CHALLENGES OF LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES THAT AFFECT THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN JOHANNESBURG EAST DISTRICT, GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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I, **Makuya Rudzani Vanrijn,** a Master of education student at the University of Venda hereby declare that the research titled: "**CHALLENGES OF LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES THAT AFFECT THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN JOHANNESBURG EAST DISTRICT, GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA"** presented here is my own work and where I have used the work of others, I have done an accurate acknowledgement.

Signature: *Makuya R.V*   Date: 13March 2022

DEDICATIONS

I would like to thank the Almighty God who made it possible for me to reach this far. It was never an easy journey, but through Him, I made it. This work is highly dedicated to none other than to Him. Through You, indeed, everything is possible.

My dedications would not be complete if I do not express my sincere gratitude to my wife, children, grandchildren, brothers, and sisters. You remain my source of inspiration. Your support went further than any human expectation.

Without the Gauteng Department of Education, my study would not have been possible. This is specially dedicated to you. My fellow colleagues at Tlhabologo, Ponelopele Oracle and Ekurhuleni North District, you are stars.

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ABSTRACT

A child-headed household is a form of family that is growing around the world, especially in the sub-Saharan Africa. These are families without adults, hence, are headed by children or adolescents, less than 18 years of age. The study investigated challenges faced by learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals. This was done through an analysis and description of the experiences of learners from child-headed households through an ecological systems model that included stakeholders like, community, school, government departments and officials as well as non-governmental organisations. This study was based in the Johannesburg East District of Education, in the Gauteng Province, South Africa. A purposive sampling method was used to select three learners from child-headed families, six educators in the School Based Support Teams, three school managers and one social worker from Johannesburg East District schools in Kaalfontein, Ebony Park and Ivory Park in Gauteng Province of South Africa. A Phenomenological qualitative research design was used where face-to-face interviews were conducted, and documents (SBST, school reports and attendance registers) were reviewed. The face-to-face interview were conducted between the researcher and the sample in a one –on –one situation for privacy. The data collected from audio tapes was transcribed. Research quality control measures that are centered on trustworthiness which included aspects such as credibility, transferability, consistency and conformability were observed. To test and implement research ethics, measures such as - informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, privacy, and empowerment, caring and fairness were employed. The study identified challenges such poor socio-economic background, child abuse, stigmatisation, exclusion, psychological and emotional abuses that were faced by children in child-headed families which and observed that they affected learners academically, socially, emotionally, physically and psychologically. Recommendations were provided to different stakeholders involved in addressing challenges faced by children living in child-headed households.

Keywords: Child-Headed Families, Child, School-Based Support Team, Vulnerable Children, Attachment, Learning Challenge

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CHC	:	Community Health Centre's
CHFs	:	Child-Headed Families
CRC	:	Child Rights Convention
CT-OVC	:	Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
EG	:	Educational Goal
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IPA	:	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
NGOs	:	Non-governmental Organizations
NSNP	:	National School Nutrition Programme
OVC	:	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
RDP		Reconstruction and Development Program
SASA	:	South African Social Security Agency
SBST	:	School Based Support Team
SIAS	:	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy
SNP	:	School Nutritional Programs
STIs	:	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	:	United Nations
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds
VFH	:	Voluntary Food Handlers

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Child-headed families are those where the main caregiver is younger than 18 years, therefore, the families are without adults, rather they are headed by children or adolescents (Cloth-Nielsen, 2004; Statistics South Africa, 2021; University of Cape Town, 2019). This may be due to various factors, such as adults leaving their household as migrant workers, being dead or ill (Leatham, 2005). In South Africa, the AIDS epidemic has thrown millions of households into turmoil. Often the middle generation is wiped out, and children and the elderly are left to fend for themselves (Sarandom, 2001; Satoh & Boyer, 2019).

Over the years, due to the plight of children who have lost parental care due to HIV and AIDS, such children have been identified as one of the most vulnerable group of people the world over who need to have their rights to be protected upheld by both state and non-state parties. Their right to childhood care, such as provision of basic necessities therefore need to be stimulated for possible intervention strategies and provisions developed and implemented (Nelson Mandela Children Fund Report, 2001; Satoh & Boyer, 2019).

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund Report (2001), and also Satoh and Boyer (2019) conducted studies that concluded that there has been an increase of infections and effects from HIV and AIDs in South Africa compared to other African countries and even in the world generally. The number of children orphaned by AIDS is increasing at an alarming rate and this is becoming a social problem. The report further states that absenteeism from school by learners is escalating, educators are frustrated by the low level of performance by their learners, and personal hygiene amongst learners is becoming a problem. Moreover, the integrity, cohesion, capacity, and efficiency of the extended family as a social support network are being undermined by social upheavals, poverty, unemployment, and over-stretched resources.

Before the advent of HIV and AIDS and other factors mentioned above, societal structures such as the extended families could cope with most of the social, mental,

and educational needs of orphans. Due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic from the late 1980s, reports indicate that there has been an alarming increase of children who are orphaned and living in families where there are no adults, now known as 'child-headed families', because of AIDS-related factors in sub-Sahara Africa. In South Africa, there were about 55,000 children staying in 33,000 child-only households in 2018. This amounts to 0.3% of the total children in the country. The data for the period 2002 – 2018, however, show that there has been no increase in the percentage of children living in CHFs. The projections of rapidly increasing numbers of CHFs due to HIV and AIDS are unrealised at this point, however, the current number of children living under this condition is of concern.

The aim of South Africa's Department of Education and Culture is to provide for the maximum development of each learner in accordance with his/her aptitude, ability, interest and personality (Diane, 2013). "The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 declares basic education as an inalienable basic human right for all South Africans" (The South Africa Government, 2020:2). The report further indicates that many communities and schools are failing to cope with challenges from CHFs because there are no relevant structures that are specifically meant to consider the plight of children who live without adult role-models who would take parental responsibilities. In this regard, some of the older siblings have had to take up parental responsibilities, not out of their choice but because they are forced by the desperate circumstance of losing both parents. Some of the children even leave school and look for employment in order to care for their siblings. Apart from these problems, even children in formal care settings can be vulnerable when there is no effective regulatory or mentoring mechanism to assess the suitability case arrangement. Mann (2002) and Pain (2014) noted that children sometimes are not only invisible, but also unheard as they may choose to stay silent despite abuse at home because they are afraid of the unknown consequences. This means that there is a serious need for interventions in these children's lives. It is against this background that the proposed study focused on investigating challenges preventing learners in child-headed families from achieving their educational goals.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

A family serves as a socialisation agent and there are specific societal functions that it is expected to perform. The family is the primary educational agent which constitutes the nucleus of the lifeworld in which the child is situated and is the child's first experiences of value priorities which eventually help to shape his or her attitude to life (Mahoney & Filer, 1996; Marin & Bocoş, 2017). This constitutes the foundation of the child's immediate lifeworld and the social and educational structure within which he/she grows up. In a situation where children have to fend for their younger siblings, it becomes clear that children in such families have lost their right to childhood as such families are dysfunctional.

Pretorius and Lemmer (2004); Marin and Bocoş (2017) believe that learners are more successful if their parents participate in school activities and encourage education and learning at home. Encouragement is important regardless of the educational background or social class of the parents. These authors emphasise that learners' academic performance improve when there is parental involvement. Pretorius and Lemmer (2004) argue that parents' involvement increases self-esteem and decrease behavioural problems of learners as well as improve school attendance. When parents show an interest in their children's education and display high expectations regarding their performance, parents promote attitudes that are pivotal to achievement. Parental involvement increases commitment to schoolwork, for example learners develop more regular homework habits (Pretorius & Lemmer, 2004; Marin & Bocoş, 2017). Educators usually come to know and, understand their learners' parents better, and this increases their understanding of the learner's personal circumstances and provides valuable information which in handling specific learners in their classes.

 Learners who do not have parents lack someone to provide them with food, clothes, and religious values. All children need someone who can shape their character, give support and hope in difficult times, unfortunately, there may be nobody to assist or guide CHFs to do homework, prepare for tests and examinations (Berger & Font, 2015). Family units strengthen children's ability to absorb and adapt to external challenges. One external challenge which the family is confronted with today is the survival of a social unit without a parental subsystem, where both parents are not there in a household to play their parental role.

The Johannesburg East District of Education, in the Gauteng Province, like many other districts in South Africa is facing a challenge of CHFs. This problem is worsened by HIV and AIDs, poverty, hunger, exploitation, high school dropouts, starvation, trauma and stress, and exposure to different kinds of abuse. CHF learners may be trapped under perpetual poverty if the problems they experience are not clearly identified and controlled, and may fail to achieve their academic goals.

It is against this backdrop that it is imperative to explore challenges affecting learners in child-headed households from achieving their educational goals (Marin & Bocoş, 2017).

1.3   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This section of the research presents the main objectives of the study and the corresponding precise objectives.

1.3.1 Main Objective/Purpose

The main objective of the research study was to examine the challenges faced by learners in child-headed families that prevent them from achieving their educational goals.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives in the study on the challenges of learners from child-headed families in Johannesburg East District, Gauteng Province, South Africa as outlined below were to:

- identify the educational aspirations of learners from child-headed families.
- examine school experiences of learners from child-headed families.
- explore challenges that affect the school performance of learners from child-headed families.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions were derived from the objectives stated above, to guide the investigation of the research. These are presented below.:

1.4.1 Main Research Question

The main research question of the study was: How do challenges faced by learners from child-headed families militate against their educational aspirations?

1.4.2 Specific Research Questions

To complement the main research question, the following precise research questions were formulated:

- What are the educational aspirations of learners from child-headed families?
- How do learners from child-headed families experience schooling?
- What challenges affect the school performance of learners from child-headed families?

1.5   LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the literature review, the theoretical back-bone of the study. The theoretical framework informs the research design and data collection process of a research.

1.5.1 Theoretical Framework - Bowlby's Attachment Theory

This study is guided by John Bowlby's attachment theory which indicates the essential nature of parental closeness or bond, care and love especially of the mother for early childhood development which have critical implications on other human developmental factors, such as intellectual, emotional, psychological and social growth (Bowlby, 2011). The most important tenet of the Attachment Theory is that children need to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver, who is

usually a mother, for social, emotional, psychological, and physical development to occur normally.

Bowlby (2011) argues that children become attached to adults who are sensitive and responsive to their needs, and who remain consistent caregivers for some months during the periods from about six months to two years of age. When children begin to crawl, and walk, they begin to use attachment figures (family members), as a secure base to explore to the world. Parental responses lead to the development of patterns of attachment which in turn lead to internal working models which guide the individual's perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and expectations in later relationships. A secure attachment shapes people's ability to feel safe, develop meaningful connections with others, explore the world, deal with stress, balance emotions, experience comfort, security and make sense of their lives (Bowlby, 2011).

Separation anxiety or grief following the loss of an attachment figure is a normal and adaptive response to an attached infant. The adjustment of insecure children, in many spheres of life, compared to that of securely-attached children, does not have a sound base, putting the latter's future relationships in jeopardy. Insecure children are vulnerable to family risk and their social and behavioural problems increase. These insecurities may lead to insularity, avoiding any close, emotional connection, becoming fearful never knowing what to expect next, becoming disorganised, aggressive, and developing slowly. Such developmental delays manifest themselves as deficits and result in subsequent physical and mental, health problems, social and learning disabilities (Bowlby, 2011).

In line with the study objective, the attachment theory by John Bowlby was selected and found appropriate for informing a study on children who have lost their attachment to their parents due to HIV and AIDS. This theory's relevance is based on the fact that it posits that loss of parental or adult guidance can have serious consequences on the developmental growth of affected children physically, psychologically, socially, emotionally and cognitively (Bowlby, 2011). Education, which is one of the basic needs of any child was therefore the focus of this study in terms of how the sampled children in this study had to bear the negative consequences of parental loss. Usually, with the loss of immediate parents, it is

expected that the state, teachers, extended families, and communities would intervene to rescue these children from these challenges.

MacLellan (2005) and Phillips (2011) observe that child-headed families usually comprise both brothers and sisters and that the eldest tends to become the head of the household. Older children sometimes find it hard to exercise authority over younger siblings, while girl heads of families, in turn experience problems with younger brothers. They report emotional distress and feel they are voiceless; believe that they are powerless to change their fate, feel excluded from the community which neither acknowledges nor fulfils their need for love, sanctuary, and recognition because they are often dismissed as those with no rights within society.

Lack of affordable nutritious food coupled with the inaccessibility of healthcare when needed results in poor health, thus affecting these children's immune system and leading to continuous vulnerability to infections.

Many psychologists believe that infants will not develop normally unless they receive the warm, loving attention of one consistent mother figure to whom they can become attached. This implies that children raised in understaffed institutions are developmentally impaired because they have not had an opportunity to become emotionally involved with a primary caregiver (Marin & Bocoş, 2017).

Socially-deprived children can overcome many of their initial handicaps if placed in homes where they receive a lot of attention from affectionate and responsive caregivers. Even severely-disturbed children who are adopted after spending several years in understaffed institutions show dramatic improvements, compared with their counterparts who remain in a barren institutional setting (Shaffer, 1996:455; Berger & Font, 2015).

1.6   DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Child-Headed Families

Child-headed families refers households without adults, and are headed by children or adolescents, as the adults are absent due to migrant working conditions, dead or ill (Statistics South Africa, 2021:10).

1.6.2 Child

In South Africa, a child is a person under the age of 18 years (Children's Act, 2005).

1.6.3 School-Based Support Team

The School Based Support Team (SBST) is responsible for establishing the support needs of schools, teachers, learners and coordinating support provision within the provision of the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy (SIAS). The team should meet on a regular basis to fulfil these functions. All public schools are obliged to establish an SBST (The Department of Basic Education, 2014:8).

1.6.4 Vulnerable Children

The term "vulnerable children" generally refer to individuals under 18 years of age whose development, safety, and well-being, is at significant risk due to insufficient care and protection, or not getting important services. This definition encompasses OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children), a term commonly used to describe children affected by HIV and AIDS, especially in lower- and middle-income countries (Satoh & Boyer, 2019:467).

1.6.5 Attachment

Attachment is the tendency of children to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver, who is usually a mother, for social, emotional, psychological, and physical development to occur normally (Bowlby, 2011:12).

1.6.6 Learning Challenge

A learning challenge is a specific impairment related to academic learning that interferes with a specific aspect of schoolwork and that reduces a student's academic performance significantly (United States Department of Education, 2005).

1.7   RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Erek (2004) and Bryman (2012) state that a research paradigm serves as a pattern or model for a study. We have three major paradigms in the verification of theoretical proposition. These are positivism, anti-positivism, and critical paradigm.

Thomas Kuhn is said to have coined the term 'paradigm'.   In simple, Bryman (2012) is of the view that a research paradigm offers general guiding principles to researchers in a field of specialisation on how the whole research project should be conceptualized and operationalised in terms of data collection, analysis, interpretation and release of study results.   The notion of paradigm is most often used in the natural sciences. In the social sciences, paradigms are more likely to be referred to as "research traditions" or "worldviews" (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014).   Knowing what paradigm or tradition a researcher ascribes to is important, because it determines what questions are considered worthy of investigation and what processes are required for the answers to these questions to be acceptable (du Plooy- Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin and Zikmund (2019) indicate that positivism originated from studying the national world and argue that anti-positivism for relativism is the view that reality cannot be objectively measured or understood as reality depends on individual interpretations, experiences and could differ from time to time even for the same person.   Du Plooy- Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), explains positivism as an approach of the natural sciences which is based on objective and deductive research results. Positivists advocate the application of natural sciences methods to study certain phenomena, including social phenomena. The early positivists have a very positive view of sciences as they believe that sciences could enlighten people, and in the process, make the world a better place for humans. In

other words, they believe that humans can improve their world and become better people through education which is scientifically proven.

Positivists believe that valid knowledge can only be gained from objective, observable (empirical) evidence, therefore, in their view, only knowledge confirmed by the senses can be considered as knowledge and is the result of empirical observation only; they therefore see a clear separation between science and non-science (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Du Plooy, Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), indicate that, positivists believe that the duty of a researcher is to discover laws that govern reality.

Leady and Ormrod (2021) state that the critical paradigm historical realism is the view that reality has been shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethic, and gender values; reality that was once deemed plastic but has now become crystallised. Realities are socially-constructed entities that are under constant internal influence. Du Plooy- Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) explain that Critical Realism has its origin in Germany and was born out of a frustration with positivists' non-humanistic and narrow focus and its emphasis on the causal nature of universal laws. There was also frustration with interpretivism's passive, contextual, subjective and relativist view, thus, what is termed as 'Critical Realism' has aspects from both traditions and combined them in a unique way. Critical Realism holds that real structures exist independent of human consciousness, a view like that of the positivists, who believe that our knowledge of reality is a result of social conditioning although, like interpretivists, they believe that knowledge is a social construct.

On the one hand, in line with the interpretivist position, critical realism recognises that the natural and social sciences are different, and that the way in which reality is experienced is based on how people perceive reality. In line with the positivists, critical realism insists that science must be rational and based on evidence. Critical realists try to understand and explain, rather than predict; both positivists and critical realists aim to generalise their results. Critical Realists maintain that researchers have a responsibility to transform social relations by exposing, critiquing, and changing any unjust practices in society. The main aim of their studies is, therefore, exposing myths so as to transform society and free people from all forms of

oppression, and to empower people to build a better world for themselves in the process.

1.7.1 Research Paradigm for The Study

Interpretivism developed as a reaction to the short-comings and limitations of positivism, specifically in its application to the social sciences. The main idea on which this paradigm rests is that people are fundamentally different from objects. Consequently, we cannot study human beings in the same way we study objects in the natural sciences, because, unlike objects, human beings change all the time and the environment in which they find themselves constantly influences them (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Du Plooy- Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), point out that interpretivists assert that, in the social sciences in particular, researchers should study and describe meaningful social action. Interpretivists merely want to understand human behaviour as their aim is to gain in-depth understandings; this often requires the researcher to spend many hours in direct contact with those being studied, to appreciate how they experience daily life and to get an understanding of what is meaningful and relevant to them (du Plooy- Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The interpretivist theory tells a story. It describes and interprets how people living within a particular context conduct their daily lives. Interpretivist research is rich in detailed description and direct quotes from participants (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The aim of interpretivists is to have a deep conceptualisation of subjective or relative realities of a phenomenon under study, thus, they depend on qualitative research. Interpretivist researchers use methods that are sensitive to the context and will help them to gain an in-depth understanding. This method includes focus-groups discussions, in-depth interviews, ethnography, and narrative inquiry. In qualitative research, such as the current study, a researcher is one of the primary research instruments and study participants are there to inform the researcher about their lives, which are the subjects of study (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Murname (2010) argues that the post-positivism paradigm posits that research should have more value and must not be biased but be value-subjective and inter-subjective, even value-driven within the critical paradigm. He elaborates on the idea

of the anti-positivists that there is a place for the voice and role of the researcher and participants of the study. Humans are central to the research process, rather than isolated from it. People are not controlled and studied but are part-takers (participants) in the whole process such that they investigate and benefit from the research. So, this study used face-to-face interviews between the researcher and learners from child-headed households, their teachers, and principal. The researcher also used observation to ascertain the behavioural patterns of the learners through their performance reports, attendance registers, exercise books and SBST logbook.

1.8   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.8.1   Research Design

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) indicate that a research design is the whole plan on how the research is conducted from the beginning up to the conclusion, hence, this is called the 'blueprint' of a research project. It is through the research design that the quality of the research results is determined. It is from the research objectives and research questions that researchers make decisions on the research design that is relevant in achieving the research objectives or answering the research questions, as well as the study sample and data gathering instruments. Research designs range from experimental, semi-experimental, surveys, historical to descriptive and these can be selected based on the research problem at hand (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Kumar (2011:396) states that "A research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically". Similarly, du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) add that a research design is a complete plan for the entire research project, and that it is an outline of what a researcher did, from formulating the question(s) or hypothesis to collecting the information and completing the final analysis.

According to Saunders et al. (2019), a research design is an outline of the process that is followed when conducting a research project on a given topic. The design among other things indicates the sources of primary and secondary data, as well as

the data gathering approaches and instruments.   In simple terms, the research design is a general plan of action for carrying out research or the whole process of generating data that answer the research questions (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

Babbie (2001) and Bryman and Bell (2011), concur that research designs fall under two main categories - empirical and non-empirical studies. Empirical studies, which are similar to this study are distinguished as consisting of methods such as surveys, experiments, case studies, programme evaluation, ethnographic studies which require data gathering and analysis. Research designs that involve empirical data can also be classified according to the types of data they generate such as numeric or textual data. Non-empirical studies can be distinguished into philosophical analysis, conceptual analysis, theory building and literature reviews which do not require a researcher to conduct field work or data gathering. McMillan and Schumacher (2010), classify research designs into four major categories: quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, and analytic.   Each design is again divided into different types.   McMillan and Schumacher (2010:29), point out that quantitative research design has two types which are experimental and non-experimental. Experimental type has either true experimental, or quasi-experimental with single subjects as examples. Non-experimental has descriptive, comparative, correlational, survey, *ex post facto* and secondary data analysis as examples of this. Analytical research design has policy analysis, concept analysis and historical analysis as examples. Qualitative research design has ethnographic, phenomenological, case study, grounded theory, and critical studies as examples.   As its research design, the proposed study used primary data research design which is empirical. Documentary reviews and interviews were also used.

In this study there was analysis of documents on learner achievement, which according to Bryman and Bell (2011), is a form of qualitative research that requires the researcher to locate, collate and analyse empirical data and draw conclusions that describe, interpret, or explain what has occurred. In this study the documents analysed were learners' progressive reports, attendance registers, written work, and School Based Support Team (SBST) logbooks.

Apart from documentary study, this study also used interviews to collect data from all the study respondents, which enabled exchange of ideas between the researcher and study respondents, allowing for probing of responses provided by the participants for in-depth understanding of the motives and feelings of participants (Sounders et al., 2019). In particular, interviews were conducted with three learners, three teachers, and one school managers in the Johannesburg East District of Education in Gauteng Province of South Africa on the school experiences of vulnerable learners.

1.8.2 Qualitative Research Design

Babbie and Mouton (2001:270), observe that qualitative research is a generic research approach in social research whereby research takes as its departure point the insider's perspective on social action. Qualitative researchers attempt to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves. The primary goal of studies using this approach is defined as describing and understanding rather than explaining human behaviour, (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Qualitative research researchers emphasise studying human action in its natural setting and through the eyes of the actors themselves, together with an emphasis on detailed description and understanding of phenomena within the appropriate context. Babbie and Mouton (2001), state that qualitative research design has the following features: a detailed engagement or encounter with the object of study; selecting a small number of cases to be studied; an openness to multiple sources of data; and flexible design features that allow the researcher to adapt and make changes to the study where and when necessary.

The case study was used in this study. Bronley (1990), defines a case study research design as a primary empirical study where the researcher collects textual data in the form of documents and interviews with a few units of the targeted population, who are rich in information on the topic.

Creswell (2010), concurs saying, a case study research method is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. For McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a case study examines a bounded system, or a case, over time, in depth,

employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. The case may be a program, an event, an activity, or a set of individuals bounded in time and place in which the researcher defines the case and its boundary. A case can be selected because of its uniqueness or used to illustrate an issue, as in this study where orphaned children attending public schools were regarded as unique cases who need close examination of their life and school experiences in their daily circumstances.

Face-to-face interviews that combine a set of open questions were used to explore themes or responses in detail; the researcher interviewed learners from child-headed households, teachers and principal. As McMillan and Schumacher (2006), and O'Donoghue and Punch (2003) advise, the researcher strives to be genuine, patient, and non-confrontational, maintains eye contact, uses a low key approach and cadence during interviews with study participants.

1.8.3 Research Methodology

Babbie and Moulton (2001) state that the research methodology is the research process, which Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013) expand as a systematic way to solve an identified research problem. In line with the research design, the methodology is the implementation approach on how the design is carried out.   A research methodology usually includes the data collection process, such as interviews, surveys, study of documents, and how the gathered data is analysed and presented, leading to publication of study results.

 MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) continue that a research methodology refers to design strategy and traditions of enquiry or research approaches used to study an issue.   In this regard, Van Rensburg (2010), explains that there are two main types of approaches used in research - qualitative and quantitative.

1.8.4 Qualitative Methodology

Creswell (2010) explicates the qualitative method as a naturalistic approach which seeks to understand phenomena in context or the real-world setting. Burns and Grove (2009) contend that a qualitative research orientation is an inquiry process

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intending to explore and understand participants' lived experiences and uncover new insights. Polit and Beck (2008) describe the qualitative research approach as giving a full view of the phenomenon under study and further allows the expression of a full range of beliefs, feelings, and behaviours. De Vos (2011) notes a qualitative research orientation as a journey of discovery rather than a process of verification, and such a journey has the potential to stimulate new leads and avenues. It is characterised by the fact that the researcher is attempting to reach the heart and soul of the issue to understand it (Mouton & Marais, 1990). In this research, the researcher tried to understand the barriers and experiences of learners who are heading families that affect the achievement of their educational goals.

The qualitative methodology allows one to talk to the participants face-to-face in their own setting; experiences cannot be easily expressed from a distance. A qualitative approach seeks to understand a social phenomenon within its cultural, social, and situational context without imposing pre-existing explanations upon the setting (Gubrium & Sanker, 1994; Mouton & Marais, 1990).

This study was qualitative because data collected was not in numbers, but in textual form. Learners who head families explained challenges that affect the achievement of their educational goals. Educators were also asked to provide information that speaks to the challenges that interfere with the achievement of educational goals by learners from child-headed families.

1.9   DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND INSTRUMENTS

This study used qualitative approach to collect, present and analyse data to produce findings on underlying experiences of learners who faced circumstances that could affect their school attendance, participation and performance. This is an approach involving methods whereby the researcher obtains rich data, gathered from complex and multi-faced phenomena in a specific social context (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). To this, Neuman (2011) adds that qualitative research gives opportunity to collect detailed information in a more natural social setting which can bring out diverse or subjective views and meanings on a phenomenon under study; in this case orphaned learners who are studying in formal school settings. The

researcher was interested in understanding participants' subjective experiences which allow one to see things through their eyes. Neuman (2011) refers to researchers providing a thick description or narratives of subjective experiences and meanings based on qualitative data.

The data collection procedure needs to be clear and correct for reliable and valid data to be obtained from relevant sources using appropriate gathering instruments to achieve the study objectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). They further state that there are several methodological criteria that ought to be followed during the process of data collection. These include the suspension of personal prejudice, biases, systematic and accurate recording of the observations, establishment of trust and rapport with the interviewer and creating optional conditions in terms of the location or setting for the collection of data. There are two methods of collecting data, that is, from primary sources, such as interviews, observations, and questionnaires and the second method is to employ secondary sources, which include, for example, school documents (Kumar, 1999:104). This study used face-to-face interviews to gather data. According to Pratt, Raiffa and Schaifer (1995:66); an interview is a conversation where questions are asked and answers are given in parlance, with one person playing the role of interviewer and the other the role of interviewee. In this study, to gain confidence of the study participants, the research objectives were explained to the participants before they were asked to voluntarily accept to participate in the study. This helped them to talk about their challenges experiences, feelings, and minds without fear of discrimination. The researcher collected data from learners, teachers and principals using interviews. Additionally, the researcher analysed documents like school progressive or performance reports, attendance registers and School Based Support Team (SBST) logbook.

1.9.1 Population

Population is defined by Wiid and Diggines (2013:186) as 'the total group of people or entities (social artefacts) from whom information is required. According to du Plooy, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:133), population parameters of a study refer to the nature (people or social artefacts), size and unique characteristics of the population. For Keyton (2011:121), "a population consists of all units or the universe

- people or things - possessing the attributes or characteristics in which the researcher is interested".

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) contend that a population is a universe or group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria, and to which one intends to study and generalise the results of a research.

White (2005) notes that a population is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. Oswala (2001:55) hold the same view that a research study population is a collection of individuals or objects covered by the study or with which that study is concerned. The population of this study comprised of learners from child-headed families, educators in the School Based Support Team, school manager in the Johannesburg East District in Gauteng Province, South Africa. There were time and resource constrain to study the whole population in the district, hence, a representative sample of the population was purposively selected from whom the results can be generalised.

1.9.2 Study Sample and Sampling Procedure

It is not possible to study every element of a population, therefore, a sample has to be selected using credible approaches. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) explain a sample as a sub-set of a population that is representative of the accessible population. White (2005) describes a sample as a portion of the elements in a population, to which Brink (1996) confirmed a a subset of a population selected to participate in a study; it is a fraction of the whole, selected to participate in a research project. Sampling means taking any portion of a population as a representative of that population (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2002). Two methods of sampling are identified, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a process in which the probability of selection of each respondent is known, while for non-probability sampling, the probability of selection is unknown.   Probability sampling refers to whether each unit in the population has equal opportunity to be part of the sample (du Plooy- Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Systematic random sampling, simple random sampling, cluster random sampling, multistage sampling and stratified sampling are examples of probability sampling;

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convenience sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling are examples of non-probability sampling. Not all these approaches were applicable to this study because the phenomenon under study affected a small and specific group of people in the population. In this regard, the purposeful sampling approach was found relevant to identify the most appropriate elements from the study population, namely, learners from child-headed families and educators who had information on the affected learners.

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) indicate that in purposive sampling, the researcher selects elements from the population that are informative about the topic of interest to the researcher. Based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. Qualitative researchers are interested in selecting cases that are information rich. In other words, purposeful sampling selects subjects with certain established characteristics (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

Purposive sampling was chosen because it was necessary to select only those individuals from the population who would yield the most information about the topic under investigation (De Vos, 1998; McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative researchers are intentionally non-random in their selection of data sources (Leedy & Ormrod 2021).

Du Plooy-Cilliers Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) define a sample as a subj-set of a population that is representative of the accessible population. Likewise, White (2005) describes a sample as a portion of the elements in a population. Brink (1996) holds a similar opinion saying, a sample is a sub-set of a population selected to participate in a study; it is a fraction of the whole, selected to participate in the research project.

In this study a purposive sampling method was used to select three learners from child-headed families, three teachers in the School Based Support Team, and one school manager from Johannesburg East District in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The participants were from Kaalfontein. Participants were interviewed about

the challenges that affect the achievement of educational goals by learners from child-headed families.

1.9.3 Data Collection Strategies

Permission letters to conduct interviews were sought from the district.   After receiving permission letter, the letter was taken to the schools sampled.   Consent forms were given to respondents, to whom were also explained the details of the study.   After being given permission, the researcher set up appointments with each respondent for interviews. The researcher, on the set dates interviewed the respondents based on the questions in the interview schedule.   Documents which were learners' performance reports, SBST logbook records and school attendance registers were reviewed, and data collected from them. The interview process was conducted over an hour and the information was transcribed for analysis.

Creswell (2003) defines an interview as a two-way conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee, to collect data about ideas, beliefs, opinions, and behaviours of the interviewees with the aim of seeing the world through their eyes. Similarly, Mare (2007) notes an interview as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data to learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviour. Johnson and Christensen (2012) share a similar view and adds, that an interview is a data-collection method in which an interviewer asks questions to an interviewee who provides data. According to Cohen (2011), interviews are a widely-used instrument for data collection. Burns and Grove (2008) add that interviews enable interviewers to follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings of interviewees.

This study used face-to-face interviews to explore the views and experiences of learners from child-headed families, educators and a principal about challenges affecting the achievement of educational goals by these learners. Creswell and Plano (2011) advocate that qualitative data should consist of information obtained through open-ended questions in which the researcher does not use predetermined categories or scales to collect data.

Similarly, Welman and Kruger (2001) point out that semi-structured interviews offer a versatile way of collecting data and add that these can be used with all age groups, since they allow the interviewer to use probes with a view to clear up vague responses, or to ask for elaboration of incomplete answers.

The researcher explained and discussed the purpose of the study with the participants before conducting the interviews. The questions were clear, neutral, and not leading. Throughout the interviewing process, the researcher was a good listener and avoided being judgmental; participants' non-verbal communication was also noted. The researcher scribbled notes and then subsequently transcribed them; where necessary, translation to English was made of the responses. I interviewed each learner individually to uphold confidentiality. If there was a need, each response by the learner was followed-up for deeper information and understanding. I interviewed the educators in the SBST and school manager, separately, to ensure confidentiality.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1992) observe, there is bewildering variety of documentary materials that might be relevant to a researcher on this topic, for example, functional literature, diaries, autobiographies, letters, and mass media products. Creswell (2005) points out that documents in research are written communications related to a topic under study.

Documents are any written materials that contain information about the phenomena we wish to study. Some are primary documents, or eyewitness accounts written by people who experienced a particular event or behaviour. Others are secondary documents produced by people who were not present on the scene but who received information necessary to compile these documents by interviewing eyewitnesses or by reading primary documents (Baile, 1994). In this study, I used school performance reports or mark schedules of learners from child-headed families and SBST logbook to check these learners' educational or academic performance.

1.10   DATA ANALYSIS

Mouton (2001) points out that data analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends, and relationships. Patton (2002) also adds that data analysis is the process of identifying categorizing and classifying the primary patterns in data.   Bernard (2013) defines analysis as the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explain that qualitative analysis begins with coding the data by dividing the text into phrases, sentences and paragraphs, and assigning a label to each unit. In qualitative data analysis, the raw data to be analysed are words rather than numbers. On use of records in research, Mack (2005), points out that preparing recorded data for analysis requires transcribing all tapes and typing the transcriptions into computer files.

For this study, transcriptions of collected scribbled data was the first step in understanding the relevance of the data to the study objectives. Transcription was read not once but several times, making comments on the transcriptions, developing a list of categories, and reducing categories. The data was gathered from interviews and documents that were selected because of their relevance to the study objectives.

1.11   RESEARCH QUALITY CONTROL MEASURES

Quality of qualitative research can be achieved through ensuring dependability, creditability, transferability, and conformability. These four key criteria are briefly discussed below in relation to the study.

1.11.1 Credibility of Gathered Data

Truth value reflects the confidence the researcher has in the truth of the findings, including the contexts in which the phenomenon was taking place (Krefting, 1990). MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:102), state that credibility is the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be accurate and reasonable. In this study, credibility was ensured by prolonging engagement at the study sites whereby

there was repeated engagement with selected elements and by using data collection instruments that helped to obtain relevant data in line with study objectives.

1.11.2 Transferability of Study Results

Gay and Airasion (2003:246) state that transferability has to do with transmitting or generalising the results of a study to other contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985:90) observe that, transferability is the degree to which the results of a study can be applied in similar contexts to different participants. The primary strategy to ensure transferability is the provision of rich, thick descriptions (De Vos, 1990; Krefting, 1990). From these arguments, it can be concluded that the applicability of the study is a responsibility of any person who wants to apply findings of the study, and not necessarily the researcher. In this case, the results of this study may be found useful by schools that have learners who come from orphaned situations in order to use the study recommendations to assist them in learning and achieving their educational aspirations.

This research is of a qualitative nature, thus, the challenges experienced by the participants were studied in their natural context. Each situation is unique, hence there is very little chance of generalising findings (Krefting, 1990). To improve transferability, the findings of the study, were accurately defined in the form of themes and detailed explanations.

1.11.3 Dependability of Research Findings

Gay and Airasian (2003) say dependability refer to how carefully the researcher has selected data instruments and research sites to suit the research questions and the objectives of the study. Mouton (1996) indicates that consistency implies that using the same research design with a different group under a different set of circumstances may lead to similar observations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that consistency is not possible with the application of dependability. Dependability which is a control measure for consistency is discussed below and in the third chapter of the study. A detailed description of the focus of the study, the researcher's role, the participant's position and basis for selection, and the context, from which the data

is provided, were issues that were carefully examined to improve the credibility of gathered data on learners from child-headed families. An independent coder was utilised to validate the interpretation made. An external data analyst (the research supervisor) rechecked the category and interpretations to further ensure dependability.

1.11.4 Conformability of the Study

Polit and Beck (2004), point out that conformability ensures that there is freedom from bias in the research procedures, that data and interpretation of the study are a true reflection of what has been investigated. Maree (2007) also states that the extent to which the researcher's findings can be confirmed by another researcher depends on the conformability or neutrality achieved when true value and applicability of data is created. The reason for recording data during the interview is to retrace the information as he or she audits the study. For this study, raw data that was scribbled, field notes and interview transcripts that was written by the researcher were used for audit trail. The researcher achieved conformability by ensuring participants' anonymity and confidentiality and asked for permission to store data for further processing. In addition, the actual statements by the study participants were captured verbatim in order to avoid distorting the voice of the interviewees.

Conformability, according to Merriman (2009), is ensuring that the data findings truly represent the views of the respondents, perspectives, or meanings rather than the views and understanding of the researcher. The findings were scrutinised and analysed, and self-critical accounts were considered. The data was captured accordingly, interpreted, and presented correctly and then the researcher's own perspectives and position were applied.

1.12   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study may assist different government departments' policy makers, educators, school management teams, school governing bodies, various departments, and the community at large to understand the challenges of learners living in child-headed households that negatively affect them in their educational goals. Pretorius and

Lemmer (2004) believe that learners are more successful if their parents participate in school activities and encourage education and learning at home. This encouragement is essential regardless of the educational background or social class of the parents. Parents' involvement increases self-esteem and decreases behavioural problems of learners as well as improve their school attendance. When parents show an interest in their children's education and display high expectations regarding their performance, they promote attitudes that are pivotal to achievement. Parental involvement increases commitment to schoolwork, for example, learners develop more regular homework habits (Pretorius & Lemmer, 2004). The findings will ensure educators come to know and, understand learners from CHFs better, and enhance their understanding of the learner's personal circumstances and provides information which may be of value in handling specific learners in their classes. That knowledge may assist them to provide effective support to the learners living in child-headed families. The findings of this study would also clarify the roles that schools, and the community can play in child-headed families. The study may also add value to the body of knowledge about child-headed families as well as stimulate further research on challenges faced by learners living in child-headed families.

This may also assist educators with the knowledge of dealing with these learners' failure to perform effectively. For example, giving them a second chance or extension if there is a valid reason for not submitting their work, understanding if they are absent, failing tests or underachieving and establish lawful practices in dealing with these issues.

1.13   DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Simon (2011) states that, delimitations are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study. The delimitations are in the control of the researcher. Delimiting factors, amongst others, include the choice of objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives that the researcher adopted, and the population chosen for investigation. The first delimitation in the study was the choice of the problem itself; this implies that there are other related problems that could have been chosen but were rejected. Delimitations are created before any investigations are carried out. The study was carried out at a public school

in Kaalfontein in Johannesburg East District of Education in the Gauteng Province, South Africa. Only three learners from child-headed families, three teachers, and one school manager were the sampled. This study used face-to-face interviews and information from analysis of school documents as research instruments.

1.14   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are the rules that bind the researcher as he/she conducts his/her research. Critical ethical issues such as permission to conduct research, anonymity, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality should be considered.

De Vos (2005) and Bless and Higson-Smith (2006) note that, ethics is a set of moral principles or guidelines which are suggested by an individual or groups and are subsequently widely accepted about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects or respondents. Ethics can be referred to as a field that seeks to ensure that the welfare of participants is protected.   It refers to standard conduct and values, and how these impact on the researcher and research subject (Gray, 2009). Monette et al. (2008) add that ethics are guidelines for research that enable a researcher to ensure that all respondents participate voluntarily and that they are not harmed.

Governments and professional bodies insist on professional codes to protect participants in social research from harm, to ensure their right to privacy, to adhere to the notion of informed consent, and avoid the issue of deception (Merriam 1998); ethics relate to what is right and what is wrong. McMillan (2010) observes that qualitative research is more likely to be personally intrusive than quantitative research, thus, the need for guidelines such as - informed consent, no deception, providing confidentiality, anonymity, privacy for data and ensuring that no harm befalls the participants. A credible research design involves not only selecting informants and effective research strategies but also adhering to research ethics. Researchers need to plan how they will handle the ethical dilemmas in interactive data collection. Most qualitative researchers devise roles that elicit cooperation, trust, openness, and acceptance (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This suggests that there is a need for the researcher to conform to standards of conduct of a given profession when research is undertaken.   Issues concerning the invasion of privacy

need to be paid attention to because social research often involves intrusion into people's lives, requiring people to reveal personal information about their lives (Rosaldo, 1993), therefore, issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality become critical.

For this study, permission was requested from the Province, District, Circuit, and school. Critical ethical issues such as anonymity, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality were considered. These are discussed below.

1.14.1 Informed Consent

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006), indicate that informed consent is the process of seeking explicit agreement from subjects to participate in research based on their full understanding of the procedures involved and their likely effects. Welman (2005) agrees that the researcher should get the necessary permission from the respondents after they have been thoroughly and truly informed about the purpose of the study.

The researcher explained to the participants what the study was about, its purpose and what it would entail. This helped participants to understand what was expected of them as well as to understand the nature of study and its impact on them. Informed consent was obtained through the form which each participant received from the researcher explaining what the purpose of the study was. On the form was also outlined how the information would be obtained as well as the method and procedures to be used. The informed consent forms indicate to the participants that the information obtained from them would be used for nothing else, but the study; it also indicated how the information would be kept confidential. At the end of the consent form, participants were asked to sign it indicating their full understanding and consent to take part in the study.

This ensured that respondents understand what they agreed to; that they were not consenting because of any manipulation, but their own free will based on clear understanding. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) point out that, in gaining informed

permission, most researchers give participants assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and describe the intended use of data.

1.14.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality implies the undertaking by the researcher to protect the anonymity of the research participants. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006) and Bless and Higson-Smith (2006), believe information obtained or provided by the participant should be protected and should not be available to anyone, other than the researcher.

In this study, participants were assured that no other person would have access to their information because the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights and values of the respondents. The consent form stated that only the researcher would have access to the provided information. Participants were assured that the data collected would be kept in a safe place after the summarisation of data. The researcher ensured confidentiality by not requiring any names and participants' identities would remain unknown.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue that the settings and participants should not be identifiable in print, thus, locations and features of the settings were disguised, hence, pseudonyms were used for places and people. Researchers have a dual responsibility: to protect the individuals' details from other persons in the setting and to protect the informants from the general reading public. For this study, the researcher made sure that the questionnaire made no provision for a setting so that participants felt free and safe to articulate their views.

1.14.3 Caring and Fairness

Physical harm to informants seldom occurs in qualitative research, although some persons may experience humiliation and loss of trust, constituting possible harm to individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A sense of caring and fairness must be part of the researcher's thinking, actions, and personal morality. Open discussions and negotiations usually promote fairness to the participants and research inquiry (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).   For this study, the researcher ensured that all the

participants were treated equally and fairly, with the due respect they deserve. The researcher maintained the trust between himself and participants by always putting participants first in the interactions.

1.15   RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter dealt with the introduction of the research topic, aims, objectives, research questions and the research problem, that are covered in the research study. A brief overview of the literature review and research methodology was also covered.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Two presents a discussion and analyses of past literature sources that cover the research questions about learners from child-headed families, through interacting with educators in the School Based Support Team and school manager from Kaalfontein in the Johannesburg East District in Gauteng Province, South Africa.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter Three spells out all the methodologies that were used to conduct the research project. The discussions include definitions, advantages and disadvantages of the methods of conducting the research were highlighted.

Chapter Four: Results, Discussion, and Interpretation of Findings

Chapter Four presents the research data, interpretation, and findings. Reponses were presented as per the research questions.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 5 details the findings of the research, recommendations, research limitations and suggestions for future research.

1.16   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter contained the conceptual framework of the research, constituting the aim of the study, research objectives and the research questions. A brief literature review on learners from CHFs was presented. This was followed by the research methodology which spelt out the population of the study, the sample of the research, the data collection instruments (interview schedules), research quality control measures and the ethical guidelines. The chapter concludes by outlining the whole research base on learners from child-headed families, educators in the School Based Support Team, school manager from Kaalfontein in the Johannesburg East District in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The next chapter reviews literature and the attachment theory that underpinned the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter gave a brief background of the study and the main study focus. In this chapter, the researcher presents reviewed literature from different sources relating to challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals. The overview targeted - the challenges faced by learners in child-headed families, how they affect them in achievement of their educational goals, identifying educational goals of these learners and examining their school life experiences. The chapter also offers a theoretical framework of the study, views of orphans in child-headed families, educational goals of learners from child-headed families, school experiences of learners from child-headed families and challenges that affect the school performance of learners from such families.

2.2   UNDERPINNING THE STUDY WITH BOWLBY'S ATTACHMENT THEORY

This study is informed by the attachment theory, which was proposed by John Bowlby, whose main tenet is that children need to develop a close relationship with at least one primary caregiver, who is usually a mother, for normal social, emotional, psychological, and physical development (Bowlby, 2011).

Bowlby (2011) argues that children become attached to adults who are sensitive and responsive to their needs, and who remain consistent caregivers for some months, for periods from about six months to two years of age.   When children begin to crawl, and walk, they begin to use attachment figures (family members), as a secure base to explore the world. Parental responses lead to the development of patterns of attachment which lead to internal working models to guide the individual's perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and expectations in later relationships. A secure attachment shapes people's abilities to feel safe, develop meaningful connections with others, explore the world, deal with stress, balance emotions, experience comfort, security and make sense of their lives (Bowlby, 2011).

Separation anxiety or grief following the loss of an attachment figure is a normal and adaptive response to an attached infant. The adjustment of insecure children in many spheres of life, compared to that of securely-attached children, if not soundly-based, puts the former's future relationships in jeopardy. Insecure children are vulnerable to family risk and their social and behavioural problems increase. These insecurities may lead to insularity, avoiding any close, emotional connections, becoming fearful and never knowing what to expect next, becoming disorganized, aggressive and developing slowly. Such delays manifest themselves as deficits and result in subsequent physical and mental health problems and social and learning disabilities (Bowlby, 2011).

The attachment theory is very relevant for understanding the life experiences and developmental challenges children living in single or child-headed family backgrounds, undergo. Children living in child-headed families are basically orphans, therefore, could be deprived of their right to develop normally. The attachment theory suggests that children living in families where there is no parental figure are likely to develop social and behavioural problems such as being disorganised, aggressive, insecure, and angry and have physical and mental health problems. It is therefore important to explore challenges faced by these children, the effects of living in child-headed families. It is also the responsibility of the state, teachers, extended families, and communities to intervene to rescue these children from any ill-effects.

MacLellan (2005) observes that child-headed families usually comprise both brothers and sisters and that the eldest tends to be the head of the household. Older children sometimes find it hard to exercise authority over younger siblings, while girls in turn experience problems with younger brothers. They report emotional distress and feel they are voiceless, believe that they are powerless to change their fate, feel excluded from the community which neither acknowledges nor fulfils their need for love, sanctuary, and recognition because they are often dismissed as those with no rights within society.

Lack of affordable nutritious food coupled with the inaccessibility of healthcare when needed results in poor health, thus, affecting the immune system and leading to continuous vulnerability to infections.

Shaffer (1996:453) notes that many psychologists believe that infants will not develop normally unless they receive the warm, loving attention of one consistent mother figure to whom they can become attached. That also means that, children raised in understaffed institutions are developmentally-impaired because they have not had an opportunity to become emotionally involved with a primary caregiver.

Socially-deprived children can overcome many of their initial handicaps if placed in homes where they receive a lot of attention from affectionate and responsive caregivers (Shaffer, 1996:454). Even severely-disturbed children who are adopted after spending several years in understaffed institutions show dramatic improvements, compared with their counterparts who remain in a barren institutional setting (Shaffer, 1996,455).

In this study of the challenges for learners from child-headed families in Johannesburg East District, Gauteng Province, South Africa, Bowlby's attachment theory was found to be very relevant in identifying the nature of challenges that learners from CHFs experience. Children could be viewed as having lost their childhood rights once they grow up outside parental care and guidance. The theory was instrumental in the formulation of interview questions used to collect data for purposes of answering the research questions.

2.3 OVERVIEW OF BACKGROUND TO ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN (OVC)

The phenomenon of orphaned child-headed family is complex and multifaceted. It impacts on their societal framework and has profound implications for the well- being of children and the realization of their rights. The loss of a traditional family environment diminishes the child's safety net against abuse, exploitation, and violence. Most significantly, the rights of children to education, rest, play and recreation are compromised by having to take adult responsibilities prematurely, by

taking care of their siblings and having to take sole charge of the family by providing the basic needs such as food, clothing and psychological support (Department of Social Development November, 2008).

2.4   THE PHENOMENON OF CHILD-HEADED FAMILY

According to Mothapo (2016:5), the highest percentages of children orphaned in Africa are in countries with high HIV prevalence levels. These are mostly countries in Southern Africa, and include Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland (eSwatini) and Zimbabwe. The author adds that over 80 per cent of these children were orphaned by the year 2020 because of adults dying from HIV/AIDS.

According to a study conducted in Zimbabwe, by Mathapo (2016) on factors leading to child-headed families, it was found that such children were left to live on their own because close relatives did not want to take up the responsibility due to economic strain. In other instances, children opted to stay together in their own home due to the risk of separation or trying to keep family property. In some cases, the option to stay together was found to be motivated by fear of mistreatment and exploitation by foster families, or a need to fulfil promises made to dying parents. Children must, therefore, make an adjustment from being a child to being the head of a family, a process that carries many challenges.

Mothapo (2016) stated that in war-stricken countries, children are forced to join military or rebel groups for survival and protection. The child heads of child-headed families become involved in child labour as a means of sourcing for money for the family's subsistence, and the dire economic situation faced by many of these children; situations in CHFs have often led to engagement in hazardous child labour practices (Mathapo, 2016; Magwa & Magwa, 2016).

Magwa and Magwa (2016), show the meaning of 'children' being redefined for many around the world by the death of parents. Children in such families are denied a sense of childhood, comfort and are burdened physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically.   In their study, they found that the children in CHFs encounter many challenges, in their everyday life that interfere with their learning. The children are

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left with an arduous task of fending for younger siblings. The children shoulder all the bulk of the housework and are vulnerable to poverty and social isolation and this creates an environment which does not foster academic performance (Magwa & Magwa, 2016). The authors identify that children are left without adult caregivers on account of road accidents, mental disability of parent and chronic sick parent. When children are left by both parents due to economic hardships that is, when they migrate to other countries this leads also to the emergence of CHF.

According to Phillips (2011) in Chidziva (2013), CHFs' children are disadvantaged because they do not have the opportunity to learn skills from parents that are needed in life. In South Africa, related problems result from not growing up with parents or adult caregivers.   Sexual abuse, child labour and prostitution are common features of child-headed families.

Good child rearing practices equip a child with relevant skills, norms, values, and attitudes that make him/her fit well in the society (Gubwe, Gubwe and Mago, 2015). Children who grow up without parental guidance and figureheads suffer from loss of these important rearing benefits.

 In the host country for this study, South Africa, there were 2.8 million orphans in the country by 2017, which was about 6% of the whole population of about 50 million people. This constituted children without a living biological father, mother, or both parents and is 14% of all children in South Africa. The total number of orphans grew by over a million between 2002 and 2009, after which the trend changed, by 2017, when orphan numbers dropped to below the 2002 levels. This was mostly a result of improved access to antiretroviral drugs (Hall & Sambu, 2018).

Alongside this background of high rate of orphanhood, the country's Section 28 in the Constitution gives provisions for children, outlines their rights, and explains that any person up to 18 years of age is a child. Like the international statutes on the rights of the child which are informed by United Nations (UN) Child Rights Convention (CRC), the South African constitution's Bill of Rights enshrines all children's right to:
- full identity at birth,

- belong to a family or environment that provides protection, care and love that is normally provided by parents,

- basic material needs like food, shelter, health and clothing,

- psycho-social necessities that help child development,

- protection from all forms of abuse and neglect or human degradation,

- protection from all forms of exploitation or labour that is beyond the level of a child,

- protection from all forms of risks or threats to child's wellbeing or anything that can be detrimental to normal mental, health, moral, psychological, social and educational development,

- protection from any type of detention that is not to the benefit or best interest of the child,

- legal protection by the state and at state expense in civil proceedings, and armed conflicts and

- access to all basic human rights further to those specific to children who are 18 years and below.

2.5   CONCEPTUALISATION OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

In broad terms, Educational Goals are statements that describe the competences, skills, and attributes that students should possess upon completion of a course or programme. Goals often operate within the interacting domains of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Virkkula, 2020). Academic units may decide to define Educational Goals in broad terms, focusing on the anticipated benefits to students from participation in a program; for example, units may define a goal by stating the skills, attributes, competencies, and qualities that are expected from learner upon completion of the program, like research, critical thinking and creative writing skills. There are four Educational Goals and 8 basic skills.

The first Educational Goal (EG) is to learn how to learn, for life, by:

> "respecting choice as central to learning; exploring and practising
> basic skills; applying basic skills to real life, hands-on learning
> experiences; fostering the pursuit of genuine interests and passions

within by making use of community resources, including mentors, learning sites, apprenticeships and genuine work, encouraging peer learning and appreciation of difference, encouraging the pursuit of beautiful, challenging, useful work, and appreciating the value of mistakes (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine, 2018:38).

The second EG is to discover his/her whole self by:

"*engaging in activities of the heart, mind, and body, paying attention to learning styles and various intelligence, practising reflection and introspection, playing and laughing, dancing and singing, encouraging each child to discover his/her own artist within, and developing and discovering individual skills and interests*".

The third EG is that the learner should live in harmony with the natural environment by:

"*practising reduce, reuse, recycle and composting every day, thinking globally, acting locally in terms of responsible, sustainable living, exploring the ecosystem of our backyard and role in that system, exploring the interrelationship of all things, and actively participating in political issues that affect the natural environment*".

There fourth EG is to ensure the learner practises responsible, knowledgeable citizenship by:

"*encouraging the development of personal values, ethics and a sense of justice, practising respect, appreciation, compassion, and acceptance of diversity, using community meetings and consensus to make decisions about learning, justice, governance, and relationship, accepting responsibility for one's own actions as they affect other individuals, and the immediate and global community, engaging actively in multi-cultural experiences, participating in and contributing to the social, political, environmental and contributing to the social, political, environmental and economic life of the various communities that touch the lives of the learners, considering all sides*

of issues, and exploring the benefits of diversity in the human and physical world (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine, 2018).

These four Primary goals are broken down into The Eight Basic Skills, which are used by students, teachers, and parents to set goals and evaluate progress. Additionally, teachers reflect on these goals while planning curriculum units and individual classes. The "Basic Skills" as defined by the School Around Us assume that all things are connected; a reflection of the spiritual aspect of Holistic Education School around Us (SAU) is not a traditional school, in that the basics include matters of the spirit, the body, the heart, as well as the mind.

2.6 EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES FACED BY VULNERABLE AND ORPHANED CHILDREN

According to the article by Gubwe, Gubwe and Mago (2015), children living in Child-Headed Families (CHFs), encounter several challenges/problems. In their study, the major challenges were as follows: sixteen of the twenty pupils indicated that they had fees problems; eight respondents indicated that they were laughed at because of inadequate uniforms and stationery to use in class; six respondents indicated that they were beaten by their teachers because they did not do their homework which they blamed on lack of assistance at home. Fifteen respondents indicated that they did not come to school, everyday due to home duties and menial employment to have basic necessities for survival. In the same study, teachers confirmed that orphaned learners had erratic school attendance and most ended up dropping out due to lack of school fees, inadequate resources and being overwhelmed by serious family responsibilities. Lack of books, pens, rulers and other stationery needed for class work were also cited. Four of the six teachers indicated that most of the orphaned children showed signs of low attention span due to hunger. This was manifested by observed signs of tiredness and sleeping during lessons. Some respondents indicated that some of the children lacked respect and discipline in the classroom and showed signs of trauma and stress.

The other challenge reported by Gubwe, Gubwe and Mago (2015) was stigmatisation of vulnerable learners by other learners and even some teachers, which negatively affected OVCs school participation and performance.   According to reports from the teachers who participated in this study, all the orphaned learners had below-average school performance, were largely lonely out of class during school break times, their facial expressions and body language revealed signs of stress and depression and cried when asked about how they coped with school or life in general. This Zimbabwean study was of interest to the current study because it focused on a similar sample although in a different rural setting unlike this study which was located in an urban district in Gauteng Province of South Africa.

Another study of interest was conducted at schools in Botswana by Nxumalo (2015), who concluded that there were three key education indicators for learners that came from child-headed families - absenteeism, repetition and school interruption. Results of the same study added that learners from child-headed families showed an increased incidence of social, emotional, physical, and economic and human rights problems which disrupted their scholastic performance. Literature by Foster and Williamson (2000), Wood (2009) which was cited in Nxumalo (2015), indicated that teachers who work at schools with large population of vulnerable children struggle to balance the already challenging business of teaching and learning with the additional demands imposed by the increased levels of anxiety, limited concentration spans, severe trauma, heightened discrimination and stigma, and increased poverty experienced by learners who are vulnerable. This was attributed to the fact that such learners from child-headed families face many socio-economic and psychosocial challenges which the teachers must attend to first before assisting the learners to cope with schooling.

2.6.1 Socio-economic Challenges of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

Surveyed literature indicates that there are several socio-economic challenges that affect learners from Child-Headed Families (CHFs), which include lack of financial support, poor educational opportunities, lack of basic needs, absenteeism, sexual abuse and poor academic performance.

2.6.1.1   Lack of financial support

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) is clear that all children have a right to access educational institutions of their choice regardless of their socio-economic background and no child, therefore, should be denied the right to equal and quality education as also enshrined in the UN CRC to which South Africa is a member and have signed the convention. One factor that should be addressed for children to have equal chances to access quality education is poverty, which affects OVC more than other children. The schools have a responsibility to accept and develop children from child-headed families so that they are well groomed to be socially responsible human beings. Lack of adequate shelter, nutrition, care and affection, education and psychological support are some of the key important factors that accentuate the vulnerability of children. According to Mutiso and Mutie (2018), children who have lost their primary caretakers are more vulnerable to health risks, violence, exploitation, and discrimination and there is inadequate income to meet all their family needs. The authors continue that some households are so poor that they cannot afford a piece of bath soap. The right to shelter or housing is important as protection against threatening elements, like violence, abuse, disturbances, and noise. Shelter is also important as an arena for privacy, personal space, dignity, and peace. Most of the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) live in deplorable condition such that without basic needs like shelter, food and closing, education can be a luxury for OVC. Losioki (2020) observes that access to education among OVC is constrained by limited and unreliable sources of funds to meet the necessary basic needs and school requirements including food, learning materials, school uniforms, and fees. She further indicates that OVCs are threatened by lack of adequate education, psychological support, nutrition, shelter, care, and affection. Orphan children's families have limited finances and are in extreme poverty. This suggests that orphans and vulnerable children living in child-headed families experience problems in attainment of their education; they are likely to perform poorly when compared to other children (Losioki, 2020).

Moletsane (2013) states that uncertain living conditions and economic difficulties make most orphans easy targets for sexual, physical, labour and other forms of exploitations.   Orphaned learners sometimes resort to prostitution or multiple partners to get money. She reiterated that female orphans are more likely to get

involved in prostitution to get money for school fees and other material things, owing to the lack of financial support.

The study by Magwa and Magwa (2016), established that all children in child-headed families pointed out that they faced financial challenges. Disintegrated family safety net and inadequate material support from government mean that children from CHFs are vulnerable to poverty. They have very limited means of generating income to sustain their households. Teachers, parents, and learners pointed out that financial constraints impact negatively on both the education and behaviour of children from CHFs.

2.6.1.2 Poor educational opportunities

Related to socio-economic challenges, Mutiso and Mutie (2018) found that orphans and vulnerable children cannot buy uniform, and some dropout of school due to early pregnancy, lack of school fees, or taking care of an ailing parent or siblings. Some do not attend school due to lack of school uniform and inability to pay school levies. Fortson, Evans and Miguel (2007) had noted earlier that the absence of parents results in delayed enrolment, fewer hours at school once enrolled, or dropping out. They reiterated that parents are influential in the academic achievement of children as normal learning requires a parent's push in doing homework, proper wearing of school uniform and participation in other school activities. It is the responsibility of parent to provide emotional support for the child.

2.6.1.3 Lack of basic needs

Some children from orphaned families came to school without breakfast, indicating that they could be starving at home, and there was a need for them to be given food parcels to take home (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016). They indicated that taking home rations have been shown to promote participation, progression, and retention of OVC in education as children who are not hungry are better able to concentrate in class. In their study, they found that lack of food at home may have negative impact on the child's health since a hungry child may not have energy to play and to actively participate in his/her learning. In the same vein, Evans and Schamberg (2009) argue that child-headed families are adversely affected by poverty and memories that ultimately result in greater difficulty to learn, than with other children.

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On the impact of the absence of parental figures in a family, on the education of children, Case, Anne, Paxson and Albeidinger (2004), note that parents' death results in socio-economic circumstances as well as a lack of motivation which negatively affect their performance at school. Nxumalo (2015) cited that child-headed families are prone to increased poverty, poor health and poor nutrition which exacerbate poor school performance. This shows that these children's main worry is family budget constraints.

Vaughn, Boss and Schumm (2000) argued that poverty among children from child-headed families affects their mental and physical wellbeing and scholastic experience since they do not have the required material to fulfil the objectives of school. Nxumalo (2015), comments that children from child-headed families have to confront and cope with challenging physical conditions at home, such as absence of desks to complete their homework and overcrowded rooms make it impossible to study.

2.6.1.4 OVC and absenteeism from school

Ogina, and Ramare (2019) explain that from an educational perspective, a parental death may have a negative impact such as non-school attendance and poor learner performance because of lack of educational support. Their research established that orphans are more absent from school than non-orphans. They stated that in child-headed families, there are no parent figures to ensure that the children attend school. The authors observe that one factor that causes school dropout and absenteeism is learners being victims of child labour and prostitution. According to their study, another reason for absenteeism is poor nutrition, threat to their physical safety, fear of being punished for being late for school, for failing tests and for their inability to do homework because of responsibilities at home. Orphaned children who care for their siblings in child-headed families miss their schooling, as they need to find ways of providing food for their family and are required to perform household duties (Ogina, & Ramare, 2019).

To Losioki (2020) orphans and vulnerable children perform poorly academically, compared to non-orphaned children, largely because their school attendance is poor due to lack of resources to meet their health care and food needs.

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Allem (2020) found that orphan children were not attending their schooling regularly could be attributed to poor health, lack of breakfast before going to school, lack of energy due to continuous hunger, too much physical work for money, demotivated by their life, not having necessities such as clothes, to get balanced diet and house for shelter.

Orphans and vulnerable children are less likely to attend school (Oyedele, Chikwature & Manyange, 2016). This supports the study by Mwoma and Pillay (2016) in which they found that orphans experience lower school attendance than non-orphans. Moletsane (2013) asserts that the rate of absenteeism and dropout from school is high among orphan learners as those affected prefer to work part-time, therefore, their scholastic performance declines.

Further challenges on the education of OVCs are observed by Nxumalo (2015) who argues that the children from child-headed families often perform poorly at school, such that they cannot afford to continue schooling and have to spend their days eking out a survival. Both work and school roles were too difficult to carry given their vulnerability hence, their schoolwork is compromised.

Robson and Kanyauta (2007) emphasised that child-headed families are often extremely vulnerable and impoverished which drives them to work and prevents them from attending school, thereby affecting their academic performance and life chances.

The findings of the study by Chidziva (2013) revealed that absenteeism emerged as one of the major challenges that learners from CHFs experience. One of the respondents said that it is sometimes difficult to go to school every day. She must prepare her younger siblings first and make sure that they go to school. When she finishes late, she may decide not to go to school because she would be afraid of the punishment that the teachers would give, so, it is better to be absent that day. This was reiterated by many other respondents. Some absent themselves because of doing part-time jobs; their attendance is irregular because of their caring responsibilities. At times they must go to collect grant and absent themselves from

school. Some drink a lot over weekends and on Mondays they would be too tired to go to school.

In the related study by Mothapo (2016), absenteeism emerged as one of the major challenges that learners from CHF experience. This supports what has been found in the study by Chidziva (2013). This situation causes learners to absent themselves from school due to the responsibilities they have.

2.6.2 Psychosocial Related Challenges of OVC

Alem (2020) reports that orphans may score lower in indicators constructed to reflect social and emotional adjustment and are more likely to report symptoms of depression, peer relationship problems, and post-traumatic stress. He continues that access to food, shelter and education remains a key challenge for orphan children. Such children suffer many difficulties such as poverty, poor physical health, attachment disorders, inadequate social skills, and mental health difficulties. In addition, these children are subjected to multiple ongoing stressful and traumatic life events such as abuse, neglect, sexual abuse among others.

Chidziva (2013) found that a lot of these children have psychological trauma. The respondents were traumatized by the death of their parents and their living conditions. The author explained that children from child-headed family's suffer stress because of failing to adapt to the parental roles and responsibilities. This finding is supported by Mothapo (2016), who in her study echoed that child from CHFs face psychological trauma because of living in such families. They get stressed by the assumptions of parental roles and responsibilities. This finding is consistent with the results of the study by Ogina (2010) who found that children without parents are usually traumatised by their parents' death, which is then followed by a change in their living conditions.

2.6.2.1 Academic performance of OVCs

Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016) cited neglect, abuse, lack of parental love, lack of food, high labour demands at home, stigmatized at school because of lack of school uniforms and learning materials are some of the challenges facing

orphaned learners. These challenges create emotional stress making it difficult for learners to concentrate and learn in the classroom. They further pointed out that since these learners lack basic needs such as love from parents, good shelter, food and clothes they are less motivated to perform well in class. Satisfaction of basic needs enables one to perform to the expected standards.

From the analysis of reports and mark schedules, Chidziva (2013) found that poor performance is a challenge that learners from CHFs face. A minority from the study performed well, however, most of them did not meet the minimum requirements needed to pass a grade. The learners gave different reasons for the poor performance citing reasons like - being tired and failing to concentrate in class, sleeping in class because they wake up early in the morning to prepare for their siblings, the mind being pre-occupied with the death of parents, failing to sleep at night because of taking care of a baby, failing to concentrate in class because of hunger where the first periods before break were a challenge, lack of table and chairs to use when studying at home and the absence of a person to support them to study, just to mention a few.

Mothapo (2016), in her study found that children from CHFs perform poorly at school. and did not meet minimum requirements needed to pass a grade; this supports findings of the study by Chidziva (2013). Mothapo (2016) lends support to earlier studies by Richter and Desmond (2005) that found that concentration at school is often difficult for learners who live in CHFs. According to the findings by Mothapo (2016), hunger contributes to poor performance by children in CHFs, which concurs with the study by Germann (2005), and Phillips (2011) who found that children who live in CHFs struggle with performance due to hunger.

2.6.2.2 Stigmatisation and discrimination of OVC

According to Losioki (2020), OVC tend to feel isolated and unhappy compared to other students; this affects their concentration in class. These children suffer depression, loneliness, and stress which affect their mental health and concentration in their studies, participation in classroom activities, and school attendance. Some end up dropping out of school.

Mutiso and Mutie (2018) state that children who have lost their primary caretakers are vulnerable to stigma and discrimination at school, where social acceptance is very important to them. These children are teased and verbally abused by peers and educators. One challenge faced by children from Child-Head Families (CHFs) affecting their school learning as established by the study was social exclusion as the children experience discrimination in the society and at school.

Chidziva (2013), found that gender-based discrimination is also a challenge. Girls are the ones who do a lot of chores compared to boys in a case where there are both boys and girls in a family.

This is supported by the study done by Mothapo (2016); she found that girls who attend secondary schools are the ones who did more of the household chores than boys. This finding lends support to an earlier study by Tybazayo (2009) who found that girl children are especially vulnerable in the emergence of CHFs.

2.6.2.3 Sexual abuse

In the study by Alem (2020), it was established that orphans are subjected to multiple ongoing stressful and traumatic life events such as abuse, neglect, sexual abuse among others.

The findings of the study by Ogina and Ramare (2019) was that many orphans are sexually abused, especially girls who are raped by community members because of their vulnerability in the absence of adult caregiver. Some of them experience sexual abuse by family members and this prevents them from attending school.

Nxumalo (2015) also argues that young girls from CHFs are vulnerable to unsafe sex, so they are exposed to the risk of falling pregnant, which may lead to them being sleepy, passive in class resulting in them performing poorly in classwork and fail the exams. She added that these children are vulnerable to abuse from other members of the community.

Mothapo, in the (2016), study found that children from CHFs face risks. Girls fall pregnant and were at a greater risk of contracting Sexually-Transmitted Infections

(STIs). This agrees with that of Wiid (2001) who suggested that children in CHFs especially, girls are at risk of contracting sexually-transmitted infections due to exploiting economic coping strategies involving sexual behaviour. This finding supports an earlier study by Makiwane (2004) who found that girls in child-headed families had no choice but to give up their youth to become parents to get access to the government grant to support their siblings and themselves while boys resort to the use of drugs to help them cope with their stress.

This is consistent with the results of a study by Zamani and Yolanada (2007) who found out that children in CHFs turn to alcohol in their distress and this has further detrimental effect upon their education. This finding agrees with the results of Chidziva (2013) who echoed that those children in CHFs have a problem with alcohol and drugs, and as a result, they are at greater risk of contracting STIs from economic coping strategies involving sex; they turn to theft and criminal activities to survive. All these risks and problems in child-headed families result from lack of parental support and guidance and they affect the schooling of these children.

Girls were found to be at high risk of sexual abuse and HIV infection, according to Mothapo (2016). The author revealed that 60% of the girl learners in the CHFs have multiple sexual partners who offer them cash and other essentials that they need. These girls end up having sexual relations with older men who lure them with offers of cash, consumer goods and supposed status. Boys also encounter financial difficulties but were more likely to earn a living by performing relatively safe jobs like working in the garden, washing cars, and collecting firewood.

2.6.2.4 Problematic behaviour

The study by Alem (2020) revealed that orphaned children showed problematic behaviours in the schools such as cried excessively, spoken very little or loudly, usually missed classes, had disobedient behaviours, were aggressive towards people, withdraw themselves from any types of school activities, exhibited self-destructive behaviours and fought with other children. These problematic behaviours exhibited by these children adversely affect lifelong holistic development such as cognitive development, socio-emotional development, and learning.

The study by Chidziva (2013) established that child-headed families have problems with alcohol and drugs, hence, girls were at a greater risk of contracting sexually-transmitted infections from economic coping strategies involving sex. The children turn to stealing and criminal activities to survive because there are no parents or caregivers to fend for them, therefore, lack of parental figure is a cause of discipline problems. Girls from CHFs choose to become pregnant so that they can access child-support grant. All these risks and problems in CHFs, hence, result from lack of parental support and guidance and they affect the schooling of these children.

2.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature discussed in this chapter indicates that education is important for children's self-efficacy, socialisation and their socio-economic development. It is also clear from literature that educational is key in improving children's chances of becoming productive and socially responsible members of the society, however, many studies indicate that OVC face many hurdles that may exclude them from using education as a social mobility ladder due to socio-economic and psychological factors that impact against their school participation and achievement. The attachment theory, which was chosen for the study points out that children need to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver, who is usually a mother, for social, emotional, psychological, and physical development to occur normally (Bowlby, 2011). From the theory, it is noted that OVC lack the benefits derived from attachment with elderly figures in the family due to parental loss. Without parents, the older children are responsible for families, therefore, they are burdened with caring for their siblings and themselves. The literature reviewed indicates that child-headed families are facing psychosocial distress, financial challenges, and educational challenges amongst others (Mutiso & Mutie, 2018). The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology which were chosen and employed for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the methodology employed in this study, and includes a discussion on the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis methods, as well as ethical considerations; issues pertaining to the trustworthiness of the findings are also discussed.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research approach, specifically, a phenomenological research design was used in this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) assert that the purpose of a phenomenological study is to describe and interpret the experiences of participants regarding a particular event so as to understand their meaning ascribed to that event. This study therefore aimed at describing the challenges facing learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals in three schools in Kaalfontein, Ivory Park and Ebony Park in Johannesburg East District of Education, Gauteng Province, South Africa.

Chidziva (2013) asserts that the basis of phenomenology is that there are multiple ways of interpreting the same experience and the meaning ascribed to the experience by each participant is what constitutes reality.   In this study all the three learners from child-headed families, six educators, three school managers and a social worker were given an equal opportunity to describe and narrate their experiences as learners from CHFs and people interacting with these learners.   All the similarities and differences in the experiences of the respondents were noted and recorded. This study focused on understanding the participants' voices, that is the reason the qualitative approach was used in this research. The qualitative research approach enables a researcher to describe and understand rather than to explain human behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).   Qualitative research researchers emphasise

the studying of human action in its natural sitting and through the eyes of the actors themselves, together with an emphasis on detailed description and understanding of phenomena within the appropriate context. Burns and Grove (2009) contend that a qualitative research orientation is an inquiry process intending to explore and understand participants' lived experiences and uncover new insights. The approach allows one to talk to the participants face-to-face in their own setting as experience cannot be easily expressed from a distance. De Vos (2011) describes the qualitative orientation as a journey of discovery rather than a process of verification and such a journey has the potential to stimulate new leads and avenues. In this study, the researcher tried to understand the barriers and experiences of learners who are heading families that affect the achievement of their educational goals. The researcher therefore felt that a qualitative approach was appropriate for the study since it was likely that extensive descriptions of participants' schooling experiences would be produced.

3.2.1 Population of the Study

Population is defined by Wiid and Diggines (2013:186) as "the total group of people or entities (social artifacts) from whom information is required". According to du Ploy, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), population parameters of a study refer to the nature, size, and unique characteristics of a population. For Keyton (2001:121), "a population consists of all units or the universe - people or things -possessing the attributes the researcher is interested in". Oswala (2001) holds the same view that a population is a collection of individuals or objects covered by the study or with which a study is concerned. The population for this study comprised of learners from child-headed families, educators in the School Based Support Teams (SBST), school managers and social workers from Kaalfontein, Ivory Park and Ebony Park Schools in the Johannesburg East District of Education in Gauteng, South Africa.

For this study, the researcher identified three high schools, in Kaalfontein, Ebony Park and Ivory Park. The researcher chose these three schools on the basis that the researcher would be able to access the schools as they are near to where the researcher works and stays. The schools were chosen, also because as a member of the community where the schools are located, the researcher knows the teachers

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and school managers at these schools. This made it easy to gain access to collect data. This location is characterised by unemployment, poverty, escalating crime, xenophobic attacks, and child abuse. The researcher chooses these schools because the learners of these schools are from this location characterised by CHFs.

3.2.2 Sampling and Study Sample

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) explain that a sample is a sub-set of a population that is representative of the accessible population. In other words, sampling means taking any portion of a population as a representative of the whole group (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002). This is supported by Brink (1996) that a sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in a study; it is a fraction of the whole, selected to participate in a research project. A sampling strategy was used to select participants for the study. There are two main sampling techniques that can be used in research - probability and non-probability (Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund, 2019).

Non-probability sampling is a technique which involves using subjective and non-random methods of creating a sample (Stevens, Loudon, Ruddick, Wrenn & Sherwood, 2012). The non-probability sampling methods do not allow each individual or candidate in a population an equal opportunity of being selected into the sample. The most prominent or widely used techniques that are under non-probability sampling include purposive sampling, quota sampling, judgment sampling, and snowball sampling. Non-probability sampling was applied in this study because there were few OVC to select, therefore, only those who met the criteria of being an OVC from a child-headed family qualified to be sampled.

Purposive sampling (sometimes called purposeful sampling) was used; with this method the researcher selects elements from the population which are representative or informative about the topic of interest. Based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research (McMillan & Schumacher (2010). Qualitative researchers are interested in selecting cases that

are information- rich. In other words, purposeful sampling selects subjects with certain characteristics (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

Purposeful sampling was used because it was necessary for the researcher to select those individuals that would yield the most information about the topic under investigation. In this study three secondary schools, were purposefully selected because they are close to the area where the researcher is located. The sample size was intended to consist of three learners from each school, school managers from each school, two educators in SBST from each school and a social worker from the Community Care Centre. The researcher decided on this sample, because in his view, the sample of this age group are relatively senior, articulate, matured and capable of acting independently. The sample ended-up comprised of three learners, two educators, a school manager and a head of department, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Research Sample

Pseudonym of Learner Interviewed	Gender	Age in Years at Interviews
Bono	Male	16
Enelo	Female	17
Mveledzo	Female	17
Pseudonym of Educator Interviewed	Gender	Position/ Rank at School
Peters	Male	SBST coordinator (Departmental Head)
Motaung	Female	Educator
Sibuyi	Female	Educator
Ndlovu	Male	School Manager

The purposive sampling allowed for the selection of a small groups or individuals, who have valuable knowledge and information about the plight of learners from

CHFs. The participants were interviewed about the challenges that affect the achievement of educational goals by learners from child-headed families.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND INSTRUMENTS

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) qualitative research deals with the underlying qualities of subjective experiences and the meanings associated with phenomena. By using qualitative data collection methods, the researcher obtained depth of data, gathered from complex and multi-faced phenomenon in a specific social context. Neuman (2011) refers to researchers providing a 'thick description' of subjective experience and meanings based on qualitative data. There are two methods of collecting data - from primary sources, such as interviews, observation, and questionnaires. The second method is to employ secondary sources, which include, for example, school documents (Kumar, 1999).

According to Neuman (2011:424), "a researcher attempts to capture all the details of a social setting in an extremely detailed description and convey an intimate feeling for the setting and inner lives of the people in it". The researcher should be interested in understanding subjective experiences which allow one to see things through the participants' eyes. The data collection procedure needs to be clear and correct for reliable and valid data to be obtained.

3.3.1 Face-to-Face Interview

For this study, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to explore the views and experiences of learners from child-headed families, educators, school managers and a social worker about the challenges affecting the achievement of educational goals by learners from child-headed families. Creswell and Plano (2011) advocate that qualitative data should consists of information obtained through open-ended questions in which the researcher does not use predetermined categories or scales to collect data. Welman and Kruger (2001) point out that semi-structured interviews offer a versatile way of collecting data and add that these can be used with all age

groups, since they allow the interviewer to use probes with a view to clear up vague responses, or to ask for elaboration of incomplete answers.

Listening and empathy skills were developed during the research as the interview method helps in dealing with emotional processes and personal issues. During the interviews, the researcher worked with the participants to arrive at the heart of the matter. He listened closely as his respondents describe their experiences, ensuring that the respondents did most of the talking while the researcher did most of the listening.

The researcher clearly explained and discussed the purpose of the study to the participants before conducting interviews. The questions were clear, neutral, and not leading. Throughout the interviewing process, the researcher was a good listener and avoid being judgmental while the participants' non-verbal communication was also noted. The researcher wrote notes on the interviews which were subsequently transcribed; when necessary, each response was followed-up for deeper information and understanding. The researcher interviewed three learners, three educators in the SBST, and one school manager. The researcher interviewed each of them separately to ensure confidentiality. With the semi-structured interviews, the researcher constructed an interview schedule that acted as a guide and reminder during the interview. This allowed the researcher to remain free to enquire deeply into areas and to follow the priorities and concerns of the respondents, who introduced topics the researcher had not thought of. The researcher kept in mind that during the interviews, he must begin the conversation with a small talk that can break the ice; he was always courteous and respectful to his participants and showed genuine interests in what the respondents said, and through body language like smiling and keeping eye contact. The interviews were conducted after school to avoid interrupting the learners in their studies. The participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point if desired and they had the right not to respond to any of the question during the interview if they could feel intimidated, uncomfortable or threatened. The notion of confidentiality was discussed with them before participation while filling in the consent forms (Appendix D and E).

3.3.2 Review Documents

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1992:129) observe, there is a variety of documentary materials that might be relevant to a researcher, for example functional literature, diaries, autobiographies, letters, and media products. Cresswell (2005:85), pointed out that documents are written communications related to a topic under study. Some are primary documents, or eyewitness accounts written by people who experienced a particular event or behaviour. Others are secondary documents produced by people who were not present on the scene but who received information necessary to compile these documents by interviewing eyewitnesses or by reading primary documents (Baile, 1994:294).

For this study, official records and documents were other sources of information. The researcher requested and studied the attendance registers and mark schedules for all the three learners from their respective schools. The researcher reviewed these documents to check the performance and progress of participants as well as their attendance. The review of these official school documents suggested the trends concerning these learners. Permission to review these documents were sought first since these were official documents of the schools. The researcher requested for attendance registers and mark schedules from January 2019 to February 2020 to have a proper understanding of the attendance, performance, and progress of these learners.

3.4   RESEARCH QUALITY CONTROL MEASURES

3.4.1 Data Trustworthiness in Qualitative Studies

Good quality of qualitative research can be achieved through ensuring dependability, creditability, transferability, and conformability. These four key criteria are briefly discussed below in relation to the study.

3.4.2 Credibility of Data Gathering

Truth value reflects the confidence the researcher has in the truth of the findings, including the contexts in which the interviews take place (Krefting, 1990). This was obtained by ensuring credibility (Krefting, 1990). According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2010), credibility is the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be accurate and reasonable. In this study, credibility was ensured by prolonging engagement with the study sites, through a phenomenological approach that allowed for collection of deeper insights from the respondents.

3.4.3 Transferability of Gathered Data

Gay and Airasion (2003) state that transferability has to do with transmitting or generalizing the results of a study to other contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed that, transferability is the degree to which the results of a study can be applied in similar contexts to different participants. The primary strategy to ensure transferability is the provision of rich, thick descriptions (De Vos, 1990; Krefting, 1990). Krefting (1990) argues that the applicability of the study is the responsibility of any person who wants to apply findings of the study, rather than of the researcher. Since this research is of a qualitative nature, the challenges experienced by the participants were studied in their natural context. Each situation is unique, hence there is very little chance of generalizing findings (Krefting, 1990). To improve transferability, the findings of the study, were accurately defined in the form of themes and detailed explanations that were based on the actual narratives or verbatim statements made by study participants.

3.4.4 Dependability of Data Collection Process

Gay and Airasian (2003) say dependability refer to how carefully the researcher has selected data instruments and research sites to suit the research questions and the objectives of the study. Mouton (1996) indicates that consistency applies when using the same research design with a different group under a different set of circumstances will still lead to the same observations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point

out that consistency is not possible without the application of dependability, therefore, dependability which is a control measure for consistency is discussed below:

- The researcher described the research methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation to ensure dependability. A detailed description of the focus of the study, the researcher's role, the participants' position and basis for selection, and the context, from which the data was provided, was used. An independent coder was utilised to validate the interpretation made and an external data analyst who did not participate in the data collection process and the research supervisors rechecked the analysis and interpretations to further ensure dependability.

3.4.5 Conformability of the Research Process

Polit and Beck (2004), point out that conformability ensures that there is freedom from bias in the research procedures that data and interpretation of the study are of true reflection of what has been investigated. Maree (2007) also states that the extent to which the researcher's findings can be confirmed by another researcher depends on the conformability or neutrality achieved when true value and applicability of data is created. The reason for recording data during the interview is to retrace the information as a researcher audits the study. For this study, raw data that was audio-recorded, field notes and interview transcripts that were written by the researcher were used for audit trail. The researcher achieved conformability by ensuring participants' anonymity and confidentiality and asking for permission to store data for farther processing.

Conformability according to Merriman (2009) is ensuring that the data findings truly represent the views of the respondents, perspectives, or meanings rather than the views and understanding of the researcher. The findings were scrutinised and analysed, and self-critical accounts were considered. The data was recorded accordingly, interpreted, and presented with the researcher's own perspectives and position used.

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

For this study, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method was used to analyse the data. With this approach, the aim is to offer insights into how a given person, in each context, makes sense of a given phenomenon. Usually, these phenomena relate to experiences of some personal significance (Smith & Eatough, 2006) the researcher in this study sought to understand and describe the lived experiences of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals. The following steps were followed to analyse data:

- **STEP 1: Reading and Re-reading**

The researcher immersed himself in the original data. The transcripts were read several times using the left-hand margin to annotate what is interesting about what the respondents said. This first step of importance was to make the researcher familiar with the account.

- **STEP 2: Connecting the Themes**

The emergent themes were listed on a sheet of paper, and connections between them were identified. Contrary to the first list which was more chronological, the second list had a more theoretical ordering, as the researcher was trying to make sense of the connections between the themes which were emerging.

- **STEP 3: Grouping Themes Together as Clusters**

A single respondent's transcript can be written up as a case study or the analysis can move on to incorporate interview with several different individuals. One can either use the themes from the first case to help orient the subsequent analysis or put the table of themes for Participant 1 aside and work on transcript 2 from scratch. Whichever approach is adopted, one needs to be disciplined to discern repeating patterns but also acknowledging new issues emerging as one works through the transcripts. One aim was to respect convergences and divergences in the data, recognising ways in which accounts from respondents are similar but also different.

- **STEP 4: Tabulating Themes in a Summary, Table/Writing up**

The final step is concerned with moving from the final themes to a write up and final statement outlining the meanings inherent in the respondents' experience. This stage is concerned with translating the themes into narrative account.

3.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics refer to the study of standard conduct and values, and in research how these impact on the researcher and research subjects (Grey, 2009). Ethics are guidelines for research that enable a researcher to ensure that all respondents participate voluntarily, and respondents are not harmed (Monette et al., 2008). According to Babbie (2007), ethics is a matter associated with morality. In the context of research, "Ethics refers to the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subjects of his/her work or affected by it" (Watkins, 2008). He further indicated that most of the ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories, namely, protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues.

For this study, before the study was conducted, ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the University of Venda's Research Ethics Committee. Permission to do the research in the selected high schools was obtained from the Department of Education, Gauteng Province. The researcher approached the principals of the three high schools. The letter of introduction provided information on the study, the study participants as well as how the schools could help with the recruitments of participants. The letter of introduction also provided the details of the researcher and the supervisor's contact details. This enabled the principals concerned to verify anything that they want concerning the research. The researcher was granted permission to interview the learners by the principals who, in turn informed, the teachers. The interviews were conducted after school to avoid interrupting the learners in their studies, but before the interviews, the researcher explained the nature of the research and that participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. The participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point if desired. They were informed that they could choose not to respond to any questions during the interview if they felt uncomfortable, threatened, or

intimidated. Confidentiality was discussed with the respondents before they participated in the study.

Signed consent forms were obtained from the learners before them taking part in these interviews. The forms were either signed by older siblings, relatives or the principals since these learners no longer have parents.

3.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this Chapter Three is outlined in detail the methodology of the research used in this study. A qualitative research approach, specifically phenomenological research design was used in this study to describe and interpret the experiences of participants regarding a particular event and to understand the participants' meaning ascribed to that event. The phenomenological research design was to describe the challenges of learners from child-headed families, that affect their educational goals, in three schools in Kaalfontein, Ivory Park and Ebony Park in Johannesburg East District of Education, Gauteng Province, South Africa. For this study, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method was used to analyse the data. With this approach, the aim was to offer insights into how a given person / participant in each context, makes sense of a given phenomenon.   In the following chapter, the gathered data are presented and analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The methodology of this study was discussed in Chapter Three. In this chapter, the results of the study are presented and discussed in line with the objectives of the study. The central focus of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by learners from child-headed families that affect them in achieving their educational goals. The study investigated these challenges in three schools in Johannesburg East District of Education in Gauteng Province.

The data collection instrument used for this study were semi-structured interviews and analysis of school records. The learners that the researcher managed to interview were three, - two girls and one boy. A number of them turned down the invitation for an interview citing different reasons. From the educators' side the researcher interviewed three and one school manager. The demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 4.1. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of learners and educators interviewed. The profile details include the pseudonym of learners interviewed, gender, age, living arrangements and grade. The responses that the learners gave were analysed according to themes and shown with quotes. From the participants' responses, the themes that were found were socioeconomic and psychosocial themes. Inadequate learning support materials for these children and lack of basic needs were the subthemes under socio-economic theme. Sexual abuse, dissatisfactory academic performance, absenteeism, discrimination at school, behavioural problems, health problems, educational goals and coping strategies were the subthemes under psychosocial theme.

4.2   DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 and 4.2 below summarises the demographic information of the research respondents. It gives a breakdown of the research participants in terms of gender, age, grade, living structure and the pseudonyms of learner interview.

Table 4.1 Demographic Details of Learners

Pseudonym of Learner Interviewed	Gender	Age at Time of Interviews	Living Structure/Arrangement	School Grade
Bono	Male	16	Living with twin brother and younger sister aged 13.	Grade 8
Enelo	Female	17	Staying with two younger brothers aged 14 and 11 years	Grade 10
Mveledzo	Female	17		Grade 10

Table 4. 2 Demographic Details of Educators

Pseudonym of Educator Interviewed	Gender	Position/ Rank at School	Teaching Experiencing in Years
Peters	Male	SBST coordinator (Departmental Head)	15
Motaung	Female	Educator	07
Sibuyi	Female	Educator	10
Ndlovu	Male	School Manager	24

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4.3   FAMILY BACKGROUND OF LEARNERS FROM CHILD HEADED FAMILIES

The responses below relate to the family background, and details of the respondents as per the allocated pseudo names. The three learners provided their background in terms of their age, family members, education and family income-related issues. In this respect the learners had the following narratives about their families:

Bono, a Grade 8 learner had this to say about his family:

> I am a sixteen-year-old boy who is doing Grade 8 at this school. I am living at Themba Khoza informal settlement with my twin brother and younger sister who is thirteen years old. In a way, we are just three in a family. My mom died when I was just 8 years. I never knew my father. I lived with my grandmother who passed on three years back. We used to survive on her old age pension money. Since she died, life is like hell for me and these other two. Life is tough".

He continued to indicate that they live in a two-roomed shack where one room is a bedroom, and the other is a kitchen and bedroom in one. There is no electricity or running water. There is no elderly parental figure to fend for them, and this is evidence of the poverty-stricken environment that children from child-headed families live in and to struggle for basic necessities. In recent years, there has been an increase in the amount of economic literature on subjective well-being (Handa, Martorano, Halpern, Pettifor & Thirumurthy, 2014). These researchers used experimental data from Kenya's largest social protection program, the Kenya Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC), to come up with their findings. One theory is that psychological feelings or emotional states are contagious, and people who share the same environment tend to influence one another. As a result, directing resources to the poorest households helps to enhance their living conditions as well as their subjective well-being. Given that poverty is not only a physical but also a mental state, this approach could be beneficial in assisting individuals – particularly the young – in thinking differently and escaping poverty.

Another similar sad family story was provided by Enelo, whose education has been disrupted due to the illness and loss of her parents.

> *"I am a girl who is 17 years old, but still doing Grade 10. I stay at Kaalfontein in a two-roomed shack with my two younger brothers aged 14 and 11 years. This shack was left to us by our parents who passed on due to illness four years back. My relatives that I know are staying in Mpumalanga and are also hustling to have bread on the table. So, there is no assistance we can get from them. We hardly ever communicate. We are just surviving by the grace of God"* (Enelo).

The third learner from a child-headed family, Mveledzo stated that she is a girl aged 17 years. She is staying with her 2 year-old baby and a 13 year- old younger brother. She is doing Grade 10. She is a breadwinner, parent and learner at the same time. Against all odds, she has to see to it that life has to go on. She is living in an RDP house at Winnie Madikizela-Mandela settlement, and she sums up what her family's survival means.

Mveledzo had this to say about her plight:

> *"We are surviving on the grant from social development department. Other than that, I have to be naughty and irresponsible so as to supplement the little South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grant."*

From the responses by these learners, one could see that life is very difficult for them. They are indeed the relevant sample because all of them are heading families and are younger than 18 years. It is clear that these children have no one who has been assisting them after the loss of either their parents or guardians. These children were forced to live on their own since even the relatives were not ready to take over their guardianship. Based on the extracts above, one could see that the older children were not ready to abandon their siblings, they clung together as a unit. They stood by each other against all odds. One can conclude or realize that these children are indeed facing socio-economic and psychosocial challenges both at school and home environment.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) has the Bill of Rights that stipulates a number of basic human rights that each citizen has. The right to a safe clean and healthy environment is one of these rights. Based on the extracts above, one can see that the home environment is not good for these. The houses in which they live are not safe and do not promote healthy living. The living space has no privacy which is enshrined in the Children's Rights Act. The phenomenon of child-headed family is complex and multifaceted. The Department of Social Development (2008) also stated that the phenomenon of child-headed family impacts on the societal framework and has profound implications for the well- being of children and the realisation of their rights.

4.4   SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Based on the interviews held, the subthemes that are under socio-economic factors are - lack of basic needs, learning support materials and financial support. These identified when I asked them as to what the challenges are that affect their school performances as children in child-headed families and militate against their educational goals.

4.4.1 Lack of Basic Needs

All the three participants indicated that they must hassle to get basic needs at home. For them to have food on the table, it is war that they must fight.

Bono, indicated that it is very difficult for them to get food at home since there is no one to fend for them. They must scramble for food.

To complement this, Bono indicated that:

> *"I rely much on the food parcels that the School-Based Support Teams (SBST) coordinator provides us with when there is surplus of food from National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)"*.

Upon asking him about other siblings at home on how they get food, he indicated that he brings a bigger container with a lid to school. After eating during lunch, he goes

back to the food handlers to ask for some more food which he takes home for his siblings if he secures some. He again indicated that he does piece jobs after school and on weekends to get something to eat.

Bono said, "at times it becomes difficult to have food at home that, we end up taking a day or two without anything on the table". Bono further stated that they do not have electricity in their residential area, and it is very difficult for him to get money to buy firewood or coal to make fire for the cooking or warming themselves, especially during cold weather condition.   Most of the times he finds it difficult to study or do schoolwork at home since he cannot afford to have candles or paraffin all the time. This affects his learning/schooling in a negative way. For him to have clothing, he must hassle as there is no one to buy him clothing.   He said: "It is very difficult for me to have bath and washing soap and body lotion. When it comes to balanced diet, it is just something that I read in books."

On the same subject of food, Enelo added that

> "*Life is very unfair sir. I don't know why it is like this. In order to have basic needs at home, it is a struggle that one doesn't know as to when it will come to an end. We usually sleep with empty stomach in a shack that is not fit for human residence,*"

Ms Motaung and Ms Sibuyi expressed some concern regarding the challenge of the inadequate resources that the learners from CHFs have and stated that:

> "*the learners from CHFSs feel inferior at school as they do not have proper uniforms, school bags and books." Ms Motaung. "These learners struggle to make ends meet and often survive without some of the basic needs like three meals in a day and clothing*" Ms Sibuyi.

Lack of care and affection, adequate shelter, nutrition, education and psychological support are some of the most important factors that accentuate the vulnerability of children (Kuhumba, 2018).

On further probing, she indicated that she has to risk her life at times so that she can get money to support herself and her two younger brothers. She would engage in

transactional sex just to have food on the table. She would have relations with working people not minding about the age gap. She would have sex with people who are even older than her late parents, as long as they can give her money.

This was revealed when she said:

"*I even try to do piece jobs of doing laundry, just to have money to take care of myself and sibling*".

One could see that her life is at risk of getting sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), human trafficking and rape all because she wants to support or maintain family. She further indicated that she ends up so tired that she just falls asleep unexpectedly. She has no time to do her schoolwork because she is forever tired. The worst part is that the family is not getting any grant from the Department of Social Development. She has tried to apply, but she has not yet received anything positive. "Challenges are my daily bread," Mveledzo said. She ended up having a baby that was unplanned for. She became pregnant after being raped while coming home from doing a piece job at Allandale. She finished doing laundry at Allandale late and she had to walk past an open ground surrounded by bushes where she was attacked and raped. She could not report the matter because she did not know the perpetrator and she was afraid of the embarrassment she could be faced with. She ended up keeping it to herself.

She discovered she was pregnant when she was four months pregnant. That is how she got her two-year-old baby.

To complement the above Mveledzo had this to say:

"*I hate winter seasons because it is very cold and getting warm clothing and uniform is not easy.*"

One can see that these teenagers are struggling to get enough clothing that are compatible with the seasons. Upon probing, she indicated that the RDP house she is living in with her baby and sibling is no longer in good condition. It has serious roof leaks, and the windowpanes are broken. The roof trusses have been eaten by termites and can break at any time.

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Mveledzo had this to say:

> "*Our lives are in danger as the roof is almost collapsing,*"

This challenge was noted by Mutiso, and Mutie (2018), who stated that children who have lost their primary caretakers are more vulnerable to health risks, violence, exploitation and discrimination.

These children are being deprived of their basic rights by their situation; it becomes a challenge that affects them educationally.

4.4.2 Challenge of Learners Fending to Feed Themselves

On the subject of how the learners from child headed families survived, one interviewee (Bono) said:

> "*My uncle (mother's brother) gets grants through a third-party organisation. We put the money towards our basic needs. When I go home from school, I do everything on my own, including cooking. The grant money is insufficient'.*

The other participant, Mveledzo similarly added:

> "*Our step-grandmother cares for us; she is elderly and unable to work, so she collects grants on our behalf. She also drinks and does not always return home*".

In the instance of the two respondents mentioned above, they rely on their guardians to receive grants on their behalf. Lyons (2006) mentioned this type of circumstance when the author stated that child-headed families are more likely to endure greater poverty, bad health, and poor nutrition, all of which aggravate poor school attendance, limiting the potential of a positive school experience. In the example of the two individuals mentioned above, they rely on their adult relatives to receive grants on their behalf. The occurrence of widespread poverty in South Africa led to the introduction of Child Support Grants as a means of contributing towards poverty alleviation programs, according to the South African government's 1997 White Paper on Social Development.

The step-grandma appears to be using the money for her own personal advantage in the instance of the second participant; this could have a negative impact on the child's future education. If the child does not have a biological parent, the caregiver must present confirmation of their status as the child's primary caregiver in order to receive a grant on the child's behalf. The South African government's policy is to ensure that everyone in the country has enough food, clothing, and shelter, however, in some situations, even after receiving government grant money, the guardian appears to utilise the money for her own personal gain, such as drinking alcohol. This could have a negative impact on children in CHFs' future education. The aunt who looks after the family is occasionally away from home, therefore, this youngster has no adult to supervise her school attendance and check her school performance.

According to Evans and Miguel (2007), parents have a significant impact on their children's academic achievement. The authors observe that the absence of parents causes delayed enrolment, less hours in school once enrolled, or drop-out due to the lack of a parental figure to supervise childhood activities. Appropriate learning necessitates parental encouragement when it comes to homework, proper school uniform use, and engagement in other school activities, these were not the case with the second respondent.

These youngsters typically perform poorly in school to the point that they cannot afford to continue their education and they might spend their days eking out a living (Ayieko, 1997; Kakooza & Kimuna, 2005; Richter, 2004; Kibachio & Mutie, 2020). Given their susceptibility, involved in work and going to school is too challenging, and unfortunately, their schoolwork is jeopardized, according to Hartell & Chabilall (2005); Makuu (2019) and Ringson (2019).

Narrating a pitiful situation, one of the learners, Enelo, explained that:
> "I stay alone because my older cousin who stays at home drinks and occasionally fights with me, calling me names and telling me that my education is not relevant to him. I sometimes even sleep outside."

Another participant, Mveleso explained that there was no adult figure at home by indicating that:

"My uncle lives in Mpumalanga, which is far away from home and only comes home at the end of the month."

During this period the scholar was absent from school for thirteen days, according to the school records. Throughout the term this scholar could miss at least two to three days a week. According to Evans and Schamberg's (2009), the position of children in child-headed homes can impair a child's psychological well-being and leave an indelible mark on their educational experience. They discussed how a youngster can be meek in class yet enraged at home due to emotional abuse. Two respondents were teenage girls living on their own without their parents. According to Chinyoka, (2019) adolescent girls from child-headed homes who remain on their own are subject to risky sex and the possibility of becoming pregnant, which can cause them to be tired and lethargic in class, and ultimately causing them to perform poorly in class and fail tests. Sulemana, Malongza, and Abdulai (2019) maintain that the death of a parent causes children to grow up without adult supervision, love, or care, making them open to abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual) from other members of the community.

The ramifications for education are that there may be a high number of adolescent pregnancies among these girls, resulting in a high absenteeism rate when the child is sick, or that the youngsters may grow nasty to instructors, since the former are also engaging in adult play. This could result in a negative academic experience and, eventually, the termination of their educational career. If there is no adult in the house, it is unclear how these children will cope on their own. No one assists them with domestic tasks, according to all eleven participants; it is a burden on the children's shoulders only.

Indicating the negative impact of child-headed families on their education, another child participant stated:

"There is no one at home, and we have home duties to do" (Bono).

The same participant stated:

"Living alone is difficult. It interferes with my studies because I occasionally have to skip school to care for my younger sister. No one watches after my needs."

Another participant (Mveleso) remarked:

"My grant has been terminated, although, the social workers are straightening things out. My sister works on a piecemeal basis. When I go home from school, my house is deserted, and my brother has gone to see his buddies."

Child-headed families are generally extremely vulnerable and disadvantaged, according to Robson and Kanyanta (2007), this forces them to work and prohibits them from attending school regularly, hence, impacting their academic experience. It is obvious that when a child lives alone and runs a household, he or she has limited resources to meet his or her basic needs because there is no additional revenue other than the grant money. This unsettling home atmosphere may demotivate the child, thus, impacting negatively, on his or her academic achievement. This entails a great deal of responsibility, as Van Breda (2010) concurred with the Chiastolite research (2008) which stated that taking on additional obligations and roles was a key theme in this topic. As a result, it is challenging to be a parent, a student, and a counsellor to siblings at the same time. Furthermore, Chiastolite (2008) affirms that children household heads are especially vulnerable to dropping out of school in order to care for their younger siblings who are still in school.

Another participant Elno a Grade 8 learner had this to say about his family:

"No one helps, and my stepbrother often complains that I'm not learning for him and that I'm not going to gain from my education. School keeps me away from situations that could endanger my life. I am eligible for the award if I am enrolled in school. Because the school is aware of my circumstance, the lunches at school also provide for me.''

There is a sense of bullying in the instance of the aforesaid participant and his stepbrother. Bullying is defined by Rigby (2004) as "a sort of aggressive behaviour

that is usually hurtful and purposeful." He went on to say that it is difficult for those who are bullied to defend themselves. This older sibling appears to be enraged by his younger brother's continued attendance at school, as well as by the former's lack of opportunities for education and employment at his age. There is a sense of competition, as though since he did not achieve in life, his younger step-brother should not as well. School Nutritional Programs (SNP) give meals at school to help children in low-income neighbourhoods overcome hunger, nutrient shortages, and increase class attendance (Mafugu, 2021). According to the same author, school nutrition programs are important in minimising hunger and vitamin shortages. It boosts cognitive performance by delivering essential nutrients and improves learners' attention in the classroom, ensuring that learning is at its best.

Most of the learner participants do not have persons who could provide them with the support they require from parents. The above participant's stepbrother has feelings of despair, social isolation, and/or a lack of adult support as a result of the psychological effects. Boris, Thurman, Snider, Spencer and Brown (2006) found that children in CHFs had greater rates of depressive symptoms, social isolation, and/or a lack of adult support. Venter and Rambau (2011) warn that children who are left alone for lengthy periods of time may develop low self-esteem, academic inefficacy, and depression. This pattern was noticed in the behaviour of the stepbrother, who is enraged and depressed. The individual may experience socio-emotional distress, such as being impolite to teachers at school, which leads to him blaming others for his difficulties.

Atwine, Cantor-Graae and Bajunirwe (2005) observed that levels of depression are higher in child-headed homes than in non-orphaned households and the former also experience considerably higher levels of anger than non-orphans. Orphans have a sense of abandonment by their parents, according to the same authors. As a result of role overload, Paige and Johnson (1997) refer to a report by social workers in the United States about vulnerable children who frequently experience behavioural difficulties at home and at school.

4.4.3 Inadequate Learning Support Materials

The responses of these learners indicated that the absence of their parents has tremendous educational impact on them as they lack learning and support materials and it makes their learning difficult. They cannot afford study guides that are very crucial for their studies. For Bono and Enelo, who are living in informal settlements there is no electricity and running water; they get water from tanks. The unavailability of electricity makes it difficult for them to do schoolwork at home as they cannot afford to buy candles all the times since there is no source of income in the family. Nxumalo (2015) comments that children from child-headed families have to contend with challenging physical conditions at home such as an absence of desks to complete their homework and overcrowded rooms make it impossible to study.

For uniforms, the children depend on the uniforms that are given to them by the School-Based Support Team (SBST) coordinator. This is the uniform that is donated to the office of the SBST by learners who have passed Grade 12, from the Department of Social Development and School Service Providers who are ploughing back into the school or from learners who no longer want the uniform they have (Brown,& Buthelezi, 2020; Makhalemele & Payne-van Staden, 2020).

These learners are from full ICT schools where they use tablets. It becomes difficult to use them at home because they are from informal settlements where there is no electricity. Their gadgets run out of battery (power) and there is no way they can access the textbooks and other educational information from their gadgets while at home. This is a very serious challenge for them because they cannot do their schoolwork as envisaged. It was indicated by one of the learners,

> "*When we are expecting to do school research project and collect information from different sources, it becomes a problem because at times I have to travel distant places and I have to walk,*" (Enelo).

This simply tells that it is a challenge for her. Upon further probing, she stated that she ends up not doing her research project the way it is supposed to be. hence, she gets very low marks if not failing marks. Vaughn, Boss and Schumm (2000) conclude that poverty among children from child-headed families affect their mental and

physical wellbeing and scholastic experience since they do not have the required material to fulfil the objectives of school.

4.5   PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF CHF

Like indicated in the introduction of this chapter, the sub-themes that emerged under psychosocial are sexual abuse, poor performance, absenteeism, behavioural problems, discrimination at school, teenage pregnancy and coping strategies.

4.5.1 Sexual Abuse

One could conclude from the narratives that these children from child-headed families are not safe at all; they are traumatized. People take advantage of the family condition and abuse them sexually.

This was noted by one of the children from child headed family (Mveledzo) who explained that:

> *"Older men or boys take advantage of my situation that we are living by ourselves at home: It happened twice that my home was broken into and I was raped on both the occasions. I didn't know the perpetrators and it is still traumatizing me. We are not safe."*

Upon further probing, the researcher found that it was after the third rape at an open field that she fell pregnant, hence, a two year old baby.   Most of the times when she sees the baby, those memories of the rape might come back. She never received any psychological help or counselling. Enelo indicated that she is forced to sleep with older man just for the sake of getting money from them so that she can try to make the ends meet at home and school.

All these sexual abuses and behaviours put these children at risk of getting sexually-transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies; this interferes with their schooling. For both the girls, their sexual activities are both sexual abuse and statutory rape since they are under the age of 18 years (they are still minors). Both the girls are involved in transactional sex not by choice, but because they want to get money. At

times they do have sex with these men who promise them a particular amount of money, but after sex, they give them less than what they had promised or nothing at all. Even though these girls insist on using condoms when having sex with these men, there was once when the condom burst when Enelo was having sex with, and she had this to say;

> "*It is very risky to have sex with these men, because I remember the other time when a condom burst in the process of having sex*",

She indicated that it traumatized her for a very long time because she did not know his HIV status. She was only relieved when she tested HIV negative three months after that incident. These responses concur with Mothapo (2016), who noted that girls in CHFs were found to be at high risk of sexual abuse and HIV infection. The study found that 60% of the girl learners in CHFs have multiple sexual partners who offer them cash and other essentials that they need. These girls end up having sexual relations with older men who lure them with offers of cash, consumer goods and supposed status.

4.5.2 Absenteeism

Absenteeism is the practice of regularly staying away from work or school without good reason. So, one of the prime challenges that learners from CHF experience as a subtheme is absenteeism. For Mveledzo, when asked about the challenges that affect her school performances as a child in child-headed family that militate against her educational goals, she stated,"

> *I don't go to school the way I am supposed to. It is rare that I can go to school for a whole two weeks without being absent".*

Upon further probing, she indicated that the absenteeism is due to the fact that she has to hustle for her siblings, herself and her baby.

She at times gets very tired that she does not have energy to wake up in the morning and go to school. Sometimes there would be nothing at all to eat at home, thus, she cannot go to school and leave her baby and siblings without food. She has to go all out to get food on the table:

"*Sometimes the baby would be sick and there is no one that I can leave to take care of my baby. I therefore am left with no other option than to stay at home*".

Mveledzo, Ogina and Ramare (2019), share the same views, that one factor that causes school dropout and absenteeism is learners being victims of child labour and prostitution. According to their study, another reason for absenteeism is poor nutrition and the threat to the children's physical safety, fear of being punished for being late for school, for failing tests and for their inability to do homework because of responsibilities at home.

Bono indicated that he absents himself because of a number of reasons. At times he would do piece jobs after school and he could not finish, so, for him to get paid, he must absent himself from school, go and finish-up the job. He would at times feel too tired to wake up and go to school.

Bono learner had this to say about his school:
> "*When I think of ill-treatment I get at school from other learners and teachers, I feel discouraged to go to school*",

Another participant Elno a Grade 8 learner had this to say about his school:
> "*Some learners and teachers are insensitive and have no regard and respect for my socio-economic background. They can make fun of me about something that is very painful to me.*"

These children from CHF are indeed traumatized at school, such that they at times become reluctant to go to school. They are absent from school because they are learners and parents at the same time and the embarrassment because of the treatment they get from some fellow learners and educators. They end up feeling it is better to stay home than being a laughing-stock at school. They would be teased for example, because their uniforms are worn out; they do not use perfumes or roll-ons, or their shoes are not polished. That makes them feel bad and at times make them to stay home rather than being humiliated at school. At times they would fail to do schoolwork like homework and assignments because of lack of learning support

materials and then absent themselves in fear of the bad treatment they will get from educators and embarrassment from other learners.

Checking from the attendance register of these learners, it is very concerning to notice that their attendance is very poor. According to their rotational attendance due to COVID-19, they had 17 days to attend during the first term of 2021. Bono only attended 10 days of those 17 days. Both Enelo and Mveledzo only attended 11 days of the 17 days. One could see that their attendance is very poor and not pleasing at all. They, therefore missed a lot of teaching and learning time. At times they felt they cannot go to school because they have nothing to eat before and after school as they feel they cannot concentrate at school on an empty stomach. At school, they depended solely on the NSNP food during lunch. Robson and Kanyauta, (2007) supported the view that child-headed families are often extremely vulnerable and impoverished which drives them to work and prevents them from attending school, thereby affecting their academic performance.

Upon interviewing the two educator participants they indicated that these learners' attendance is not pleasing at all. There is a tendency of absenteeism especially on Mondays for Bono, and Mondays and Fridays for Enelo and Mveledzo. The educator indicated that these learners absent themselves from school and the reasons they give is that they were trying to make things work at home. "This is dragging them backwards in as far as their learning is concerned", said Mr. Peters. Chidziva (2013), reveal that absenteeism emerged as one of the major challenges that learners from CHFs experience. One of the respondents said that it is sometimes difficult to go to school every day as she had to prepare her younger siblings first and make sure that they go to school.

The educator indicated that in close interaction with Bono, he found that the former absents himself because he wakes up late because of the drug he is taking as a means of reducing depression. The principal indicated it is a matter of concern that these learners are often absent since they lose a lot of content in their absence from school, hence they lag behind in their learning. One of the educators indicated he once had a situation where Bono was absent for three consecutive school days and when he came back to school, he gave the reason that some learners were laughing

at him days before, that his shoes were torn and looked like catfish, so, he stayed at home until he got money to buy glue to fix the shoes. From the information above one could see that absenteeism is a challenge for these learners, however, all of them indicated that they would not dropout because they want to see themselves realising their dreams of getting educational qualifications that will see them getting jobs and their lives changed for the good.

4.5.3 Behavioural Problems of Learners from Child-Headed Families

Educators indicated that these learners have behavioural challenges such as aggression; for example, respondents indicated that Bono is very aggressive and defensive. One educator, Ms Sibuyi, commented on such behaviour of learners from child-headed families by saying:

> *"At one stage I sat down with Bono to try and find as to what his problem was in as far as his aggressive nature is concerned. Bono indicated that he displays aggressive behaviour because he feels people undermine him, they seem to think he is not like other people because of his family background. So, he has to be aggressive in order to protect and defend himself. On one occasion, Bono stood up in class and started beating another learner in class just because that learner laughed after Bono failed to give the correct answer in class. Bono is not friendly to other learners. He has a negative attitude towards fellow learners and educators."*

According to Madam Motaung who taught learners from child-headed families:

> *"These learners are very quiet and withdrawn in class. You could see that their minds at times seem to be far away from school and class in particular".*

Madam Motaung remembered when she called Enelo in class twice without any response or reaction from her. Enelo only responded when Ms Motaung called her for the third time and the latter commented on such behaviour of learners from child-headed families by saying:

"She was completely not there in class psychologically, but only physically. One can see that it might mean she missed out a lot of what was being taught at the time. These learners behave in a way that shows they are crying for help or seeking for attention. One could see that the roles that these learners are carrying are stressing them such that they want to ventilate their anger on other learners and educators. They have no shoulder to cry on. There is not enough parental support they get from home and school. They are on their own. This hampers their learning."

What the educator narrated about the challenging behavioural in the incident above was observed by Mwoma and Pillay (2016) that children who are not hungry are better able to concentrate in class. In their study, which agrees with data from this study, they found that lack of food at home may have negative impact on the child's health since a hungry child may not have energy to concentrate and to actively participate in his/her learning.

4.5.4 Peer Pressure

Adolescents are more likely to be subjected to peer pressure at school. Peer pressure is classified as resulting from four factors, categorised as: social belonging, curiosity, cultural-parenting orientation of parents, and education (Moldes, Biton, Gonzaga & Moneva, 2019). Peer pressure is common among teens during their adolescence because they seek comfort among their peers and plan to do what their peers do without knowing if it is beneficial or bad for them. Adolescence is a transitional era in a person's life when he or she transitions from childhood to maturity (Adeniyi & Kolawole, 2015). These youngsters from CHFs live an unusual existence in which they have responsibilities that are above their years, thus, it is possible that their thinking is more matured than their peers due to their independence. The researcher needed to know how these kids interacted with their peers, hence, the participants were questioned on how they interact with their peers and how they are treated by their peers. The participants stated that they get along well with their peers and that their peers are accommodating, kind, friendly, supporting, and emphatic toward them.

Two other participants, like Irene, indicated that they are bullied by their peers, saying:

> *"Children at school sometimes look down on us because they know there is no parent to fight for us."*

According to Robson and Kanyanta (2007), disadvantaged children are tormented and harassed at school, resulting in poor performance and dropouts.

The same participant went on to say:

> *"On Thursday, my school shoes were ripped, other students laughed at me, and I had to skip lessons." I'm now wearing shoes that aren't appropriate for school."*

This condition is shown in ABT Associates Incorporated's (2001) study on vulnerable children, which states that some students are expelled from school because other students mock them. When a parent is dying or has died of AIDS, societal stigma works as an extra stumbling obstacle to the children's continuing education, according to Ayieko (1997), Masondo (2008), and Robson & Kanyanta (2007). Some children describe being tormented, harassed, and encountering prejudice at school. Children have not yet experienced life and are prone to laughing at inappropriate times. They must be taught about specific difficulties in order to be aware of them.

Another learner interviewee added,

> *"Our friends take advantage of our being alone and force us to do things we don't want to do. This puts us under a lot of stress. Our mother tells us to stay inside to avoid unwanted visitors who force you to do things you don't want to do. Peers, on the other hand, are permitted to visit pals who live alone without the supervision of an adult. My colleagues compliment me for remaining alone and being able to do whatever at any time; they perceive no negative aspects to my situation."*

In a study of child-headed families in Zimbabwe, Walker (2002) found that 40% of the children interviewed had experienced some sort of maltreatment after becoming the

head of the family. Beatings, being yelled at or called insulting names by classmates, and being sexually molested were among the kinds of abuse. Participants in the conversation above live in poverty and rely on their foster parents to collect funds on their behalf. Others are forced to live alone while their parents work odd jobs. As a result, they have no one to assist them with daily tasks such as homework. Some people of the community are quite welcoming of these children, but others are not so fond of them since they feel they will have a negative influence on their children. Some participants stated that they get along well with their peers, while others stated that they have received harsh treatment from their peers. The second theme will investigate whether these youngsters cope with homework, which indicates that they return to a previous state of normal functioning as a result of their exposure to and experience with diversity (Rutter, 2004a).

Individuals are prone to temptations in social contextualization notions, for example, when socializing with others, they are more likely to engage in activities such as napping and drinking during class or throughout the workday (Bonein & Denont-Boemont, 2013). Adolescents' social environments may have an impact on them during their adolescence, as teenagers tend to speak more with their peers during this time. As children grow older and enter adolescence, they become more reliant on their friends than on their parents, especially when it comes to making decisions and developing moral standards (Uslu, 2013). Socialisation with other individuals in the environment has an impact on human growth. The academic achievements of pupils are said to be linked to the support provided by parents, instructors, and peers of teenagers, all of whom influence students' academic performance (Chen, 2008). Teenagers, on average, spend more time with their peers. Peer pressure has been identified as having both a positive and negative impact on individuals, as well as having no effect on a person because peer pressure is a lifelong process (Gulati, 2017). Peer pressure appears to have a variety of consequences on a student's academic achievement.

4.5.5 Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

Upon interviewing the educators and school manager, the researcher found that these learners from CHF are not performing to their potential. They made mention

of a number of reasons that could be contributing to this poor academic performance by these learners. One contributory factor was lack of concentration in class, as they always seem to be mentally absent from class. They attributed this to irregular school attendance by these learners. The researcher found that these learners are complaining that they cannot study with an empty stomach. They are usually tired because from school, they have to wear 'parenthood caps'. This gives them very little time to do their schoolwork. "*Doing piece jobs after long school day is not a child's play",* said Mveledzo.

Mveledzo has to go and do laundry as a means of getting money. This leaves her so totally exhausted that she cannot study or do her schoolwork thereafter.

This was confirmed by Bono who has to go and do gardening and landscaping work as a way of survival. According to them, they have no recreation time, like the other students, to refresh their mind; they were always exhausted causing them to often slumber in class. Lack of parental support and motivation is one of the things that they mentioned as contributing to their unsatisfactory academic performance. One of the things that Mveledzo made mention of as a contributing factor to poor academic performance was that there was not enough support, either from school or community. They feel unwanted and this affected them psychologically. They were stressed and depressed most of the times and nobody seemed to care.

Enelo had this to say:
"*Life is just survival of the fittest."*

Lack of learning-support materials also dominated responses from both learners and educators.

Getting candles for light at home is a constant struggle and they consequently could not do their schoolwork. Their poor performance was confirmed by an analysis of their school mark sheets. Their performance was gradually dropping every time. There is, therefore, a clear strong relationship between their irregular attendance and low marks.

The learner Mveledzo had this to say:

"*There is no one to assist me with my schoolwork at home whenever I encounter difficulties.*"

These challenges faced by learners from CHFs impacted their studies as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: School Performance of Learners from CHFs

Learner	Grade	Average Mark	Class Average
Bono	8	52%	65%
Enelo	10	54%	68%
Mveledzo	10	63%	62%

School records showed that most of the learners from CHFs performed below the class average. This was however, not the case for Mveledzo who had an average mark of 63%, which is higher than the class average.   Mveledzo has the potential to improve her marks if she does not experience challenges from looking after her family.

The schooling difficulties were also confirmed by Bono when he said that he has to struggle alone with schoolwork at home. One could conclude that lack of support is contributing to poor academic performance amongst these learners. According to Ogina, Ramare (2019), learners from child-headed families experience threat to the physical safety, fear of being punished for being late for school, for failing tests and for their inability to do homework because of responsibilities at home.

4.6   LEARNERS SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE FROM BEING IN CHFS

The family is one of the essential social subsystems shaping the lived experiences and lives of teenagers. Participants in this study were adolescent members of child-headed families who live alone or with their siblings and whose parents had died. These teenagers live in a household with no live-in adult supervision from guardians

or carers. Changes in family arrangements, as well as an increase in the number of child-headed families, are becoming increasingly visible on a national and international scale (Leatham, 2008). A growing number of children in South Africa are left without parents who can give them basic needs as well as emotional care and support due to the large number of families and parents infected with HIV/AIDS. As a result, older siblings become carers for younger siblings, as the extended families are no longer able to care for these orphans due to the former's strained social-economic circumstances.

The findings revealed that these students are guided by values and principles in developing responsible and respectful interactions with their surroundings. According to the findings of this study, learners from child-headed households have predominantly unfavourable experiences in their homes, which are generally marked by extreme poverty. Other research (Crosby, 1993; Leatham, 2006; Lethale, 2008; Nesengani, 2006; Daidone, Davis, Handa & Winters, 2019) back this up. Majority of OVC live in deplorable physical conditions, such as crumbling buildings with no running water or electricity, as well as exceedingly inadequate hygiene and sanitation. The results of the data analysis painted a very grim picture of the home and family environment. Almost all of the interviewees indicated dissatisfaction with their physical living conditions.

In an individual interview, Bono expressed this sentiment:

> *"We live in deplorable circumstances. I'm embarrassed even to talk about it. My living situation is intolerable. We don't have any windows and our doors are shattered. Our roof is collapsing. We are terrified of drowning when it rains."*

These negative emotions were overwhelming. Due to lack of safety, violence, and crime, several learners said they felt frightened by their community.

In an individual interview, Enelo stated:

> *"There is a lot of killing where I live. The people loot and kill each other. When there is substance abuse, it appears that things become*

worse. The males consume drugs and then they become violent, looking for fights and running after the young girls."

The above statement shows the learner from this child-headed family is vulnerable. Vulnerability refers to those who are thought to be unable to cope with events that have a negative impact on their lives (Ursula Mohlakwana, 2013). The same author affirmed that vulnerable children are exposed to a variety of dangers throughout their life. Poverty, maltreatment, and social injustice are socioeconomic factors that influence the quality of their lives, who they are is defined by the environment in which they live. Orphans, sick children, and crippled youngsters are examples of vulnerable children. Further definitions of vulnerable children pertain to children who have lost their primary caregivers for a variety of reasons. One of the unpleasant school experiences that surfaced from the data was the bullying that some of the participants received from other students, particularly those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Things would be better if these learners were staying with their parents as parents would look for an alternative school. This is evident in the words of *Mveledzo*:

> *"The kids don't like us. They are cruel to us. They slap me, tease me, and order me to shut up. I don't like it when the kids mock me. They make derogatory remarks that harm my sensibilities."*

When it comes to poverty-stricken children and schools, school psychologists need to play a crucial role. Poverty is a global phenomenon, and even the wealthiest countries have disenfranchised populations who suffer from it (Pillay, 2011). Schools are crucial locations for psychosocial development; therefore, the researcher agrees with De Jong (2000) that school psychologists should play a role in building health-promoting schools. From an eco-systemic standpoint, health promotion would entail taking into account the physical, mental, and social well-being of students and other stakeholders in the school. In the context of this study, school psychologists would have to advocate and lobby with a variety of stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community organizations, civic structures, and religious organizations, to provide feeding schemes for learners in and out of school so that they do not go to school hungry and are better able to learn. School psychologists should help students apply for social grants from the Department of

Social Welfare so that they can get some financial help without resorting to begging, theft, or prostitution.

Another unfavourable encounter stemmed from the school's poor physical state. Some students expressed dissatisfaction with the state of some of the classes. A student respondent (Bono) put it this way:

> "The classroom windows are damaged and haven't been fixed in a long time. It is extremely cold in the winter. We also don't have suitable uniforms, which makes things worse."

Some student participants through (in-depth interviews) mentioned the lack of school texts books as a problem:

Mveleso a learner had this to say about the school:

> "We don't have textbooks. We sometimes have to share or wait for photocopied papers from our teachers."

Mveleso further stated:

> "Sometimes I don't do my homework because I don't have the textbook that I need. At school, I feel bad since I don't have textbooks."

The students also talked about their positive experiences. The first time they had a favourable experience was when they were given food and clothing at school.

Enelo had this to say:

> "At the very least, I eat something for the day when I go to school.' When there is no school, I become hungry. I don't like vacations and weekends since I don't get any food or clothes."

She also mentioned that:

> "The people from the church, they offer us food for lunch when we're at school. I get food at school, but I take it home to feed my little sisters."

The desire to learn and succeed in life was linked to favourable feelings at school. The following quotes are from the respondent Bono:

> *"I want to learn and pass school. If I want to achieve better in life, I have to. The only way I can get out of this dump is if I educate myself, and I want a profession, I want to be someone in life."*

Teachers were the source of the other favourable school experience. Almost all of the students commended the majority of their teachers, describing them as extremely helpful, compassionate, and supportive. The following quotations from Mveledzo demonstrate this:

> *"I like my teachers. They are considerate of me. My teacher is a wonderful person. When I don't understand something, she explains it to me."*

The dynamics of learners' changing roles are a significant finding in this study. Many female students expressed their dissatisfaction with the idea of taking on the responsibilities of motherhood while they were still children who are in need of caring. They frequently tried to strike a balance between their mothering and learning duties. In their study, Vaughn, Bos and Schumm (2000) showed that students from low-income families are more likely to perform badly in school when they have additional obligations such as caring for siblings or contributing to the family's finances.

Parental support, according to Gogolo (1998), is one of the factors that determines a student's academic achievement. Other research has revealed that when youngsters grow far away from parental influence, their self-esteem suffers (Fletcher, Steinberg, & Sellers, 1999; Iwanisec, 1996). Barry and Garbarino (1997) discovered that youngsters with few positive role models struggle in school and have low self-esteem. With regard to learners' shifting roles, it is critical that school psychologists provide them with training and practical seminars in life skills, such as decision-making, dispute resolution, and parenting, while still allowing them to maintain their childhood. The findings paint a vivid picture of OVCs' living conditions, changing roles, community worries, and school experiences, all of which have an impact on their psychological well-being and highlight the importance of efficient school psychological services (Pillay, 2011). Despite all odds, schools in this research

demonstrates how they can make a positive effect in the lives of students simply by showing love, attention, and care. Based on the findings, various reasons are offered for school psychologists being successful in aiding learners from child-headed homes in vulnerable schools across national boundaries.

In South Africa, child-headed families are becoming more common. This large number is anticipated to have a significant impact on family life as well as the country's educational institutions' future.   Each key finding (theme) is analysed in light of the literature and the study's theoretical foundations; second, the role of the school psychologist is examined under each topic; and finally, some recommendations for assisting child-headed learners and vulnerable schools are made. These discussions are based on the findings of this particular study, although, they are not confined to South Africa.

The extent to which schools care for children in child-headed households, as well as the role of educators and the school in attempting to assist these students, are critical considerations.   HIV/AIDS is the most common cause of orphanhood among children, yet it is not the only factor in child-headed families. Whatever the cause of orphanhood, these children require government, school, and societal assistance; these orphans are at risk. They must also work longer hours than their peers in order to obtain food and money for other essentials. OVC frequently assume the role of family leader by caring for their siblings.   The research method was based on a review of the literature as well as the researcher's personal experiences.   As their behaviour is maladaptive in terms of societal standards, child-headed households can also be considered as "children in crisis" (Le Roux, 1994).   Children from child-headed households, like all other students in a school, might be classified as "special children". OVC require love and instruction on how to love themselves and others. Schools have the ability to make a difference in the lives of children who are at risk.

4.6.1 Discrimination at School

"It is so disturbing that there are some other learners who do not want to interact with us", Bono said. Upon probing him, he revealed that most of the learners do not want to be associate with him. If he could joins learners seated in a group, they disperse,

hence, he feels so much bad at school because he feels unwanted. He thinks they discriminate against him because of his socio-economic background. These views were also expressed by Losioki, (2020), who noted that OVC tends to feel isolated and unhappy compared to other students; this affects their concentration in class. These children suffer depression, loneliness and stress and this makes Bono to be always full of anger towards every learner at school. He is not accommodated by other learners, and this disturbs his concentration in class and affects his learning. Enelo also indicated that she feels unwelcomed by other learners because every time she joins them, they will either not entertain her or her comments or just disperse one by one.

She thinks she is being discriminated because of her socioeconomic background. That really stresses her because she feels she needs them and wants to belong. This has been confirmed by some educators who stated that they had on several occasions seen each of these learners seated alone during breaks. When asked why she was sitting alone during break, Enelo replied that she felt safe and fine alone because she gets hurt when she joins other learners and they do not welcome her. This may end up causing OVC to drop out of school because the school is now a terrorising environment for them. OVC's relationship with other learners is poor because they are associated with poverty.

Mutiso, and Mutie (2018) posit that children who have lost their primary caretakers are vulnerable to stigma and discrimination at school, where social acceptance is so important to them. These children are sometimes teased or verbally abused by peers and educators.

4.6.2 Health Problems

"I have to see to it that I hustle in order to get medication when one of us is sick. My baby is always sick, and I guess it is because of malnutrition", Mveledzo said. Those children have no support from family relatives when they are not well; they rely solely on clinics. Those Community Health Centre's (CHC) at times run short of medications, especially during the time of COVID-19 pandemic that the world was faced with. Everyone rushes to the clinic when they feel symptoms that are

associated with COVID-19, therefore, getting treatment is a challenge. This ultimately affects their day-to-day life including learning or schooling. These children suffer health issues especially during winter when it is cold, and they do not have enough warm clothing, blankets and medication for winter-related illness like flu.   One of the educators indicated that she recalls one day when she had to take Bono to the doctor because he was miserably ill.   She had to pay herself.   Bono had told her he had been feeling sick for weeks and he could not get help from the local CHC.

According to Alem (2020) access to food, shelter and education remains a key challenge for orphaned children. Such children suffer many difficulties such as poverty, poor physical health, attachment disorders, inadequate social skills, and mental health difficulties.

4.6.3   Coping Strategies

What was so impressing was that all those children are not ready to throw-in the towel. They were showing the zeal to succeed in life and change their situation. Enelo said,

> *"What matters most is not my current situation, but where I am heading. My destination is the most important territory that I have to protect by all means"*.

From the above statement by Enelo, one can see that she is ready and willing to work very hard so that she can achieve her life goal. She has told herself that she wants to change her situation for the good. For those girls to survive, they do laundry for other people in order to get money and other necessities that could see them going on.

They even involve themselves in transactional sex just to get money so that there could be life at home. One thing that they emphasized was that they do not involve themselves in transactional sex because they want or they are immoral, but because it is a way of survival which they are not proud of. They do this because they have no one to lookup to for their daily basic and educational needs.   Mveledzo stated that she hates doing it because she puts herself at risk of getting infected with STIs and

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being killed by these men. Female OVC are forced to have multiple boyfriends so as to widen their scope or range of their source of money to survive on. This agrees with Wiid (2001); Chidziva (2013) and Daidone, Davis, Handa and Winters (2019) who suggested that children in CHFs, especially girls are at risk of contracting sexually-transmitted infections from economic coping strategies involving sexual behaviour.

With Bono, he stated that he relies much on piece jobs as a source of income. He would do gardening for a number of households who would pay him monthly. For each day of the week, he has a household where he does the garden. On weekends he would work at two or more households. He also washes people's cars in order to get something for survival. His twin brother is physically challenged so there is very little that he can do in order to assist at home. These learners also indicated that they carry containers along with them when going to school so that after eating during break, they could get surplus food from Voluntary Food Handlers (VFH). This is the food they share with their siblings at home for supper. It becomes a challenge when there is no surplus of food from the school kitchen.

4.6.4 Educational Goals of Orphaned Learners

"Like other children, I want to see myself having a qualification one day and getting a job of my dream," said Bono. Upon further probing, he stated that he would like to be a social worker so as to assist children who are like him. According to findings from studies performed by Moletsane (2003) and Nkomo (2006), children from child-headed families try everything they can to deal with the challenges they face on a daily basis. In the face of adversity, they try to make sense of things and discover coping techniques. These children realized that in order to fight this battle of independence at their age, they needed to stand on their own two feet and transform their reality. Bono wants to change people's lives including his own. With Enelo, she said that she wanted to be a teacher right from her childhood and added that there will be nothing that would stop her from achieving her goal. The researcher found that Mveledzo would want to be a nurse. Studying hard and committing to work, strong values and moral character, accepting their situation and striving to achieve, and a network of adults who check on the children's schoolwork, as well as teachers

who understand the children's situation and offer to help, were all factors associated with academic success, according to Shilubana and Kok (2005).

This is a career that Mveledzo wanted to follow from the time her mother was sick, and nurses seemed to take little care of her mom. She feels that if nurses could dedicate themselves more to their work, many lives could be saved. What was so interesting was that all the OVC made one common statement - that their age and time was nothing and will not be a disturbing factor to achieving their goals. They said they would do their best against all odds to achieve their goals. Leatham (2006) reiterated this sentiment, claiming that most students rely on teachers for support. The OVC's comments indicated that they do not want to see their current situation repeated, in the future, with other children.

4.7   COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

On this subject, the three OVC participants expressed opposing viewpoints, such as the participant who stated:

> "*The community is not glad for their children to visit us since there are more boys who visit us taking advantage of us being alone because we are just girls. The neighbourhood refers to our home as a house of prostitutes, which makes us upset because we don't invite the lads to our house, which also makes us miserable.*"

Another respondent expressed a more favourable attitude of the community's engagement in their lives, saying:

> "*The community is very worried and sorry that our parents have abandoned us. The guys visit our place and remain till late, which interferes with study time. We love the company since we are lonely and feel bad if we drive them away.*"

Thurman et al. (2008) confirmed that children from child-headed households face social exclusion, citing his Rwandan study as an example, in which he discovered that children from child-headed families experienced community rejection. In the study by Chiastolite (2008), the OVC participants stated that their communities

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viewed them differently since they were raised by children.   Neighbours who live near this family are unfamiliar with the predicament of a family headed by a child. They saw the child-headed household as the result of parents abandoning their children, which is unusual in the culture.   Jones (2005:165) corroborated this view when he stated that there are orphans whose parents have died as well as OVC whose parents have abandoned them.

Bono said:

> "The community looks out for us. One day, several members beat us up for misbehaviour, and we came to a halt. During the day, I am alone, and at night, I visit a friend. I'm quite aware that everyone in the community is watching my every action. I aim to stay away from any wrongdoings".

Bono has been a member of the community for some time, hence, whenever he does anything wrong, he is reprimanded, especially because other children can replicate his bad behaviour. Children in Africa have traditionally been viewed as belonging not only to their biological parents, but also to their lineage or kinship group, according to Oleke et al. (2005). The habit of helping relatives in times of catastrophe is well rooted in culture, and it means that households gladly embraced orphans of their relatives.

4.8   FUTURE DREAM CAREERS

The participants demonstrated that they accept their current circumstances, yet the researcher would like to learn more about how they envision themselves in the approaching years. Following that, participants were asked to highlight their future dreams in order to change their current position.   All participants were optimistic about their future prospects.   Some aspired to be professionals, while others wished to improve their communities and address the issues that had led to the prevalence of child-headed households.   Those who felt threatened decided they would work in the security services to safeguard their neighbourhoods.   Others aspired to be lawyers in order to fight for human rights and injustices after witnessing the difficulties they confront when their grants were revoked.

Most of them were aimed at improving their future through education. These participants presented their views as follows:

The first person to speak in this segment remarked:

> "I dream of working and supporting my family one day. My ambition is to work as a civil engineer'' (Bono).

Two participants chose to be lawyers for various reasons, including:
Second stated that:

> "I hope to continue my education because I want to be a lawyer. Fighting for human rights, particularly the rights of children, is something I enjoy doing" (Enelo).

The third stated that:

> "At home, there is no role model. All of that is something I want to change, and I want to become a lawyer who will help the community.''
> Mveledzo.

The participants have a vision of a turnaround strategy to help them get out of poverty and desperation. The three participants have been through hardships and exploitation, and they do not want other youngsters to go through what they had. They want to fight for their rights so that they can have dignity and respect for themselves. This is related to UNICEF's (2009) statement that "emotional instability among child-headed households can be reduced via schooling, which permits learning and cognition to take place even under tough life situations."

The participants had other choices, for example, two chose to join the police force as a result of the traumatic experiences in their lives, Bono said:

> "I have many dreams; I want all of my siblings to have a better life and not be trapped in poverty. When I finish school, I will try to assist them with school and household tasks. They need to be free of distractions and have someone motivating them.''

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of children's development, gives essential information about their functioning within social contexts, as described by Donald et al. (2002). In order to understand child development, four interacting dimensions must be considered: person factors (child and parent temperament), process factors (interaction patterns within the family), environments (family, school, and local communities), and time (changes occur over time in the child & the environment). Proximal contacts, such as the mother-child relationship, have a long-term impact on the child's development. A single mother who works as a domestic worker in the suburbs and is also quick-tempered (person factors) can be an illustration of this. She may struggle to meet the financial needs of caring for her family.

The other respondent said:

> *"My dream is to perceive myself as a trustworthy person in a trustworthy position. I want to be a police officer and a good person"*
> Mveledzo.

Both individuals felt unnoticed by the community in which they grew up, and they want to work for and be recognized by it. In their study on child headed homes in developing countries, Mogotlane, Chauke, Van Rensburg, Human and Kganakga (2010) stated that while children from child headed households experienced challenges, they could overcome adversity and live their aspirations.

4.9   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The research interviewees constituted three learners and four educators, allocated pseudo names. Bono and Mveledzo, who are learners, agreed to provide details on their family demographics. Bono is a Grade 8 leaner who lives in a two-roomed shack where one room is a bedroom, and the other is a kitchen and bedroom in one with his twin brother and a thirteen-year-old sister. There is no electricity or running water. There is no one to fend for them. Mveledzo stated that she is a girl aged 17 years. She is staying with her 2 years old baby and 13 years old younger brother. She is doing Grade 10 and is a breadwinner, parent and learner at the same time.

All the three participants indicated that they struggle in order to get basic needs at home.   For them to have food on the table was a very difficult task.   Learners indicated that the absence of their parents has hit them hard. They lack learning and support materials, and it makes their learning difficult as for example, they cannot afford study guides that are very crucial in their studies.   Bono and Enelo, are all living in informal settlements where there is no electricity and running water. These learners are also experiencing psychosocial challenges such as sexual abuse, absenteeism, discrimination and health problems which ultimately affect their academic performance. According to Ogina and Ramare (2019), child labour, prostitution, poor nutrition, threats to physical safety, fear of being punished for being late for school, for failing tests and their inability to do homework because of responsibilities at home contribute to school dropout, absenteeism and poor academic performance by learners from CHFs.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This final chapter of the research project summarises the research findings regarding challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals based on a case study of three schools in Johannesburg, East District of the Gauteng Province, South Africa. The conclusions from the research and recommendations are provided to the schools, the community, and the Department of Basic Education. The limitations experienced during the research are also highlighted, followed by suggestions for future research. The chapter ends with a conclusion, which summarises the research findings.

5.2   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A study was conducted to establish the challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals based on a case study of three schools in Johannesburg, the East District of the Gauteng Province, South Africa. The main objective, thus, was to investigate the challenges faced by learners in child-headed families that affect them in the achievement of educational goals. This main objective was supported by three sub-objectives:

    (i)   to identify educational goals of learners from child-headed families;

    (ii)   to examine school-life experiences of learners from child-headed families; and

    (iii)   to explore challenges that affect the school performance of learners from child-headed families.

The conclusions presented in this closing chapter, therefore, are guided by these research objectives and based on the data presented in the previous chapter.

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5.2.1 Educational Goals of Learners from Child-Headed Families

Learners from CHFs showed resilience in copying with challenges to meet their educational goals. This can be witnessed in the following response by one of the interviewed learners who had high dreams: *"Like other children, I want to see myself having a qualification one day and getting a job of my dream," (*Bono). These sentiments are in accordance with findings from studies performed by Moletsane (2003) and Nkomo (2006), that children from child-headed families try everything they can to deal at school, with the challenges they face on a daily basis. In the face of adversity, they try to make sense of things and discover coping techniques.

With Enelo, she said that she wanted to be a teacher from her childhood age. She further indicated that nothing that would stop her from achieving her goal. The other respondent, Mveledzo would want to be a nurse. This is a career that she had wanted to follow from the time her mom was sick, and nurses did not take adequate care of her mom. She feels if nurses could dedicate themselves to their work, many lives could be saved. Leatham (2006) reiterated that leaners from CHFs' comments indicated that they do not want to see their situation to be repeated in the future. They are studying hard to ensure that they excel academically and pursue their careers.

Earlier literature by Pillay (2011) also indicated that efficient school psychological services can have a positive effect in the lives of students simply by the professionals showing love, attention, and care, thus aiding learners from child-headed homes in vulnerable schools across national boundaries.

5.3 CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT THE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS FROM CHFS

Data from this study indicated that the learners from CHFs have socio-economic and psycho-social challenges that affected their educational attendance, participation and achievement.

These challenges faced by learners from CHFs impacted their studies as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Performance of Learners from CHFs

Learner	Grade	Average Mark	Class Average
Bono	8	52%	65%
Enelo	10	54%	68%
Mveledzo	10	63%	62%

School records showed that learners from CHFs performed below class average. This is, however, not the case for Mveledzo who had an average mark of 63%, which is higher than the class average. Mveledzo has a potential to improve her marks if she does not experience challenges from looking after her family.

In the same vein Lyons (2006) mentioned that child-headed families are more likely to endure greater poverty, bad health, and poor nutrition, all of which aggravated poor school attendance, limiting the potential of a positive school experience.

5.3.1 Socio-Economic Challenges

The socio-economic challenges experienced by learners from CHFS from three schools in Johannesburg, East District of the Gauteng Province, South Africa, include, lack of basic needs, struggling to feeds themselves, and lack of learning support material.

The research established that learners from CHFs are facing challenges relating to the lack of basic needs such as food, proper shelter, and warm clothing, especially in winter. This finding is supported by statements made by the learners and teachers below:

> *"I rely much on the food parcels that the School-Based Support*
> *Teams (SBST) coordinator provides us with when there is surplus of*
> *food from National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)",* (Bono).

Enelo also indicated that "*Life is very unfair sir. I don't know why it is like this. We usually sleep with empty stomach in a shack that is not fit for human residence*". The third respondent, Mveledzo also expressed how her family struggle to make ends meet on a day-to-day basis, "*I hate winter seasons because it is very cold and getting warm clothing and uniform is not easy*".

Ms Motaung and Ms Sibuyi expressed some concerns regarding the challenge of inadequate resources the learners from CHFs experience,

> "*The learners from CHFs feel inferior at school as they do not have proper uniforms, school bags and books*" (Ms Motaung). *"These learners struggle to make ends meet and often survive without some of the basic needs like three meals in a day and clothing"* (Ms Sibuyi).

Mutiso, and Mutie (2018:22), noted that children who have lost their primary caretakers are more vulnerable to health risks, violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Magwa and Magwa (2016:21) supported these findings by stating that "Children from child-head households may if the country's economy is poor fail to get assistance in terms of food or health services and they are bound to experience strain in their development".

5.3.2 Learners from CHFs Struggle to Feed Themselves

Two respondents indicated that they rely on their guardians to receive grants on their behalf, however, the grant does not always benefit the children. Lyons (2006) mentioned this circumstance and stated child-headed families are more likely to endure greater poverty, bad health, and poor nutrition, all of which was aggravated by poor school attendance, limiting the potential of a positive school experience.

One interviewee (Bono) participant, from a local school, said:

> "*My uncle (mother's brother) gets grants through a third-party organisation. We put the money towards our basic needs. When I go home from school, I do everything on my own, including cooking. The grant money is insufficient.*"

The other participant (Mveledzo) said,

> "*Our step-grandmother cares for us; she is elderly and unable to work, so she collects grants on our behalf. She also drinks and does not always return home.*"

Moletsane (2003), mentioned that the death of a parent causes children to grow up without adult supervision, love, or care, making them open to abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual) from other members of the community.

5.3.3 Inadequate Learning Support Material

The study gathered that absence of parents is affecting learners from CHFs negatively. They lack learning and support materials, and it makes their learning difficult. They cannot afford study guides that are very crucial in their studies. Bono and Enelo, live in informal settlements where there are no electricity and running water; they get water from tanks. The unavailability of electricity makes it difficult for them to do schoolwork at home. According to Elno,

> "*When we are expecting to do school research project and collect information from different sources, it becomes a problem because at times I have to travel to distant places, and I have to walk.*"

Schumm (2000:317) asserts that poverty among children from CHFs affects their mental and physical wellbeing as well as scholastic experience since they do not have the required material to fulfil the objectives of the school. Van Breda (2010) concurred with Chiastolite et al. (2008) when they stated that taking on additional obligations and roles was a key theme in CHFs situation. As a result, it is challenging for these learners to be a parent, a student, and a counsellor to siblings at the same time.

5.4 PSYCHO-SOCIAL CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNERS FROM CHFS

This study revealed that learners from CHFs are impacted by multiple psychosocial challenges, which include child abuse, peer pressure, discrimination, sexual abuse and school absenteeism. Similarly, an earlier study by Mothapo, (2016), noted that

girls were found to be at high risk of sexual abuse and HIV infection. Sixty per-cent of the girl learners in CHFs have multiple sexual partners who offer them cash and other essentials that they need.

5.4.1 Sexual Abuse and School Absenteeism of Learners from CHFs

Sadly, the study revealed how girls from CHFs are sexually abused without the community taking any action. For example, Elno confirmed that she was engaging in sex in order to survive,

> "*It is very risky to have sex with these men, because I remember the other time when a condom burst in the process of having sex*", Enelo.

Mveledzo also stated,

> "*I don't go to school the way am supposed to. It is rare that I can go to school for whole two weeks without being absent*".

Upon further probing, she indicated that absenteeism was due to the fact that she has to hustle for her siblings, and herself. These responses correspond to those from Mothapo (2016:43), who noted that girls were found to be at high risk of sexual abuse and HIV infection. The study found that 60% of the girl learners in the CHFs have multiple sexual partners who offer them cash and other essentials that they need.

5.4.2 Behavioural Problems Caused by Peer Pressure

The research established that learners from CHFs exhibit some behavioural problems. Madam Motaung (not real name), one of the female teachers commented,

> "*these learners are very quiet and withdrawn in class. You could see that their minds at times seem to be far away from school and class in particular*". She mentioned that "*I remember well the other times when I called Enelo in class twice without any response or reaction from her. "Enelo only responded when I called her for the third time. She was completely not there in class psychologically, but only physically*".

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Mwoma and Pillay (2016:92) established that children who are not hungry are better able to concentrate in class and that lack of food at home may have negative impact on the child's health since a hungry child may not have energy to play and to actively participate in his/her learning.

According to Moldes et al. (2019) adolescents are more likely to be subjected to peer pressure at school. This study noted that learners from CHFs do not have parents as role models who can guide them on good moral behaviour and therefore are prone to peer pressure. These findings were supported by sentiments shared by Bono:

> "Our friends take advantage of our being alone and force us to do things we don't want to do. This puts us under a lot of stress. Our mother used to tell us to stay inside to avoid unwanted visitors who force you to do things you don't want to do. Peers, on the other hand, are permitted to visit pals who live alone without the supervision of an adult. My colleagues compliment me for remaining alone and being able to do whatever at any time; they perceive no negative aspects to my situation."

In the research, it was gathered that peer pressure appears to have a variety of consequences on a students' academic achievement, due to the way their peers influence them, whether positively or negatively.

5.5   SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS FROM CHFs

The research further gathered that learners from CHFs do not enjoy their school experience due to a number of challenges they face on a daily basis, and this ultimately affect their academic performance. The need to juggle between school and struggling for food makes it hard for learners from CHFs to perform well in school. *"Doing piece jobs after long school day is not a child's play",* said Mveledzo. She further commented that "*There is no one to assist me with my schoolwork at home whenever I encounter difficulties.*" These findings concur with the views expressed by Magwa and Magwa (2016:19), that children from CHFs shoulder all the bulk of the

housework and are vulnerable to poverty and social isolation creating an environment which does not foster academic performance.

These learners also lack proper resources for their schooling. Mveledzo highlighted, *"Sometimes I don't do my homework because I don't have the textbook that I need."* Bono also complained,

> *"The classroom windows are damaged and haven't been fixed in a long time. It is extremely cold in the winter. We also don't have suitable uniforms, which makes things worse."*

These findings are consistent with the research done by Robson and Kanyauta (2007:419); Chidziva (2013:82), and Mothapo (2016:50) who concluded that CHFs are often extremely vulnerable and impoverished which force them to work and prevent them from attending school (absenteeism), thereby affecting their academic performance negatively.

5.5.1 Discrimination, Health Problems and Coping Strategies

The data gathered from the research indicated that learners from CHFs experienced some health problems and discrimination. These sentiments were shared by Enelo,

> "*I feel unwelcomed by other learners because every time I join them, they will either not entertain me or my comments or just disperse, one by one.*"

The research further gathered that these children suffer health issues especially during winter when it is cold, and they do not have enough warm clothing, blankets and medication for winter-related illnesses like flu. One of the educators, Ms Sibuyi said, *"I recall one day when I had to take Bono to the doctor because he was miserably ill."* To cope with the difficulties of CHFs, Bono, commented,

"*I rely much on piece jobs as a source of income. I would do gardening for a number of households who would pay me monthly. For each day of the week, I have a household where I do the garden.*"

The research gathered that these learners have big dreams, despite the hardships that they face. Enelo said,

"*What matters most is not my current situation, but where I am heading. My destination is the most important territory that I have to protect by all means*".

Bono also shared the same sentiments and stated that "Like other children, I want to see myself having a qualification one day and getting a job of my dream". Upon further probing, he stated that he would like to be a social worker so as to assist children who are like him. According to findings from studies performed by Moletsane (2003) and Nkomo (2006), children from child-headed families try everything they can to deal at school, with the challenges they face on a daily basis. Losioki (2020:194) and Mutiso and Mutie (2018:22) noted that learners form CHFs feel isolated and unhappy compared to other learners; this affects their concentration in class. Children from CHFs are also vulnerable to stigma and discrimination at school, where social acceptance is so important to them.

5.5.2 The Role of the Community in the Life of Learners from CHFs

In this study, it was gathered that OVC have difficulties in coping with the pressure and challenges they face on a day-to-day basis without the support of the community. This view was shared by Bono,

"The community looks out for us. One day, several members beat us up for misbehaviour, and it came to a halt. During the day, I am alone, and at night, I visit a friend. I'm quite aware that everyone in the community is watching my every action. I aim to stay away from any wrongdoings''.

On the contrary, Mveledzo highlighted some challenges encountered from some community members,

"*The community is not glad for their children to visit us since there are more boys who visit us... The neighbourhood refers to our home as a house of prostitutes, which makes us upset because we don't invite the lads to our house, which also makes us miserable*".

The sentiments expressed by Bono are supported by the assertion by Oleke et al. (2005:2631), that children in Africa had traditionally been viewed as belonging not only to their biological parents, but also to their lineage or kinship group. The habit of helping relatives in times of catastrophe is well rooted in culture, and it means that households gladly embraced orphans of their relatives.

On the contrary Thurman et al. (2008:2) revealed that child from child-headed households face social exclusion, and experienced community rejection as stated by Mveledzo, nevertheless, the community plays a pivotal role in shaping the lives of children from CHFS (Oleke et al., 2005: 2631).

5.5.3 Mixed Views on School Experiences of Learners from Child-Headed Families

The main participants in the study were adolescent members of child-headed families who live alone or with their siblings and whose parents had died. These teenagers lived in a household with no live-in adult supervision from guardians or carers. The learners from child-headed family are vulnerable. Vulnerability refers to individuals who are thought to be unable to cope with events that have a negative impact on their lives (Ursula Mohlakwana, 2013). This is confirmed by Mveledzo:

"The kids don't like us. They are cruel to us. They slap me, tease me, and order me to shut up. I don't like it when the kids mock me. They make derogatory remarks that harm my sensibilities."

The students also suffer from bad weather conditions because of lack of proper clothing as indicated by one,

*"The classroom windows are damaged and haven't been fixed in a long time. It is extremely cold in the winter. We also don't have suitable uniforms, which makes things worse" (*Bono).

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Not all school experiences for the learners are negative. The learners from CHFs benefit by going to school where they can get food and support from the teachers as confirmed by Enelo and Mveledzo.

"At the very least, I eat something for the day when I go to school. When there is no school, I become hungry. I don't like vacations and weekends since I don't get any food or clothes."

Mveledzo. She also mentioned that:

"The people from the church, they offer us food for lunch when we're at school". In the same vein it was indicated that *"I also get food at school, but I take it home to feed my little sisters",* said another student.

In support of these two sentiments, Enelo remarked:

"I like my teachers. They are considerate of me. My teacher is a wonderful person. When I don't understand something, she explains it to me."

Teachers were the source of inspiration and support with regards to the school experiences of learners from CHFs. All the learner participants in this study commended their teachers, describing them as extremely helpful, compassionate, and supportive. Mveledzo acknowledged the good relationship these learners have with teachers by stating,

"I like my teachers, they are considerate to me, my teacher is a wonderful person. When I don't understand something, she explains it to me".

5.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY FOR LEARNERS FROM CHFS

The recommendations on challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals are based on a case study of three schools in

Johannesburg, East District of the Gauteng Province, South Africa, are presented below.

5.6.1 The Role of School Counsellors

This study found that learners from child-headed families faced numerous psycho-social challenges, which include difficulties in concentrating in class. From this finding it is recommended that schools appoint child counsellors trained in child psychological problems. This support should not be limited to school counselling only but should also include paying some visits to the households of CHFs. Feedback from school counsellors can be used by teachers and school administrators to provide relevant support to these learners.

5.6.2 The Role of Teachers

The research gathered that, teachers and school authorities do not only act as role models to learners from CHFs, but they represent parental figures for these learners. The research therefore recommends teachers to create consultation sessions with learners from CHFs as a way of providing emotional support and guiding them in their day-to-day lives. If necessary, these learners may also require additional academic support to ensure that they have resources for their schooling demands.

5.6.3 Community Leaders

The study established that learners from CHFs do not exist in a vacuum but live in a community that is woven together by a social fibre. Community leaders should ensure that CHFs are protected from preying men and women who may take advantage of these learners' lack of basic needs. Community leaders should act as the bridge between churches, Non-Governmental Organisations, donors, and the CHFs.

5.6.4 Management of Social Grants

In this research, it was gathered that some of the learners from CHFs have relatives who collect social grants on their behalf which, unfortunately, is not used for their benefit. The social workers, school counsellors, church leaders and community leaders should report any abuse of social grants to the Department of Social Welfare, by the purported caregivers. In the event that these grants are being abused by care givers or relatives, community leaders and counsellors can recommend the grants to be managed by religious organisations for the benefit of children from CHFs.

5.7   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations were experienced in this study. A purposive sampling method was used to select three learners from child-headed families, six educators in the School Based Support Teams, three school managers and one social worker from Johannesburg East District schools in Kaalfontein, Ebony Park and Ivory Park in Gauteng Province of South Africa.

Respect for the ethical rights of the respondents was a priority, hence, the researcher could not continue to probe for information that would make the respondents feel uncomfortable, for example, the demographic details on Mveledzo's living arrangement could not be established because she was not comfortable to reveal them. This emerged as one of the limitations in the collection of data.

A bigger sample size could not be selected due to time and resource restrictions. The respondents' views may not be a full representation of all learners from CHFs, teachers and social workers in the East District schools in Kaalfontein, Ebony Park and Ivory Park in Gauteng Province of South Africa. The views may therefore not be generalised for the rest of learners from CHFs in South Africa; however, the research findings will help to design interventions measures that may help to address the plight of learners from CHFs, based on recommendations provided.

5.8   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Learners from CHFs are impacted by numerous factors that affect their academic performance and life goals. In this era of digital explosion and social media dominance, future research can focus on the extent to which learners from CHFs are exposed to smart devices and social media. Further search can focus on the aspect of digital divide, specifically, possible digital exclusion of learners from CHFs. For those learners from CHFs with access to smart devices, future research can also focus on cyber bullying of these learners.

5.9   CONCLUSION

According to the Department of Social Development November (2008) the phenomenon of orphaned child-headed family is complex and multifaceted. It impacts on societal framework and has profound implications for the well-being of children and the realization of their rights. The loss of a traditional family environment diminishes the child's safety net against abuse, exploitation and violence. The study of the challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals based on a case study of the three schools unearthed important findings, among them are - learners from CHFs are at a disadvantage as far school as performance and the pursuit of life dreams are concerned. This was found to be caused by the added family responsibilities that these learners have to carry out, due to absent parents. These learners are robbed of the opportunity to enjoy being children as they often spend time struggling for resources to support their siblings. From data gathered in this study, learners from CHFs were found to be too young to handle a plethora of factors emanating from - peers, the community and the school environment, where at times it is difficult to gain acceptance. It was also found from gathered data that these learners lacked enough resources to support themselves in their learning journey, thereby, compromising their ability to excel in their studies.

From the findings of the study, it is acknowledged that the support of community leaders, NGOs, counsellors, social workers and schoolteachers is critical in propelling learners towards their dreams, irrespective of the hurdles faced by these learners. The research findings shows that all hope is not lost for learners from CHFs

as they have exhibited resilience in pursuing their career dreams which can become a reality with enough support from all stakeholders.

The research eventually proposed areas for future research, concerning CHFs; this included determining the extent to which learners from CHFs are exposed to smart devices and social media, specifically, its impact on these learners in the absence of caregivers and parents. Further research is also suggested to focus on the CHFs with access to smart devices, whether these learners are exposed to cyber bullying.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS IN CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES

The interview guide has the questions that were developed to clearly respond to the research objectives that the study intends to achieve.

1. May you please briefly tell me about yourself and your family background.
2. Every person has goals in life that he/she wants to achieve in future. Can you please explain to me the educational goals that you want to achieve in your lifetime.
3. In detail, tell me your school-life experiences as a child in a child-headed family.
4. What are the challenges that affect your school performances as a child in child-headed family, that in a way militate against your educational goals?

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL MANAGERS IN SCHOOLS WITH LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES

This interview guide has the questions that were developed to investigate the challenges faced by learners in child-headed families that affect them in the achievement of educational goals.

1. How did you become aware of these children's situation?
2. How is the general behaviour of these learners from child-headed families? (Names of the learners are not mentioned).
3. What is the trend of school attendance by these learners?
4. How would you describe their academic performance?
5. Can you please narrate to me the challenges that these learners are facing according to your observation and experience, that are negatively affecting them from achieving their educational goals?

APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SOCIAL WORKER

This interview guide has a question that seeks to get information about the challenges learners from child-headed families' experience that may prevent them from achieving their educational goals.

1. Anything that happens to a child's life may affect the child negatively or positively. Now, considering that you interact with learners from child-headed families, can you please explain to me the challenges that these learners face that prevent them from achieving their educational goals.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

	1117 MNISI STAND
ENQUIRIES: MAKUYA R.V.	WINTERVELDT
cell: 082 585 4444	0198
e-mail: rvmakuya@gmail.com	15 March 2021

Dear Learner

I, **Rudzani Vanrijn Makuya**, a student at the University of Venda hereby invites you to participate in research to be conducted with children living in child-headed families.

Families like yours are found throughout the world. I would like to invite you to answer a few questions on challenges that prevent you from achieving your educational goals. The responses you will give would assist your educators, the government, and other stakeholders to understand your situation and do something about it.

It is your right to take part in this research or not. No one can force you; it is your choice. Taking part would not affect you in any way and you can also decide to stop at any time, if you feel like it. You are also free not to answer any question that you feel may compromise you.

Confidentiality is guaranteed to you. Whatever you are going to share with me will remain between us. I am also asking for permission to record our interviews. You again have the right to agree or not to agree about the recording of the interviews. No names will be mentioned in the whole interview process; therefore, your name will not be mentioned in the recording. You are free to say it if you want the tape recorder to be switched off at any point during the interviews. The interview will not be longer than an hour, and you are humbly requested to be as open and honest as possible in answering the questions.

………*Makuya R.V.*…………………………………………………

MAKUYA R.V.   (RESEARCHER)

APPENDIX E: DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

I…………………………………………… (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document (Appendix D) and the liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I desire.

Signature of participant/guardian: ………………………   Date: ………………….

Signature of researcher: …………………………...   Date: …………………

Do you give me (the researcher) permission to record the interview?

YES   OR   NO

Signature of participant/guardian: ……………………   Date: …………………

Signature of witness: …………………………   Date: ………………….

APPENDIX F: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

enq: Makuya R.V.

cell: 0825854444

e-mail: rvmakuya@gmail.com

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1117 MNISI STAND

WINTERVELDT

0198

11 March 2021

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Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street

 Johannesburg

 2001

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THREE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JOHANNESBURG EAST DISTRICT

My name is Rudzani Vanrijn Makuya, a Masters in Psychology of Education Degree student, in the Department of Foundations of Education, School of Education, at the University of Venda. I am conducting a study on: ***Challenges of Learners from Child-headed Families that Affect their Educational Goals: A Case Study of Three Schools in Johannesburg East District, Gauteng Province, South Africa.*** The purpose of the study is to investigate the challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals.

I, hereby, apply to be granted permission to conduct this research in the following three schools in your District, namely: Ponelopele Oracle Secondary School, Kaalfontein Secondary School and Tsosoloso Ya Africa Secondary School. It is important to point out that the researcher undertakes to maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of the participants in this research project.

………*Makuya R.V.*………………………………………………………..

MAKUYA R.V.   (RESEARCHER)

APPENDIX G: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM GDE

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	13 April 2021
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2021– 30 September 2021 2021/89
Name of Researcher:	Makuya RV
Address of Researcher:	1117 Mnisi Road
	Winterveldt
	Pretoria
Telephone Number:	082 585 4444
Email address:	rvmakuya@gamil.com
Research Topic:	Challenges of learners from child-headed –families that affect their educational gaols. A case study of the three schools in Johannesburg East District, Gauteng Province ,south Africa
Type of qualification	Master's Degree
Number and type of schools:	3 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Johannesburg East

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

13/04/2021

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
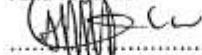7ᵗʰ Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

University of Venda

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. Because of COVID 19 pandemic researchers can ONLY collect data online, telephonically or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate. The approval letter will then indicate the type of arrangements that have been made with the school.
4. The Researchers are advised to make arrangements with the schools via Fax, email or telephonically with the Principal.
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

....

Mr Gumani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: ......13\04\2021.............

2

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX H: REQUEST LETTER TO THE SGB

Enq: Makuya R.V.

cell: 0825854444

e-mail: rvmakuya@gmail.com

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1117 MNISI STAND

WINTERVELDT

0198

15 March 2021

</div>

The SGB Chairperson

Ponelopele Oracle Secondary School

3856 Cnr Pilchard & Mudhopper Str.

Ext 8 Kaalfontein MIDRAND 1685

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I, **Rudzani Vanrijn Makuya** (Student No. 11604428), a student at the University of Venda wish to make a request to conduct research among learners, educators and the principal in your institution. I am a Master's Degree student doing research on the challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals.

I will take upon myself to respect the local customs and school image and promise to give copies of all reports upon request by the school.

Two learners from child-headed families will be required to give detailed account of their unique perceptions and experiences about the challenges that affect their educational goals.

Your teachers will be expected to provide attendance registers, quarterly schedules, and mark sheets for analysis for the selected learners. They will also be expected to answer some few questions based on the challenges of these learners.

University of Venda

The School Manager will be required to give the overall view of the challenges experienced by these learners that prevent them from achieving their educational goals.

There will be no financial incentives for participating in the research, but findings will be made known to your teachers. The participants may withdraw at any time they like and data collected before the withdrawal will not be used any further. The data collection instruments and consent forms to participate are herein attached for your attention.

Thanking you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

Yours faithfully

……*Makuya R.V.*…………………………

Makuya R.V.   (Researcher)

APPENDIX I: CONSENT FORM

	1117 MNISI STAND
ENQUIRIES: MAKUYA R.V.	WINTERVELDT
CELL: 082 585 4444	0198
e-mail: rvmakuya@gmail.com	15 March 2021

Dear Educator/School Manager

I, **Rudzani Vanrijn Makuya**, a student at the University of Venda hereby invites you to participate in research to be conducted with children living in child-headed families.

I would like to invite you to answer a few questions on challenges that prevent children from child-headed families from achieving their educational goals. The responses you will give may assist your educators, the government, and other stakeholders to understand these children's situation and do something about it.

It is your right to take part in this research or not. No one can force you; it is your choice. Taking part will not affect you in any way and you can also decide to stop at any time if you feel like it. You are also free not to answer any question that you may feel will compromise you.

Confidentiality is guaranteed to you. Whatever you are going to share with me will remain between us. I am also asking for permission to record our interviews. You again have the right to agree or not to agree about the recording of the interviews. No name will be mentioned in the whole interview process; therefore, your name will not be mentioned in the recording. You are free to say it if you want the tape recorder to be switched off at any point during the interviews. The interview will not be longer than an hour, and you are humbly requested to be as open and honest as possible in answering the questions.

Yours faithfully

...*Makuya R.V*..

MAKUYA R.V.   (RESEARCHER)

APPENDIX J: UNIVERSITY ETHICAL LETTER

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:

Mr RV Makuya

STUDENT NO:
11604428

PROJECT TITLE: **Challenges of learners from child-headed families that affect their educational goals: A case study of three schools in Johannesburg east district, Gauteng province, South Africa.**

ETHICAL CLEARENCE NO: SEDU/20/CSEM/29/2202

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof T Runhare	University of Venda	Supervisor
Dr SK Muthambi	University of Venda	Co - Supervisor
Mr RV Makuya	University of Venda	Investigator – Student

Type: **Masters Research**
Risk: **Risk to humans, animals, environment, or a sensitive research area**
Approval Period: **February 2021 – February 2023**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following.

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
  - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
  - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
  - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
  - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
  - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
  - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
  - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
  - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary
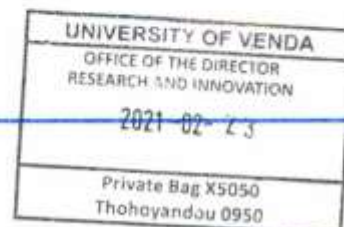
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UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: February 2021

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof Takalani Mashau
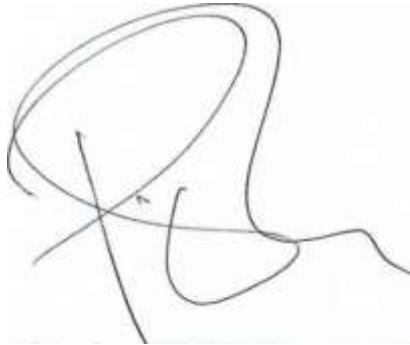
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RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
2021-02-23
Private Bag X5050
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APPENDIX K: EDITOR'S LETTER

PROOF OF EDITING

10 March, 2022

This is to certify that I, Dr P Kaburise, of the English Department, University of Venda, have proofread the dissertation titled - **CHALLENGES OF LEARNERS FROM CHILDHEADED FAMILIES THAT AFFECT THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN JOHANNESBURG EAST DISTRICT, GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA** - by Makuya Rudzani Vanrijn (student number: 11604428). I have indicated some amendments which the student has undertaken to effect before the final dissertation is submitted.

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