]
Don’t know	[]

10. Please give reasons for your response

.....

.....

.....



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

11. What activities/work does your child do at home after school?

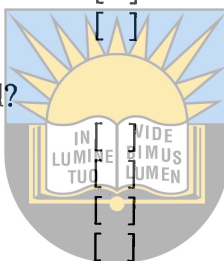
.....
.....

12. What activities/work does he/she do during weekends?

.....
.....

13. How far is your home from school?

- Less than a 1 kilometer []
- 1-2 kilometers []
- 3-4 kilometers []
- 4-5 kilometers []
- Over 5 kilometers []



14. How does your child get to school?

- Walk []
- Public transport []
- Private transport []
- Other (specify) []

15. How long does it take your child to travel from home to the nearest school?

- Less than 10 minutes []
- 10-20 minutes []
- 21-30 minutes []
- 31-40 minutes []
- 41-50 minutes []
- 51-60 minutes []
- Over 60 minutes []

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

16. Do your children bring schoolwork to do at home?

- Yes []
- No []

17. Who at home guides the learners with the school work when they encounter problems? (State as many as are applicable)

- Father []
- Mother []
- Sister []
- Brother []
- Nobody []
- Other (specify)

18. When do your children do their homework?

19. What facilities are there at home to enable your children to do their homework?
.....
.....

Does the size of your family affect the performance of your children at school?
.....
.....

20. What additional contributions, besides fees, have you made to your school/s to facilitate teaching and learning?

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)



21. How often does the school inform you about your children's progress

- Once a term []
- Once a year []
- Other []
- I do not receive any information []

22. Do you think this is the right school for your children?

- Yes []
- No []

23. Please give reasons for your answer
.....
.....

24. Do your teachers show an interest in teaching in your school?

- Yes []
- No []

25. Please give your reasons for your response
.....
.....

26. Does your schools have sufficient resource materials for effective teaching and learning?

Yes []
No []

27. What do you think are the factors affecting academic performance of students at this school?

.....
.....

28. What should teachers and parents do to improve on the performance of learners in your schools?

(a) Parents should

.....
.....



(b) Teachers should

.....
.....

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

29. Besides the factors we have discussed, what other factors influence the academic performance of students in your school?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Thank you for your co-operation!

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEADS

I am a university of Fort Hare student in the Republic of South Africa, doing a Master of Education Degree. I am carrying out a research project on factors influencing the academic performance of 'O' level students in Mutasa District secondary schools. The information you give will be treated in confidence. Kindly answer truthfully by selecting the most appropriate response to each item. (Tick on the box provided).

GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. Date:
2. School enrolment
3. Classroom size:
4. Number of classrooms



PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HEAD/DEPUTY HEAD

5. Sex:
Female
Male
6. Age:
20-29 years
30-39 years
40-49 years
50-65 years
Above 65 years
7. Employment status (choose one)
Acting Head
Acting Deputy Head
Substantive Head
Substantive Deputy Head
8. Highest academic and professional qualifications
Standard 6 and teacher education
J.C and teacher education
"O" Level and teacher education
"A" Level and teacher education
BA degree and Grad. CE
Masters in education
Other (Specify)

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

9. How long have you been a Head/Deputy Head?

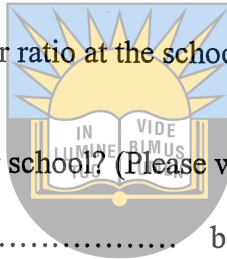
- Less than 1 year []
- 1-5 years []
- 6-10 years []
- 11-15 years []
- 16-20 years []
- Over 20 years []

10. How long have you been in this school?

- Less than 1 year []
- 1-5 years []
- 6-10 years []
- 11-15 years []
- 16-20 years []
- Over 20 years []

11. What is the average pupil: Teacher ratio at the school?

12. What is the total enrolment at your school? (Please write figures in the space provided below)



..... boys

..... girls

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

SCHOOL RESOURCES/EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

12. How many classrooms does your school have?

13. Does your school have enough classroom accommodation?

- Yes []
- No []

14. Does your school have enough accommodation for your teachers?

- Yes []
- No []

15. Which of the following does your school have? (Tick only ONCE for each line).

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a) Piped water
b) Other sources of water
c) Electricity
d) Computers
e) School laboratory
f) Library /resource center
g) Video machine
h) Telephone
i) Photocopier



University of Fort Hare

Excellence

16. Are there any students who share textbooks for?

All subjects	Yes	[]	Yes	[]
For other subjects	No	[]	No	[]

17. What is the average student- textbook ratio?

18. What is the classroom- student ratio?

19. What is the teacher-pupil ratio?.....

20. Roughly what percentage of students lives more than 3 kilometers away from the school?

.....

21. Is the school regularly accessible by road?

Yes	[]
No	[]

22. Do you have an SDC/SDA at your school?

Yes	[]
-----	-----

No []

23. How often do you meet with the SDC/SDA?

Once a week []

Once a term []

Once a year []

Never meet []

24. Is the school development committee supportive?

Yes []

No []

28. How often do District or Regional Education Officers supervise the school?

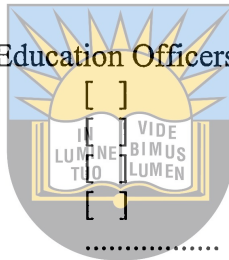
Weekly []

Monthly []

Quarterly []

Never []

Other (specify)



University of Fort Hare

29. How many teachers (including student teachers) are there in your school this term?
(Please write figures in the space provided below)

.....Male teachers

.....Female teachers

30. How many of your teachers have been at this school for the following length of time?
(Please write figures in the space provided below)

Up to 1 year

1-2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

31. How often do you supervise your Educators?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Daily
- Other (specify)

32. Do you practice continuous assessment of your teachers?

- Yes
- No

33. Do you have a log in book for teachers?

- Yes
- No



34. What challenges are you currently faced with as a Head/Deputy?

.....

.....

.....

35. How many lessons per week do you teach? (Please write figures in the space provided below. If you do not teach any please write 'N/A').

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

36. Has the District Office in any way been helpful in addressing these challenges?

- Yes
- No

37. What facilities would you like to acquire that you think would enhance teaching and learning in your school?

.....

.....

.....

OTHER ISSUES

Put a cross in the box, which reflects your opinion

[5] I agree totally

- [4] I agree with some doubts
- [3] I disagree totally
- [2] I disagree with some doubts
- [1] I have no opinion

38. The involvement of parents in school has greatly affected the performance of learners
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

39. The absenteeism of pupils greatly affect on the performance of learners
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

40. Family circumstances contribute towards the performance of learners
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

41. Lack of resource materials in school result in poor performance of learners
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

42. Learner characteristics are associated with the performance of learners.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

43. Ineffective leadership greatly affects the academic performance of learners.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

44. The socio-economic status of parents contributes to the performance of learners.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

45. As head of this institution, apart from the factors identified in the above assumptions, what other factors do you think contribute towards the poor performance of learners? (Put them in order of importance)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

1. Are you satisfied with the work of your class teacher?

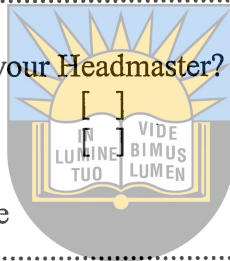
Yes []
No []

2. Give reasons for your response

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

3. Are you satisfied with the work of your Headmaster?

Yes []
No []



4. Please give reasons for your response

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

5. Are you satisfied with the work of your school development committee?

Yes []
No []
N/A []

6. Please give reasons for your response

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

7. Do you have all necessary textbooks and related learning materials for your class?

Yes []
No []

8. What activities/tasks do you do after school?

.....

.....

9. What activities/tasks do you do on weekends?

.....

.....

10. Are you usually given schoolwork to do at home?

Yes []

No []

11. How often do your teachers give you homework?

Every day []

Once per week []

Twice per week []

Twice per month []

Never gives homework []

Other (Specify)



12. When do you do your homework?

.....

.....

13. Who assist you in your schoolwork at home (give as many as applicable)

Father []

Mother []

Sister []

Brother []

Neighbour []

Nobody []

Other (specify)

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

14. What problems do you encounter when you do your schoolwork at home?

.....

.....

.....

15. How far is your school from home?

Less than 1 kilometer []

1-2 kilometers []

2-3 kilometers []

3-4 kilometers []

4-5 kilometers []

Over (specify)

16. How do you travel to school?

- Walk []
- Public transport []
- Private transport []
- Other (specify)

17. How long does it take you to travel from home to school?

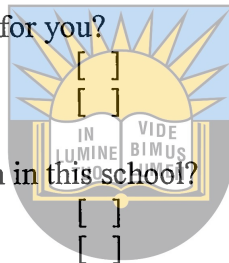
- Less than 10 minutes []
- 10-20 minutes []
- 21-30 minutes []
- 31-40 minutes []
- 41-50 minutes []
- 51-60 minutes []
- Over 60 minutes []

18. Do you think learning is important for you?

- Yes []
- No []

19. Would you want your child to learn in this school?

- Yes []
- No []



20. Please give reasons for your answer

.....

.....

Put a cross in the box which reflects your opinion

- [5] I agree totally
- [4] I agree with some doubts
- [3] I disagree totally
- [2] I disagree with some doubts
- [1] I have no opinion

21. The teachers has greatly affected your performance [5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

22. Absenteeism affects your performance in school [5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

23. Your family circumstances like illiteracy, wealth and occupation contribute towards your performance at school [5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

22. Lack of resource materials in your schools results in your poor performance

[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

30. Besides the factors we have discussed above, what other factors do you think contribute towards your academic performance? (Put them in order of importance)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Thank you for your co-operation!



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

This questionnaire seeks your ideas, impressions or views on the factors influencing the academic performance of 'O' level learners in your school. It should be brought to your attention that strict confidentiality of responses is guaranteed and your honest opinion will be most valuable in this study.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EDUCATORS

1. Sex: Female []
 Male []
2. Age: Below 20 years []
 20-29 years []
 30-39 years []
 40-49 years []
 50-59 years []
 Above 65 []
3. Employment status (choose one)
 Permanent educator []
 Temporary educator []
 On probation []
 Other (specify)
4. Highest academic and professional qualifications:
 Standard 6 and training []
 J.C and training []
 "O" Level and training []
 "A" Level and training []
 B/A/B. Sc and training []
 B.Ed []
 Masters []
5. How long have you been in the service?
 Less than 1 year []
 1-5 years []
 6-10 years []
 11-15 years []
 16-20 years []
 Over 20 years []



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

10. For how long have you been teaching in this school?

- Less than 1 year []
- 1-5 years []
- 6-10 years []
- 11-15 years []
- 16-20 years []
- Over 20 years []

11. Are there any students who share text books for:

- All subjects Yes [] No []
- Some subjects Yes [] No []

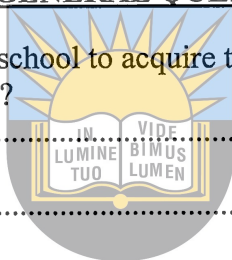
SECTION B: GENERAL QUESTIONS

12. What facilities would you like the school to acquire that you think would enhance teaching and learning in your class?

.....

.....

.....



University of Fort Hare

13. How long do you engage in lecture method of teaching?

- Daily []
- Weekly []
- Monthly []
- Quarterly []
- Never []
- Other (specify) []

14. How often do you engage in question-and-answer method of teaching?

- Daily []
- Weekly []
- Monthly []
- Quarterly []
- Never []
- Other (specify)

15. How often do you engage learners in discovery activities?

- Daily []
- Weekly []
- Monthly []

- Quarterly []
- Never []
- Other (specify)

16. In general, how often do you assess your learners?

- Daily []
- Weekly []
- Monthly []
- Quarterly []
- Never []
- Other (specify)

17. How are your learners performing, compared with other schools?

.....

.....

18. Please explain your response



.....

.....

19. How do your learners perform in cluster examinations?

.....

.....

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

20. Please explain.

.....

.....

21. Do you think constant the socio-economic status of a community has an effect on the performance of learners?

- Yes []
- No []

22. Please explain your response

.....

.....

.....

SECTION C

Put a cross in the box, which reflects your opinion

[5]	I agree totally
[4]	I agree but not strongly
[3]	I disagree totally
[2]	I disagree but not strongly
[1]	I am not sure

27. Learners perform badly because teachers are ineffective
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
31. Learners perform badly in school if their parents do not take an active role in the education of their children.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
32. Poor administration focuses (e.g.) ineffective leadership, have greatly contributed to the academic performance of your learners.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
33. The lack of resource materials and facilities has to a great extent affected the performance of learners.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
34. The shortage of books in particular has contributed to the poor performance.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
35. Supervision strategies have an impact on learning outcomes.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
36. Children who come from big families tend to perform badly in class.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
37. Children from parents who do not participate in school programmes tend to perform badly in class.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
38. The fact that schools do not have enough accommodation for educators and learners significantly contributes to the poor performance of learners.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]
39. Learners perform poorly because of their characteristics.
[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

SECTION D

40. As a regular form 'O' level educator, identify some of the problems that are associated with the academic performance of learners in general.

.....

.....

.....

41. Apart from the factors identified above, which other factors do you think affect the learning outcomes in your school in particular?

.....

.....

.....



Thank you for your co-operation.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

**FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT,
 DEVELOPMENT AND
 COMMERCE**

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

PRIVATE BAG X1314 ALICE 5700
 PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE – SOUTH AFRICA
 TELEPHONE 040 – 6022075/ 6022412/ 6531943
 CELL 082 200 3369
 E-mail: blindeque@ufh.ac.za or benlindeque@procomp.co.za

18 June 2003

The D. E. O.
 Mutasa District Office

Dear Sir/Madam



**REQUEST TO BE GRANTED PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH
 YOUR SCHOOLS**

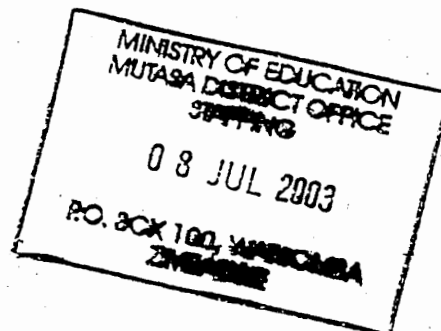
I am kindly requesting you to permit Ms Lizzie Mutanda (200261312) a second year Master of Education in Education Management and Policy student at the University of Fort Hare, to conduct research with your schools in Mutasa District.

The research to be conducted in July 2003 will target school heads, teachers, students and School Development Committee members of three secondary schools. The research entitled "Factors associated with the academic performance of students" is academic, and information obtained shall be used for the research project only.

I wish to thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Ben Lindeque
 Professor and Associate Dean



*Permission is granted
 A. K. M. M. M.
 D.E.O. Mutasa*