

**ASSESSMENT OF LEARNER SUPPORT AGENT ON SELF-CONCEPT AND
ACADEMIC LEARNER PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOLS IN GERT SIBANDE
DISTRICT OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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DECLARATION

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... is my own work and has not been submitted for another degree or diploma at this university or another institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is provided.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the following members of my family for their continued support, encouragement, motivation and understanding throughout the period of my study.

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“To me they are/were source of inspiration. Without them, I am nothing.”

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. For quantitative strands, the sample comprised 80 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners randomly selected from 8 schools. Two groups were formed, one experimental and one control. Each group consisted of 20 male learners and 20 female learners. For the experimental group, participants were drawn from schools which implemented the LSA programme. For the control group, participants were selected from non-LSA programme implementing schools. A multidimensional self-concept scale and academic school records were used to collect data for quantitative strand, measurement of learners' self-concept and academic performance. Quantitative data on self-concept and academic performance of both groups were subjected to multiple linear regression modelling and independent sample t-tests for analysis. There were no significant differences between the experimental group and the control group on the self-concept dimensions, namely, self-regard, social confidence, academic self-concept, physical appearance and physical abilities. In Mathematics, the experimental group (mean 41.35, SD 23.83) outperformed the control group (mean 31.73, SD 14.03). For the qualitative strand, the sample consisted of 10 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners who were purposively selected from four schools which implemented the LSA programme. In addition, one educator per school was selected due to their roles as co-ordinators. The main findings were that the LSA programme had a positive impact on self-confidence, attitudes towards schoolwork, and academic performance of participating OVC learners. However, the study revealed that the LSA programme implementation had inadequate resource provision, inconsistent participation by some OVC who were targeted beneficiaries, unexpected disruption of learning during Covid-19 pandemic, time constraint, and inconsistent guardian/parental support. To mitigate these challenges, the study recommends the training of duty bearers in the LSA programme, focus and regular involvement of guardians of learners who are orphans and vulnerable (OVC) and for LSAs to carry out awareness campaigns on the objectives, activities and expected benefits of the LSA programme in schools.

Key words: Academic achievement, Learner Support Agent Programme, Psychosocial intervention, Self-concept, Vulnerable Children

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AMPATH	:	Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare
ART	:	Antiretroviral Treatment
BYI	:	Beck Youth Inventories
CBOs	:	Community Based Organizations
CDG	:	Care Dependency Grant
CHH	:	Child-Headed Household
CINDI	:	Children in Distress
CRC	:	Convention on the Rights of Children
CSI	:	Child Status Index
CSTL	:	Care and Support for Teaching and Learning
DBE	:	Department of Basic Education
DHS	:	Demographic and Health Survey
DoH	:	Department of Health
DSD	:	Department of Social Development
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
EFA	:	Education for All
EFL	:	Education for Life
FBOs	:	Faith Based Organizations
FCG	:	Foster Care Grant
FHI	:	Family Health International
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAP	:	Integrated AIDS Program
JFS	:	Janis-Field Feelings of inadequacy
LSA	:	Learner Support Agent
MAD	:	Make A Difference
MDGs	:	Millennium Developmental Goals
MDoE	:	Mpumalanga Department of Education
MMR	:	Mixed Methods Research

MSCM	:	Multidimensional Self-Concept Model
MSCS	:	Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale
MUAC	:	Middle Upper Arm Circumference
NGOs	:	Non-governmental Organizations
NSNP	:	National School Nutrition Programme
OVC	:	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PEPFAR	:	Presidential Emergency Program for Aid Relief
PLWHA	:	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PMTCT	:	Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission
SADC	:	Southern African Development Communities
SBST	:	School Based Support Team
SDQ	:	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
SIPP	:	Survey of Income and Program Participation
STI	:	Sexual Transmitted Infection
TB	:	Tuberculosis
TIMSS	:	Trend in International Mathematics and Science Study
UN Women	:	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	:	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV & AIDS
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Fund
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	:	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS	:	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNHCR	:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	:	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WEF	:	World Education Forum

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Mueller, Alie, Jonas, Brown and Sherr (2011:57) note that the psychological health of HIV-infected and affected children in Southern Africa is high on the research agenda, yet evidence is relatively scarce on the psychological health of orphaned and vulnerable children. Mueller et al. (2011:57) argue that the need for psychosocial interventions for OVC is widely acknowledged and community-based programmes in Southern Africa are mushrooming, yet little is known about the content of such interventions and what impact they are having on child psychosocial health. Furthermore, Mueller et al. (2011:57) state that empirical evidence is needed to inform the development of psychosocial intervention programme for OVC. The current study assesses the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of OVC from selected rural schools in Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

This chapter provides an overview of the study by discussing the background to the study and outlining the statement of the problem, aim, objectives, research questions, research hypothesis and null hypothesis. The chapter also discusses the study's theoretical framework and literature review. It also provides definitions of relevant concepts and outlines research design and methodology. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the significance of the study and delimitation thereof. Lastly, the chapter highlights ethical considerations and provides the study's chapter outline.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The high prevalence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in the Mpumalanga Province in the past decade has contributed to high mortality among adults and children. According to the Republic of South Africa's Department of Health (2012:15-16), the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in

Mpumalanga Province in 2011 was the second highest at 36, 7% and Gert Sibande District in the same province had 46, 1% prevalence rate; the highest in the country.

It is very difficult to come up with the exact figures regarding HIV mortality because death related to HIV/AIDS is under reported. However, Mba (2007:201), argues that a large proportion of death rates is attributed to the AIDS epidemic. Statistics South Africa (2016:6) states that the number of deaths due to AIDS-related causes in comparison to all deaths in South Africa is estimated as follows; year 2010, 183 465 (34.0%); year 2011, 200 654 (36.1%); year 2012, 19 7090 (35.5%); year 2013, 177 624 (32.9%); year 2014, 151 040 (29.2%); year 2015, 162 445 (30.5%). Record keeping standard in 2002 and the highest number of deaths was in 2005 which stood at 345 607 (50.7%).

The high number of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) has increased because of this high death rate. Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38) state due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic there are millions of orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa. Berry and Malek (2017:53) state that these children have been left in the care of relatives such as grandmothers and aunts who are overwhelmed by their responsibilities. Similarly, Mba (2007:201) notes that Africa is currently home to 70% of the world's AIDS orphan, consequently grand parenting has reached catastrophic levels. Furthermore, this has led to child-headed families or Child Headed Households (CHH).

Vulnerability is brought by orphanhood, child-headed household, poor income household and children who stay with chronic sick parents/grandparents. A child who has lost only a mother is referred to as a maternal orphan and a child who has lost only a father is a paternal orphan. A child who has lost both parents is a double orphan. Hall and Sambu (2017:102) observe: "In 2015, there were 3, 1 million orphans in South Africa. This includes children without a living biological mother, father or both parents, and is equivalent to 17% of all children in South Africa". In 2015, the following figures were recorded for Mpumalanga Province, double orphan 63 000 (4.1%), maternal orphan 54 000 (3.5%), paternal orphan 155 000 (10.0%), children living in child-headed households 7 000 (0.4%), children living in income poverty households

990 00 while children living in households without employed adults were 462 000 (Hall & Sambu, 2017:102-107).

Orphans and vulnerable children are faced with many challenges. Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38) argue that compared to non-orphan, orphaned students are more likely to be malnourished, more likely to drop out of school and have limited access to health services and are prone to exploitation. These challenges create emotional stress making it difficult for pupils to concentrate and learn in the classroom due to trauma. Mwoma and Pillay (2016:88-89) found that OVC struggled with reading and writing, lack of concentration, submitting schoolwork late and not doing their homework. Furthermore, low self-esteem, absenteeism and lateness were other challenges that negatively influenced OVC's academic performance. Nayak (2014:13) indicates that poor health status, poor academic performance, food shortage, child delinquents, child begging, dependency syndrome, school dropout and street children as challenges faced by OVC. Orphans and vulnerable children from Mpumalanga Province face similar problems.

Another challenge relates to Mathematics performance although this is not unique to orphans and vulnerable children. Bemstein (2013:4) reports that South African Grade 9 learners who wrote the Trend in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2011 came last out of 42 countries which took part on the test. In response to this poor academic performance and school dropout, the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE) introduced an intervention programme called Learner Support Agent Programme in 2015.

The programme supports orphans and vulnerable children to gain skills, knowledge and confidence in order to improve academic performance and stay at school until they complete Grade 12 (MDoE, 2015:1). A Learner Support Agent (LSA) is employed by the MDoE on a twenty-four-months contractual basis to work on the Learner Support Agent Programme. The minimum requirement for the LSA is Grade 12 certificate and a candidate has to be between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The LSA can be hosted by the primary school or secondary school. The MDoE (2015:3) states that the LSA will in no way replace the teacher, since his or her responsibility is to support teaching and learning.

One of the duties of the LSA is to conduct home visits when there is irregular attendance, regular late coming and absenteeism of a learner. After conducting a home visit, the LSA is expected to give a report to a school-based coordinator (Teacher), who will then present it to the School Based Support Team (SBST) for intervention (MDoE, 2015:4). The LSA is also expected to academically support orphans and vulnerable learners by assisting with the writing of homework and facilitating study groups (MDoE, 2015:4). Furthermore, the LSA is expected to support advocacy campaigns organized by the school such as STI awareness, Human Rights celebration, and such like activities. The LSA is expected to keep records of all the activities conducted in the school and write monthly reports and submit them to the District Based Life Co-Ordinator (MDoE, 2015:5).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Being an orphan or vulnerable learner comes with its own challenges. According to Baldo-Sangian (2015:384), an orphaned child's self-concept and academic performance are the first areas that are negatively affected by the child's unfortunate situation. If these vulnerable learners are not given psychosocial support, chances are that these learners may drop out of school. Thus Oyedele et al., (2016:38) argue that motivation is the drive of learning and in the case of orphans, since they lack basic needs such as love from parents, good shelter, food and clothes, then they will be less motivated to perform well in class.

In response to the challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable learners in schools, the Mpumalanga Department of Education introduced the Learner Support Agent Programme in 2015 to support orphans and vulnerable learners in selected schools. This response is in line with DBE (2017:12) which states that a package of pro-poor will be implemented to mitigate the impact of HIV, STIs and TB as well as any associated vulnerability. According to the MDoE (2015:1), LSAs will support vulnerable learners to gain skills, knowledge and self-confidence to stay at school until they matriculate. Thus, the LSA programme entails the provision of psychosocial support to orphans and vulnerable learners. DBE (2020:7) argues that psychosocial support plays a significant role in learner enrollment and retention, as well as in improving learner participation, thus contributing to optimal achievement. However, since its

introduction over five years ago, there has been no formal assessment of the impact of LSA programme as an intervention strategy on the self-concept and academic performance of vulnerable learners.

1.3.1 Aim of the Study

The study assessed the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme as an intervention strategy on self-concept and academic performance of the vulnerable learners from Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of the study were:

- a) To assess whether the LSA programme has an impact on self-concept of OVC.
- b) To assess whether the LSA programme has an impact on Mathematics performance of OVC.
- c) To explore the challenges in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools in Gert Sibande District, Mpumalanga Province.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

- a) Is there a significant difference on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and those who do not? Self-concept for the study has five dimensions, hence five sub-questions were formulated:
 - Is there a significant different on self-regard of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate?
 - Is there a significant different on social confidence of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate?
 - Is there a significant different on academic self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate?

- Is there a significant difference on physical appearance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate?
 - Is there a significant difference on physical abilities of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate?
- b) Is there a significant difference in Mathematics performance between orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme versus those who do not participate?
- c) What are the challenges encountered by teachers and OVC in the implementation of the LSA Programme in Gert Sibande District?

1.4.1 The Research Hypothesis

- a) There is a significant difference on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme as compared to those who do not participate.

Sub-hypotheses:

- There is a significant difference on self-regard of orphans and vulnerable learners on the LSA programme as compared to orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate.
- There is a significant difference on social confidence of orphans and vulnerable learners on the LSA programme as compared to orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate.
- There is a significant difference on academic self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners on the LSA programme as compared to orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate.
- There is a significant difference on physical appearance of orphans and vulnerable learners on the LSA programme as compared to orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate.
- There is a significant difference on physical abilities of orphans and vulnerable learners on the LSA programme as compared to orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate.

- b) There is a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme versus those who do not participate.

1.4.2 The Null Hypothesis

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in LSA Programme compared to orphans and vulnerable learners who do not participate in the LSA programme.

Sub-null hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference in the self-regard of orphans and vulnerable learners compared to those who do not participate.
- There is no significant difference in social confidence of orphans and vulnerable learners compared to those who do not participate.
- There is no significant difference in academic self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners compared to those who do not.
- There is no significant difference in physical appearance of orphans and vulnerable learners compared to those who do not.
- There is no significant difference in physical abilities of orphans and vulnerable learners compared to those who do not.

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in LSA Programme compared to those who do not participate.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In line with the Maslow's theory of motivation, all children want to be academically successful regardless of their background. Thus, the theoretical framework of this study is underpinned by Maslow's theory of motivation. Maslow's theory of motivation can be divided into four perspectives, namely, the view of the person underlying the theory, principles underlying the theory or assumptions, hierarchy of needs, and its application in the education context.

1.5.1 Maslow's Theory of Motivation

Abraham Maslow is a renowned proponent of humanistic approach and Heylighen (1992:39) argues that what distinguishes his work from that of other humanists is that he proposes a model of how a happy, healthy, well-functioning person behaves based on concrete observations of real people, rather than on formulating ideal requirements. Heylighen (1992:40) claims that Maslow proposes a simple, and intuitively appealing theory of motivation, which explains where such concepts as a “self-actualizing” personality comes from.

Maslow's theory of motivation forms the basis of his personality theory. Heylighen (1992:40) notes that Maslow's theory of personality is based on a theory of human motivation, characterised by a hierarchy of needs, a description of a particular type of maximally healthy personality, called “self-actualizing”, which is supposed to emerge when these needs are satisfied.

1.5.2 The View of the Person Underlying the Theory

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338) note that Maslow holds the view that the tendency towards self-actualization is the motive that underlies all behaviours. While Maddi (1989:103) notes that the self-actualization tendency is the organism's push to become what its inherent potentialities suit it to be and that these potentialities aim towards the maintenance and enhancement of life. Zimbardo (1992:525) argues that this innate striving towards self-fulfillment and realization of one's unique potential is a constructive, guiding force that moves each person towards generally positive behaviours and enhancement of the self. The individual's goal is to realize his or her true potential.

Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338), point out that Maslow believes that much human behaviour can be explained in terms of need gratification and that Maslow presents the human as a “yearning being” who is seldom satisfied, because no sooner is one need gratified than another surface. Furthermore, Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338) argue that need gratification is not merely a means of relieving tension and frustration, it is also the basis for growth and realization of an individual's full potential

through self-actualization. Viljoen and Meyer (338) further state that Maslow's view of the person is a holistic one, an integrated whole and cannot be studied piecemeal. Zimbardo (1992:525) concurs saying that Maslow does not see people as the sum of discrete traits that each influences behaviour in different ways.

1.5.3 Principles Underlying Maslow's Motivation Theory

Feist (1985:377) states that the basis of Maslow's theory of personality rests on his theory of motivation. Heylighen (1992:40-41) says that Maslow views that human behaviour is motivated by a set of basic needs and that the highest need is the need for self-actualization. Zimbardo (1992:525) states that self-actualization is a constant striving to realize one's potential to fully develop one's capacities and talents.

Heylighen (1992:40) states that the manner in which the needs drive behaviour depends on two principles, namely, a need which is satisfied is no longer active (the exception to this rule is the need for self-actualization). According to Heylighen, needs can be ordered in a hierarchical order, such that from all the non-satisfied needs, the one which is the lowest in the hierarchy will be the most active.

1.5.4 The Hierarchy of Needs

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:339) note that Maslow postulates that the fact that needs are arranged in a hierarchy means that the person's development progresses through successive stages of needs gratification towards the goal of self-actualization. The lower the need to the hierarchy, the more urgent it is, which means that lower needs must be gratified before needs at higher level manifest themselves. Therefore, Cloninger (1996:436) argues that as people mature and as their lower-order needs are satisfied, they develop more uniquely human motivations. Furthermore, Cloninger (1996:486) notes that motivation changes as we progress upward through a hierarchy of needs, or motives.

Schultz and Schultz (2001:302) note that Maslow proposed a hierarchy of five innate needs that activate and direct human behavior. According to Cloninger (1996:436),

the five innate needs consist of four levels of deficiency motivation and a final, highly developed level called being motivated or self-actualization.

1.5.4.1 Physiological needs

Cloninger (1996:437), Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:340) note that at the lowest level of the need hierarchy are physiological needs, - the need for food, water, sleep, oxygen, activity and sensory stimulation are examples. Physiological needs are the most basic needs and if they are not gratified regularly, they dominate all other needs. Cloninger (1996:437) states that in Maslow's terminology, needs that are dominant at a particular time are called prepotent.

In relation to the physiological needs of all children, schools must provide shelter and food in the form of classroom and National School Nutrition Programme respectively. Schools should also provide running water. The Department of Basic Education (2013:14) instructs that all schools should have sufficient water supply for personal hygiene and where appropriate, for food preparation and that schools should have sufficient sanitation facilities, that are easily accessible to all learners and educators, provide privacy and security, promote hygiene standards, comply with all relevant laws and should be maintained in good working order. The Department of Basic Education (2013:17) also recommends that all schools should have areas where physical education, sporting and recreation activities can be practised.

1.5.4.2 Safety needs

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:341) observe that when a person is reasonably sure that his or her physiological needs will be satisfied regularly, physiological needs lose their urgency. A sense of urgency is transferred to the next level, that is, safety needs. According to Cloninger (1996:437), at this level, the person's predominant motivation is to ensure a safe situation.

In relation to safety needs, the Department of Basic Education (2013:18) states that every school site, which includes all school buildings and sporting and recreation facilities, must be surrounded by appropriate fencing to a minimum height of at least 1.8 meters. The Department of Basic Education also recommends that school buildings must have at least one form of safety and security measure, such as the following: burglar proofing to all opening windows sections on all ground floor buildings

that are accessed by learners and educators; a security guard arrangement; or an alarm system linked to a rapid armed response, where available. The Department of Basic Education (2013:18) also directs that school buildings and other school facilities must comply with fire regulations in terms of National Building Regulations.

1.5.4.3 Sense of belonging and the need for love

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:341) note that once the physiological and safety needs are regularly satisfied, a person becomes aware of his or her need to belong somewhere and to belong with someone; to receive and give love. Cloninger (1996:437) concurs that the need for love and belongingness become prepotent when primary needs have been satisfied. When a child enrolls at a school, he/she is allocated a class register teacher and a class. As a child interacts with other children, he/she develops friendship and a sense of belonging. Within the class, the child will develop very close friendships with some of the children. In this way, the need for belonging is met.

The child needs care and support when he or she gets sick. However, orphans and vulnerable children might not have someone to take care and support them. OVC who are part of Learner Support Agent Programme have someone to visit them and be offered social and spiritual support (MDoE, 2015:5). Such support shows the OVC that there is someone who cares for them, and this makes them develop a sense of belonging and being loved.

1.5.4.4 The need for self-esteem

Schultz and Schultz (2001:306) note that once we feel loved and have a sense of belonging, they may find themselves driven by two forms of need for self-esteem and that people require esteem and respect from in the form of feelings of self-worth, and want status, recognition or social success. Cloninger (1996:438) notes that Maslow believed that esteem should be “stable and firmly based” and result from our actual abilities and achievement. Cloninger argues that achievement striving is the manifestation of the esteem needs since society honours those who achieve. Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:342) argue that when the needs for self-esteem have been satisfied, people feel confident, competent, strong, useful, and needed in their world.

When these needs are not met, people develop feeling of inferiority, weakness and helplessness.

The need for self-esteem is of great significance for this study. Through the support provided by the Learner Support Agent, the OVC are hopeful to gain skills, knowledge and confidence to stay at school until they complete Grade 12 (MDoE, 2015:1). Through Learner Support Agent Programme, OVC receive homework assistance and group study. The support provided to OVC should improve academic performance of these learners and is hoped that their improved academic performance would boost their self-esteem. In turn, improved self-esteem would motivate OVC to work harder. Wade and Tavis (1983:421) argue that individuals with high self-esteem are motivated to enhance their public image and are above average, whereas individuals with low self-esteem are primarily concerned about protecting their image and avoiding failure.

1.5.4.5 The need for self-actualization

Schultz and Schultz (2001:306) observe that the highest need in Maslow's hierarchy, self-actualization, depends on the maximum realization and fulfilment of people's potentials, talents, and abilities. Cloninger (1996:438) argues that at this highest stage, the person is no longer motivated by physiological needs, safety needs, need for belonging and love, and need for self-esteem but rather by the need to "realize" or fulfil his or her potential. Schultz and Schultz (2001:306) state that the self-actualizing process may take many forms, but each person, regardless of occupation or interest, can maximize personal abilities and reaching the fullest personality development.

It is a dream and wish of every child to be successful in life irrespective of the family background. The Learner Support Agent Programme is meant to support orphans and vulnerable children to realize their dreams and wishes, and fulfil their potentials, talents and abilities. Thus, the Learner Support Agent Programme is very important for orphans and vulnerable children.

1.5.5 Maslow's Motivation Theory in the Education Context

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:354) argue that for Maslow, education conveys not just knowledge but “internal education”. Through internal education, individuals achieve self-knowledge, discover their potentials, to find out how they wish to grow, and to achieve their goals (Moore, Viljoen & Meyer, 2017:354). Moore, Viljoen and Meyer further note that according to Maslow, the objective of education is for children to discover themselves and realize what their interests are.

The Learner Support Agent Intervention Programme provides support to vulnerable learners to gain skills, knowledge and confidence to stay at school until they complete Grade 12 (MDoE, 2015:1). Most children want to succeed in whatever they do, and this includes self-actualization, which is the highest in the hierarchy of needs. In relation to the need for self-esteem, two categories have been identified. The first one is a set of needs based on a person's achievement which according to Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:342) this related to a sense of efficiency, capability, achievement, confidence, personal strength and independence. The Second category is a set of needs related to esteem of others to recognise and appreciate their competence. Through the LSA Programme, the vulnerable learners can be supported to achieve better academic performance. This will give them a sense of efficiency, competence, confidence, personal strength and independence. In the long run, others will recognise and appreciate their competence.

Although they are not catered for in the LSA Programme, the first three levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs are also of great importance in motivation. These three levels of needs must be satisfied before the last two levels are met. Hence, the MDoE (2015:1) notes that out of school support will assist learners to access health and social services to keep them in school. However, the Learner Support Agent Programme cannot work in isolation to satisfy the diverse needs of orphans and vulnerable children.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examined the prevalence of orphans and vulnerable children and the challenges associated with this vulnerability. This section reviews literature on the

prevalence of orphans and vulnerable children at global perspective, followed by regional, the sub-Saharan region and lastly, the South African perspective. Furthermore, the literature review also discusses studies pertaining the relationship between self-concept and academic performance. In addition, the section also examines the impact of vulnerability on self-concept and learning. Lastly, the review discusses the intervention programmes put in place to address the challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable children.

1.6.1 Background to Vulnerable Children

Kiragu and Chepcheng (2013:735-736) state that pupils are negatively affected when their parents die from HIV/AIDS related illnesses because they are left with no one to provide for their basic needs. As a result, some may drop out of school because orphanhood is one of the major factors that contribute to vulnerability. There are three categories of orphans, namely, maternal orphans; paternal orphans and double orphans. Various authors that indicate that where there is a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, there is also a high death rate (Bakir, 2018:7; Kavak, 2014:7; Smart, 2003:7; UNICEF & UNAIDS, 2006:3; Fleming, 2015:9-11). These places also have a high number of orphans.

Nayak (2014:9) states that HIV/AIDS contributes to the high number of orphans in community due to the death of parents. Several authors point out that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is leaving a population with millions of orphans and vulnerable children and most of these orphans live in sub-Saharan Africa (Fleming, 2015:4; Nayak, 2014:9; Oyedele, Chikwature & Manyange, 2016:38; Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, Write & Hoffman, 2010:10). Granted, not all orphans and vulnerable children are due to HIV/AIDS.

Environmental factors leading to vulnerability include severe chronic illness of a parent or caregiver, poverty, hunger, lack of access to services, inadequate clothing, or shelter, overcrowding, deficient caretakers, and factors specific to the child, include disability, direct experience of physical or sexual violence or severe chronic illness (Skinner, Tseko, Mtero-Munyati, Segwabe, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Chondiwana, Nkomo, Tlou & Chitiyo, 2006:619). It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of

factors leading to vulnerability as one sector differs from one another in terms of factors considered for vulnerability. Fleming (2015:7) states that the multiple definitions for orphans and vulnerable children range from very narrow to all-encompassing and broadly applied. This means that children who are counted and served vary based on the definition for a particular context.

Having realised the importance of considering these additional factors for care and support, the operational term “Orphan and Vulnerable Children” (OVC) has been coined to aid program targeting. The exclusive focus on orphanhood as a principal criterion for distribution of resources has been criticised as inefficient and inequitable because orphanhood represents only a single aspect of children’s multi-dimensional vulnerability. Orphans and vulnerable children are classified into categories based on the factors of vulnerability (Fleming, 2015:4). Boler and Carroll (2003:1) states that the term OVC has been coined in light of the high number of children affected by the AIDS epidemic.

1.6.2 Status of Orphan and Vulnerable Children in the World

UNICEF and UNAIDS (2004:7) define an orphan is a child under 18 years of age whose mother, father or both parents have died from any cause. A child who has lost one parent is regarded as a single orphan while a child who has lost both parents as a double orphan. A single orphan is also referred as to as a maternal orphan if he/she has lost a mother. On the other hand, a single orphan is also referred to as a paternal orphan if he/she has lost a father.

Mishra and Van Assche (2008:11) define vulnerable children as a population of children made vulnerable by the AIDS epidemic and whose survival, well-being, or development is threatened by HIV/AIDS. Sometimes these children may live with chronically ill parents and thus be required to work or put their education on hold as they take on household and caregiving responsibilities. These children may also be in poverty because of disease. They may be at high risk of being infected by HIV or being subjected to stigma and discrimination due to their association with a person living with HIV.

There are several factors that contribute to an increase in the number of orphans and vulnerable children. Bakir (2018:10) says wars, invasions, and conflicts are all crises which lead to an increase in the number of orphans. Furthermore, Bakir (7) notes that there is an increase in children who lose parents in conflicts ravaging the globe, from the Middle East to Asia and Africa. Bakir (10) states that natural disasters also leave behind many orphans and points out that the Tsunami that hit South Asia, the earthquakes in Haiti and Pakistan, and the drought in East Africa, left millions of children orphans. Bakir ((7) states that the global number of registered orphans has reached 153 million although unofficial sources suggest a figure of more than 400 million. Smart (2003:7) observe that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is producing orphans on an unrivalled scale and also notes that historically, large scale orphaning has been sporadic, short-term problems associated with wars, famine, or disease. On the other hand, Smart (2003:7) claims that orphaning caused by HIV/AIDS will be a long-term, chronic problem, affecting developing countries throughout the world.

1.6.3 Status of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Different Regions

Bakir (2018:11) indicates that Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East lead the list of the places where millions of children are rendered orphans due to chronic poverty, wars, or invasions. Bakir (11) states that there are 61 million orphans in Asia, 52 million in Africa, 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

These orphan children are left vulnerable, exposed and defenseless in the face of any kind of abuse. Human trafficking, child soldiers, child labour, organ mafia, prostitution and beggar rings are but a few of hazards faced by orphans. Bakir (2018:11) states between 1987 and 2007, 1 million children were kidnapped by organ mafia and that each year, millions of women and children are forced into displacement by human traffickers. Bakir states that these people are forced to perform hard labour like slaves. Bakir (2018:11) observe that such practices affect children who have already had to cope with pain of losing their parents and increases the material and psychological hardships they experience. UNICEF and UNAIDS (2006:3) indicate that AIDS is a leading cause for death among adults ages 15-59 in sub-Saharan Africa, as a result, an estimated 12 million children ages 0 and 17 have lost either one or both

parents. Since 1990, the number of orphans from all cause in Asia, Latin America and Caribbean has been decreasing, while the number of orphans has risen by more than 50% in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF & UNAIDS, 2006:3). Orphans account for 6% of all children in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, while in sub-Saharan Africa orphans account for 12% of all the children (UNICEF & UNAIDS, 2006:3). Mishra and Van Assche (2008:1) state that more than four-fifths of all children orphaned by HIV/AIDS worldwide live in Sub-Saharan Africa, where every eighth child is an orphan, that is, has lost one or both parents. Kavak (2014:7) concurs that most the world's orphan population lives in underdeveloped or developing countries.

Table 1 below shows the distribution of the estimated number of orphans across the regions of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of orphans because of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is the highest in the region.

Table 1.1: Distribution of the Estimated Number of Orphans Across the Regions

NUMBER OF ORPHANS IN THE WORLD		
Region	Children Orphaned Due to AIDS (2012 Estimates)	Orphan Children (2012 Estimates)
Sub-Saharan Africa	15 100 000	56 900 000
East and South Africa	10 600 000	27 900 000
West and Central Africa	4 400 000	28 100 000
Middle East & North Africa	100 000	5 500 000
South Asia	610 000	40 800 000
East Asia & Pacific	780 000	26 900 000
South America & Caribbean	830 000	7 800 000
Central & East European/Commonwealth Countries	260 000	6 200 000
Underdeveloped Countries	7 600 000	42 900 000
World*	17 800 000	150 000 000

Source: Kavak (2014:7)

The consequences of losing a parent or both parents are huge and varied. Smart (2003:8) states that with the death of a parent, children experience profound loss, grief, anxiety, fear, and hopelessness with long-term consequences such as psychosomatic disorders, chronic depression, low self-esteem, learning disabilities, and disturbed social behaviour. These children are at risk of losing school opportunities, health care, growth, development, nutrition, and shelter (Smart, 2003:7-8). Therefore, the impact of being orphans or vulnerable children affect the children for life if no intervention programs are provided to mitigate the impact.

1.6.4 Status of Orphans in South Africa

There were 2.8 million orphans in South Africa in 2017 (Hall & Sambu, 2018:134). This constitutes 14% of all children living in the country. Hall and Sambu (2018:134) define the total number of orphans as the sum of maternal, paternal, and double orphans. The breakdown of the 2.8 million is as follows; paternal orphans 1 728 000 (9%), maternal orphans 530 000 (3%), and double orphans 505 000 (2%) (Hall and Sambu, 2018:134).

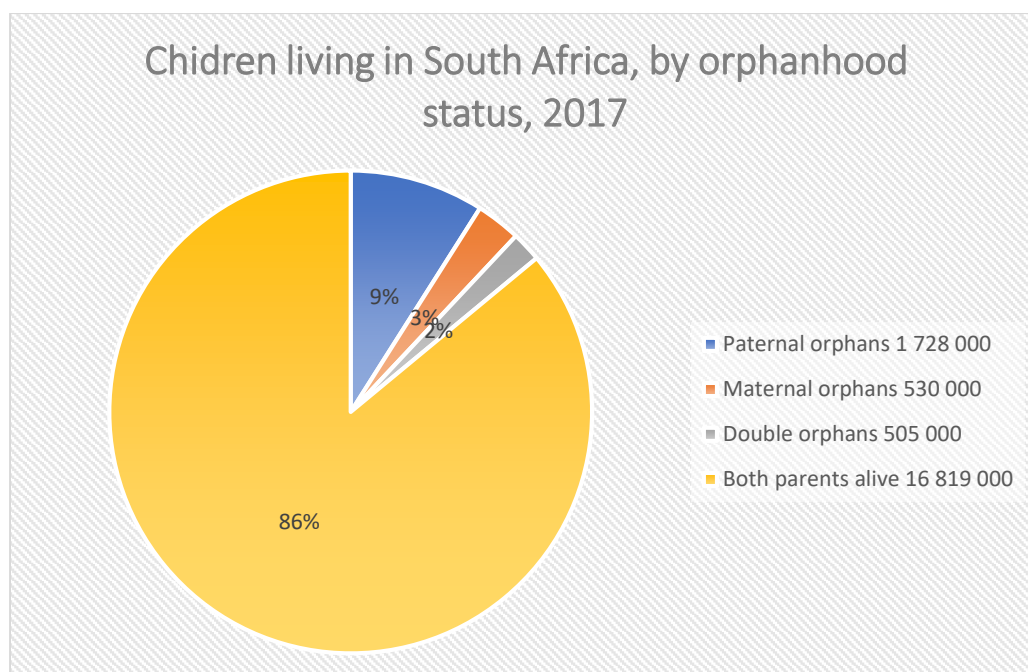


Figure 1.1: Children Living in South Africa, by Orphanhood Status, 2017

Source: Hall and Sambu (2018:134)

Hall and Sambu (2018:134) note that orphaning rates are particularly high in provinces that contain former homelands. This phenomenon is observed in Table 2 below:

Table 1.2: Number and Percentage of Orphans, by Province, 2017

Province	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC
Double orphan	3.9% 100 000	3.4% 35 000	2.1% 88 000	3.1% 129 000	1.9% 46 000	3.2% 53 000	2.3% 31 000	2.1% 9 000	0.7% 14 000
Maternal orphan	3.7% 93 000	3.1% 31 000	2.1% 88.000	3.2% 134 000	1.9% 44 000	3.4% 57 000	2.5% 34 000	3.7% 16 000	1.7% 33 000
Paternal orphan	10.4% 265.000	11.5% 116 000	6.8% 279 000	11.0% 456 000	8.4% 199 000	9.9% 164 000	9.7% 131 000	7.5% 32 000	4.4% 86 000

Source: Hall and Sambu (2018:134)

1.6.5 Children Living in Child-only Households

Hall and Sambu (2018:135) define a child-only household as a household in which all the members are younger than 18 years. These households are known as child-headed households. There were about 58 000 children staying in a total of 32 000 child-headed households across South Africa in 2017 (Hall & Sambu, 2018:135). This constituted 0.3% of all children who were living in South Africa in 2017 (Hall & Sambu, 2018:136). Hall and Sambu (2018:136) further note that child-headed households were concentrated in the poorest of households. Child-only households are particularly high in provinces that contain former homelands. This phenomenon is observed in Table 1.3 below:

Table 1.3: Children Staying in Child-headed Households, by Province, 2017

Province	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC
Children living in CHH	0.6% 15 000	0.3% 3 000	0.1% 2 000	0.2% 9 000	0.6 15 000	0.5% 8 000	0.3% 3 000	0.4% 2 000	0.0% 0

Source: Hall and Sambu, (2018:135)

1.6.6 Relationship Between Self-concept and Academic Performance

Sanchez and Sanchez Roda (2003:96) indicate that there is a close relationship between academic self-concept and measures of academic performance. Sanchez and Roda also argue that total self-concept and academic self-concept are good predictors of general performance. Arefi and Naghebzadeh (2014:3225) concur that academic self-concept positively and significantly correlates with students' academic motivation and academic achievement, but no correlation between academic motivation and academic achievement has been shown. Ghazvini (2011:1034) also established that there is a close relationship between self-concept and measures of academic performance. Ghazvini (2011:1034) also claims that academic performance powerfully and positively predicts general performance in literature and Mathematics.

1.6.7 Impact of Vulnerability on Self-concept and Learning

The above three studies demonstrated the relationship between self-concept and academic performance. Therefore, self-concept affects academic performance and vice versa. Skinner et al. (2006:619) state: "The loss of a parent through death or desertion is an important aspect of vulnerability". Baldo-Sangian (2015:384) also notes that trauma from the death of parents and the loss of parental guidance and support may lead to a child poorly performing in school and in turn, affecting the decision to attend school. Baldo-Sangian (2015:384) adds that orphans are likely to repeat a grade level in school because they have experienced a parental death and its consequences.

Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38) argue that compared to non-orphans, orphaned students are likely to be malnourished, likely to drop out of school and have limited access to health social services and are prone to exploitation. As a result, these challenges create emotional stress making it difficult for pupils to concentrate and learn in the classroom. Baldo-Sangian (2015:386) states that most orphans miss their parents who would have provided them with nurturance, guidance and care particularly in doing their assignments, projects and homework. Furthermore, Baldo-Sangian (2015:386) points out that the first area to be affected when a child is

orphaned is his or her self-concept and academic performance. Mwoma and Pillay (2016:88) and Erango and Ayka (2015:6) add that low self-esteem among OVC contributes to their poor educational outcomes. Kiragu and Chepchieng (2015:741) discovered that HIV/AIDS orphanhood affects the self-esteem levels of primary school pupils in Nyeri South Sub-County in Kenya. Kiragu and Chepchieng also note that HIV/AIDS orphanhood affects the academic performance of the primary school pupils.

1.6.8 Intervention Programmes to Support Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Stover, Bollinger, Walker and Monasch (2007:22), state that children need various type of support ranging from those necessary for survival, such as food and health care, to those interventions that will provide a better quality of life in the future such as education, psychological support and economic self-sufficiency. This is in line with Maslow's theory of motivation. Mueller, Alie, Jonas, Brown and Sherr (2011:57) concur noting that the need for psychological intervention for OVC is widely acknowledged and that community-based programmes are mushrooming in Southern Africa.

Similarly, Bojer, Lamont, Janitsch and Dlamini (2007:8) note that orphans and vulnerable children are a concern that cuts across sectors and are a societal responsibility. Bojer et al. (2007:5) recommend that government, civil society, business, communities, individuals, media, academics, faith-based groups, and children themselves should be involved in alleviating the problems of orphans and vulnerable children.

Children spend most of their time at school, therefore, schools should become centres of care and support for orphans and vulnerable children. Thus, Mahlase and Ntombela (2011:195) argue that the education system should be responsive to the learning needs of all children, and foster links with other departments to ensure that all services necessary to support children's learning and development are readily available. Several policies, strategies and programmes have been developed by government to take care and support OVC. Examples are: No Fee Policy; National School Nutrition Programme; National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for learners, Educators, School Support Staff and Officials in all Primary and Secondary Schools in the Basic

Education Sector of 2017; South Africa's National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs 2017-2022 and Integrated School Health Policy 2012.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1 Academic Achievement

Kumari and Chamundeswari (2013:106) says that academic achievement is the amount of knowledge derived from learning that a child gains knowledge by instructions he/she receives at school. These instructions are organized around a set of core activities in which a teacher assigns tasks to pupils and evaluates and compares the quality of their work.

On the other hand, Arefi and Naghebzadeh (2014:3227) state that academic achievement refers to performance in the form of a numerical score as obtained by students in final examination.

This study defines academic achievement as the amount of knowledge derived from learning, assessed and expressed in percentage quarterly and annually to show the progress of a learner.

1.7.2 Learner Support Agent (LSA) Programme

Lee (2003:182) observe that learner support is a broad concept and that some consider resources and interactivity as critical in defining learner support while putting emphasis on individualization or customization of services. Wright (1991:59) argues that learner support is a requisite student service essential to ensure the successful delivery of learning experience at a distance. Similarly, Thorpe (1988:54) says that learner support is an element of an open learning system capable of responding to a particular individual learning.

Gregori, Zhang, Galvan-Fernandez and Fernandez-Navarro (2018:154) state that learner support are interactive and pedagogical conditions for augmenting the learner's ability to understand and learn the course content. Furthermore, Gregori et

al. (2018:154) believes that better integrated learner support is essential for facilitating an enriching quality learning experience that will ultimately lead to better outcomes and greater retention.

This study adopts Gregori et al.'s (2018:154) definition because of its broadness and catering for diverse services of the intervention program under investigation.

1.7.3 Psychosocial Intervention

According to Skeen, Sherr, Tomlinson, Croome, Ghandi, Roberts and Macedo (2018:3), psychosocial intervention refers to interventions that improve the psychosocial well-being of children affected by HIV/AIDS employing either a psychological, health, general or social approach, or a combination of the two, to improve well-being. Skeen et al. (2018:3) note that psychosocial interventions place emphasis on social and psychological factors rather than exclusively focusing on biological factors. Furthermore, Skeen et al. (2018:3) state that psychosocial interventions use a variety of delivery methods, which can impact on individual level processes, or improve outcomes of a family, group or community.

Forsman, Nordmyr and Wahlbeck (2011:87) define psychosocial intervention as any intervention that emphasises psychological or social rather than biological factors. They note that this definition allows for the inclusion of psychosocial intervention and health education, as well as intervention with focus on social aspects, such as social support.

These definitions resonate with the current study. However, The International Federation Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (n.d.:89) notes that most people will not take part in psychosocial activities, if they are hungry, cold, have nowhere to live and are struggling to survive and cautions that it is therefore critical that the planned psychosocial response is coordinated with responses relating to health and care, water and sanitation, food security and nutrition, and education. The same source further notes that it should be possible to initiate some psychosocial activities at the same time as basic needs are being met, but fulfilment of basic needs must be a priority.

1.7.4 Self-concept

Since a lot of research has been done on self-concept, Ghazvini (2011:1034) states that it is difficult to find a unanimous, accepted definition of the term. Ghazvini (1034) further observes: “Nonetheless, there is agreement among the different authors that the term self-concept has a multi-dimensional nature”.

Fieldman (1995:112) defines self-concept as a person’s sense of identity, the set of beliefs about what he or she is like as an individual. On the other hand, Gore and Cross (2011:135) define self-concept as a multifaceted psychological construct, composed of a variety of characteristics. Asma-Tuz-Zahra, Arif and Yousuf (2010:73) state that self-concept generally refers to the composite of ideas, feelings, and attitudes people have about themselves.

Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008:370) states that self-concept refers to the “picture” that individuals have of themselves and the value they attach to themselves and that it represents the person’s conscious experience of himself or herself formed through experience and interpretations of the environment. These authors further argue that although the self-concept consists of a relatively stable pattern of integrated perceptions, it is nevertheless flexible and changeable. Therefore, Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (370) claim that because self-perceptions are organised into a whole, changes in one part of the self-concept influences the whole of the self-image.

Although all these definitions are correct, this study adopted Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton’s (1976:331) definition which describes self-concept as an organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, and differentiable entity. This definition was adopted because it is broad and covers almost all aspects of the self-concept.

1.7.5 Vulnerable Children

Skinner et al. (2006:619) observe: “The loss of parent through death or desertion is an important aspect of vulnerability. Additional factors leading to vulnerability include severe chronic illness of a parent or caregiver, poverty, hunger, lack of access to

services, inadequate clothing or shelter, overcrowding, deficient caretakers, and factors specific to the child, including disability, direct experience of physical or sexual violence or severe chronic illness". Orphaned children fall under the category of vulnerable children.

Smart (2003:4) states although there are multiple terms used to encompass orphans and other vulnerable children, only a few relate specifically to vulnerability resulting from HIV/AIDS. Fleming (2015:7) argues that the multiple definitions for orphans and vulnerable children range from very narrow to all-encompassing and broadly applied, meaning that children who are counted and served vary based on the definition that is being used in a particular context. Thus, there is no universal definition for vulnerable children. However, Smart (2003:4) states that it is universally agreed that there is merit in distinguishing between different causes of orphanhood and vulnerability only as far as this allows for a better understanding of circumstances, vulnerability, and need.

Mishra and Van Assche (2008:12) argue that the more restrictive definition of OVC includes children who are orphaned, who live in households with HIV infected adult, who live in households with chronically ill adults or where an adult has recently died due to chronic illness, who live in households with no adults aged between 18 and 59 years or who live in households with orphaned children. Mwoma and Pillay (2016:83) define vulnerable children as those whose safety, well-being or development is at significant risk.

On the other hand, Mishra and Van Assche's (2008:12) definition has four categories of vulnerable children, namely, orphans, children from households with HIV infected adult, children from households with chronically ill adult and children from child-headed families.

Hall and Sambu (2017:102) define an orphan is a child under the age of 18 years, whose mother, father or both biological parents have died (including those whose living status is reported as known but excluding those whose living status is unspecified. Mwoma and Pillay (2016:83) define orphans as children aged under 18 years who have lost either one or both parents.

A child-headed family or Child-Headed Household (CHH) is a family structure in which a minor assumes the responsibility of being a head of the family because parents might have died or absent in the family life for whatever reasons. It is the elder child who usually assumes this responsibility of being the head of the family. He/she becomes the breadwinner, takes care of the younger children/siblings, and runs all the affairs of the family.

In this study, vulnerable children refer to children who are orphaned, who stay with chronic ill parents due to HIV/AIDS, who live in child-headed households. Therefore, the term “vulnerable children” is used interchangeably with “orphans and vulnerable children” (OVC) in the study.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research Paradigm

Paradigms play an important role in research. Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:52) note that a paradigm guides a researcher’s methodology-that is, how the research will proceed. According Kivunja to and Kuyini (2017:26), Thomas Kuhn (1962) first used the word paradigm to mean a philosophical way of thinking.

Researchers from various fields of study propose several paradigms. However, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:30) state that there is now general agreement about the major paradigms that are applicable in the educational research. These paradigms can be grouped into three main taxonomies, namely positivist, Interpretivist, and critical paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:30). The fourth paradigm known as the Pragmatic paradigm borrows the elements from the other three paradigms (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:30).

For any scientific study, the researcher is expected to adopt one research paradigm from several paradigms. The current study adopted the pragmatic paradigm because the nature of the study required the pragmatic approach. Taylor and Medina (2013:1) point out that no research paradigm is superior, but each has a specific purpose in providing a distinct means of producing unique knowledge. Similarly, Chilisa and

Kawulich (2012:52) state that no one paradigmatic or theoretical framework is “correct”. Therefore, it is the researcher’s choice to determine his or her own paradigmatic view and how that informs his or her research design to best answer the issues being researched. The pragmatic paradigm allowed me to collect quantitative data in relation to self-concept and academic performance of the participants (orphans and vulnerable children). The pragmatic paradigm also allowed me to interact with participants to explore challenges encountered in the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme.

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:35) indicate that the pragmatic paradigm arose among philosophers who argued that it was not possible to access the ‘truth’ about the real world solely by virtue of a single scientific method as advocated by the positivist paradigm, nor was it possible to determine social reality as constructed under the interpretivist paradigm. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:35) note that those theorists looked for research approaches that could be more practical and pluralistic and could allow a combination of methods that in conjunction could shed light on the actual behaviour of participants, the beliefs that stand behind those behaviours and the consequences that are likely to follow from different behaviours. Thus, according to Kivunja and Kuyini (35), this gave rise to a paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods as a pragmatic way to understand human behaviour, hence, the pragmatic paradigm.

Kivunja and Kuyini (35) state that the pragmatic paradigm is based on a non-singular reality ontology, in other words, there is no single reality, and all individuals have their own and unique interpretation. In this sense, the phenomenon that was investigated in the current study comprises self-concept, and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable children. Furthermore, experiences of educators, orphans and vulnerable children regarding the Learner Support Agents are also part of the said phenomenon. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:35) state that the pragmatic paradigm advocates a relational epistemology, that is, relationships in research are best determined by what the researcher deems appropriate to that particular study. The pragmatic researchers believe that from an epistemological perspective one can adopt an objective approach at some stages by not interacting with subjects in data collection and analysis, while at other stages it may be necessary to take a more subjective

approach by interacting with research subjects to construct realities (Brierley, 2017:18; Shannon-Baker, 2016:322).

The phenomenon that I sought to investigate required the adoption of an objective approach to gather and analyse quantitative data (self-concept and academic performance). However, at some point it was necessary to interact with the research subjects to gather and analyse qualitative data (challenges encountered by teachers and OVC in the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme). The pragmatic researcher uses a mixed methods methodology, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:35). The current study used the mixed methods research.

There were many advantages that resulted from selecting the pragmatic paradigm for the current study. Several studies (Tran, 2017:74; Morgan, 2007:67; Shannon-Baker, 2016:322; Brierley, 2017:15-17; Madondo, 2015:8) note the advantages of pragmatism paradigm, namely; pragmatism considers “what works” to answer research questions rather than making a choice between the positivist/post positivist or constructivist paradigms; it provides a middle position both methodologically and philosophically by offering a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer research questions; it allows researchers to be flexible to adopt the most practicable approach to address research questions. It is outcome-orientated and interested in determining the meaning of things or focusing on the product of the research. It is characterised by an emphasis on communication and shared meaning-making to create practical solutions to social problems. The pragmatic researcher maintains both subjectivity in his or her own reflection on research and objectivity on data collection and analysis. It offers researchers the opportunity to search for useful points of connection between qualitative data and quantitative data; and pragmatism allows the potential and possibility to work back and forth between qualitative data and quantitative data which is often viewed as incompatible.

In the light of the above advantages, I consider “what works” to answer the research questions. I was not confined to either positivism or interpretivism paradigms. Therefore, I was able to be adequately flexible to adopt the most practicable approach

to address the research questions. Furthermore, I maintained both subjectivity in my own reflection on research and objectivity on data collection and analysis.

1.8.2 Research Design

Research design is a broad framework that provide guidance on how research should be conducted to arrive at a conclusion. Since research design is very broad, different researchers describe it in different ways. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:185) state that a research design is a general plan for implementing a research strategy. Furthermore, Gravetter and Forzano (2009:185) state that a research design specifies whether a study will involve groups or individual participants, will make comparisons within a group or between groups, and how many variables will be included in the study. On the other hand, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:52) state that a research design is a plan according to which we obtain research participants (subjects) and collect information from them. Further Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:52) argue that the research design describes what the researcher will do with the participants, with a view to reaching conclusions about the research problem.

Durrheim (2008:34) points out that a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. Durrheim (34) adds: "Research designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collections and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to research purpose with economy in procedure". Furthermore, Durrheim (2008:35) states that designing a study involves multiple decisions about the way in which the data will be collected and analysed to ensure that the final report answers the initial research question. Furthermore, the researcher must decide about the study's research paradigm. In a nutshell, the researcher must make a series of decisions along four dimensions, namely, the purpose of research, the theoretical framework informing the research, the context or situation within which the research is carried out, and the research techniques employed to collect and analyse data (Durrheim, 2008:37). Though considerations are made on the four dimensions, these considerations are put together in a coherent research design in a way that will maximise the validity of the findings.

For the current study, I assessed the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme using an empirical study on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable children. To gain insight into the typical challenges encountered by educators and OVC in the implementation of LSA programme, I used the phenomenological approach. For an empirical study, a posttest-only non-equivalent control group design was used. This was the most suitable design for the current study. This design was selected after careful consideration of all the factors which were at play. This design is also called static group comparison (Neuman, 2014:293). Neuman (2014:293) notes that a static group comparison has two groups, a posttest, and treatment. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:281) state that a posttest-only non-equivalent control group design compares two non-equivalent groups of participants. Furthermore, Gravetter and Forzano (2009:281) note that one group is observed (measured) after receiving a treatment, the other group measured at the same time but receives no treatment. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:290) present the research design schematically as follows:

X O (treatment group)
O (non-equivalent control group)

The letter X corresponds to the treatment, and the letter O corresponds to the observation or treatment. For the current study, the X was for treatment, that is, academic support provided by the Learner Support Agents. The O was for measurement of both self-concept and academic performance, specifically, Mathematics.

To understand the context under which the Learner Support Agent Programme was implemented, I used an in-depth individual interview for exploring the challenges encountered by educators, orphans and vulnerable children.

1.8.3 Research Methodology

Research methodology is a broad concept; hence various researchers define it in different ways. Babbie (2010:4) notes that methodology is a subfield of epistemology and might be called the science of finding out. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2008:6) argue that methodology specifies how researchers may go about practically studying

whatever they believe can be known. While Gerring (2012:6) says methodology refers to a specific procedure for gathering and/or analysing data. Lastly, Babbie and Mouton (2002:75) state that research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be followed.

Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:52) note that the research methodology summarizes the research process, that is, how the research will proceed. Chilisa and Kawulich (52) further state that deciding on a methodology starts with a choice of the research paradigm that informs a study. Therefore, the methodology process is guided by philosophical beliefs about the nature of reality, knowledge, and values and by the theoretical framework that informs comprehension, interpretation, choice of literature and research practice on a given topic of study (Chilisa & Kawulich, 53). Furthermore, Chilisa and Kawulich (52) state that methodology is where assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge, values, and theory and practice on a given topic come together. Chilisa and Kawulich (52) write: “Methods are the means used for gathering data and are important part of the methodology”. The current study used the pragmatic paradigm. This has been indicated in paragraph 1.8.1.4. above. I adopted an objective approach on one hand, while on the other hand, I used subjective approach which means I used both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

1.8.4 Mixed Methods Research (MMR)

According to Bazeley and Kemp (2012:55), mixed methods research is research which uses more than one paradigmatic or methodological approach, method of data collection, or type of analysis strategy. This is regardless of how these approaches or methods might individually be classified, and with the common purpose that goes beyond that which could be achieved with one method. For Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:123), mixed methods research is a type of research in which a researcher or a team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference technique) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.

Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:117) observe that there are various types of mixed methods research designs. The current study followed the convergent parallel

design where according to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:117), quantitative and qualitative strands of the research are performed independently, and their results are brought together in the overall interpretation.

There are two rationales for using the mixed methods research in the current study. Firstly, the integration of methods assisted in building stronger conclusions, as the strengths of one approach or method served to compensate for the weakness of the other (Bazeley & Kemp, 2012:56). Secondly, according to Bazeley and Kemp (2012:56), mixing methods provides a more complete understanding of causal processes.

1.8.5 Quantitative Approach for the Study

For Gravetter and Forzano (2009:147), the term quantitative refers to the fact that this type of research examines variables that typically vary in quantity. Hence, Gravetter and Forzano (147) say quantitative research is research based on measuring variables for individual participants to obtain scores, usually numerical values that are submitted to statistical analysis for summary and interpretation.

Based on the above observations, for the current study, I collected quantitative data for self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners through a multi-dimensional self-concept scale and school report cards respectively. The scores of the self-concept and academic performance were subjected to statistical analysis and interpretation at the end.

1.8.5.1 Population

Durrheim and Painter (2008:133) define population as the larger pool from which sampling elements are drawn and findings generalised. Similarly, Gravetter and Fornazo (2006:128) state that a population is the entire set of individuals of interest to a researcher. Although the entire population usually does not participate in a study, the results from the study are generalized to the entire population. Babbie and Mouton (2002:174) concur stating that a study population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected. Although all these three definitions have some merit, Babbie and Mouton's definition was adopted for the current study. This definition

acknowledges the fact that an element or elements might be omitted from the entire population due to human error. In this regard, Babbie and Mouton (2002:174) state that even where lists of elements exist for sampling purposes, the lists are usually somewhat incomplete. The population of the current study was based on the number of schools which implemented the Learner Support Agent Programme in Grade 9. Therefore, schools which were not implementing the programme were excluded from the population of the current study. The population of the study consisted of 1 844 Grade 9 learners in 53 secondary schools.

1.8.5.2 Quantitative sampling procedures

Babbie (2010:199) defines random selection as sampling method in which each element has an equal chance of selection independent of any event in the process. Orphans and vulnerable children who were in Grade 9 from four schools which were implementing the Learner Support Agent programme were picked up through random sampling. The lists of Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners (only) from the four schools which implement the Learner Support Agent Programme were used for this exercise. List of orphans and vulnerable learners were readily available to all schools including those implementing the LSA programme. Such lists are used in various ways, for examples, social workers from the Department of Social Development determine the quantity for donation of school uniforms based on these lists. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), and other stakeholders who have interest in education use these lists to pledge their support to schools.

Based on the number required for the sample, which was, 40 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners and the total number of orphans and vulnerable learners on the four lists from the four schools, the interval ratio was determined. The interval ratio was then used to select the participants (orphans and vulnerable learners) randomly. Similar procedure was followed for the 40 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners from four schools which were no implementing the LSA programme. This method was preferred because it was simple, and it gave each participants an equal opportunity of being selected from the four schools.

1.8.5.3 Sample

Gravetter and Fornazo (2006:128) define a sample as a set of individuals selected from a population and usually intended to represent the population in a study. Similarly, Bailey (1978:82) defines sample as a subset or portion of total population. The two definitions resonate with the current study. The total sample consisted of 80 Grade 9 OVC. This comprised of an experimental group (40 orphans and vulnerable learners from four schools which implemented the LSA programme) and the comparison group (40 orphans and vulnerable learners from four schools which did not implement the LSA programme).

1.8.5.4 Reliability and validity

Neuman (1997:138) notes that reliability deals with an indicator's dependability. Thus, Neuman (138) further states a reliable indicator or measure gives the same results each time the same thing is measured. Babbie and Mouton (2002:119) concur stating that reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time. For any instrument or technique to be used for research purpose, the researcher must make sure that the instrument or technique is reliable. There are many ways to make sure that the instrument or technique is reliable. Babbie and Mouton (200:122) note that another way to help ensure reliability in getting information from people is to use measures that have proven their reliability in previous research.

The current study measured orphans and vulnerable children's self-concepts through the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (MSCS) by Fleming and Courtney. This scale is the modification of Janis-Field feelings of inadequacy (JFS). Arip, Saad, Rahman, Salim and Bistaman (2013:1456) state that the enactors of Multidimensional Self-Concept Model (MSCM) have dedicated the MSCS questionnaire to become the manual in intervention programme and that it was designed based on intervention strategies.

The current study examined academic school records (marks schedule) to determine academic achievement. Schools are the custodians of academic activities, hence, instruments used for measuring academic achievement are regarded as reliable.

Furthermore, any researcher should be concerned about the validity of the research. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:156) state that validity is concerned with the truth of the research, or the accuracy of the results point out that validity is the standard criterion by which researchers judge the quality of research. In a nutshell, the validity of a study is defined as the degree to which a study accurately answers the question it was intended to answer and any factors that raise doubts about the research results or about interpretation of the results is a threat to validity (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009:157). It is important that the researcher should be on the lookout of these threats and put measures in place to deal with such threats. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:157) note that questions about the validity of research are traditionally grouped into two categories: questions about internal validity and external validity.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:107) state that the term internal validity describes the degree to which changes in the dependent variable are indeed due to the independent variable rather than to something else. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:157-158) also note that internal validity is concerned with factors in the study that raises doubts or questions about the interpretation of the results. Internal validity is important for research, where the researcher's goal is to obtain a cause-and-effect explanation for relationships between two variables (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009:157; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2010:107). Gravetter and Forzano (158) state that research has internal validity if it allows only one explanation of the results and that any factor that allows an alternative explanation for the results is a threat to internal validity. Afterwards, it was possible to attribute any change of the dependent variable (self-concept and academic performance) to independent variable (Learner Support Agent Programme) with confidence.

The current study also used the post-test only non-equivalent group design. This compares the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of the experimental group and comparison group via post-test at the same time. This design ensured internal validity. Since all the data was collected at the same time, the problems of maturation, history, test effects and regression towards the mean did not arise.

I also ensured that socio-economic status, age, gender and grades did not threaten the internal validity of the study. Orphans and vulnerable children from Gert Sibande largely came from poor families and the orphans were selected from Grade 9 and were thus almost of the same age. The experimental and comparison groups were matched in terms of gender, with 20 girls and 20 boys each.

Teachers did not have the time to organise or provide extra academic support specifically for orphans and vulnerable learners. This is why the MDoE introduced LSAs specifically for orphans and vulnerable learners in selected schools.

Gravetter and Forzano (2009:158) indicate that external validity is the extent to which we can generalize the results of research to people, settings, times, measures, and characteristics other than those used in the study. Similarly, Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:157) state that external validity examines the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized. Graziano and Raulin (1993:196) note that the population to which we generalize is defined by the characteristics of the ad hoc sample. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:158) argue that any factor that limits the ability to generalize results from a research study is a threat to external validity.

Furthermore, Gravetter and Forzano (159) observe that there are at least three different kinds of generalization, and each can be a concern for external validity. Firstly, it is the generalization from a sample to the general population. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:159) advise that a sample should be representative of the population so that the results can be generalized to the entire population. For the current study, the sample was drawn from orphans and vulnerable children as a specific population. Therefore, the results could not be generalized to the entire population.

Secondly, Gravetter and Forzano (159) there should be generalization from one study to another, meaning that to ensure external validity is that results obtained in one specific study should also be obtained in another similar study. It should be possible to repeat the current study and get similar results, provided similar procedures and steps are followed.

Thirdly, Gravetter and Forzano (159) there should be generalization from a study to a real-world situation by ensuring that results obtained in a relatively sterile research environment are also obtained in the real world. Though the scale of the current study was so small, it can be applicable to real world situations provided that all the procedures and steps are followed. The current study was conducted in a natural setting generalization was not made beyond the scope of the sample. Since the sample of the study was drawn from Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners from Gert Sibande District, the generalization is limited to Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners in same district.

1.8.5.5 Quantitative data collection and analysis

Quantitative data was collected for both self-concept and academic performance of the Grade Nine orphans and vulnerable learners. Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (MSCS) by Fleming and Courtney was used to measure self-concepts. This scale is the modification of Janis-Field Feelings of Inadequacy (JFS). The modification of this scale includes, change in number of items; format; and the scale. Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (MSCS) from Fleming and Courtney consists of 36 items which can be clustered into five dimensions of self-concept namely, self-regard (global self-esteem); social confidence; school abilities; physical appearance; and physical abilities. The scale ranges from 1 to 7 as opposed to 1 to 5 in the original version. The MSCS is highly recommended for the evaluation of intervention programme on self-concept. In programme evaluation, Bracken, Bunch, Keith and Keith (2000:491), recommended that researchers use the configured self-concept scales or the MSCS to evaluate the influence of program on specific domains of self-concept

For academic performance, Mathematics mark sheets from the 8 schools were used to compile Mathematics schedule for both the experimental and control groups. Marks for formal assessments and written tests of the learners are recorded on mark sheets. These mark sheets are used to compile marks schedules for a particular grade on a quarterly and yearly basis. Then, report cards for individual learners are completed based on the mark schedule.

An independent samples t-test was used to analyse quantitative data as non-equivalent groups post-test-only design had been adopted for the study. The independent samples t-test was suitable for comparing the experimental and comparison group. This procedure determined if there was statistically significant difference in the dependent variable (self-concept and academic performance) of the experimental group (orphans and vulnerable learners in LSA programme) and the comparison group (orphans and vulnerable learners not in LSA programme).

For self-concept, the scores from the multi-dimensional self-concept scale were used to determine the mean (average) and standard deviation of the experimental group (orphans and vulnerable learners) and the comparison group (orphans and vulnerable learners not in LSA programme). The means and standard deviations of both the samples was subjected to t-test to determine if there was a statistical difference between the two groups.

For Mathematics performance, Mathematics scores for each participant were extracted from the school mark schedule. Thereafter, the mean and standard deviation of the experimental group (orphans and vulnerable learners in LSA programme) was determined. A similar procedure was followed for the comparison group (orphans and vulnerable learners not in LSA programme). The means and standard deviation of both the samples were subjected to t-test to determine if there was a statistical difference between the two groups.

1.9 QUALITATIVE APPROACH FOR THE STUDY

Astalin (2013:118), qualitative research is a systemic inquiry which seeks to build a holistic, largely narrative, description to inform the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon. Thus, Babbie and Mouton (2002:270) state that the primary goal of studies using this approach describe and try to understand rather than explain human behaviour. Similarly, Maree (2007:51) states that qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing participants in their natural environment focusing on their meanings and interpretations. For appropriate describing and understanding of the phenomenon that was being studied, the current study obtained participants perspectives, and this is in line with Babbie and Mouton (2002:270) observation that qualitative researchers always attempt to study

human action from the perspective of social actors. Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (270) say qualitative refers to a broad methodological approach to the study of social action and a collection of methods and techniques which share a certain set of principles or logic.

In terms of data collection, qualitative research uses participation observation, semi-structured interviews, written texts or documents, visual images, personal documents to construct life stories, case studies, and so on (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011:57; Babbie & Mouton, 2002:270). The nature of data collected through these methods is nonnumeric. According to Babbie and Mouton (270), the main characteristics of qualitative research are:

- Research is conducted in the natural setting of social actors.
- A focus on process rather than outcome.
- The actor's perspective (the "insider") descriptions and understanding of sections and events.
- The main concern is to understand social action in terms of its specific context (idiographic motive) rather than attempting to generalize to some theoretical population.
- The research process is often inductive in its approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories.
- The qualitative researcher is seen as the "main instrument" in the research process.

For the purpose of the study under discussion, I used the in-depth individual interviews to explore challenges that had been encountered by educators and vulnerable learners on how the Learner Support Agent Programme had been implemented in schools. In the process, nonnumeric data was collected.

1.9.1 Qualitative Sampling Procedure

Purposive or judgement sampling was chosen for the qualitative approach of the study. Laher and Botha (2012:93) state that with purposive sampling, the researcher relies on his or her own experience, previous research or ingenuity to find participants who are representative of the population and usually uses specific selection criteria to

identify the most suitable individuals. Bolderston (2012:68) concurs saying that purposeful sampling involves the researcher selecting potential participants who represent the group to be studied to get a reasonable cross-section of people. As such, I selected orphans and vulnerable children across five categories as shown on the sample below, 1.9.2. In addition, one educator (School-based Life Skills Co-ordinator) per school was selected. These educators were selected by virtue of being the School-Based Life Skills Co-ordinators. These educators were selected for in-depth individual interviews because they were School-Based Life Skills Co-ordinators.

1.9.2 Sample

The sample for the qualitative part of the study consisted of 10 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners purposively selected from four schools which were implementing the LSA programme. The five types of OVC were represented on the sample. Hence, the 10 participants consisted of the following:

- 2 OVC from child-headed households (1 male and 1 female).
- 2 OVC from single parent mothers (1 male and 1 female).
- 2 OVC from single parent fathers (1 male and 1 female).
- 2 OVC from grandparent paternal (1 male and 1 female).
- 2 OVC from grandparent maternal (1 male and 1 female).

In addition, four educators formed part of the sample. These educators were selected because they were School-based Life Skills Co-ordinators. This sample was meant for in-depth individual interviews.

1.9.3 Trustworthiness

For a study to be recognised and accepted in the community of researchers, it is important that it is trustworthy. Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:3) argue that trustworthiness is a way researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention. Furthermore, Nowell et al. (:30) state that trustworthiness involves credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability.

1.9.3.1 Credibility

Credibility addresses the question whether there is compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of respondents and those that are attributed to them (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277). Babbie and Mouton (2002:277) also suggest several techniques to address credibility; these include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referral adequacy, debriefing, and member checks. The current study used triangulation, referral adequacy to address the question of credibility. For referral adequacy purposes, I used a tape recorder during data gathering.

1.9.3.2 Transferability

Babbie and Mouton (2002:177) say that transferability refers to the extent which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. A qualitative researcher is not obliged to generalize his or her results to the entire population as all observations are defined by a specific context in which they occur. (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277). Babbie and Mouton (277) further argue that in a qualitative study, the obligation for demonstrating transferability rests on those who wish to apply it to the receiving context. However, I made it possible for other researchers to judge transferability by using purposive sampling and providing a detailed report of my study.

1.9.3.3 Dependability

Babbie and Mouton (2002:278) state that an inquiry must also provide its audience with evidence that if it were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same (or similar) context, its findings would be similar. Since there is no credibility without dependability, a demonstration of credibility is sufficient to establish the existence of the dependability (Babbie & Mouton, 278). Thus, Babbie and Mouton (278) argue that if it is possible, using the techniques outlined in relation to credibility to show that a study has that quality, it ought not be necessary to separately demonstrate dependability. For current study, I employed techniques used for credibility, which included, triangulation and referral adequacy.

1.9.3.4 Confirmability

Babbie and Mouton (2002:278) say that confirmability is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of an inquiry and not biases of the researcher.

Babbie and Mouton (278) note that Lincoln and Guba refer to a confirmability audit trail, i.e., an auditor to determine if the conclusion, interpretation and recommendation can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry. Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (278) state that conducting such a trail involves reviewing at least eight classes of data, namely, raw data; data reduction and analysis products; data reconstruction synthesis products; process notes; material relating to intentions and dispositions; and instrumental development information.

In relation to this aspect, I have provided a detailed report for my research study and all source materials that I had used for data collection and analysis can be viewed.

1.9.4 Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

I used in-depth individual interviews as methods for qualitative data gathering. Boyce and Neale (2006:3), in-depth interviewing is a qualitative technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspective on a particular idea program, or situation. Boyce and Neale (3) further state that in-depth interviews are useful when you want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours or want to explore new issues in depth. Boyce and Neale (3) note that interviews are often used to provide context to other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the program and why.

There are many advantages for using in-depth interviews and Bolderston (2012:68) indicates that advantages of the interviews include that the interviewees can express their viewpoint, in private, without a framework imposed by the researcher. Bailey (1987:174) concurs noting that an interviewer can standardize the interview environment by making certain that the interview is conducted in private. Bailey (1987:174) lists many advantages, namely; the interviewer can make a follow-up for more specific answers and can repeat a question when the interviewer senses that the respondent misunderstood the question; the interviewer is present to observe nonverbal behaviour and to assess the validity of the respondent's answer; the interviewer has control over question order and can ensure that the respondent does not answer the questions out of order or in any other way thwart the structure of the

questionnaire; and that the interviewer can record spontaneous answers. Kelly (2008:298) argues that the advantage of recording is that it allows the keeping of a full record of the interview without having to be distracted by detailed note-keeping. It was because of the above advantages that the in-depth interview was used in the current study. The in-depth interview was used both for educators, and orphans and vulnerable learners regarding the challenges they encountered on how the Learner Support Agent Programme was implemented in schools.

I used phenomenological analysis method to analyse data from the interviews. Kawulich and Holland (2012:238) indicate that the purpose of phenomenological analysis is to identify some shared phenomenon and the description of shared experiences. In this regard, the shared phenomenon and the description of shared experiences related the implementation of the Learner Support Agent in schools. For phenomenological analysis, data was orientated towards capturing as closely as possible the manner in which the phenomenon under investigation had been experienced by the participants (Isabirye & Makoe, 2018:3). In the current study, the experiences and views of the participants on the implementation of the LSA programme was analysed as presented by the participants. Phenomenological analysis entailed a vigorous step by step procedure of segmented raw data into units meaning, restructuring in terms of meaning cluster, translated into specific language consistent with their central meaning, and consistent themes common to all the participants' accounts eventually synthesised into a coherent description of the structure of the experience investigated (Isabirye & Makoe, 2018:3).

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to reveal the impact that the Learner Support Agents have on academic performance of the vulnerable learners and to provide information about the impact that the Learner Support Agents have on the self-concept of the vulnerable learners. If there is an improvement on the self-concept and academic performance of the vulnerable learners, the authorities responsible for providing care and academic support for orphans and vulnerable children will hopefully extend the LSA programme to other schools. This would mean that more schools and more orphans and vulnerable children will benefit from the Learner Support Agent Programme. This may

also translate into job opportunities because there is a high rate of youth unemployment in South Africa.

1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The current study is confined to Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners who were beneficiaries of the Learner Support Agent Programme of Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga, Republic of South Africa. Gert Sibande District shares a boarder with Swaziland on the eastern part of Mpumalanga. In the South East, it is bordered by KwaZulu-Natal Province, in the south west it is bordered by the Northern Province and in the north-east there is Ehlazeni District which is part of the Mpumalanga Province. In the North West there is Nkangala District which is also part of the Mpumalanga Province. In the western part it shares a border with Gauteng Province.

Gert Sibande District is predominantly rural and sparsely populated; hence, schools are scattered and far apart

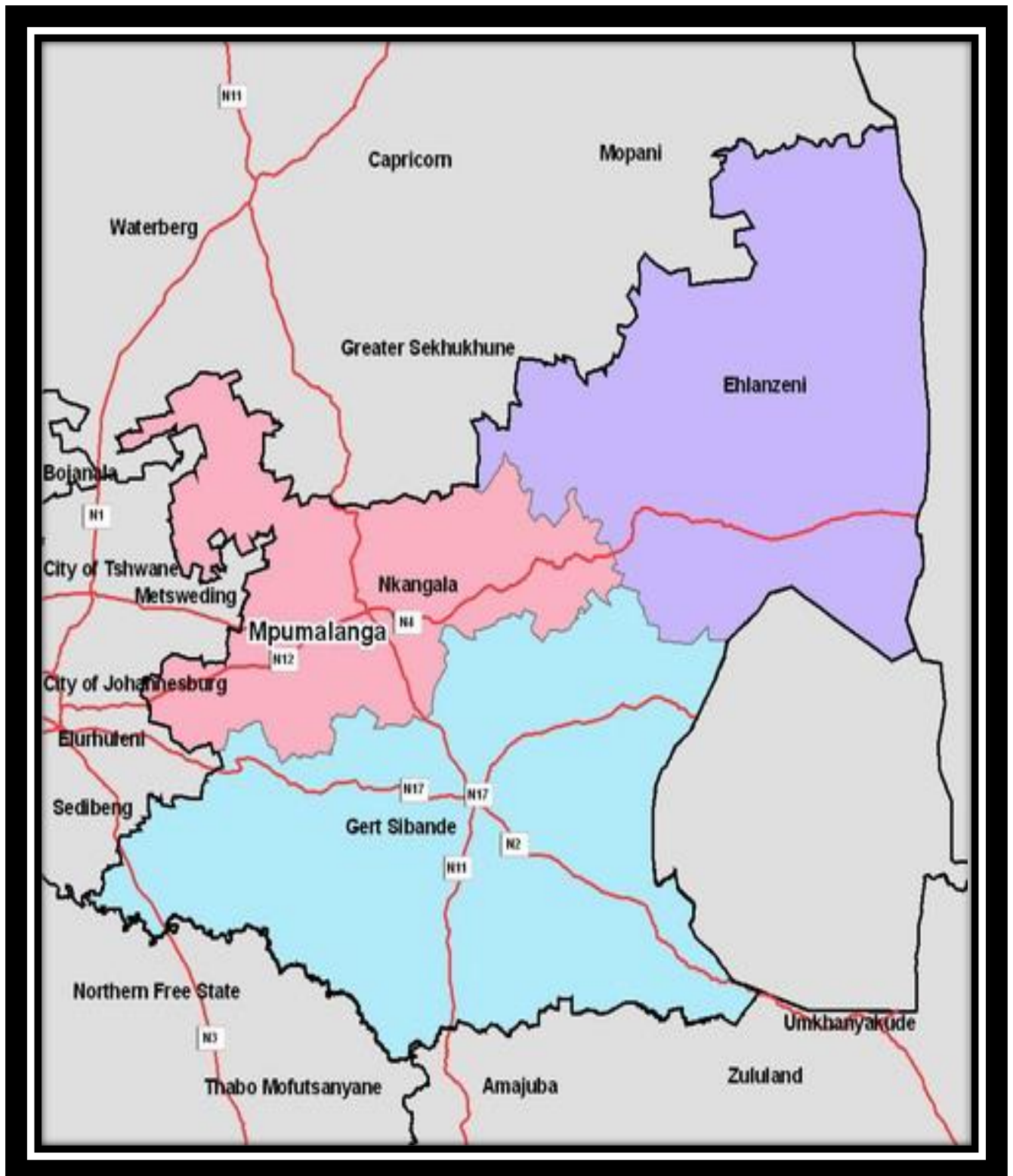


Figure 1. 2: A Map Showing the Location of the Four Districts of the Mpumalanga Province (Extract: Maliavusa, 2014:18).

(SA-VENUES.com.online).

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:181) state that the principles underlying research ethics are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) note four overlapping guidelines that are standard for organizations' codes of ethics: informed consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality, and accuracy.

- **Gatekeeping**

Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:35) argue that sometimes it may be necessary for a researcher first to approach a gatekeeper before directly approaching prospective participants. For this reason, I wrote a letter to the Mpumalanga Department of Education to ask for permission to conduct the research in the schools before embarking on the study (An example of a letter is attached on annexure marked E).

- **No Harm to Participants**

Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:65) state that it is the researcher's responsibility to make sure that participants are in no way harmed because of their participation in a study. Furthermore, Ogletree and Kawulich (65) indicate that people can be harmed psychologically or emotionally, and their reputation can be damaged.

The study involves vulnerable participants, that is, orphans and vulnerable learners. Therefore, I was careful and conscious at all times of participants' feelings. I ensured that neither the OVC participant nor myself was placed in harm's way either emotionally or psychologically by weighing the potential understanding from the findings against possible harm that may be caused to OVC participants.

- **Deception**

Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) note that avoiding deception in ethical standards emphasises that researchers must not deceive participants in any way. Furthermore, Ogletree and Kawulich (64) point out that deception is both unnecessary and unacceptable.

Thus, I was honest and truthful in my interaction with all participants.

- **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) state that privacy and confidentiality involve hiding the identity of participants and research location and not disclosing any information that may embarrass or otherwise harm participants. Bolderston (2012:75) argues that although the data are acquired, all personal information should be made as anonymous as possible. To ensure that the participants' identities were kept secret. I used unique codes to conceal their identities throughout the study. As such, questionnaires (Multi-dimensional Self-concept Scale) used in the study did not require participants or schools to divulge their names. Therefore, information gathered through questionnaires, progress academic school records and in-depth interviews was treated with confidentiality it deserves.

- **Accuracy**

Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) state that the ethical requirement of accuracy means that the researcher must take care to report data factually, since fabrications, Freudulent materials, omissions, and contrivances are both non-scientific and unethical. Thus, I ensured that report data was factual and accurate.

- **Informed Consent**

Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) note that informed consent means that the participants agree to participate without feeling coerced, and that they are fully informed about the purpose, duration, methods, and potential use of the research. Bolderston (2012:75) recommends that as in all research, the risk and benefits need to be explained to the respondents so that they are able to make informed decision on whether to participate. Furthermore, Bolderston (2012:75) states that they should be aware of the research topic and the questions they may be asked as well as how data will be stored and used.

Therefore, I gave each participant informed consent to sign before participating in the study. The informed consent form provided a space for a guardian to sign because participants were minors. The topic, purpose, duration, anticipated outcomes, and methods for data collection were communicated fully to participants and groups likely to be affected. (Example of a consent form is attached on annexure marked B).

Fox and Bayat (2013:148) indicate that voluntary participation is a principle that requires that people participate voluntarily in research and that, if they have agreed to participate, they are free to withdraw at any time they wish. As such, the informed consent forms which were signed by both guardians and participants indicated that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the research at any time.

1.13 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Overview of the Study

This chapter presents the background, aim, objectives and significance of the study. The chapter also covers the research problem, research questions, and purpose of the study and definition of concepts. Furthermore, the chapter briefly outlines other components namely, theoretical framework; literature review; research approach and methodology.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, Maslow's theory of motivation which underpins the study is discussed from four perspectives, namely, the view of the person underlying the theory, assumptions underlying the theory, and hierarchy of needs. Other important aspects related to the theory are discussed.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This chapter reviews studies that provide background information or challenges which led to the formulation of the problem statement. The chapter also looks at the phenomenon of orphans and vulnerability from a global perspective to local perspective. It also looks at the intervention strategies from global to local perspectives. In addition, it also highlights the shortcomings of approaches to date. Lastly, the chapter looks at the evaluation of intervention programmes aimed at providing support to orphans and vulnerable children.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, a detailed outline of the design and the methods followed in conducting the study is provided. It also provides the paradigm and assumptions underpinning the

study and contains methods, procedures and processes followed in selecting participants and data collection instruments. Lastly, it outlines the processes and procedures followed in dealing with ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Presentation

This chapter presents and analyses the study data. Research findings based on the analysis and interpretation are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussions of Research Findings

This chapter discusses and summarises the main findings of the study. The chapter also makes recommendations to stakeholders on how to improve the status quo in learning institutions where the study was conducted. Limitations of the study are indicated and the possible topics for further research suggested.

Chapter 7: Summary, Limitations and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the main findings of the study and presents the study limitations and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study assessed the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. The Learner Support Agent Programme is an intervention strategy for supporting vulnerable children to gain skills, knowledge and confidence to stay at school until they complete Grade 12 (MDoE, 2015:1). Lazowski and Hulleman (2015:3) argue that intervention programmes must be grounded in motivation theory and designed to leverage motivational process as their primary aim. Lazowski and Hulleman (2015:3) note that a rich body of research in educational and social psychology has clearly demonstrate that student motivation is essential for learning, and if left unguarded declines in motivation will undermine system effectiveness. Furthermore, Lazowski and Hulleman (2015:3) argue that motivated students learn more, persist longer, produce higher quality work, and score higher on standardized achievement tests, particularly if they are motivated by relatively intrinsic rather than extrinsic reasons.

Zimbardo (1992:424) argues that motivation is a general term for all processes involved in starting, directing, and maintaining physical and psychological activities. Furthermore, Zimbardo (424) notes that motivation is a broad concept that embraces a host of internal mechanisms, vigour, or strength of responses, and persistence of organized patterns of action towards relevant goals. Zimbardo (424) argues that a highly motivated person seeks out certain activities over others; practices behaviours and perfects skills required to attain the objective and focuses energy on reaching the goal despite frustrations. There are two types of motivation and according to Zimbardo (1992:454), motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake, in the absence of external reward, is called intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is motivation to engage in an activity for some external consequences.

Weiten (2014:381) indicates that motives are the needs, wants, interests, and desires that propel people in certain direction. Therefore, motivation involves goal-directed

behaviour. In education, there are several types and qualities of motivation such as needs, drives, goals, aspiration, interests, and effects, to name a few (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2015:2). Lazowski and Hulleman (2015:2) argue that theories of motivation are concerned with the energization and direction of behaviour. There are several approaches to motivation from various cluster of theories and school of thought in psychology.

The study involved orphans and vulnerable children with diverse needs and challenges. The study is underpinned by the theoretical framework that attempts to accommodate the diverse needs and challenges of these vulnerable learners. Maslow's motivational theory is grounded on humanistic theories.

2.2 RATIONALE FOR SELECTING MASLOW'S MOTIVATION THEORY

The researcher considered four critical aspects in selecting Maslow's motivation theory, namely, the aim of the Learner Support Agent Programme, orphans and vulnerable learners, needs of orphans and vulnerable learners, and academic performance.

The aim of the Learner Support Agent Programme is to provide support to orphans and vulnerable learners to gain skills, knowledge and confidence and stay at school until they complete Grade 12 as mentioned in the introduction. If vulnerable learners stay at school until Grade 12, they stand a chance of making it in life. Thus, the Learner Support Agent Programme seeks to support vulnerable learners to realise their full potentials and their desires. Fulfilment of one's potentials and desires will bring about happiness and peace in life. This is in line with the central aim of Maslow's theory of motivation. Heylighen (1992:39) argues that Abraham Maslow proposes a model of how a happy, healthy, well-functioning person behaves, which is based on concrete observations of real people, rather than on formulating ideal requirements. Maslow believed that every person has inborn desire to self-actualise, that is, the desire to fulfil one's potentials (Moore, Viljoen & Meyer, 2017: 338; Neher, 1991:90).

Orphans and vulnerable learners have diverse needs which should be met for survival and success in life. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a framework for five basic

set of needs, namely, physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs.

Maslow's theory of motivation holds an optimistic view of a person. Orphans and vulnerable learners, just like any other person, have innate potentials to be successful in life irrespective of their background as long as there are provided with the necessary support.

Every child is unique and should be treated as a totality. The principle of integrated whole is applicable to every child. Orphans and vulnerable learners should be treated as such.

2.3 MASLOW'S MOTIVATION THEORY

Abraham Maslow is regarded as the best-known proponent of humanistic approach (Heylighen, 1992:39). Heylighen (1992:39) argues that what distinguishes his work from other "humanists" is that he proposes a model of how a happy, healthy, well-functioning person behaves, which is based on concrete observations of real people, rather than on formulating ideal requirements. Heylighen (1992:40) claims that Maslow proposes a simple, and intuitively appealing theory of motivation, which explains where such a "self-actualizing" personality comes from.

In a nutshell, according to Heylighen (1992:40), Maslow's theory of personality is based on a theory of human motivation, characterised by a hierarchy of needs; a description of a particular type of maximally healthy personality called "self-actualizing", which is supposed to emerge when all needs are satisfied.

2.3.1 Maslow's Views of the Person

Maslow's views of the person emanate from the principles underpinning humanistic theories. Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338) observe that Maslow's view of the person is essentially optimistic. Maslow acknowledges the positive aspects of human nature- the person's dignity, his or her active will to develop- and he stresses the person's functioning as an integrated whole and according to Maslow, the tendency towards self-actualization is the motive that underlies all behaviour.

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338) argue that Maslow believes that most human behaviour can be explained in terms of needs gratification and that he presents the human as a “yearning being” who is seldom satisfied, because no sooner is one need gratified than another surfaces. Furthermore, Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338) note that need gratification is not merely a means of relieving tension or frustration, it is also the basis for growth and the realisation of an individual’s full potential through self-actualization.

Maslow is of the view that people have certain basic needs, which are hierarchically arranged, and these needs are namely, biological, safety, love and esteem needs (Moore, Viljoen & Meyer, 2017:338). According to Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338), these needs must be satisfied before the need for self-actualization which is at the top of hierarchy, becomes apparent.

Lastly, Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:338) note that Maslow’s view of the person is a holistic one and that a person is an integrated whole and cannot be studied piecemeal.

2.3.2 Assumptions Underlying Maslow’s Motivation Theory

According to Maslow, human behaviour is motivated by a set of five levels of needs arranged in hierarchical order, starting from the bottom to the top namely, physiological needs, safety needs or security needs, love and belonging needs or social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017:15; Greene & Burke, 2007:116; Heylighen, 1992:40). Maslow argues that human beings by nature, want things and are motivated to acquire things that they do not have (Greene & Burke, 2007:116). Heylighen (1992:40) notes that which needs are most active in driving behaviour depends on two principles mentioned below:

- a need which is satisfied is no longer active: the higher the satisfaction, the less the activity (the exception to this rule is the need for self-actualization).
- Needs can be ordered in a hierarchy, such that from all the non-satisfied needs, the one which is lowest in the hierarchy will be the most active. A lower need

is more “urgent” in the sense that it must be satisfied before a higher need can take over control.

2.4 MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Aruma and Hanachor (2017:15) note that Abraham Maslow propounded the theory of human needs which is popularly known as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in human environment in the society. According to Kaur (2013:1062), this means that these needs are aroused in specific order from the lowest to highest, such that the lowest needs must be fulfilled before the next order is triggered and the process continues. According to Greene and Burke (2007:116), the hierarchy starts with physiological needs and moves to safety and security, social activity (or love and belonging), to esteem (or ego), and finally to self-actualization.

Physiological needs and safety needs are regarded as basic needs for survival. Esteem needs, belongingness and love needs are regarded as psychosocial needs. Based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in Figure 2.1 below, once a person’s basic needs are met, psychosocial needs arise. Once the psychosocial needs are met, self-fulfillment arise.

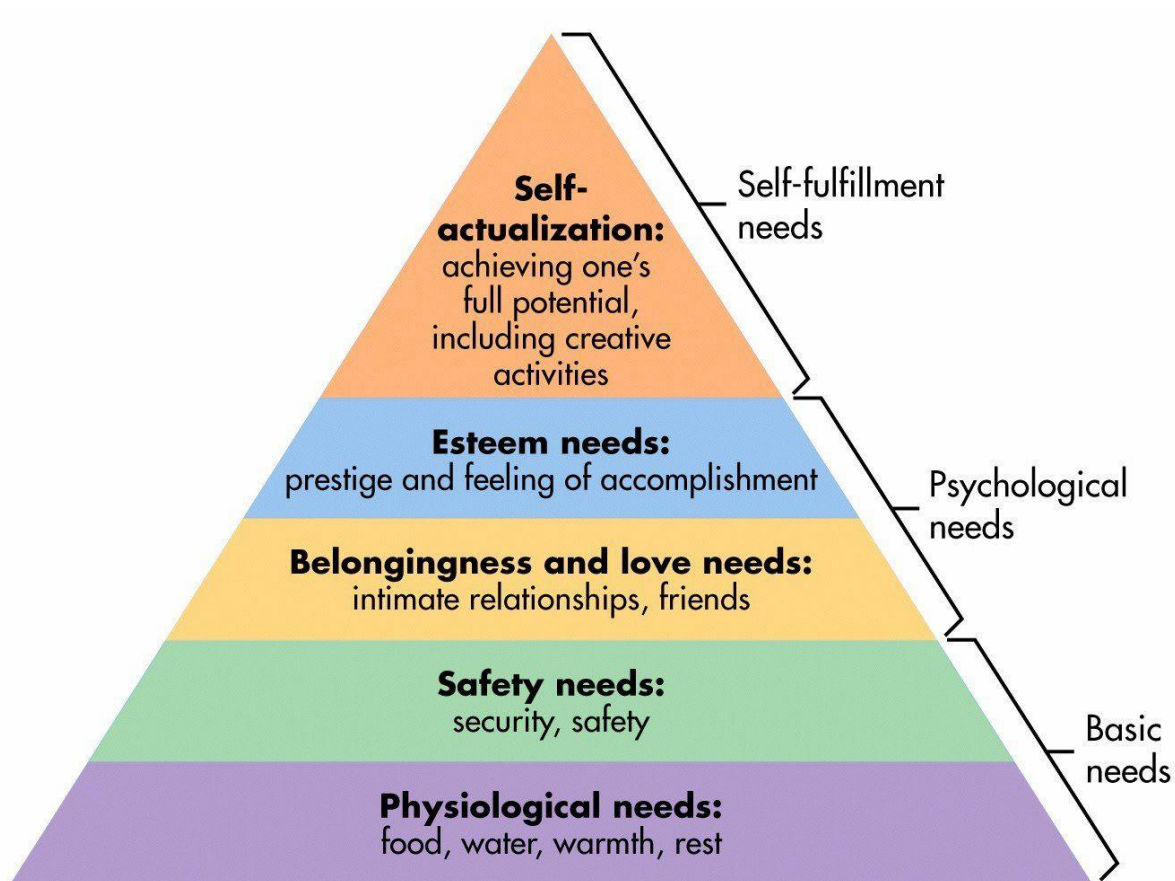


Figure 2.1: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: McLeod, S.A. (2018, May 21). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

2.4.1 Physiological Needs

At the bottom of the hierarchy of needs we find the physiological needs. According to Aruma and Hanachor (2017:19), physiological needs are such human basic needs as food, water, clothing, shelter (accommodation or housing), sleep as well as procreation. Heylighen (1992:40) states that these are needs of the body as a physiological system which tries to maintain homeostasis. According to Weiten (2014:381), homeostasis is a state of physiological equilibrium or stability. According to Heylighen (1992:40), these needs are such that if they are not satisfied the organism dies. Aruma and Hanachor (2017:19) argue that indeed, human basic needs are very important for survival and sustainability of human race.

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:34) argue that according to Maslow, physiological needs are the most basic needs and if they are not gratified regularly, they dominate

all other needs. Burleson and Thoron (2017:1) concur stating that if these needs are not met, then all efforts are focused on these needs. Furthermore, Burleson and Thoron (2017:1) argue that physiological needs are the most important, and if they are not met, they will be the biggest motivating factor for the individual.

Burleson and Thoron (2017:1) state that if hunger is the issue, all other needs and desires will be suppressed to satisfy hunger. Burleson and Thoron (2017:1) argue that a learner may act out because the learner's first concern is not learning but rather obtaining food. Similarly, the learner who didn't sleep a night before may fall asleep instead of completing the work, and thus sleep is the motivating factor of his behaviour, rather than learning (Burleson & Thoron, 2017:1).

Physiological needs are of great importance for orphan and vulnerable children. Stormont, Espinosa, Knipping and McCathrene (2003: n.k.) observe that many children who are considered "vulnerable" live below the poverty level. Therefore, it is difficult for the household to meet all the physiological needs of the children. Boler and Carrol (2007:7) note that anecdotal evidence suggests that orphan and vulnerable children are more likely to be tired and hungry at school. Mahlase and Ntombela (2011:195) note that poverty reduces people's capacity and opportunities to access proper shelter, adequate nutrition, and education. Orphans and vulnerable children's needs range from basic needs for survival such as food, water, shelter, clothing, and health care (Stover, Bollinger, Walker & Monasch, 2007:22).

2.4.2 Safety Needs or Security Needs

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:340) note that when a person is reasonably sure that his or her physiological needs will be satisfied regularly, they lose their urgency. This will give rise to safety needs or security needs. Aruma and Hanachor (2017:20) state that safety needs deal with protection and survival from chaotic situations, social disorder, social disturbance and physical dangers in human environment. Similarly, Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) argue that safety needs are generally concerned with the environment and can be seen at home, at school, and elsewhere. Hence, safety needs become a driving force for behaviour. Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:340) argue that safety needs may become dominant to such an extent that all functioning

is directed towards achieving security, stability, and freedom from fear. Furthermore, Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:340) argue that needs for safety are especially apparent in young children because they are dependent on others and react uninhibitedly when they feel unsafe.

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:341) state that after an accident or an illness, maltreatment, neglect, a divorce or death in the family a child may experience the world as unsafe and unpredictable and show fear reactions. Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:341) argue that Maslow's theory accords with the general view held by educationists that children feel safe in an environment where there is a kind of structure, with set limits and boundaries and where fixed patterns apply. Reasonable freedom with set boundaries is ideal for gratifying the needs for safety rather than unbounded freedom.

Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) argue that if a child has a bad home life (fighting parents, addicted parents, absent parents, etc.) or lives in an unsafe neighbourhood, the child will have trouble focusing on learning when he/she does not feel secure. Similarly, if a student does not feel safe at school, due to bullying or a feeling of a dislike from the teacher, the student will also have trouble completing work and learning material, because the primary concern is safety (Burleson & Thoron, 2017:2). Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) note that learners also view safety through a predictable and orderly world- they have an undisrupted routine or rhythm. Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) argue that if learners do not have routine, or the routine is in jeopardy, learners can feel anxious and unsafe, and this will lead to underperformance by the learner.

Orphan and vulnerable children have safety needs. They need to be protected from sexual abuse, child labour and child trafficking. Bakir (2018:11) argues that children who have lost one or both parents because of a crisis caused by human activities or natural reasons, are defenseless in the face of any kind of abuse.

2.4.3 Love and Belonging Needs or Social Needs

Jerome (2013:42) notes that when the needs for safety and for psychological well-being are satisfied, the next class of needs for love, affection and belongingness can emerge. Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:341) note that a person becomes aware of his or her need to belong somewhere and to belong with someone; to receive and to give love. Aruma and Hanachor (2017:21-22) observe that when people in various communities feel secure and safe in an environment, the tendency is to feel the need to identify and belong to a social organisation of family, community, Community-Based Organisation (CBO) among others in the society. Heylighen (1992:41) argues that this is the basic social or affiliative motive, which drives people to seek contact with others and build satisfying relations with them.

Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) note that love and belonging help people to have confidence in their own abilities of contributing reasonably to decision-making process that promote community development in various communities.

Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) argue that when individuals feel deprived of love and belongingness, they hunger for affectionate relationships where people strive for a place in a group. Furthermore, Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) claim that the need for love and belonging is often overlooked; however, this need can often be just as important as physiological needs. Hannula (2006:67) notes that psychological needs that are often emphasised in education settings are autonomy, competency, and social belonging.

Motsa and Morojele (2016:38) note that vulnerable children face challenges of social exclusion as they try to fit into the school society. Kiragu and Chepchieng (2014:736) argue that vulnerable children are isolated by other children because of the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Motsa and Morejele (2016:35) argue that other learners are terrified to play with them due to an uninformed fear of contracting the HIV virus. Furthermore, Motsa and Morojele (2016:38) note that these children are susceptible to bullying and ridicule by other learners. Motsa and Morojele (2016:38) add that the schools subject vulnerable children to unfair and unjust treatment, due to the lack of understanding or appreciation of these children's life challenges and situations.

2.4.4 The Need for Self-esteem

Heylighen (1992:41) states that satisfaction of belongingness needs triggers the emergence of the esteem need. Viney and King (2003:392) indicate that these include feelings of worth, competence, recognition for achievement, and adequacy. Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:342) concur pointing out that as soon as a person's need for love has been satisfied to the point where it diminishes as a motivating force, the need for esteem awakens. Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) write: "Esteem and prestige needs can equally be referred to as ego needs in human environment". Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) argue that it is always natural that people seek for esteem and prestige in human environment when it is obvious that they feel secure in their respective social groups such as family group, social group, communal group, working group, group of colleagues, group of friends among others in their various communities in the society. Furthermore, Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) argue that when people achieve their social needs or love and belonging needs by belonging to a family group, social group, communal group, group of friends, group of colleagues, professional group amongst others, they tend to seek for self-respect, recognition, reputation, status, self-worth among others in their respective groups in various communities.

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:342) state that Maslow classifies esteem needs into two categories, namely;

- A set of needs based on a person's achievement. This is related to a sense of efficiency, capability, achievement, confidence, personal strength and independence.
- A set of needs related to esteem of others. This includes social standing, honour, importance, dignity and appreciation. People need others to recognise and appreciate their competence.

Smith (2003:22) argues that fulfilment of esteem needs secures feelings of self-worth, strength, capability, and the adequacy of being useful in the world. On the other hand, Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:342) argue that unfulfilled needs for self-esteem give rise to a feeling of inferiority, weakness and helplessness.

Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) argue that in communities, self-esteem and prestige needs are demonstrated in the need for recognition, reputation, respect and admiration for higher status or position in the community in the society. Furthermore, Aruima and Hanachor (2017:22) argue that it is natural that the need for recognition, respect and admiration for higher status or position has more responsibilities in human environment.

Mwoma and Pillay (2016:55) report that low self-esteem among orphan and vulnerable children was a contributing factor to poor performance. Kiragu and Chepchieng (2014:736) note that orphans and vulnerable children experience emotional problems like low self-esteem and self-pity because they lack parental attention. Furthermore, Kiragu and Chiepccheng (2014:736) argue that vulnerable children's self-esteem may be affected because of the stigma that is associated with HIV/AIDS and this may in turn affect their academic performance.

2.4.5 Self-actualisation

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:343) argue that a person whose basic needs are satisfied on regular basis can start functioning at the level of self-actualization and at this stage growth motivation comes to the fore. Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) note that self-actualization is the fifth level of need in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs which deals with the desire of people to develop their talents and hidden potential. Thus, Viney and King (2003:392) note that according to Maslow, self-actualization refers to self-fulfillment that comes about by realising or accomplishing the potentials by which we are endowed. This is regarded by Maslow as being the ultimate need in human motivation.

Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) argue that this is the achievement of self-actualization or self-realization needs as advanced by Abraham Maslow in the hierarchy of human needs in the society. Furthermore, Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) argue that self-actualization or self-realization becomes a reality when people develop the desire to exploit all the talents, gifts and potential that are hidden in them in the society. Aruma and Hanachor (2017:22) note that the self-actualization needs, and self-realization

needs encourage people to be innovative in their various social/settings in order to improve their living conditions in the society.

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:344) argue that self-actualization is the process of becoming all one is capable of being, making full use of one's abilities, talents, and potentials. Smith (2007:25) notes that according to Maslow, self-actualization is not static but an ongoing process. Smith (2007:25) argues that not everyone is able to achieve this need and the few that can have been innately determined. Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:344) note that self-actualization can result in works of art or important scientific discoveries. Furthermore, Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:344) argue that self-actualization is an exciting ideal because it encourages the person to discover and realise his or her highest potential and, in doing so, to become a fully functioning, goal-oriented being. Burlison and Thoron (2017:2) state that self-actualized individuals are spontaneous, problem-centered, increased perception of reality, and are autonomous.

2.5 STRENGTHS OF MASLOW'S MOTIVATION THEORY

The strengths of Maslow's motivation theory are seen in its application in teaching and learning environment. Pardee (1991:2) claims that based on numerous state and national studies concerning the conditions of schools, a great deal of time, energy, and effort is expended by educational administrators trying to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education delivery systems. In a school setting, there are two key stakeholders, namely, educators and learners. Therefore, below the implications and applications of Maslow's motivation theory are discussed in view of teaching profession for teachers and learning environment for learners.

2.5.1 Teaching Profession

According to Pardee (1991:8), Maslow believed that man is inherently good and argued that individuals possess a constantly growing inner drive that has great potential. The implication is that the teacher must view any child as a person with innate potential. Therefore the teacher must support the child in his/her endeavour to develop his/her full potential.

Moore, Viljoen and Meyer (2017:326) observe that Maslow present human beings with worth and dignity who, as whole, integrated persons, active and consciously strive towards the actualisation of their potentials. From this observation, the teacher must view any child as a person who has a dignity and worth of recognition. Therefore, the teacher should treat the child with respect. Furthermore, the child must be taught as a whole that is in totality. Hence, when teaching the child, it is important to take into consideration the physical, psychological, social and emotional aspect of the child.

2.5.2 Teaching and Learning Environment

D'Souza and Gurin (2016:3) observe that the hierarchy of needs is arguably the most prominent motivational theory in the field of psychology. Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of five levels, from the bottom to the top are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs (Moore, Viljoen & Meyer, 2017:339; D'Souza & Gurin, 2016:3). The teaching and learning environment should endeavour to meet the needs as outlined in the hierarchy of needs for effective teaching and learning.

2.5.2.1 Physiological needs

The teacher cannot meet all the physiological needs of learners. Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) argue that there is no possible way that a teacher can provide food, clothing, shelter, and adequate sleep for each learner. The responsibility to provide for the physiological needs lies squarely on government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), and other structures interested in education.

2.5.2.2 Safety needs

Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) argue that in terms of safety, there are several factors that the teacher can consider helping make learners feel safe. For children, feelings of safety can be derived from a routine or a predictable world (Burleson & Thoron, 2017:2). Therefore, it is important that the teacher establishes a routine in learning environment. The teacher should provide clearly defined procedures and rules for the learners (Burleson & Thoron, 2017:2). Furthermore, the teacher should provide an

agenda for the day so learners know what to expect (Burleson & Thoron, 2017:2). Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) claim that learners will feel they have control over the learning environment by simply being aware of what is expected during instructions. Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) add that learners should feel psychologically and emotionally safe within the learning environment. Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) assert that teachers should provide an environment where learners feel at ease to take risks-answering questions, or sharing their thoughts, without fear of ridicule from other learners.

2.5.2.3 Love and belonging needs

The teacher should make sure that learners feel comfortable in the learning environment by making sure that no learner feels isolated. The teacher should create an environment of team spirit, generate a feeling of acceptance and belonging by organizing birthday parties for all learners and cultural events where they would participate as a group.

2.5.2.4 Esteem needs

Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) state that to help satisfy love and belongingness needs, as well as self-esteem needs, a learner will want to feel loved and cared about. Furthermore, Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) argue that teachers must ensure that learners know that they are valued as individuals. Burleson and Thoron (2017:2) note that teachers must take advantage of every opportunity to reinforce positive learner behaviour and self-esteem. Learners must know that the teacher appreciates their efforts in the learning environment (Burleson & Thoron, 2017:2).

2.5.2.5 Self-actualization

The teacher can offer challenging and meaningful assignments to encourage the learners' maximum creativity and innovation. The teacher should also encourage learners to enter into competitions such as drama, debate, cultural dance, Science Olympiads and other innovation competitions.

2.6 CRITICISMS OF MASLOW'S MOTIVATION THEORY

Despite the popularity of Maslow's motivation theory and its wide used in psychology, education and other fields, there are still some flaws and limitations to the theory. Maslow's motivation theory is criticised for unscientific methodology used in formulating his theory. Smith (2003:35) points out that Maslow based his theory on clinical encounters, using his experience of personality motivation cases he had heard. McLeod (2018:n.k.) indicates that Maslow formulated the characteristics of self-actualized individuals from understanding a qualitative method called biographical analysis. Hence, Ramsay (2019:4) argues that experimentation does not feature in his research methods. Ramsay (2019:4) also notes that Maslow relies on the use of unstructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and diary accounts.

Maslow is also criticized for the sample used in formulating his theory. McLeod (2018:n.k.) claims that Maslow looked at the biographies and writings of 18 people he identified as being self-actualized. McLeod (2018:n.k.) notes that from these sources, Maslow developed a list of qualities that seemed characteristics of his specific group of people, as opposed to humanity in general.

Heylighen (1992:40) notes that in academic psychology Maslow has been criticized for his lack of scientific approach. McLeod (2019:n.k.) argues that from scientific perspective, there are numerous problems with Maslow's approach. Firstly, McLeod (2019:n.k.) states that it could be argued that biographical analysis as a method is extremely subjective as it is based entirely on the opinion of the researcher. Personal opinion is always prone to bias, which reduces validity. Secondly, McLeod (2019:n.k.) argues that Maslow's biographical analysis focused on biased sample of self-actualized individuals, prominently limited to highly educated white males.

Maslow's theory is also criticised for the lack of testability. McLeod (2019:n.k.) argues that it is extremely difficult to empirically test Maslow's concepts of self-actualisation in a way that causal relationships can be established. Smith (2003:35) observes that there is a lack of rigour in Maslow's writings, an absence of standard definitions of constructs, and no discussion of any guides for empirical verification. Furthermore, Smith (2003:35) argues that there are problems with testing the theory through

replication because Maslow did not detail the deductive steps, he took to form the theory.

Maslow's view of human nature is unrealistic and has limitations. Neher (1991:92) observes that Maslow believed that each of us is endowed at birth with a complete, and, to some extent, unique complement of needs that, allowed expression by our environment, will foster our growth in a healthy direction. Neher (1991:92) argues that few psychologists would disagree that our lower needs in general such as hunger, need for intimacy, need for shelter, need for drinking water and so on are innate. Neher (1991:92) claims that many psychologists would question whether, in general, the higher needs (intellectual, aesthetic) are innate as Maslow claimed. However, Neher (1991:92) argues that although there is good evidence for the innate nature of some of the higher needs, others, such as aesthetic motivation, are probably largely shaped by cultural experience.

Maslow is criticised for his tendency to downgrade the role of environment in forming the human psyche (Neher, 1991:2). Furthermore, Neher (1991:92) notes that Maslow believed that, given basic support and nurturance from the environment, our inborn needs are sufficient to foster our psychological growth in a health direction. Neher (1991:93) argues that if the most culture can do, or should do, is provide for basic needs and freedom of expression, then most of the structure of cultures around the world must be viewed as potentially disruptive. Furthermore, Neher (1991:93) argues that child-rearing practices may conflict with innate needs of children to develop in directions other than those sanctioned by the culture.

The structure of human needs proposed by Maslow has some flaws and limitations. Neher (1991:96) states that Maslow believed that our needs function in a hierarchical fashion, so that our basic needs (for food, etc.) are prepotent, that in generally they must be satisfied before we can feel "free" of them and move to satisfy our higher needs. Smith (2003:29) argues that every stage in the progression is qualitatively different from one before, for example safety does not necessarily follow from having a full belly. Neher (1991:98) argues that no one denies that the need satisfaction leads to a temporary decrease in the strength of needs, but most needs are cyclical, in that they are satisfied for a time, only to resurface later.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter started by highlighting the motivational theories, namely, behavioural theories, psychodynamic theories, social cognitive learning theories, drive theories, incentive theories and evolutionary theories. The purpose of highlighting these theories is to contextualise Maslow's motivation theory. This is followed by the detailed discussion of the humanistic theories as the foundation of the Maslow's motivation theory. The chapter also discussed the implications and application of Maslow's motivation theory in school settings. Lastly, the chapter presented the strengths and criticisms of Maslow's motivation theory.

The next chapter, which is the literature review, will discuss the intervention programmes aimed at providing care and support for orphans and vulnerable children. Orphans and vulnerable children are found all over the world. Therefore, the chapter will discuss the intervention strategies from a global perspective down to the district level. The chapter will also discuss the key stakeholders, that is, from individuals to organizations that have an interest in mitigating the impact of children's vulnerability. Furthermore, the chapter will look at important events, such as conferences and seminars that dealt with the phenomenon. Lastly, the chapter will examine policies and programmes put in place at various levels aimed at mitigating the impact of the phenomenon.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphaned and vulnerable learners in Gert Sibande District has not been done since its inception in 2015. Monitoring and evaluation are critical elements in determining and improving the quality of intervention programmes. Monasch, Spring and Mahy (2005:10) state that tracking the progress and effectiveness of efforts to support orphans and other vulnerable children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS should provide an evaluation of what is working and what is not working. Furthermore, Monasch, Spring and Mahy (2005:10) state that evaluation results can be used to inform future programme design, promoting a decision to replicate an effective intervention in other areas or discontinue an intervention because it is expensive and not making any difference. Shenk, Michaelis, Sapiano, Brown and Weiss (2010:335) argue that developing and scaling up appropriate interventions require research guided by the input of community members and stakeholders to ensure that programs are achieving their desired goals without harming children or jeopardizing their rights.

This chapter provides a background to the prevalence of OVC. Thereafter, the chapter reviews literature on the challenges associated with OVC which led to the conceptualisation of the Learner Support Agent Programme. The chapter also reviews what is being done to mitigate the impact of orphaned children's vulnerability. This includes OVC-related events held between 1994 and 2002 in various countries that shaped the thinking and frameworks to respond to the phenomenon, international and national frameworks for actions that guide responses to OVC, principles to guide responses; international and national responses to OVC. The chapter will also review literature on the shortcomings of approaches to deal with orphaned and vulnerable children. Lastly, the chapter review literature that evaluates intervention programmes.

3.2 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

According to Holmes, Bertozzi, Bloom, Jha, Gelband, DeMaria and Harton (2017:5), HIV/AIDS, the worst human pandemic since the 1918 influenza epidemic, has accounted for more than 25 million deaths since it was first identified in 1981 and it has hit sub-Saharan Africa the hardest. Danforth, Granich, Wiedeman, Baxi and Padian (2017:29) note that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the 1990s reached more than 30 percent among adults in many sub-Saharan African cities, and no accessible, effective treatment was available. Roser and Ritchie (2019:n.k.) argue that in 2016 more than 36 million people had HIV globally, 72 percent were in the sub-Saharan Africa region. Consequently, there are more OVC due to AIDS-related deaths in the sub-Saharan Africa region. Mishra and Van Assche (2008:1) argue that the adverse effects of the AIDS epidemic are felt most severely in some of the world's poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where one of its consequences has been an upsurge in the number of orphaned children. However, Holmes et al. (2017:5) argue that the tide is beginning to turn as life-extending Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) and preventative interventions are scaled up in many settings. According to UNAIDS (2019:2), AIDS-related deaths have been reduced by more than 56% since the peak in 2004. UNAIDS (2019:2) notes that in 2018, around 770 000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses worldwide, compared to 1.7 million in 2004 and 1.2 million in 2010. Despite all the interventions that are made to fight the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, the challenges remain with the orphans and vulnerable children who are left behind by parents who die due to AIDS/AIDS-related illnesses.

HIV/AIDS is not the only pandemic responsible for deaths of many people. Kavak (2014:10) notes that war, invasion, natural disasters and similar crises are reasons for children losing their parents. According Kavak (2014:10), the hot conflict regions are places that are home to the highest number of orphans. Kavak (2014:10) notes that the Syrian crisis has taken a death toll of over 200 000 and more than 1 million Syrian children are living as refugees in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, Kavak (2014:10) argues that the ongoing war causes more children to be orphaned and the human crisis to deepen. Bakir (2018:7) claims that the number of children who have lost their parents in conflicts ravaging all corners of the globe, from the Middle East to Asia and Africa is in millions. Countries that host a high number of orphans due to

conflicts include amongst others; Afghanistan, The Republic of Central Africa, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, Nigeria, Iraq and Palestine in Middle East (Kavak, 2014:11).

According to Kavak (2014:13), natural disasters are one of the leading factors contributing to the increasing number of orphan population in the World. Natural disaster such as tsunami killed thousands of people in Haiyan, Philippines, Japan and South East Asia, resulted to a number of orphans (Kavak, 2014:13). Earthquake killed a thousand of people in Haiti, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Kavak (2014:13) notes that floods that happened in Pakistan in 2010 affected the lives of more than 20 million people, caused 2 000 people die and destroyed 12 000 villages. Furthermore, Kavak (2014:13) notes that the drought that happened in 2011 in East African countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya affected 13.5 million people. Kavak (2014:13) argues that as a result of natural disasters which affect the lives of thousands, millions of people and take high death toll, thousands of children lose their parents and become orphans.

3.3 CONSEQUENCES AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH OVC

The loss of a parent or both parents is traumatic for any child. The consequences and challenges associated with the loss of parents are many and varied. Linda and Foster (2006:29) note that the problems facing children and their families living in communities affected by AIDS are many and varied. Balso-Sangian (2015:384) observes that trauma from death of parents and the loss of parental guidance and support may lead to the child underperforming in school and in turn, affecting the decision to attend school. These children face challenges of coping with the consequences of being orphans. Nayak (2014:8) states that when children lose their parents at an early age and become either orphans or fatherless or motherless, they often have no one to take care of them. Some end up staying with relatives and in the orphanage or in the community. Baldo-Sangian (2015:) asserts that these orphans lose not only the attention, care and love that parent gave them but also access to basic resources such as housing and land.

3.3.1 Diminishing Household Income

According to Mishra and Van Assche (2008:1), parental HIV-related illness and death often substantially diminish household resources due to treatment costs and job loss, which often affect children's health care and nutrition status. Datta (2009:3) notes that the psychological trauma experienced by orphaned children begins way before their parents' die of AIDS. Mishra and Van Assche (2008:1) further state that children of HIV-positive parents suffer from the trauma of sickness and eventual death of a parent and associated hardship. Furthermore, Mishra and Van Assche (2008:1) argue that the burden of caring for a sick parent often falls on children, and many are forced to drop out of school and take on adult roles as a result. Similarly, Datta (2009:3) argues that an increasing number of psychologically traumatized children, especially girls, are being pulled out of the school system to provide care for ailing parents and siblings, while boys are supposed to take up the responsibility of the father when he falls sick. Therefore, Mahlase and Ntombela (2011:194) assert that HIV/AIDS affect the socio-economic status of affected households and renders young children vulnerable as their physiological and educational needs take a back seat.

3.3.2 Property Disposition

Only a few people in poor communities make an official will, so that when they die, their children could inherit their property. This poses a risk that unscrupulous family members may take away the property from orphaned children (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:11). Datta (2009:12) argues that upon the death of the parents, orphans could be disinherited of household property by unscrupulous relatives. Similarly, Setswe and Skinner (2008:6) state that after their parents' death, children often lose their right to family land or house. The governments of many countries in sub-Saharan Africa ensured that orphans' properties are secured and administered for their best interest (Datta, 2009:12, UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:11-12).

3.3.3 Material Needs of Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Mishra and Van Assche (2008:1) state that the death of even one parent could force changes in living arrangement, displacement, and availability of resources for schooling, health care, and food for children. Datta (2009:4) observe that even where school fees have been abolished families have difficulty in meeting school related costs such as uniforms, books and materials. Furthermore, Datta (2009:4) notes that OVC experience food insecurity, shortage of clothing and inability to pay for medical care and are exposed to myriad of ill-health problems including malnutrition, malaria and reproductive health care needs, which force them to enter into the highly exploited labour market resulting to their inability to continue with education. UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:12-13) note that studies found that OVC with chronically ill caregivers in Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe were worse off with regard to possession of basic goods such as blankets, shoes and extra clothes than other children.

3.3.4 Separation of Siblings

Datta (2009:3) notes that immediately after losing both parents almost all OVC end up being separated from their siblings. UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:16) argue that orphaned siblings may be distributed in different homes as way of sharing the responsibility of taking care for them. Sometimes OVC are taken in by extended family members of those relatives who can afford to take care of them (Datta, 2009:3) Furthermore, Datta (2009:3) argues that OVC are often passed from one household to another household, and each time the child moves from one home to another home, the likelihood of abuse increases. Datta (2009:3) notes that usually orphaned children are not consulted or given any chance to choose the kind of relative they would wish to live with.

According to UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:16), in Zambia, 30 percent OVC were separated from some or all of their siblings under the age of 18, while 15 percent of children not classified as OVC were separated from their siblings. UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:116) note that research from studies in Zambia found that the separation of siblings was a significant determinant of emotional distress for orphans

in an urban sample. Datta (2009:3-4) claims that the stress of losing parents and then separation from brothers and sisters increases the sense of uncertainty and insecurity about their future as well as reduces their ability to cope with new external environment.

3.3.5 Survival, Health and Nutrition

The survival of a young child between the ages 0 to 3 is at stake when his/her mother passes on (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:19). Children of this age range are 3.9 times more likely to die during the first two years after a mother's death (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:19). In most cases when the mother is HIV-positive, her young children have a markedly higher risk of dying because they are jeopardised of having been infected with HIV in utero, during childbirth or through breastfeeding (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:19).

UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:20) note that some studies found that when orphans grow older, they face higher risks than non-orphans of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Furthermore, UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:20) note that two studies in Zimbabwe documented a higher rate of reproductive health problems among girls who are orphans than among non-orphan girls. UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:20) add that in one large population survey, 15- to 18-year-old girls who were orphaned and girls with infected parents were found to have higher rates of HIV infections, symptoms of other sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy than non-orphan girls.

Household food security is an important indicator of long-term nutritional prospects (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:21). The study of households in poor suburbs of Dar ES Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, found that orphans were more likely to go to bed hungry than non-orphans (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:21).

UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:21) note that underfunding, lack of capacity and migration of medical professionals out of the region are some of the reasons for poor health care systems in Africa. In areas with high morbidity due to AIDS, health facilities can become overwhelmed with patients while at the same time health

providers are getting sick and dying of AIDS (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:21). Therefore, health care, nutritional and survival prospects of OVC and all children in these areas are at risk (UNICEF UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:21).

3.3.6 Extended Family Under Pressure

When both parents die, usually an extended family member takes over the care and support of the children. Extended family members play a critical role in providing care and support for OVC in the event of parents dying in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa. (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:17). These extended family members face increasing burden as adults continue to die and the number of orphans and vulnerable children increases. Ganga and Maphalala (2013:50) argue that in South Africa families and communities are currently unable to cope with the effects of HIV and AIDS, especially in the areas of care and support for OVC. The capacity of the extended family members, households and communities is stretched to a breaking point due to the increase in the number of OVC (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:17). Similarly, Kirangu and Chepcheng (2014:736) note that HIV undermines the caring capacity of families and communities by deepening the poverty due to the high cost of medical treatment and funerals.

3.3.7 Child-headed Household

Ganga and Maphalala (2013:50) note that HIV/AIDS is a significant cause of orphanhood and that when a parent is infected with HIV, the probability that the spouse could also be infected is very high, meaning that children face a high risk of losing both parents over a very short period of time, resulting in double orphanhood. If there is no member from extended family who can come in and take care and support the children, (Ganga & Maphalala, 2012:50) the OVC are compelled to form a new family structure, the CHH. However, Schenk, Ndhlovu, Tembo, Nsune, Nkhata and RAPIDS (n.d.:3) argue that the existence of child-headed households does not necessarily indicate total abandonment by family members but may result from relatives not wanting children to move in with them, children not wanting to be split up from siblings, or children being unable to move from their family home to prevent property grabbing.

Children in these situations cannot earn sufficient money, protect themselves, deal with the legal system or make good food decisions (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:17). Mwona and Pillay (2016:83) note that vulnerable children from child headed households are burden with domestic and economic responsibilities, which in turn affect participation in education and succeeding in school. Baldo-Sangian (2015:386) argues that most orphans miss parents who would have nurtured, guided them in doing their assignments, projects and homework. When they come back from school, no one has cooked for them. Baldo-Sangian (2015:386) states that they have no one to share bad and/or good experiences that they may have at school every day.

3.3.8 Missed Opportunities in Education

Missed opportunities in education include lack of enrolment, interruption in schooling and poor performance while at school (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR (2006:21). OVC may miss education opportunities because caregivers may not afford the cost of schooling and they may be required to leave school to pursue economic activities in order to supplement household income (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:21). School enrolment rates for OVC differs significantly compared to non-OVC across countries (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:21).

Fleming (2015:5) argues that despite the role of socio-economic status may play over orphan status in education attainment, the challenges experienced by OVC made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS influences their ability to enroll, attend and succeed in school. This is seen in the existing pervasiveness of stigma and discrimination of HIV positive children and children living in households affected by HIV/AIDS. UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:21) argue that there is a significant gender gap in many countries where girls enrolled less often than boys, but this gap does not appear to be more prominent among orphans.

There is also a disparity in terms of continuity in schooling and appropriate grade age as more OVC are disadvantaged in most countries (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:21). Baldo-Sangian (2015:384) notes that orphans are likely to repeat a school grade because they experience a parental death and its consequences. Furthermore, Baldo-Sangian (2015:384) this might lead to an interruption of human capital

accumulation and the orphan's educational progress may be negatively affected. A longitudinal study conducted in South Africa showed that maternal orphans were at lower education levels than other children of the same age and compared to other non-orphans with whom they live (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:22).

UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:22) note that missed opportunities for education may begin prior to the death of a parent and even before the onset of illness. A population survey from Kenya found that children of HIV positive parents were significantly less likely to attend school than children of HIV negative parents (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:22). Furthermore, UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:22) note that research from rural Tanzania found that children with ill parents were more likely to have their schooling interrupted and to spend fewer hours in school prior to the death of their parents than other children.

A determining factor for orphans' schooling is the relationship between the child and the head of the household (UNICWF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:22). On one hand, where the relationship between the child and the head of the household is not so close, the orphan may be discriminated in terms of care and support. Baldo-Sangian (2015:384) notes that orphans might fall short compared to non-orphans for discrimination from other relatives or household members where the investment in the orphaned child is not taken into consideration. Furthermore, Baldo-Sangian (2015:384) notes that orphans are often treated as second class members of the household and that discrimination can involve everything such as food, education, abuse and being forced to work. On the other hand, UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:22) note that the closer the biological tie, the greater the chance the child will go to school consistently, regardless of poverty level. The closest relatives, including mothers and grandparents, make substantial financial sacrifice and other commitments to ensure their children attend school (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:22).

3.3.9 Psychological and Emotional Well-being

Baldo-Sangian (2015:384) notes that orphaned children undergo hardships which may affect their psychological and emotional balance. The psychological and emotional

well-being of children orphaned and made vulnerable by AIDS are threatened by several pressures (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:22).

UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:22) note that children in households affected by AIDS witness or in some cases are care for their parents or other caregivers who die of AIDS. UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:22) argue that this painful process is often compounded by the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and of being an orphan. Karangu and Chepchieng (2014:736) argue that these orphans have psychological problems such as isolation by other children because of the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:22) note that children who lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS are often rejected by their friends and schoolmates or relatives. Furthermore, Karangu and Chepchieng (2014:736) note that this may result in low self-esteem and self-pity among orphaned children. Karangu and Chepchieng (2014:736) argue that high self-esteemed pupils unlike low self-esteemed pupils take more responsibility for their academic success than for their failures.

The lack material, health care and access to education threaten the psychological and emotional well-being of a child (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:22-24). Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38) note that orphaned children are more likely to be malnourished, more likely to drop out of school and have limited access to health social services as well as being prone to exploitation. Oyedele, Chikwature and Mangange (2016:38) argue that these challenges create emotional stress making it difficult for such pupils to concentrate and learn in classroom.

3.3.10 Low Rates of Birth Registration

Birth registration is an important requirement to access services for all children in many countries, however, many OVC are unregistered (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:24). Therefore, it is critically for OVC to register their births, both as means of identification and requirement for obtaining access to public services and welfare (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:24). In sub-Saharan Africa, approximately two thirds of births go unregistered (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:24). Unregistered orphans experience challenges accessing services, such as, social

grants, health care, education and other benefits which registered children are entitled to in South Africa.

3.4 OVC-RELATED EVENTS FROM 1994 TO 2002

Several international and regional events were held in various countries from 1994 to 2002 in various countries which shaped the thinking and planning around OVC as documented by Smart (2003:13). Some of the most significant events as documented by Smart (2003:13) are the following:

- A workshop was held in Zambia in 1994 focusing on support to children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. The Lusaka Declaration was adopted which entailed several issues, namely, the need to assess the magnitude of the problem, the place of institutional care, the need for material and financial support for affected families, survival skills and vocational training for OVC, and their rights to basic education.
- A discussion was held by the UN on children living with AIDS in 1998. It was resolved that to uphold the rights contained in the Convention of the Rights of Children, a right-centred approach was required.
- A conference on Children in Distress (CINDI) was held in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa in June 1998. Representatives from various countries to the conference committed to set up task teams in their respective countries to deal with OVC.
- An African meeting on OVC was held in Lusaka, Zambia in November 2000, in which countries made commitments and plans to address the issues of the growing number of OVC in their countries.
- The UNGASS was convened in June 2001 to review and address the problem of HIV/AIDS, as well as to secure a global commitment to enhancing coordination and intensifying efforts. The convention resulted in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which includes a specific section regarding a set of policies and strategy actions on OVC for signatory states.
- In 2002, the UN Special Session on Children resulted in the World Fit for Children Declaration.
- In April 2002, in the spirit of Pietermaritzburg and Lusaka meetings, a regional workshop on OVC was held in Yamoussoukro, Code d'Ivoire for Central and

West African countries with representatives from 21 countries. Country representatives committed to setting up task teams in their countries to develop action plans to ensure the realisation of the targets pertaining to OVC set forth in the UNGASS declaration.

3.5 OVC LEGAL AND FRAMEWORKS

OVC is a worldwide phenomenon. Therefore, responses require the involvement of international organizations to local community and individuals. Bojer, Lamont, Dlamini and Hassan (2007:15) argue that no one group, or actor can resolve the OVC problem on their own, therefore, a wide variety of role players should be involved and collaborate. Role players such as international organizations, governments, business and others do not operate in a vacuum, therefore, this requires legal and policy frameworks within which these role players can operate. Smart (2003:9) notes that HIV/AIDS and human rights international guidelines define the parameters of a right-based, effective response to the epidemic in terms of establishing appropriate governmental institutional responsibilities, implementing law reform and support services, and promoting a supportive environment for groups vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and for those living with HIV/AIDS. This part of the study discusses the legal and policy frameworks for OVC responses, both at International and national levels.

3.5.1 International Frameworks for Actions for OVC

Smart (2003:9) notes that there are several international conventions, goals and other instruments that define the framework for action for OVC. Below a few examples are highlighted.

Furthermore, Smart (2003:9) indicates that in September 1990, the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection, and Development of Children was agreed at the World Summit for Children. Smart (2003:9) adds that signatories committed to a 10-point program to protect the rights of children and to improve their lives.

UNICEF, UNAIDS and PEPFAR (2006:27) note that a large gathering of world leaders adopted the United Nation Millennium Declaration in September 2000, an ambitious

agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives across the globe. A number of Millennium Development Goals were identified, some of which are relevant to the rights of all children, and in particular those that relate to education, namely, Universal primary education-by 2015, children, boys and girls, able to complete a full course of primary schooling; achieve gender Equality-Girls and boys have equal access to all levels of education (Smart, 2003:9).

Many nations have committed to the goals for Education for All (EFA) which were set out at the World Conference on Education for all held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and subsequently reviewed at the meeting in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, where 164 governments committed to achieving education for all by 2015 or earlier (Smart, 2003:9).

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS boasted leadership, awareness and support in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR, 2006:27). Smart (2003:10) notes that UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS set specific targets for all signatory nations. According to UNICEF, UNAIDS (2004:12), as part of a long-term response to the growing number of orphans and vulnerable children, concrete targets were set, these targets include amongst others the following:

- Developing and implementing national policies and strategies to build and strengthen governmental, family, and community capacities to provide a supportive environment for OVC infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- To ensure that everyone enjoys all human rights through the promotion of an active and visible policy of de-stigmatisation of OVC made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.
- To urge the international community, particularly donor countries, civil society as well as the private sector to complement effectively national programmes to support programmes for children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in affected regions, in countries at high risk and to direct special assistance to sub-Saharan Africa.

UNESCO (2016:3) points out that the world has made remarkable progress in education since 2000, when the six Education for All (EFA) Goals and the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) were established. However, UNESCO (2016:3) argues that those goals had not been reached by 2015 deadline and continued action was needed to complete the unfinished agenda. Therefore, a new declaration was necessary. Hence, according to UNESCO (2016:22), the Incheon Declaration was adopted on 21 May 2015 at World Education Forum (WEF 2015) held in Incheon, Republic of Korea. UNESCO (2016:3) notes that Incheon Declaration constitutes the commitment of the education community to SDG4-Education 2030 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development. UNESCO (2016:3) further state that the Framework for Action outlines how to translate into practice, at country/national, regional and global level, and the commitment made in Incheon. UNESCO (2016:3) adds that it aims at mobilizing all countries and partners around the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on education and its targets, and proposes ways of implementing, coordinating, financing and monitoring SDG 4-Education 2030 to ensure inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In 2002, a model framework was established called the Children on the Brink 2002. According to Smart (2003:11), Children on the Brink presents five strategies for interventions, which have been widely accepted. UNICEF et al. (2004:14) argue that pursuing these strategies within the context of national development plans will be key to the achievement of goals established at the Millennium Summit and at the UN Special Session on HIV/AIDS. UNICEF et al. (2004:14) note that these strategies are to be implemented simultaneously with efforts to prevent the further spread of HIV, the loss of parents to AIDS and other causes of child vulnerability. These strategies are outlined briefly below:

a) Strengthening and supporting the capacity of families to protect and care for their children

Extended families are the best hope for OVC, though extended families would require support from outside sources for immediate survival needs and in the longer term (UNICEF et al., 2004:15). UNICEF et al. (2004:15) note that families require a combination of economic material and psychosocial support. UNICEF et al. (2004:15) add that family members living with HIV or AIDS need support that will enable them to live longer, better and in greater dignity.

There are six areas that are critical for intervention in order to capacitate families to cope with the support for OVC (UNICEF et al., 2004:15). Firstly, improving the economic capacity of household. Gaigbe-Togbe and Wienberger (2003:29) note that the impact of households and families begins as soon as a member of a household starts suffering from HIV-related diseases. This may include the loss of income and household production of the family member, in particular if he/she is the breadwinner (Gaigbe-Togbe & Weinberger, 2003:29). The strength to protect the rights and ensure the well-being of their children depends largely on the ability of a household to meet immediate needs, ensure a steady income and maintain the integrity of its economic safety net (UNICEF et al., 2004:15). According to UNICEF et al. (2004:15), possible interventions should enhance the economic resiliency of the household. Interventions in the form of conditional cash transfer, insurance mechanisms, direct subsidies and material assistance can help alleviate the urgent needs of the most vulnerable households (UNICEF et al., 2003:15). UNICEF et al. (2004:15) adds that examples of long-term interventions include introducing access to financial services offered by micro-finance institutions; creating linkages between micro enterprises and more profitable markets or more economical sources for purchasing new materials; and improving agricultural efficiency.

Furthermore, UNICEF et al. (2004:15) recommend that older children and young people should take part in planning activities designed to improve household economic capacity. In this way, OVC would be encouraged to be self-sufficient and help to protect them from harmful child labour and future economic exploitation (UNICEF et al., 2004:15). The specific strategy that can be employed to support household economic activities will depend on the local context and the needs of individual household (UNICEF et al., 2004:16). However, UNICEF et al. (2004:16) state that criteria for participation should be based on economic vulnerability. UNICEF et al. (2004:16) note that programming strategies should be those most likely to attract the poorer socio-economic strata in each area.

Secondly, there should be provision of psychosocial support to affected children and their caregivers. To address psychological needs of OVC does not necessarily require separate programmes, instead a comprehensive programme incorporating relevant measures can be utilised (UNICEF et al., 2004:16). In some instances, group

approaches, peer support and individual counselling are needed (UNICEF et al., 2004:16). Institutions such as schools, social welfare programmes, faith-based organizations and other existing structures with the potential to reach AID-affected families in their communities can offer much needed support (UNICEF et al., 2004:16). Furthermore, professionals such as teachers, health care workers and others can be trained to identify signs of distress and to take appropriate action (UNICEF et al., 2004:16).

Thirdly, strengthening and supporting child-care capacities. As many parents die prematurely, increasingly, children themselves are heading up households (UNICEF, et al., 2014:17). Therefore, it is essential that these new caregivers from child-headed households should have access to social welfare services through schools, health centres, pre-schools (UNICEF et al., 2004:17). According to UNICEF et al. (2004:17), emphasis should be placed on integrated early childhood development of children of pre-school age, especially through efforts that focus on food and nutrition, health and development, psychosocial needs, day care and other key areas. Furthermore, UNICEF et al. (2004:17) note that activities to strengthen and support the “coping skills” and emotional resources of new caregivers are also important.

Fourthly, succession planning should be supported. UNICEF et al. (2004:17) state that there is an urgent need to significantly expand activities geared to helping parents plan for their children’s future. According to UNICEF et al. (2004:17), this includes guidance in disclosing their illness, comforting children in their grief, making a will and other arrangements, such as identifying an appropriate caregiver, and the preparation and passing on of legal documents, such as birth certificates and title deeds to land. UNICEF et al. (2004:17) argue that planning in advance will help parents living with HIV or AIDS ensure a better future for their children and alleviate a major source of emotional distress and anxiety.

Fifthly, there should be efforts to prolong lives for HIV-positive parents. If ill parents are helped to become healthier and live longer, this would benefit their children in a long run (UNICEF et al., 2004:19). This can be accomplished through appropriate treatment and by supporting their care at home (UNICEF et al., 2004:18). UNICEF et al. (2004:18) argue that the longer an HIV-infected parent stays healthy, the better the

outcome for the child. UNICEF et al. (2004:18) note that providing a supportive environment that encourages parents to test for HIV and seek treatment is fundamental.

Lastly, young people should be empowered with survival skills. One of the negative consequences of passing away of parents prematurely, is the fact that skills are no longer passed down from one generation to another (UNICEF et al., 2004:18). UNICEF et al. (2004:18) argue that in the absence of parental guidance and support, adolescents and young people are forced to take responsibilities for which they may not be prepared. Cluver, Gardner and Operario (2009:732) argue that AID-orphaned children may experience pressures to assume adult responsibilities, such as caregiving or entering formal or informal labour sectors, which contribute to lower levels of school enrolment and attendance among AIDS-orphaned children compared with other groups. Therefore, it is essential that young people are provided with training to empower them with skills in areas of household management, caring for young siblings, budgeting and accessing services (UNICEF et al., 2004:18).

b) Mobilize and strengthen community-based responses

UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNAIDS (2002:13) note that the community is the second safety net for vulnerable children and households. According to UNICEF et al. (2004:19), care and support for OVC comes from nuclear families surviving with community assistance, in some instance extended families can cater for increased number OVC with community assistance, and, in extreme cases, communities are caring for children in child-headed households or with no family involvement. UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNAIDS (2002:13) argue that communities that have organized themselves to protect and care for vulnerable children can determine which children and households are most vulnerable, and channel local or outside resources to those most in need. Furthermore, UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAIDS (2002:13) note that some community responses are ad hoc, while others have been initiated by NGOs or religious bodies, often with the active support of government ministries. Community-based responses include amongst others, the following, namely; engaging local leaders and their communities in creating mechanisms to monitor vulnerable children and households; facilitating community dialogue on HIV to reduce stigma and discrimination; organizing cooperative family support activities (such as day care,

youth clubs, relief labour for ill adults, food assistance and psychological support); and creating community care options for children without any family support (UNICEF, UNAIDS & PEPFAR. 2006:29).

c) Strengthening the capacity of children and young people to meet their own needs

According to UNAIDS (2003:3), children who have been orphaned by AIDS are frequently shunned by society, denied affection and care, and are left with a few resources. As a result, many of these children drop out of school for economic and other reasons (UNAIDS, 2003:3). UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) note that girls are often the first to drop out, which not only undermines their own health and well-being, but also that of the next generation. UNAIDS (2003:3) argues that girls sometimes suffer from malnutrition and ill health and are at risk of exploitation and abuse, increasing the chances that they, too, will contract HIV/AIDS.

UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) state that keeping vulnerable children in school is the first line of defense. Therefore, efforts should be made to keep these children in school until they complete Grade 12. According to UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14), this provides them a secure environment to learn skills that will help them provide for their own needs as they grow into adulthood. According to UNAIDS (2003:4), education can leverage significant improvements in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children by conferring knowledge and life skills. Furthermore, UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) assert that interventions must address key factors that fuel the dropout rate: school expenses, caring for relatives, and compensating for loss income.

d) Ensure that governments develop appropriate policies, including legal and programmatic frameworks, as well as essential services for the most vulnerable children

Though families have primary responsibilities to provide care and protection for children, national governments have the ultimate responsibility to protect children and ensure their wellbeing (UNICEF et al., 2004:24). Many countries (governments) have signed international agreements and national laws obliging them act (UNAIDS, UNICEF & USAID, 2002:14). To meet these obligations, countries that are committed

should be supported with a broad range of multi-sectoral actions (UNICEF et al., 2004:24). UNICEF et al. (2004:24) assert that no single ministry has sole jurisdiction over the issue surrounding OVC. Thus, UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) emphasize that the governmental response to children affected by HIV/AIDS must be multi-sectoral and integrated with basic health, education, and development programs. According to UNAIDS, UNICAF and USAID (2002:14), strategies for governments to pursue include: development of national plans to guide programming, strengthening, and developing child law and protection services; and strengthening delivery of education, health, and other essential services. UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) note that these efforts require widespread governmental collaboration with international organizations, donors, NGOs, religious groups, community associations and the private sector.

e) Raise awareness within societies to create an environment that enables support for children affected by HIV/AIDS

Stigma and discrimination are associated with rejection, hostility, isolation and human rights violation (UNICEF et al., 2004:26). Children orphaned due to AIDS-related deaths are victims of this rejection. There is a need to reduce stigma and discrimination of orphans and vulnerable children by increasing access to information, challenging myths and transforming the public perception of HIV/AIDS (UNICEF et al., 2004:26). According to UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14), increasing awareness among policymakers, community leaders, organizations, and the public about the impact of HIV/AIDS on children and families helps generate a broadly shared sense of responsibility for action. UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) note that effective public information and social mobilization can accelerate change so that HIV/AIDS evolves from their problem to our problem.

UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) state that a comprehensive situation analysis, particularly with broad participation from stakeholders, can provide much needed information to drive such mobilization. According to UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14), active involvement of the media, faith-based groups, and key opinion leaders is important. UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2002:14) recommended that journalists should discuss the national scope of the problem and various solutions,

while religious networks should be influential in urging a compassionate response to people impacted by HIV/AIDS.

- **Principles to Guide Responses**

Smart (2003:12) indicates that a set of principles to guide action for OVC emerge from consultations during and after international AIDS conference. UNICEF et al. (2004:27) note that other principles have been put forward by various organizations working in areas of support for orphans and vulnerable children. Table 3.1. below provides a set of guiding principles for OVC responses.

Table 3.1: Guiding Principles for OVC Responses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening the protection and care of OVC within their extended families and communities. ▪ Strengthening the economic coping capacities of families and communities. ▪ Enhance the capacity of families and communities to respond to the psychosocial needs of orphans, vulnerable children, and their caregivers. ▪ Link HIV/AIDS prevention activities, care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, and efforts to support orphans and other vulnerable children. ▪ Focus on the most vulnerable children and communities, not only those orphaned by AIDS. ▪ Give particular attention to the roles of boys and girls and men and women, and address gender discrimination. ▪ Ensure the full involvement of young people as part of the solution. ▪ Strengthen schools and ensure access to education. ▪ Reduce stigma and discrimination. ▪ Accelerate learning and information exchange. ▪ Strengthen partners and partnership at all levels and build coalition among key stakeholders. ▪ Ensure that external support strengthens and does not undermine community initiative and motivation.

Source: Adapted from Smart (2003:12)

3.5.2 National Frameworks for Action for OVC

Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:13) state that international and regional instruments oblige states to realize the rights of all young children and youths, including the right to basic health care, nutrition, social security and education. South Africa is one of the countries that committed itself to these obligations. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:13) argue that South Africa's commitment to fulfil the rights of all children manifests in a range of domestic measures, which enable resource allocation. In South Africa, the rights of all children and youths are recognized through the Constitution and several policy frameworks.

The South African government has responded positively to its international and regional commitments by developing several integrated policies and plans of action which recognise and seek to promote the realisation of a comprehensive package of rights and essential services necessary to ensure the care and support for children affected by HIV and AIDS (Martin, Mathambo & Richter, 2011:19). Similarly, Chereni and Mahat (n.d.:14), state that in response to the common needs of children in South Africa, and in keeping with the supreme laws of the country and international obligations, legislative instruments have been developed. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:14) add that several multidisciplinary policy frameworks and programmes have been developed to address the needs of all children and young people in South Africa. For example, there are two pieces of legislations, namely, the South African School Act of 1996, and the Children's Act of 2005, which aim to fulfil children's rights, including the right to basic health care, social security, nutrition and education (Chereni & Mahati, n.d.:14). Some of these policy frameworks and programmes that express the South African government's commitment to fulfil the rights of all children are listed in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Policy Framework and Programmes

- The Constitution of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996).
- The South African School Act (Act No. 84 of 1996).
- The Children’s Act (Act No.38 of 2005).
- Policy framework on Orphans and other Children made Vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, South Africa.
- White paper of Social Welfare of 1997.
- White paper 6: Special needs and inclusive education.
- National Development Plan 2030 of South Africa.
- National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs 2017-2022.
- National Policy on HIV, TB and STIs for learners, Educators, School Support Staff and Officials in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Basic Education Sector.
- Integrated School Health Policy 2012.
- National Integrated Plan on Early Childhood Development (ECD).
- National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

In principle, these policies and programmes seek to provide children (and their families) affected by HIV and AIDS with a range of material and psycho-social support (Martin, Mathambo & Richter, 2011:19). The South Africa Schools’ Act of 1996, (5) (3) (a) stipulates that no learner may be refused admission to a public school on the grounds that his or her parents are unable to pay or has not paid the school fees determined by the governing body. Parents who cannot afford to pay school fees can apply for exemption from paying school fees. In addition, the government has introduced a No fee policy in quintile 1, 2 and 3.

Another example is the National Development Plan 2030 of South Africa. The Department: The Presidency of RSA (2011:296) states that by 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes. The Department: The Presidency of RSA (2011:296)

notes that the performance of South African learners in international standardised tests should be comparable to the performance of learners from countries at similar level of development and with similar levels of access. Furthermore, the Department: The Presidency of RSA (2011:296) notes that education should be compulsory up to Grade 12 or equivalent in vocational education and training. The Department: The Presidency of RSA (2011:296) argues that the education system will play a greater role in building an inclusive society, providing equal opportunities, and helping all South Africans to realise their full potential, in particular those previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies, namely black people, women and people with disabilities.

Smart (2003:10) notes that the development of a national HIV/AIDS strategy is a well-established early response by governments to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Smart (2003:10) argues that in almost all national strategies, care and support for OVC is a priority area though it is often implicit, within the concept of care and support for infected and affected people. Smart (2003:10) further states other priorities, such as the prevention of HIV transmission to men and women who have or may have children, and the prevention of mortality of infected parents are strategies that can improve the OVC situation.

The White Paper of Social Welfare (1997:n.k.) states that one of the national goals is to facilitate the provision of appropriate developmental social welfare services to all South Africans, especially those living in poverty, those who are vulnerable and those who have special needs. Furthermore, these services should include rehabilitative, preventative, developmental and protective services and facilities, as well as social security, including relief programmes, social care programmes and the enhancement of social function (DSD, 1997:n.k.). Chereni and Mahati (N.D.:15) argue that this means that all South Africans must not only have access to preventative services, statutory intervention/residential/alternative care and reconstruction and aftercare services, but also to an income. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:15) state that based on this framework, a range of non-contributory social protection services are provided to vulnerable children and their families, these include Foster Care Grant (FCG); Care Dependency Grant (CDG); Social relief and distress benefit; the older person's grant; Disability grant; and Grant-in-aid.

Policy frameworks on orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS outlines six strategies to address the needs of OVC. According to DSD (2005:n.k), the six key strategies, which will assist in developing comprehensive, integrated and quality responses for orphans and vulnerable children at programmatic level include strengthening and supporting the capacity of families to protect and care; mobilising and strengthening community-based responses for care, support and protecting orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS; ensuring that legislation, policy, strategies and programmes are in place to protect the most vulnerable children; ensuring access for orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS to essential services; raise awareness and advocate for the creation of a supportive environment for OVC; engaging the civil society and business community to play an active role to support orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:16) note that the OVC framework envisages that care and protection of OVC will be realized through a combination of statutory services, cash transfer, and other programmatic interventions at different levels of society, and community-based approaches. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:16) add that the OVC framework favours a pluralist or multi-stakeholder approach, which combines governments with non-state actors and private sector players.

White Paper 6 acknowledges that a broad range of learning needs exist among the learner population at any point in time, and that, where these are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively (Department of Education, 2001:17). Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:16) note that OVC learners are particularly at risk of not realizing their right to education since they face multiple barriers to learning. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:16) note that such barriers can be conceptualized as: intrinsic, systematic and societal. Furthermore, Charenin and Mahati (n.d.:16-17) note that intrinsic barriers refer to limitations within an individual child, such as mental and physical health problems; societal barriers refer to poverty, inequality, HIV and AIDS and insufficient care arrangements; and systematic barriers refer to constraints within the sphere of formal provision and include inadequate school infrastructure and insufficient human resources.

Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:17) state that addressing these barriers requires a holistic approach to teaching and learning. Furthermore, Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:17) note that such an approach recognizes that the learning behaviours of children are affected by various spheres of influences. In 2008, the Ministers of Education in Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) programme with the aim of transforming schools into inclusive centres of care and support to ensure that all children, especially the most vulnerable, access quality education and perform optimally (DBE, 2016:4; Chereni & Mahati, n.d.:17). Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:17) note that the CSTL provides a formal framework for different initiatives developed to realize the education rights of all children, including the most vulnerable, through schools becoming inclusive centres of learning, care and support. The CSTL identifies ten priority areas that underpin school-based care and support (DBE, 2016:9):

- I. A Rights-based and socially inclusive and cohesive school: Makes sure that all school community members know, respect and promote children's rights to education, equality, freedom from discrimination, dignity, and all other rights necessary to equality and to enjoy their right to education.
- II. Social welfare services: Refers to the role of schools and educators in the implementation of childcare and protection legislation and in promoting access to social welfare services, enabling documents (such as IDs and birth certificates) and social assistance grants.
- III. Health promotion: Involves a process of enabling educators and learners to increase control over their health and its determinants, thereby improving and promoting their overall health and wellbeing. Health promotion interventions should address the risk and protective factors that impact the wellbeing of educators and learners.
- IV. Material support: Refers to the provision of resources or services to address material or financial barriers to education, including school fees, uniform and transport.
- V. Psychosocial support: Involves the provision of care and support in response to emotional, mental and social needs of learners and educators. All of these are crucial for educational and overall development.
- VI. Co-curricular support: Aims to support and augment curriculum implementation in and outside of the school. Examples of co-curricular activities include peer

education programmes, homework assistance programmes, social and drama clubs, and sport-related activities.

- VII. Curriculum support: Includes efforts to ensure that the curriculum is efficiently and effectively delivered to learners by appropriately skilled and supported educators, with the necessary teaching and learning materials.
- VIII. Infrastructure, water and sanitation: Involves the provision and maintenance of habitable and appropriate physical school structure designed to meet all of the accommodation requirements of school communities.
- IX. Safety and protection: Aim to ensure that schools are free of all forms of violence, abuse and bullying. Safety and protection concerns are not limited to the physical infrastructure of the school (such as fencing and gates), but also refers to the psychological and emotional safety of learners and educators.
- X. Nutrition support: Addresses barriers to learning associated with hunger and malnutrition. It includes the delivery of school feeding programmes, measures to ensure food quality, to support the production of food through programmes such as school-based food gardens and promotion of healthy lifestyles through, for example, nutrition education and deworming programmes.

3.6 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF OVC PROGRAMMES

The design and implementation of OVC programmes are underpinned on four pillars, namely, education, health and nutrition, and psychosocial intervention.

3.6.1 Education

Education is the engine for driving transformation in society. UNESCO et al. (2015:24) state that education is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and essential for success of all SDGs. Furthermore, UNESCO et al. (2015:27) note that education has a key role in eradicating poverty: it helps people obtain decent work, raises their incomes and generates productivity gains that fuel economic development.

3.6.1.1 Early childhood development of orphaned and vulnerable children

Engle (2008:1) argues that it is now well known that the early years are the most critical years for a child's survival as well as growth and development. Therefore, it is

important that early interventions are not missed. AIDSTAR-One (2011:2) states that ensuring a strong start for OVC is especially important in societies facing high levels of HIV infection, where illness and death erode the ability of the adult generation to nurture children. AIDSTAR-One (2009:2) argues that an expanding body of evidence highlights the importance and potential of long-term benefit of early intervention.

AIDSTAR-One (2011:3) notes that the critical factors in optimal ECD are a safe environment, proper nutrition and medical access, and most importantly, the consistent presence of stable, caring adult. Furthermore, AIDSTAR-One (2011:3) states that the potential benefit of ECD interventions extend beyond survival and health. Thus, Engle (2008:1) argues that early childhood offers an unparalleled window of opportunity to impact the future well-being of these vulnerable children. AIDSTAR-One (2011:3) argues that early education, for example, can contribute to the economic and social empowerment of women- in part by improving school access, which keeps girls in school longer, and by extending the age at which women marry and have their first children, which lower fertility rate. Furthermore, AIDSTAR-One (2011:3) states that this in turn increases the health, education and well-being of children.

Evidence suggests that comprehensive interventions during early childhood that focus on children's relationships, environments, and health- can help ensure a better future for all children, and especially OVC and those affected by HIV (AIDS-One, 2011:3). According to AIDSTAR-One (2011:3), OVC programme managers interested in developing interventions to support ECD should focus on three essential elements in the lives of young children, namely, stable and responsive environment of relationships; safe and supportive physical environment; and sound nutrition and disease prevention.

3.6.1.2 Pro-poor educational access programmes after Grade R

Schools are ideal institutions or centres for government to implement or deliver services to orphans and vulnerable children because all communities have schools. Bojer et al. (2007:24) note that the schools and school teachers are often the first to recognize that a child is in difficulty, and they are present in all areas of the country. The Department of Education cannot address all the needs of OVC alone. Chareni

and Mohati (n.d.:22) note that improving OVC's access to education requires a multi-actor approach. DBE (2017:12) notes that DBE shares responsibility with DOH and DSD for the monitoring and management of the impact of HIV, STIs, TB and pregnancy of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and other infected and affected learners but is primarily responsible for supporting to and retaining OVC in the Basic Education System.

Chareni and Mahati (n.d.:22) note that the DBE spearheads several pro-poor programmes that are designed to guarantee improve access, retention and achievement outcomes for all children, especially those in vulnerable circumstances. Furthermore, Chareni and Mahati (n.d.:22) argue that in line with DBE's goal of achieving compulsory and universal primary schooling for all children in South Africa, public primary schools have a mandate to register all vulnerable children. Several policies have been promulgated by the South African government to support OVC in schools. These include the South African School Act (Act No.84 of 1999 as amended in 2007), White Paper 6: Special needs and inclusive education, Integrated School Health Policy of 2012, and National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for learners and Educators. Chareni and Mahati (n.d.:23) note that in addition to no fees and school fee exemption arrangements, the DBE also designed a programme for making school uniforms affordable and accessible to vulnerable learners.

Schools are expected to be flexible in design and scheduling of their classes and programmes to accommodate the needs of learners who are orphaned, vulnerable, infected and affected by AIDS (DBE, 2017:12). DBE (2017:12) mandates schools to provide nutritional supplementations within the basic education sector through the National School Nutrition Programme for learners made vulnerable by poverty, orphaning, HIV, STIs and/or TB or any other condition affecting their capacity to learn in school.

3.6.2 Health and Nutrition

Health and nutrition are critical for survival and development for all the children. Therefore, it is important that the government ensures that all children are provided with health care services and nutritional supplements.

3.6.2.1 School nutrition

Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:26) note that the NSNP has been conceptualized as an educational intervention, for “enhancing the educational experience of the neediest primary school learners by promoting punctual school attendance, alleviating short-term hunger, improving concentration and contributing to general health development. According to DBE (2009:1), the key objectives of the National School Nutrition Programme are: to contribute to enhanced learning capacity through school feeding, to promote and support the implementation of food production initiatives in schools, and to strengthen nutrition for school communities. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:26) note that the provision of nutrition and nutrition education are viewed as central to DBE’s policy imperative to ensure that schools become sites of care and support for all learners particularly those that are vulnerable to hunger malnutrition and other barriers to learning.

3.6.2.2 Health promotion in schools

DBE (2016:26) indicates that health promotion involves enabling educators and learners to increase control over their health and its determinants, thereby improving and promoting their overall health and wellbeing. DOH and DBE (2012:29) state that the aim of Health Promoting schools is to improve the health of school personnel, families and community members as well as students. In addition, the purpose of health promotion interventions is to reduce the risk of negative factors that affect the wellbeing of educators and learners (Chereni & Mahati, n.d.:30). Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:30) note that these factors include the high prevalence of HIV among sexually active population groups, risky sexual behaviour, lack of information on health and wellness, and lack of life skills among children. According to DBE (2016:26), schools need to support health promotion, especially those whose poor health is linked to their poverty, gender, HIV and AIDS, and/or disability are at risk of being excluded from school, not attending regularly and not learning to their full potential. DBE (2016:26) notes that a health promoting school is one that: recognizes that good health of children is necessary for them to do well at school and that poor health places children at greater risk of not enrolling, not attending and doing well at school; and promotes

the health of its learners and practice of healthy behaviour and avoidance of behaviour harmful to their health.

3.6.2.3 Health promotion out of school

Louw and Boucher (2003:4) note that Section 27 of the South African constitution states that: everyone has the right to have access to- health care, including reproductive health; sufficient food and water, and social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:31) observe that these services are provided at different stages in a child's life, from birth to adulthood. Furthermore, Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:31) note that free health care services that target pregnant and lactating women at primary, secondary and tertiary health facilities include antenatal monitoring and care, nutritional supplementation and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) services. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:31) note that children under 6 years of age have access to free primary, secondary and tertiary health care.

Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:31) state that the Integrated Programme (INP) targets children of all ages and include a nutrition supplementation programme, fortification of food, and education and advocacy services, among others. Chereni and Mahati (n.d.:31) note that the comprehensive HIV and AIDS care, management and treatment plan also includes benefits for all vulnerable children, and it aims to prevent children and caregivers from getting infected with HIV, and to improve the quality of life of those already negative.

3.6.3 Psychosocial Support Programme

Phiri and Webb (2002:24) state that psychosocial needs of children affected by AIDS, especially orphans, are most often neglected in programme design because psychosocial needs are not visible and intangible. Phiri and Webb (2002:24) argue that psychosocial needs of children are critical because they have a direct bearing on all development aspects of children. Linda and Foster (2006:31) note that what has not been made clear in writing about psychosocial interventions and children's psychosocial well-being is the nature of interaction between interventions and well-being. However, Phiri and Webb (2002:31) argue that it has long been known that

positive emotional states and psychosocial supports contribute to good health and improve recovery and/or adjustment to ill-health. Linda and Foster (2006:31) state that what are commonly thought of as psychosocial interventions have effects on health and related aspects of human functioning that are not psychosocial. Phiri and Webb (2002:24) concur stating that children's needs for security from all aspects of economic want based on their families' capacities and context cannot be separated from their psychosocial needs. Linda and Foster (2006:31) argue that the functioning of children, like all human beings, is integrated, as is their experience of the conditions of their lives. Linda and Foster (2006:31) conclude that while it has been necessary in the past to draw a sharp distinction between psychosocial interventions and material aid in advocacy, they should be integrated approaches to improve the health and well-being of children in communities affected by AIDS.

3.6.4 Community Participation through Organizations

Linda and Foster (2006:17) note that during the 1990s, the problem of children affected by AIDS had a low priority in UN agencies, development organizations, international NGOs and research bodies. However, local people in affected communities organized themselves in groups to support orphans and vulnerable children. Linda and Foster (2006:17) observe that it was local groups and organizations that developed programmes to support vulnerable children, and who called attention to the worsening situation of children living in communities affected by AIDS.

3.6.4.1 Community-based organisations (CBO's) responses to OVC

Linda and Foster (2006:22) state that the emergence of community-based care initiatives has become one of outstanding features of responses to the epidemic. Community-based organisations play a key role in easing the impact of the pandemic particularly on children by providing home-based care, strengthening family and community coping systems, identifying children in need of care, providing psychosocial support, spiritual guidance and material assistance (Linda & Foster, 2006:22; Bojer et al., 2007:17). Linda and Foster (2006:22) note that all affected countries have spontaneous community-based initiatives, devised by local communities to help vulnerable children and families. Bojer et al. (2007:18) note that

the most CBOs are often run by women from the community. Bojer et al. (2007:18) argue that while CBO's often have limited capacity, they are highly respected by other sectors for the work they do on the ground, often on a pure volunteer basis.

Most CBOs face many challenges. Bojer et al. (2007:18) state that CBOs are generally under-resourced, run by volunteers, and in need of small amounts of steady funding, as well as organisational capacity-building. Linda and Foster (2006:23) argue that while people volunteer their time, they can only do so when the demands of their own households permit them to give assistance to others, and they seldom have resources to continue to provide material support to affected children and families except in crisis situations. Boje at al. (2007:18) note that they are also welfare-driven, often trying to do everything, and tend to be more short-term in their outlook as they aim to meet immediate needs.

The effectiveness of CBO's depends on the existence of formal health and education services and other government structures (Linda & Foster, 2006:22). Linda and Foster (2006:23) argue that for this reason, getting manageable resources to community-based groups to enable them to continue to assist vulnerable children and their families is a critical requirement of governments, as well as international and local aid agencies.

3.6.4.2 Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's) responses to OVC

Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's) are significant role players in driving the agenda around orphans and vulnerable children (Bojer et al., 2007:18). Bojer et al. (2007:18) note that the NGO's mobilise and disburse resources, advocate, develop and implement models for care, and facilitate coordination of service delivery. Bojer et al. (2007:18) add that some are focused on home-based care, while others run community centres, community childcare forums and/or children's homes. Most NGOs liaise and partner actively with CBO's and community structures helping to channel resources and build capacity (Bojer et al., 2007:18).

Non-governmental Organisations are faced with their own challenges, including competition for funding, duplication of activity, short-term planning, as well as limited capacity and skills (Bojer et al., 2007:18). Bojer et al. (2007:18) add that the NGOs

often are use resources efficiently by helping individual children rather than providing systemic solutions and they are accountable to their donors. Furthermore, Bojer et al. (2007:18) note that they need to juggle conflicts between the donor requirements and what they see as their beneficiaries' real needs.

3.6.4.3 Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) responses to OVC

Bojer et al. (2007:18) state that faith-based organisations are formed by people who share common religious beliefs and often have a high degree of trust and legitimacy among their communities. Furthermore, Bojer et al. (2007:2017:18) note that faith-based communities can play a vital role in communicating important messages to communities as well as providing material and spiritual support to people in need. Similarly, Linda and Foster (2006:25) note that FBOs can identify vulnerable and needy children through their members in communities, refer children on to other services, and assist in the distribution of emergency relief to children; playing a significant role in reducing stigma and discrimination through a spirit of acceptance of those who are affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, and/or ill; and FBO members can visit children and families, and actively discourage abuse by caregivers and neighbours.

Bojer et al. (2007:19) note that one of the key strengths of FBO's is their reach- there is a church, mosque, and/or temple in practically every community. Linda and Foster (2006:25) state that religious bodies are an integral part of community infrastructure and provide a coherent social network within which projects can be initiated and sustained. Linda and Foster (2006:25) argue that the success and effectiveness of numerous faith-based projects operating in Africa is attributed to the fact that care and compassion for vulnerable people is intrinsic to religious doctrines.

However, FBOs have challenges just like any other organisations in providing care and support for orphans and vulnerable children. Bojer et al. (2007:19) indicate that FBOs often work purely within their own constituencies and have minimal interaction, collaboration or information exchange with CBO's and NGO's which tend to be more secular in their approach.

3.7 SHORTCOMINGS OF APPROACHES TO DATE

Great strides have been made to improve the responses of families and community-based organisations to OVC. Several frameworks, policies, strategies and programmes has been developed at international, national and local level. According to Linda and Foster (2006:36), there have been several substantial reviews by researchers and practitioners of factors affecting children in communities affected by AIDS, as well as of principles and strategies for appropriate programmatic responses. However, Linda and Foster (2006:36) argue that despite what is now a voluminous literature on the topic, policy, programming, and practice to meet the needs of children living in communities affected by AIDS, many efforts remain handicapped by a number of issues that were discernible from the start and still require leadership for their resolution.

3.7.1 The potentially Misguided Targeting of Orphans

The use of orphan hood as a criterion to support vulnerable children would be misguided in many cultural settings. The use of the term orphan varies considerably in different cultural settings (Linda & Foster, 2006:36). Linda and Foster (2006:36) state that the definition of an orphan as a child under 18 years of age who has lost one parent or both parents, is well accepted for measurement purposes, especially for the secondary analysis of existing survey data and the collection of new national data.

According to Schenk et al. (n.d.:1), early efforts to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa revealed arising number of children experiencing the death of a parent and its associated consequences. This resulted in a situation where policies and programs to support children affected by AIDS began to focus on children who had been orphaned (Schenk et al., n.d.:1; Fleming, 2015:3). However, Schenk et al. (n.d.:1) note that the exclusive focus on orphanhood as a principal criterion for distribution of resources has been criticized as inefficient and inequitable because orphan hood represents only a single aspect of children's multi-dimensional vulnerability. Linda and Foster (2006:36) state that the definitional category serves

the function of monitoring the stage and impact of the epidemic on a national level. Linda and Foster (2006:36) argue that children defined as orphans may or may not be vulnerable, depending on their pre-existing childcare conditions (such as overall level of child fosterage, or what has been called child circulation), the health and availability of a surviving parent, the acceptance and affection received from family and kin, the socioeconomic resources of the household that takes in an orphaned child, and the like.

Schenk et al. (n.d.:1) argues that in households, affected by HIV/AIDS, children's vulnerability begins long before parental death. Schenk et al. (n.d.:1) add that children may face dramatic changes in circumstances during the illness of a parent/guardian, as families navigate changing household finances and caring for a sick person in their midst for extended periods. Fleming (2015:4) states that it is useful to understand the challenges associated with orphan hood and vulnerability to appreciate the extent and need for broad programme and policy design. Therefore, the issues relating to care and support for orphans and vulnerable children require the involvement of community members as they are aware of the children who need of support.

3.7.2 The Inappropriate Institutionalization of Vulnerable Children

Linda and Foster (2006:37) note that orphanages draw donor interest and have continued to proliferate in sub-Saharan Africa despite the fact that institutional care is an inappropriate response to children living in communities affected by HIV/AIDS. Phiri and Webb (2002:14) argue that for the most part, the growth of institutionalisation is an expedient social policy response to the growing numbers of children in need of care and protection. Furthermore, Phiri and Webb (2002:14) note that it is seen as an easy option for social or childcare workers to place children in these institutions, and a growing number of families also "place" their children in orphanages. Linda and Foster (2006:37) argue that orphanages in many poor countries are a misnomer because institutional care, when available, is used more often to provide care for children of destitute parents than for children whose parents have died. Linda and Foster (2006:37) add that for this reason, the majority of so-called AIDS orphans in institutions in southern Africa are not orphans in the strict sense of the word but have been admitted to care from deeply impoverished families. Phiri and Webb (2002:14)

argue that what makes orphanages attractive is the perception among some members of impoverished communities that they will provide food, education, health and other services that caregivers cannot provide to the children.

Although orphanages appear to provide some nurturing, typical institutions do not provide the holistic care that children are entitled to for all round development (Phiri & Webb, 2002:15). Phiri and Webb (2002:15) state that research shows that children in institutions lack basic and traditionally accepted social and cultural skills to function in their societies; they have lower level of education attainment; have problem adjusting to independence after leaving the orphanage, lack basic living skills; have more difficulties with relationships, lack parental skills and some of them often have a misplaced sense of entitlement without a parallel sense of responsibility. Similarly, Linda and Foster (2006:37) note that group care is known to be damaging to the development of young children, and it is difficult to prevent the abuse of older children in institutional environments and for institutionalized children to adjust to conditions in the society at large. However, Phiri and Webb (2002:15) note that children in institutions have tenuous cultural, spiritual and kinship ties with families, clans and communities. Phiri and Webb (2002:15) argue that these ties are especially critical in Africa and Asia as they are the basis for people's sense of connectedness, belonging and continuity. Phiri and Webb (2002:15) add that they are the basis upon which life skills as well as social and cultural skills are attained. Phiri and Webb (2002:16) argue that institutions should be the last resort after family, foster or community care in the absence of other models of care being available. Conversely, well managed institutions can provide emergency care particularly to protect orphans at risk (Phiri & Webb, 2002:16).

Several countries came up with alternative models of care to institutionalisation. Phiri and Webb (2002:14) note that typical of South Africa are community family models where up to six children are placed with a foster mother in a home which is purchased and furnished by external organisation/individual. Furthermore, Phiri and Webb (2002:14) state that the foster mother is paid an allowance and receives foster grants for the children, with periodical assistance from a "relief mother". The advantage of the model is that children are kept in a family unit where they get motherly care, support and moral guidance, and where possible siblings are kept together.

3.7.3 Failure to Adequately Support Family and Community Responses to Vulnerable Children

Families and community-based organisations play a critical role in responding to the challenges faced by vulnerable children in countries that are hard hit by the impact of HIV/AIDS. However, these families and community-based organisations are faced with the burden of coping with the increasing number of vulnerable children and lack of adequate support from external funders. Linda and Foster (2006:37) note that it has been realized that the impact of AIDS on children is felt inside families and households- grandparents nursing their sick adult children, trying to hold the family together and struggling to provide for clusters of grandchildren; kin and neighbourhood families taking in orphaned children; and siblings trying to stay together with the help of aunts, cousins and family friends. Datta (2009:8) acknowledges that while community responses to OVC and their households have expanded rapidly, the cumulative burden of HIV and AIDS, coupled with poverty and food insecurity, is stretching community capacities more than ever before.

Linda and Foster (2006:37) note that it is known that services to improve child health and mental health are most effectively delivered through the family, through improved family education, support and participation, and that involvement of families maximises the impact of services for children. However, Linda and Foster (2006:37) note that families need economic, social, psychological support to cope with the additional burden of care caused by increased number of vulnerable children. Phiri and Webb (2002:30) assert that the fact that in most communities, cares and grassroots organisations do not have the economic means to manage adequately, given the pervasive poverty in these communities and the increasing number of orphans it is important that internal and external resources are mobilised to assist.

3.8 LITERATURE REVIEW ON EVALUATION OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES FOR OVC

The literature review on evaluation of intervention programmes meant to care and support for orphans and vulnerable children is based on eight domains, namely,

educational support, psychosocial support, co-curricular support, food and nutrition, health care, legal protection, shelter and care, and economic strengthening of households.

3.8.1 Intervention Programs Focusing on Educational Support

Shann, Bryant, Brooks, Bukuluki, Mahangi, Lugalla and Kwesigabo (2013:1) conducted a study on the effectiveness of educational support to orphans and vulnerable children in Tanzania and Uganda. According to Shann et al. (2013:1), this study investigated the relative effectiveness of various educational delivery service models to orphans and vulnerable children in two Eastern African countries ravaged by AIDS pandemic. Shann et al. (2013:1) note that the study also examined gender differences in students' educational outcomes.

According to Shann et al. (2013:2), the study employed a four-year, retrospective records review using a mixed method approach and multiple sources enabling the triangulation of results and interpretation. The quantitative component was threefold, namely, QUANT I analysed individual level data from students classified as ever-supported OVC, never-supported OVC, or non-OVC; QUANT II looked at aggregate data from intervention and control schools; and QUANT III examined cost data (Shann et al., 2013:2). However, the focus of the study was on QUANT I, as it addressed how well individual OVC fared under the block grant and scholarship programs as compared to their OVC peers and non-OVC peers who did not receive any targeted benefit (Shann et al., 2013:2). Shann et al. (2013:2) state that outcomes measures included absenteeism, dropout, pass rates and national examination scores. Furthermore, Shann et al. (2013:2) note that comparisons of means were conducted through paired t-test and one-way analysis of variance. Regarding the qualitative component, interviews, focus groups, observation techniques, and document analysis were used to learn about the intervention employed by each NGO and its context from the point of view of the primary recipients and other knowledgeable stakeholders.

According to Shann et al. (2013:2), data collectors visited schools in teams of two, taking approximately three days to collect all required data from each school. Shann et al. (2013:2) state that fifty OVC receiving support from the target NGOs were

identified at each school and matched with the same number of OVC not receiving support and non-OVC children in the same class or year of schooling. Furthermore, school records regarding attendance and performance were obtained for each child (Shann et al., 2013:2). Shann et al. (2013:2) state that qualitative data were collected through key informant interviews of school headmasters, government education officers, NGO country and regional representatives, and community leaders. Furthermore, Shann et al. (2013:2) state that focus group discussions were conducted for supported OVC and community members.

For absenteeism, the combined results of both countries showed that both ever-supported OVC (5.1%) and non-OVC (5.5%) had significant lower absenteeism rates for the period (2006-2009) than never-supported OVC (6.4%) (Shann et al., 2013:4). In terms of gender, Shann et al. (2013:3) state that female students had slightly lower absenteeism rates compared to male students throughout the different support groups in both countries although only one of these differences reached statistical significance that is for non-OVC in Uganda.

For dropout, the combined results of both countries showed that ever-supported OVC (7.7%) and non-OVC (6.0%) had significant lower dropout rate than never-supported OVC (10.3%) (Shann et al., 2013:5). Shann et al. (2013:5) report that there was no difference in the dropout rates between males and females by student status in any of the schools in the study.

For academic performance, results were interpreted differently as each country has its own education system. In Tanzania for Form II National Exam pass rates by students' status between 2006 and 2009, results showed that ever-supported OVC (17.5%) and non-OVC (20.8) had significant higher pass rate than never-supported OVC (14.6%) (Shann et al., 2013:6). For CSR-scholarship, the results showed that ever-supported (32.9%) and non-OVC (31.5%) had significant higher pass rate than never-supported (26.2%) (Shann et al., 2013:6). In terms of gender, males performed significantly better than females in all the students' status (Shann et al., 2013:6).

For Form IV (Tanzania): Shann et al. (2013:3) state that non-OVC students had higher scores compared to OVC students, with statistically significant difference in English,

Civics, and Kiswahili. Shann et al. (2013:4) note that no statistical significance was obtained between the different types of support due to the small number of students that took this exam in this sample. In terms of gender, a similar pattern was observed. Males performed significantly better than females in all students' status.

Standard IV Exams (Uganda): Shann et al. (2013:4) state that there were no significant differences among the types of student support groups on any of the subject areas that were measured on Uganda's Standard IV National Examinations. Shann et al. (2013:4) further note that all groups scored relatively better on the examinations of English and Geography and scored poorly, with barely passing scores, in the other subject areas. However, when differentiated by type of NGO support, for ICOBI UG-block grant; the proportion of students passing Standard IV National examination was significantly lower for never-supported OVC (36.3) than for non-OVC students (60.3%0 and for ever-supported OVC students (64.4) (Shann et al., 2013:4). Similar pattern was observed in terms of gender. Shann et al. (2013:4) state that males performed significantly better that female whether the comparison were between non-OVC, never-supported OVC, or ever-supported OVC.

The study has some limitations. Firstly, the limitation is attributed to the lack of knowledge of the households from which the supported OVC came (Shann et al., 2013:6). Shann et al. (2013:6) state that many contextual factors which would help to explain issues raised in the study cannot be answered because funding was not sufficient to conduct a household survey of supported OVC to understand their, social, economic, parental, living, and other conditions. Secondly, the limitation is attributed to children "aging out" of the program (Shann et al., 2013:6). Students who reached 18 years of age lost their support in Form IV as they were no longer regarded as children as per definition of the NGOs (Shann et al., 2013:6). Thirdly, the limitation is attributed to the lack of concentrated population of supported OVC (Shann et al., 2013:6). Shann et al. (2013:6) state that the finding that both of the scholarship program (CSR and AVSI) did not have a population of 50 or more OVC in any individual secondary school only became clear as individual recipient lists were examined. Fourthly, the limitation is attributed to the differences in the education systems between Uganda and Tanzania (Shann et al., 2013:7). Shann et al. 2013:7) state that children start school one year younger in Uganda than in Tanzania, with the

results that the OVC in the sample in Tanzania were all one year older than their equivalent grade in Uganda. However, the study is significant for program managers, donors, NGOs and school administrators. According to Shann et al. (2013:4), this study was groundbreaking for its provision of reliable data to address previously unanswered questions about the impact of various forms of investments in secondary schooling for orphans and vulnerable children of both genders. The study demonstrated that OVC can perform academically just as non-OVC can do, as long as they are provided with the necessary support.

Tepkemboi, Jolly, Gillyard and Lissanu (2016:3) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of AMPATH program on educational wellbeing of OVC in Elgeyo-Marekwet County, Kenya. They used a sample of 215 children, age 8-17 enrolled in the Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH, 2004) program (Tepkemboi et al., 2006:2). The sample consisted of Indigenous African children with an age range between 8 and 17 years: 8-10 years (23.3%), 11-14 years (50.7%), and 15-17 years (25.6%) (Tepkemboi et al., 2016:4). Gender distribution was 51.6% male and 48,4% female (Tepkemboi et al., 2016:4). According to Tepkemboi et al. (2016:4), the tool used to collect data was the OVC wellbeing tool questionnaire comprising 36 questions corresponding to 10 indicators of child wellbeing: Food and Nutrition, Education, Shelter, Economics, Protection, Mental Health, Family, Health, Spiritual, and Community Care. Tepkemboi et al. (2016:4) note that data were collected over three months. Data coding and analysis was conducted using the statistical Package for Social Sciences (2013) (Tepkemboi et al., 2016:1).

Table 3.3: Descriptive Statistics of Education Domain of Well-Being (N=215)

Mean	Median	Range	Minimum	Maximum
2,66	2,60	1,60	1,40	3,00

Research findings indicate that the average score of the 215 OVC's response to questions about educational wellbeing was 2.66 on a scale of 0-3 (Tepkemboi et al., 2016:4). This implies that the children's educational wellbeing was fairly high (Tepkemboi et al., 2016:4). Therefore, it is considered to be very good (Tepkemboi et al., 2016:4). The researchers attribute the positive outcome on two reasons. Firstly,

the participants were drawn from a population already being served by the AMPATH program. Secondly, the introduction of free and mandatory primary education in Kenya in 2003.

Table 3.4: Pearson Correlation between Education Domain and Other Domains of Child's Well-Being (N=215)

Indicators of Child Well-Being	Pearson Correlation (With Education Domain)
Food and Nutrition	0,298**
Shelter	0,160*
Economics	0,457**
Protection	0,558**
Mental Health	0,217**
Family	0,381**
Health	0,264**
Spirituality	0,231**
Community Care	0,340**

*Correlation is significant at 0, 05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at 0, 01 (2-tailed)

Tepkemboi et al. (2016:4) state that the findings also indicated a strong correlation between educational wellbeing and other indicators of children's wellbeing. Furthermore, Tepkemboi et al. (2016:4) conclude that these correlations imply that improvements in other domain of the children's wellbeing (Food and Nutrition, Shelter, Economics, Protection, Mental Health, Family, Health, Spirituality, and Community Care) will impact educational outcomes.

The significance of the study is that it confirms that the provision of education has the potential to address many aspects of a child wellbeing. The strong correlation between educational wellbeing and other indicators of the children's wellbeing implies that investment in all aspects of children wellbeing will result in better educational outcomes.

However, one can point out two aspects of weaknesses. Firstly, Households factors from which the OVC were drawn are not known. Households' factors such as socioeconomic status and health status of the caregiver may have influence on the wellbeing of the child. Secondly, there is no baseline score. It is not known what could have been the score prior the introduction of AMPATH program. Alternatively, comparison should have been made with the participants where AMPATH program is not served to come to a decisive conclusion.

Mwoma and Pillay (2016) conducted a study on educational support for OVC. The study investigated the challenges associated with the provision of educational support and came up with possible interventions to address those challenges. The sample of the study consisted of 107 participants comprising 65 OVC (43 boys and 22 girls) and 42 teachers (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016:86). According Mwoma and Pillay (2016:85), a mixed method approach involving descriptive and qualitative designs were used in the study. Mwoma and Pillay (2016:85) state that self-report questionnaires for learners and educators were designed to capture both descriptive and qualitative data concurrently through structured and unstructured questions. The study was conducted in public schools in Soweto targeting the grade seven learners (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016:86). According to Mwoma and Pillay (2016:86), the OVC in grade seven who participated in the study were aged between ten and sixteen years with majority aged twelve (33.8%) and thirteen (36.9%). Mwoma and Pillay (2016:86) state that data from structured questions were captured in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) which were processed and presented in descriptive statistics involving frequency and percentages on tables ready for analysis. On other hand, Mwoma and Pillay (2016:86) state that qualitative data from unstructured questions, were typed into text, coded and categorised into themes ready for analysis. Furthermore, Mwoma and Pillay (2016:86) note that qualitative data were analysed alongside descriptive data to provide an overview of the educational support, challenges and possible intervention to mitigate the identified challenges. Findings of the study were presented into three categories, namely, provision of educational support for OVC, challenges by educators in providing support for OVC, and possible interventions to mitigate the challenges (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016:86).

Provision of educational support for OVC: the study revealed that the government through the implementation of a no fee policy in schools, enabled OVC to access their basic education, 57 (88%) learners indicated that the government paid their fees and 48 (74%) learners indicated that this support enabled many of them to access education (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016:86). Furthermore, Mwoma and Pillay (2016:86) note that sixty-four (98.5%) learners and 36 (85%) teachers revealed that schools provided books and stationery for all children while 46 (71%) learners revealed that different organisations provided school uniform for them. Mwoma and Pillay (2016:87) state that findings further revealed that schools through the government soup kitchen provided meals to OVC where 63 (96%) learners and 38 (90.5%) teachers confirmed this fact.

Challenges in providing educational support for OVC: The study revealed that what prevented teachers from supporting OVC include lack of sufficient time to support individual children (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:88). The study also revealed that OVC were struggling with reading and writing (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:88). According to Mwoma and Pillay (2006:88), twenty-six (46%) learners reported that they were not able to write like other children while 14 (23%) indicated that they were not able to read like others. The study findings also revealed that lack of concentration among OVC, submitting schoolwork late and not doing their school/homework were other challenges cited as likely to have negative influence on OVC's education (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:88). Other challenges that are likely to contribute to poor performance of OVC in education, include low self-esteem, absenteeism and lateness to school (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:88-89). Mwoma and Pillay (2006:89) state that findings from the study revealed that although schools had a feeding program, some OVC lacked meals in their homes compelling them to come to school without having breakfast. Eight (12%) learners also confirmed this fact that OVC did have meals at home (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:89). Some of the OVC were compelled to come to school even when sick in order to have just a meal for a day (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:89).

Intervention strategies to providing educational support: According to Mwoma and Pillay (2006:91), among the strategies identified that could be used to improve support for OVC with schoolwork at the meso and exosystemic levels is the need for government to employ more teachers to support OVC after school hours. Mwoma

and Pillay (2016:91) note that home visits and having information for OVC were reported to be further strategies that involve the micro and mesosystem levels to be used to establish the challenges OVC go through while at home and how best they can be helped. Social workers should be employed for further support (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:91-92). Food parcels should be given to learners who do not have food at home and training should be provided for guardians to provide support at home (Mwoma & Pillay, 2006:92).

The significance of the study is that it provides valuable information in terms of educational support for OVC, challenges encountered in the providing the educational support for OVC, and intervention strategies to mitigate these challenges. Such information is useful for policy makers and program developers. However, the study falls short in the sense that it does not reveal what could be the possible impact of educational support for OVC on teaching and learning. The study is one sided as it does not give the positive side of educational support for OVC. For example, the study revealed that some OVC come to school even if they are sick. This might imply that the provision of a meal at school may improve attendance.

3.8.2 Intervention Programs Focus on Psychosocial Support

Intervention programs that focus on psychological and social outcomes improve psychosocial wellbeing for children affected by HIV and AIDS. Skeen, Sherr, Tomlinson, Croome, Ghandi, Roberts and Macedo (2007) conducted a systematic review on intervention programs whose aim was to improve psychosocial wellbeing of children affected by HIV and AIDS. According to Skeen et al. (2017:92), the objective of the review was to evaluate the overall effectiveness of interventions that aim to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of children affected by HIV and AIDS. Skeen et al. (2017:93) note that this includes both psychological and social intervention, as well as other interventions that might have a psychosocial impact (e.g., medical intervention). Furthermore, Skeen et al. (2017:94) state that overall, interventions were generally clustered under four types, namely:

- Psychological intervention, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy, psychodynamic therapy, non-directive

counselling, psychological debriefing and problem-solving therapy. Three studies were included in this cluster.

- Psychosocial support and/or care, such as play group, homework clubs and home-based care programs. Seven studies were included in this cluster.
- Physical health, including medical interventions, such as antiretroviral therapy and other pharmacological interventions. One study was included in this cluster.
- Social interventions, such as economic assistance (e.g., cash transfer, work and skill training programs) and material assistance (e.g. provision of school material, food basket). Six studies were included in this cluster.

According to Skeen et al. (2017:96), all three of psychological interventions identified showed at least one positive result, six out of seven of the psychosocial interventions, and five out of six of the social intervention also reported a positive impact, as did the physical health interventions.

The significance of the study is that it provides a global perspective on the effectiveness of intervention programs in improving psychosocial wellbeing of children affected by HIV and AIDS. Several lessons can be drawn from the study (Skeen et al., 2017:100). According to Skeen et al. (2017:100), psychological changes noted for children included the reduction in internalizing and externalizing behaviours, decrease in symptoms of depression, anger, and anxiety, and higher rates of prosocial behaviour, self-help abilities and communication. Furthermore, Skeen et al. (2017:101) note that positive social outcomes that were recorded included retention in school, better school attendance, and less early marriage. Skeen et al. (2017:101) adds that there was no clear pattern in terms of type of intervention, target recipient, length of intervention, length of follow up, or intensity of delivery, but each of the four different types of intervention (psychological, psychosocial, social, and physical health) showed at least one positive benefit on child psychosocial wellbeing. Overall, Skeen et al. (2017:92) conclude that the study has shown that there are effective and proven programs to improve outcomes for children affected by HIV/AIDS. Skeen et al. (2017:92) add that funders and NGOs partners should undertake to share these lessons learnt with their community-level partners and find ways to make these stories of success accessible to different stakeholders in these programs.

However, there are limitations to the study. Firstly, the limitation is attributed to diverse sampling techniques used in several studies involved (Skeen et al., 2017:101). According to Skeen et al. (2017:101), some studies employed random community-based sampling techniques or random sampling of schools, and others used convenience sampling selecting participants from register of children or adults seeking treatment for HIV. Skeen et al. (2017:101) note that these reflect the “real life” context in which these studies took place but may also mean that some study results have not accurately represented the study population. Secondly, Skeen et al. (2017:101) state that studies showed wide variation in outcomes measurement, meaning that this view, it was difficult to compare outcomes across studies. Skeen et al. (2017:101) argues that this is partly due to the broad nature of psychosocial interventions and outcomes. Thirdly, Skeen et al. (2017:92) note that the study design also varied. Skeen et al. (2017:92) argue that this may have affected the reported results of the identified studies.

Gilborn, Apicella, Brakarsh, Dube, Jemison, Kluckow, Smith, and Snider (2006) conducted an exploratory study of psychosocial well-being and Psychosocial Support program on Orphans and Vulnerable Youth in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. According to Gilborn et al. (2006:8), the study objectives were to: develop a better understanding of psychosocial wellbeing among vulnerable adolescents and how to measure it; and explore the effects of participation in psychosocial support programs on adolescents’ psychosocial wellbeing. The exploratory study consisted of two phases of data collection; formative qualitative research and a cross-sectional survey (Gilborn et al., 2006:11). The sample consisted of 1.258 vulnerable youth between the ages of 14 and 20 years (Gilborn et al., 2006:11). The sample of 1.258 were from three experimental groups (Community PSS group, Camp group and Leader group) exposed to one form of psychosocial intervention and one from comparison group (Gilborn et al., 2006:11).

According to Schenk (2009:928), the findings of the study revealed the following, namely, widespread indications of psychosocial distress among youth, and participation in a psychosocial intervention was associated with greater self-confidence males. Schenk (2009:928) recommends that psychosocial support

interventions of the three programs need to explore, recognise and respond to the needs of vulnerable youth.

The significance of the study is that it provides valuable information regarding the challenges experienced by the youth. These challenges include that: most respondents experienced multiple traumatic events, lack of social support by family, friends, and community members; and psychosocial distress (Gilborn et al., 2006:16-18). Lack of money and job opportunities were perceived as major problems by most respondents (Gilborn et al., 2006:11). However, Gilborn et al. (2006:11) note that despite adverse circumstances, youth reported signs of psychosocial wellbeing and strength. According to Gilborn et al. (2006:15), limitations of the study include the lack of a pre-intervention survey and the fact that respondents were not randomly assigned to the study groups. Gilborn et al. (2006:16) add that there was no practical or ethical way to randomize youth into intervention groups. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to the entire area. Youths who participated in PSS program were identified on the basis of being “vulnerable”, in this way, the intervention groups may have been inherently different from the comparison group (Gilborn et al., 2006:15).

3.8.3 Intervention Programs Focusing on Co-Curricular Support

Kumaketch, Cantor-Graae, Maling and Bujunirwe (2009:1038) conducted a study to evaluate the effects of a school-based peer-group support intervention combined with periodic somatic health assessment and treatment on the psychosocial wellbeing of AIDS orphans in the Mbarara District of south-western Uganda. According to Kumaketch et al. (2009:1039), the purpose of the study was to examine the feasibility of peer-group support intervention in an AIDS orphan population and to test the null hypothesis that there is no difference in psychological distress between intervention and control groups at post-test. Kumaketch et al. (2009:1039) add that the impact of the intervention was also examined with gender and age sub-group.

According Kumaketch et al. (2009:1039), participants were selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. A total of 298 participants (157 orphans in the intervention group and 141 orphans in the control group) completed the study (Kumaketch et al.,

2009:1039). Kumaketch et al. (2009:1039) indicate that the study design was a cluster randomized trial which involved collection of pre-test and post-test data from participants of both intervention and control groups. Kumaketch et al. (2009:1039) state that cluster randomized trial design was the only practical way of implementing and evaluating the intervention.

Kumaketch et al. (2009:1040) declare that the outcome measures in the study were based on assessment of self-concept, anxiety, anger and depression derived from Beck Youth Inventories (BYI), an instrument particularly suitable for use in younger children, aged between 7 and 14 years. Kumaketch et al. (2009:1040) state that the BYI was developed as a self-report instrument, providing a systematic assessment across five dimensions: self-concept, anxiety, depression, anger, and disruptive behaviour.

Aspects assessed in relation to self-concept were self-confidence and positive self-worth (Kumaketch et al., 2009:1040). Kumaketch et al. (2009:1040) note that anxiety reflects children's specific worries, fears including loss of control, and physiological symptoms associated with anxiety, while depression reflects both the vegetative and behavioural symptoms. Kumaketch et al. (2009:1040) state that anger reflects unfair treatment, feelings of anger, and hatred. The children were expected to report how frequently the statement were true for them by answering either as never (0), sometimes (2), or always (3) (Kumaketch et al., 2009:1040). Kumaketch et al. (2009:1040) note that BYI scores were calculated according to BYI manual.

Peer-group support intervention used participatory methodologies which allowed for reflection, participation, development of critical awareness and empowerment (Kumaketch et al., 2009:1040). Kumaketch et al. (2009:1040) indicate that the study comprised 16 psychosocial exercises, which were implemented by selected primary school teachers over a period of 10 weeks, each exercise was designed in the form of a game or play that lasted approximately 1hr and was presented in a problem-posing manner to stimulate thinking among the participants. Kumaketch et al. (2009:1041) note that during the implementation period, two peer-group support exercises were held per week in the school classrooms and at usual games' time to avoid interference with class lessons.

Comparing the scores, at baseline, orphans in the intervention group had significantly lower scores for self-concept, higher scores for depression, but not significantly different scores for anxiety and anger (Kumaketch et al., 2009:1042). On the other hand, at follow-up, the orphans in the intervention group had significantly lower scores for anxiety, depression, and anger than at baseline, whereas orphans in the control group showed increases in depression and anger and lowered self-esteem compared to baseline (Kumaketch et al., 2009:1042). Kumaketch et al. (2009:1042) note that these findings suggest that peer-group support intervention has a significant impact on anxiety, depression, and anger among AIDS orphans. However, Kumaketch et al. (2009:1042) state that the study found no significant effect of peer-group support on self-concept of the AIDS orphans.

Kumaketch et al. (2009:1042) observe that a possible limitation in the study was the lack of similarity in the two orphans' groups in baseline psychological distress after randomization to intervention and control groups. Kumaketch et al. (2009:1042) add that another limitation is that AIDS orphans' status for the participants in the study was verified on basis of verbal report of parental cause of death by the surviving parent or guardian. Furthermore, Kumaketch et al. (2009:1042) state that it is difficult to say with certainty that improvements in psychological distress that were observed in the study were solely due to the peer-group support intervention because additional support may have been provided through the somatic treatment. Kumaketch et al. (2009:1042) further note that another possible limitation is the use of several different teachers, whose approach may not have been standardized across groups. However, the study has significance for school administrators. The study shows that peer-group support intervention can be incorporated in co-curricular activities to address symptoms of anxiety, depression and anger.

Mueller, Alie, Jonas, Brown and Sherr (2011:57) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of a community-based art therapy intervention on the psychosocial health of children affected by HIV in South Africa. Mueller et al. (2011:58) state that the study evaluated empirically the effects of a community-based psychosocial intervention for children affected by HIV and AIDS using quasi-experimental cross-sectional post-intervention survey design. Mueller et al. (2011:58) add that the research also

identified key psych-sociodemographic factors that impact upon children's psychosocial health to help effectively structure and evaluate future interventions.

Mueller et al. (2011:58) claim that a community-based intervention called MAD (Make A Difference) About Art aims to increase children's self-esteem and self-efficacy and thereby improve their psychosocial health. The intervention program is meant for 8–18-year-olds and has been based in a deprived community of South Africa since 2001 (Mueller et al., 2011:58). Mueller et al. (2011:58) indicate that children attend sessions for six months (50+ sessions), led by a team of trained and supervised youth ambassadors. Mueller et al. (2011:58) state that the project runs art and education activities to build a sense of self-worth (self-esteem), self-concept, empowerment and emotional control (self-efficacy). Mueller et al. (2011:58) add that these activities include children creating “hero” books about their own life journey and group HIV education activities focused on self-advocacy and empowerment.

A total of 297 children aged 8-18 years were selected for the study, 143 (48.1%) females and 154 (51.9%) males (Mueller et al., 2011:61). The intervention group comprised of 177 individuals, 77 (43.5%) females and 100 (56.5%) males (Mueller et al., 2011:61).

Mueller et al. (2011:59) say that self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a 10-item Likert scale with validity and reliability data, while self-efficacy was measured using the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for children, a 14-item Likert scale. Furthermore, Mueller et al. (2011:59) state that child-depression was measured by an adopted version of the Child Depression Inventory. Mueller et al. (2011:59) add that emotional-behavioural problems were measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). According to Mueller et al. (2011:59), the SDQ is specifically designed for children of the appropriate age group to this study and has been extensively validated in several languages (including African languages) and in both developed and developing countries. According to Mueller et al. (2011:62), no statistically significant differences were found between those who attended the intervention and those who did not on the CDI (depression), the SDQ (emotional and behavioural problems) and the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale.

However, Mueller et al. (2011:64) state that children attending the intervention programme displayed significantly higher self-efficacy than children who did not.

According to Mueller et al. (2011:64), a key limitation of the study is the quasi-experimental, cross-sectional post-intervention methodological approach, which precludes from conclusions over direction and validity of causation between intervention attendance and higher self-efficacy. Furthermore, Mueller et al. (2011:64) add that significant group differences on demographic variables such as age, gender and household size indicate possible biases, as do the dropout rates of 15% and 29% in the intervention and comparison groups respectively. However, the study is significant for school administrators and NGOs which have interest in education for orphans and vulnerable children. According to Mueller et al. (2011:64), the study provides evidence to suggest that social and peer support increase self-efficacy. Mueller et al. (2011:64) argue that increased self-efficacy and resilience may impact upon psychological outcomes over time.

3.8.4 Intervention Programs Focusing on Food and Nutrition

Bello and Pillay (2019:2) note that the World Health Organization in 2016 reported that 15 000 deaths occurred among children per day translating into 5.6 million annually. Bello and Pillay (2019:2) indicate that nutrition-related factors contributed to 48% of deaths among the children. Kimani-Murage, Holding, Fotso, Ezeh, Madise, Kuhurani and Zulu (2010:5282) argue that despite being highlighted as one of the priority developmental issues under the Millennium Development Goals framework, malnutrition remains an important public health concern in the developing world. Furthermore, Kimani-Murage et al. (2010:5282-5283) note that nutrition status and food security are a priority as malnutrition is a risk factor for morbidity and mortality, poor cognitive development and reduced productivity.

Akulima, Ikamati, Mungai, Samuel, Ndirangu and Muga (2016:2) conducted a study to assess and demonstrate the roles of local community food banks in improving the nutrition of orphans and vulnerable children who were HIV-infected. This followed the establishment of two food banks by Amref Health Africa in Kenya to implement the child nutrition program (Akulima et al., 2016:2). Akulima et al. (2016:2) state that the

food banking was implemented over a period of between 6-12 months. Akulima et al. (2016:2) indicate that two assessments were conducted, one before and another after the initiation of the food banking and the results were compared.

Akulima et al. (2016:2) state that a quantitative design applying a pre- and post-test study lasting 12 months (October 2013 to September 2014) were conducted in two semi-arid sub-counties, Lari and Ngoliba in Kiambu County, Kenya. 103 HIV-infected children aged between 6 months and below 18 years and who were already recruited for HIV care and support services and accessing food banking services in the two sub-counties were included in the study using a non-probability sampling method (Akulima et al., 2016:2). Akulima et al. (2016:2) state that the sex of the children assessed was 41% male and 59% female. Akulima et al. (2016:2) indicate that structured questionnaires (forms) and anthropometric measurements were used to collect data through interviews, observation and recording. Furthermore, Akulima et al. (2016:2) state that the Child Status Index (CSI) tool and the Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes were used in data collection at households. These two tools were administered to HIV-positive children in the households concurrently (Akulima et al., 2016:2). Akulima et al. (2016:2) add that caregivers at the households provided supplementary information, beside observations. The data collection was conducted one month before the initiation of the food banks for baseline scores, and between 6-12 months after the establishment of the food banks for post-test scores (Akulima et al., 2016:2). Akulima et al. (2016:3) indicate that all the 103 HIV-infected children completed the 12 months stay for both CSI and MUAC and were present for the whole period of 12 months. Furthermore, Akulima et al. (2016:3) state that both CSI and MUAC assessments were administered to all the 103 HIV-infected children. Baseline scores and the post-test scores for CSI and MUAC are presented in the tables below to show the improvement of food banking intervention.

Table 3.5: Food Security CSI Scores and Changes between Pre- and Post-food Banking by Percentage (n=103)

CSI Ratings	HIV Infected Children by Number (Percentage %) Before Food Banking Interventions	HIV Infected Children by Number (Percentage %) After Food Banking Interventions	Percentage Change
Very bad (CSI=1)	43 (41.7)	0(0)	-41.7
Bad (CSI=2)	49 (47.6)	0(0)	-47.6
Fair (CSI=3)	10 (9.7)	55(53.4)	43.7
Good (CSI=4)	1 (1.0)	48(46.6)	45.6
Total	103 (100)	1003(100)	

In 2013/14 food security of the HIV-infected children was assessed using CSI index. CSI Scores were collected before and after food banking initiatives and compared to measure the changes and improvement. Sources; Ngoliba VWM and Cheers Up CBO periodic CSI data.

Table 3.6: Nutrition and Growth CSI Scores and Changes Between Pre- and Post Food Banking Intervention (n=103)

CSI Ratings	HIV Infected Children by Number (Percentage %) Before Food Banking Interventions	HIV Infected Children by Number (Percentage %) After Food Banking Interventions	Percentage Change
Very bad (CSI=1)	43(41.7)	0(0)	-41.7
Bad (CSI=2)	49(47.6)	0(0)	-47.6
Fair (CSI=3)	10(9.7)	53(51.5)	43.7
Good (CSI=4)	1(1.0)	48(46.6)	45.6
Total	103(100)	103(100)	

In 2013/14 Nutrition and growth of the HIV infected children was assessed using CSI Index. CSI scores were collected before and after food banking initiatives and compared to measure the changes and improvement. Source: Ngoliba VWB & Cheer Up CBD periodic CSI data.

Table 3.7: MUAC Scores for HIV Infected Children at Pre- and Post Food Banking Interventions (n=103)

MUAC Ratings	HIV Infected Children by Number (Percentage %) Before Food Banking Interventions	HIV Infected Children by Number (Percentage %) After Food Banking Interventions	Percentage Change
Severely acute malnutrition (SAM)	26(25.2)	4(3.9)	-21.3
Moderate Acute Malnutrition	19(18.4)	10(9.7)	-8.7
Mid-At risk Malnutrition	16(15.6)	25(24.3)	8.7
Normal	42(40.8)	64(62.1)	21.3
Total	103(100)	103(100)	

In 2013/14 Nutrition of the HIV infected children was assessed using MUAC tapes. MUAC measurement were collected before and after food banking initiatives and compared to measure the changes and improvement. Source: Ngoliba VWB & Cheer Up CBD periodic MUAC data.

Akulima et al. (2016:4) state that the study observed improvement in nutrition status of HIV-infected children using two parameters; the CSI and the MUAC measurements. Akulima et al. (2016:4) state that by 6-12 months after the initiation of food banks, the study demonstrated children nutrition status improvement from CSI ranking of vary bad (CSI=1) and bad (CSI=2) to CSI ranking of fair (CSI=3) and good (CSI=4). Furthermore, Akulima et al. (2016:4) state that there was no death related to malnutrition reported during the study period. Improvements were also observed on MUAC ranking (Akulima et al., 2016:4). Akulima et al. (2016:4) say that those who ranked as SAM at the start of the study period reduced by 21.3% from 25.25 to 3.9% while those who were ranked as normal increased by 21.3% from 40.8% to 62.1%. Akulima et al. (2016:4) state that this suggests that nutrition support food banking initiatives led to improved nutritional status and growth for HIV-infected OVC by ensuring access to affordable, high nutritious food on time.

Akulima et al. (2016:5) observe that the study's main strength was the use of MUAC and SCI to measure the nutrition levels of HIV-infected children in a community setting. Akulima et al. (2016:50) state that MUAC has been successfully used with low-skilled staff giving training and supervisory support and is especially suitable for use in the

community. Furthermore, Akulima et al. (2016:50) note that the method is based on a single measurement, as opposed to two measurements for example weight and height. Akulima et al. (2016:5) add that the CSI has been applied and validated as a reliable measure for nutrition status of children. The study was based on pre-post-test design. This implies that there were baseline scores and the post-test scores. This made it easy to conclude about the effects of the intervention program.

However, the study has some limitations. According to Akulima et al. (2016:5), the first study limitation was the relative smaller sample (census), shorter period between the start and end of study may have limiting interpretation and application of the findings. Akulima et al. (2016:5) argue that a study period or a food banking period of over one year will allow adequate follow-up for concrete outcomes assessments. The second limitation is attributed to the fact that HIV-negative children who may present similar malnutrition symptoms were excluded from the study (Akulima et al., 2016:5). Akulima et al. (2016:5) observe that HIV-infected children assessed alone for nutritional improvement through food banking may present confounded symptoms that may be due to intolerance to clinical food supplementation and HIV Anti-Retroviral Treatment, and this will make it difficult to draw conclusions whether it was due to the effect of HIV treatment or nutrition improvement. Akulima et al. (2016:5) argue that despite the study limitations, this study contributes evidence that greatly contributes to the enquiries and practice on the role of community food banking in improving the nutritional status of HIV-infected children, more so through a community participating approach.

3.8.5 Intervention Program Focusing on Health Care

Thurman, Hutchinson, Lavin and Ikamari (2009:1) conducted a study on evaluation of multifaceted program for orphans and vulnerable children in Gutundu District, Kenya. Thurman et al. (2009:2) note that Integrated AIDS Program (IAP) is a community and faith-based organization operating in Gutundu District that receives technical and financial support from Pathfinder International. The evaluation examines the effectiveness of program strategies to improve the lives of OVC aged between 8 and 14 years and their guardians (Thurman et al., 2009:1). The purpose of the study is to present findings of the outcomes associated with these HIV prevention strategies

(Thurman et al., 2009:1). Thurman et al. (2009:2) claim that in addition to providing support to OVC and people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), IAP has the following program objectives:

- Increase the number of informed decisions that contribute to preventing and controlling the spread of HIV and AIDS.
- Increase the number of people accessing VCT services.
- Build the capacity of youth and the community at large to address issues related to HIV and AIDS by raising awareness and decreasing stigma and discrimination.

Thurman et al. (2009:2) state that to achieve these objectives, the program conducts HIV prevention and testing activities, including comprehensive HIV and AIDS educational campaigns and VCT promotion and services. Thurman et al. (2009:3) say that the outcome evaluation used a post-test design with an intervention and comparison group based on self-reported exposure to program activities. Randomized sampling was used to select 2 487 guardians and 3 423 children, representing 40% of the total households in the area (Thurman et al., 2009:3). More than half of 3 423 children were male and nearly 44% were between 12 and 14 years old, and most 99% were enrolled in school and were being cared for by their mother (78%) (Thurman et al., 2009:3). Thurman et al. (2009:4) indicate that the majority (92%) of the 2, 487 guardians interviewed for this study were female with average age of 40.3 years, and 19% were 50 years or older. Thurman et al. (2009:4) state that the socio-economic profile of households varied, with 24% in the lowest wealth category and 16% in the wealthiest category.

Regarding program exposure of children, 18% of children had received a school visit from IAP counsellors, who conducted Education for Life (EFL) activities concerning an HIV and AIDS education (Thurman et al., 2009:4). Findings revealed that children who received EFL school visit from IAP counsellors had higher level of accurate knowledge concerning HIV prevention (Thurman et al., 2009:5). Thurman et al. (2009:5) note that they were more likely to know that HIV and AIDS could be prevented than those who had not received EFL visits (96% versus 84%, respectively). Furthermore, findings revealed that children who received EFL visits reported a much higher number of accurate prevention methods than those who had not received these

visits (Thurman et al., 2009:5). Thurman et al. (2009:5) add that lower levels of misconceptions were also found among those who had received EFL school visits from IAP.

In terms of exposure of adult guardians, Thurman et al. (2009:6) state that 28.7% of adult guardians in the sample reported attending a VCT meeting and about one third (34.5%) attended an HIV prevention meeting. Thurman et al. (2009:6) state that the adult HIV prevention meetings were part of IAP's EFL activities. According to Thurman et al. (2009:6), the VCT meetings were held to specifically promote VCT testing, either encouraging the community to visit the in-house VCT clinic IAP operates or to receive a test at an upcoming mobile clinic. Findings revealed that both those who attended a VCT meeting and those attended HIV prevention meeting, reported higher levels of having been tested than those who did not attend, with the difference strikingly higher among those who had attended VCT meetings (Thurman et al., 2009:6). Thurman et al. (2009:6) concludes that these findings indicate that IAP's HIV prevention and testing activities are associated with increased HIV knowledge among children and HIV testing among adults.

Thurman et al. (2009:3) indicate that there are some limitations to this study. For example, the post-test study design cannot discern causality for differences found between individuals exposed to IAP intervention and those not exposed. Thurman et al. (2009:3) observe: "These differences may have been pre-existing" The second limitation is that the unexposed group may have been systematically different from the exposed group (Thurman et al., 2009:3). Thurman et al. (2009:3) argue that, for instance, those who reported exposure to IAP prevention and testing community sensitization events may have been more motivated to participate in these activities and obtain an HIV test, perhaps due to a personal concern of infection. Furthermore, Thurman et al. (2009:3) note that this limitation is expected to be more likely for the guardian-level outcome of VCT versus the child-level outcomes concerning HIV knowledge, as children's participation was controlled by their school administration. Despite these limitations, the study has significance for donors, program managers and policy makers. The study proved that comprehensive HIV and AIDS education remains necessary for youth. According to Thurman et al. (2009:7), the EFL intervention was associated with higher level of correct knowledge and lower levels of

misconceptions concerning HIV. The study also proved that community sensitization may promote VCT uptake and could be expanded.

3.8.6 Intervention Programs Focusing on Legal Protection

Intervention programs that incorporate advocacy campaigns on human rights and government policies awareness improve access on education, health and social welfare for orphans and vulnerable children.

Nyangara, Kalungwa, Obiero, Thurman and Chapman (2009) conducted a study on evaluation of Tumaini Project in Iringa Region, Tanzania. Nyangara et al. (2009:7) state that the Tumaini program provides home based care (HBC) and support services to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and OVC; work to strengthen referral system networks; and aims to mobilize and build the capacity of the community to cater the needs of children and their families. Nyangara et al. (2009:7) argue that to meet these objectives, the program employs a number of intervention strategies, including providing HBC and other support services; running kids' club; linking the community to an outpatient health clinic within the Allamano Health Center; and providing and ensuring that school-age children have the necessary school materials. However, it is important to note that the program is more comprehensive, as it is not limited to four strategies, instead, it employs more strategies (Nyangara et al., 2009:7). Nyangara et al. (2009:7) observe that other intervention strategies include income generating activities; livelihood skills; stigma reduction and support mobilization, advocacy, health education seminars in communities, other material support (e.g., food, medication), and referrals to complement services. Nyangara et al. (2009:7) state that this holistic approach seeks to benefit OVC and their caregivers directly through these targeted activities, as well as indirectly through the improved wellbeing of PLWHA and increase capacity of community members to support both groups.

Nyangara et al. (2009:9) indicate that a post-test study was conducted with a comparison group to evaluate the effect of exposure to the Tumaini program interventions on child and caregiver outcomes. Nyangara et al. (2009:9) state that the intervention group was drawn from a list of children aged between 8 and 14 years who had been identified as the most vulnerable in the area due to their orphanhood,

or because they were living with HIV/AIDS or had parents/caregivers living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. The rationale for selecting children aged 8 and 14 years old was that it would allow the researchers to examine a wide range of outcomes, and because children within this age-range constituted the majority of those enrolled in the OVC program (Nyangara et al., 2009:9). Nyangara et al. (2009:9) note that a comparison group was drawn from a list of newly identified most vulnerable children (MVC) in adjacent Njobe District who were scheduled to receive care and support in the near future from other nongovernmental organization. Nyangara et al. (2009:10), say that four questionnaires were developed, pre-tested, revised, and administered to each OVC household to collect data on the household schedule (roster and other socio-economic factors), caregiver demographics, child characteristics (aged between 8-14 years old), and child wellbeing from the perspective of both the child and that of the child's caregiver. Nyangara et al. (2009:10) note that a total of 1 104 OVC aged between 8 and 14 years (551 in the intervention area and 552 in the comparison area, 87.3% of those approached), and 845 of their caregivers (429 in Iringa and 416 in Njobe Districts) were successfully interviewed. It is important to note that some of these caregivers had more than one child under their care.

The original intention was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Allamano program interventions on outcome measures for children and their caregivers, using a comparison group (Nyangara et al., 2009:10). Nyangara et al. (2009:10) state that initial analyses performed to compare the interventions and comparison groups on key interventions revealed that some children in the intervention group reported having “no exposure” and some in comparison group reported “exposure” to interventions. Therefore, separate analyses were conducted to compare those caregivers or children who had been exposed to an intervention (i.e., volunteer home-visit, a kids' club meeting, heard of Allamano Health Clinic, or ensuring possession of basic school materials) versus those who had no exposure to the intervention.

Effects of the home-visiting strategy on caregiver and child outcomes: The psychosocial wellbeing of caregiver was measured using four outcome indicators (positive, negative, marginalization feelings, and perceived community stigma) (Nyangara et al., 2009:15). The findings revealed that the measures for positive feelings for those exposed and non-exposed groups were 2.5 and 2.3, respectively, in

a sub-scale with possible scores ranging between 1 to 5, where a higher score is indicative of positive perception of quality of life (Nyangara et al., 2009:15-16). Nyangara et al. (2009:16) state that when the negative scale was used to measure caregivers' feelings, home visiting showed no significant effects. Regarding marginalization, the results showed that caregivers whose homes were visited by a volunteer felt more marginalized compared to those not visited (mean score 2.36 and 2.25 for exposed and non-exposed, respectively), in a scale 1 to 4 (Nyangara et al., 2009:16). Nyangara et al. (2009:17) point out that this finding suggests that caregivers who received home visits from Allamano volunteer feel that other people in the community have negative attitude towards those affected by HIV/AIDS. These findings were unexpected as one of the aims of home visit was to help reduce stigma and discrimination in the household and in the community towards PLWHA and OVC. Regarding caregiver-child relationship, Nyangara et al. (2009:17) state that the caregiver's feeling towards a child was assessed using a sub-scale with four items ($\alpha=0,81$) taken from the 2000 U.S Census Bureau Survey of income and Program Participation (SIPP), which was designed to collect information from individuals and households in the United States. Nyangara et al. (2009:17) state that results showed that volunteer home visiting was not associated with a caregiver's feelings towards the children within their care.

Regarding to Health-Care services for child and caregiver, Nyangara et al. (2009:17) state that approximately 65% of those visited by an Allamano volunteer or staff member had visited the Allamano center for health care services, compared with only 28,7% of those not visited by a volunteer. Nyangara et al. (2009:18) note that child's legal protection outcomes were assessed using two indicators: designation of an alternative caregiver for the child and whether the child has a birth certificate (national identification document). Nyangara et al. (2009:18) state that legal advice is among the other essential services that Allamano volunteers and staff provide to their clients by, for instance, helping caregivers identify and designate an alternative caregiver for the child, in case of their absence, and ensuring that children have an identity document, such as birth certificate. Nyangara et al. (2009:18) claim that the analysis showed that children whose homes had been visited by an Allamano volunteer were more likely to have a birth certificate than those who had not been visited (42.6% and 33.6%, respectively; $p=0.02$).

Nyangara et al. (2009:18) state that the impact of home visiting on the psychosocial wellbeing of children was assessed using self-esteem indicators including family-relationships and global self-esteem (self-worth) subscale of the widely used self-esteem questionnaire, a youth-specific instrument. Nyangara et al. (2009:18), say results showed that children in households that were visited by a volunteer had slightly higher family-related self-esteem scores (children felt valued in the family) than those not visited (total scores of 21.3 and 20.9, for visited by volunteer and not visited, respectively; $p=2$).

Effects of participation in kids' club: Nyangara et al. (2009:19) state that the aim of the Allamano-run kids' clubs is to help improve children's social skills, self-esteem, emotional, and other psychosocial outcomes for OVC and to reduce community stigma and discrimination against families affected by HIV/AIDS and OVC. Effects of participation in a kids' club were presented in two perspectives; namely, feelings and social behaviour of children; and social support networks of OVC (Nyangara et al., 2009; 19). Regarding feelings and social behaviour of children, five indicators were used to assess the effects of kids' club participation, namely, self-esteem; emotional problems; social behaviour; and stigma and discrimination (Nyangara et al., 2009:19-20). Nyangara et al. (2009:19) indicate that the results showed that there was no association observed between kids' club participation and self-esteem for both measures (family-related and self-esteem). Regarding the emotional problems, results showed that the children who had fewer problems compared to those who had not attended kids' club (total scores were 11.7 among those for attending and 12.0 among those not attending), in possible scores ranging from 4 to 32, with higher scores indicating more emotional problems (Nyangara et al., 2009:19). In terms of social behaviour, children who participated in kids' club had better social behaviour than those who had not attended in the previous year (with scores of 14.1 for those attending versus 13.7 for not attending), in a possible cumulative score ranging from 5 to 15, and with higher scores indicating more co-operative and desirable behaviour. Nyangara et al. (2009:20) say further analyses on frequency of exposure (i.e., the number of times a child attended kids' club meeting in previous year) was conducted to examine if there was a close-response relationship. Nyangara et al. (2009:20) state that the children who had attended a kids' club monthly had fewer emotional problems (scoring 11.7) as measured by the SDQ subscale compared to others (those

who attended every other month scored 12.0 while those who attended four times or fewer a year scored 12.5). In terms of children's perception of negative community attitudes towards HIV-affected families (PLWHA and OVC), results showed that kids' club participation had a significant effect on children's perceptions that people in the community were jealous of the services given to HIV-families, including orphans (Nyangara et al., 2009:20). Nyangara et al. (2009:2) state that children who had attended kids' club had higher mean score than those who had never attended (mean 2.7 for those attending versus 2.4 for those who had never attended). In terms of social support networks of OVC, findings showed that children who had attended kids' club meeting felt that they had more adult support in their lives than those who had not attended (mean score were 3.5 for those attending versus 3.4 for those not attending) (Nyangara et al., 2009:20).

Effects of a Health Clinic Linked to the Community on Health outcomes: Nyangara et al. (2009:21) state that the study compared those who had "ever heard" and those who had "not heard" of Allamano Health Care Center. According to Nyangara et al. (2009:21), caregivers who had heard of the Allamano Health Center reported significant better health than those who had not (mean score 3,4 among those who had heard versus 3.2 among those who had not, in a possible scale ranging from 1 to 5. Regarding caregivers' access to Health Care Services, Nyangara et al. (2009:21) state that caregivers who had heard of the Allamano Health Center reported easier access compared to those who reported no knowledge of the center (mean scores 2,5 for those who had heard of the center versus 2.4 for those who had not, $p=0,01$).

Effects on child outcomes of having the essentials school materials and supplies: Nyangara et al. (2009:21) state that to ensure access to schooling for a majority of OVC, the Tumaini/Allamano program provides direct educational support to school-age children to meet their immediate needs including regular school attendance and help with their psychosocial wellbeing. Regarding a child's access to education, Nyangara et al. (2009:210) state that a child's access to education was assessed using two indicators; child is still attending school and child regularly attending school. Nyangara et al. (2009:21) say results showed that a significantly higher proportion of children exposed to the program through home visits and kids' club were still attending school compared to those not exposed (97.7% versus 91.9%, and 97.7% and 92.8%

respectively). Nyangara et al. (2009:22) state that the effects of having the necessary school materials on child's self-esteem (family-related and global self-esteem scale) were measured. Nyangara et al. (2009:22) note that the results showed that possession of school materials was related to better self-esteem scores. Nyangara et al. (2009:22) state that children who had more school items felt that their families valued them more compared to those who had fewer school materials (total scores were 21.2 versus 20.5. Nyangara et al. (2009:22) add that having the necessary school supplies was also positively associated with enhanced self-worth (as measured by the global self-esteem subscale) among children in the exposed group (scores of 22.4 versus 20.8). Regarding a child's perception on negative community attitudes towards HIV-affected families, Nyangara et al. (2009:22) state that results showed that children who had the necessary school materials felt that there were fewer negative attitudes towards PLWHA and OVC in the community to those who reported having fewer school items. In terms of adult support, Nyangara et al. (2009:22) state that results showed that children's feeling of adult support increased with the increasing number of basic school supplies in their possession (mean scores ranging from 2.8 to 3.7, for those with zero and five items respectively).

Nyangara et al. (2009:11) observe that the main limitation of the study was the application of a post-test study design. This implies that there was no baseline data to make any decisive conclusions of the extent of change in outcomes that could be attributed to the program intervention (exposure effects) (Nyangara et al., 2009:11). Nyangara et al. (2009:11) add that another limitation concerns selection bias. Nyangara et al. (2009:11) say the study was initially designed to compare subjects with the assumption that all those in the intervention group would have been exposed to the program components under investigation. However, it turned out that some children in the intervention group reported being "unexposed" possibly out of choice, suggesting that differences may have already existed between those who self-selected to participate and those who did not (Nyangara et al., 2009:11). Nyangara et al. (2009:11) state that those who chose to receive services may have had an increased need for those interventions and may have been worse off at the start of the evaluation, with respect to the outcomes of interest. The evaluation did not cover all the intervention programs offered by the Allimaino project; therefore, the results do not give the whole picture.

However, the study has some strengths and Nyangara et al. (2009:11) point out that a key strength of the study was that it yielded immediate data on program effects. Nyangara et al. (2009:11) state that a non-experimental study design, such as was applied here, is also more ethical as there is no instance where services were withheld from children or their caregivers. Nyangara et al. (2009:11) indicate that the sample of children comprised OVC receiving services (the exposed group) and a comparison group of OVC scheduled to receive the same services later or who could access services at the time of study but had chosen not to do so (the “not yet exposed” group).

3.8.7 Intervention Programs Focusing on Shelter and Care

Community family models are preferred over institutionalization in providing care and support for orphans and vulnerable children as discussed in paragraph 3.7.2. However, in some circumstances, it is not possible to use the community family models. Phiri and Webb (2002:14) observe that as the impact of AIDS become manifest, there are increasing numbers of institutions such as unregistered and registered children’s homes and orphanages. Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:69) state that an orphanage seeks to provide shelter, care, love and protection to these vulnerable children.

Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:69) assessed of facilities and best practices in orphanages in Benin City, South-South Region and Nigeria. They wanted to determine whether these institutions implemented best practices as described by international aid organizations. Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:70) argue that information obtained from this study could form the base line on best practices in the care of the orphans in the country as well as provide information that will be useful for evaluating interventions targeted at providing and improving on these best practices for adequate care for orphans.

The approach for the study was a descriptive cross-sectional evaluation of facilities and best practices of orphanages in Benin and was carried out between January and May 2011 (Nwaneri & Sadoh, 2016:70). Out of 15 registered orphanages located in different parts of the city, 10 were eligible for inclusion the study (Nwaneri & Sadoh, 2016:70). Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:70) state that the selected orphanages were

labelled A to J in a simple random fashion. The total number of vulnerable children under the care of these orphanages was 150, males 62 (41.3%) and females 88 (58.7%) with age range 0-17 years (Nwaneri & Sadoh, 2016:71). Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:70) indicate that data were collected from caregivers of children in the orphanages using a researcher administered questionnaire. Nwaneri and Sadoh, (2016:70) state that caregiver in this study was the proprietor/proprietress and/or the longest serving caregiver in the orphanages.

Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:70) state that the best practices assessed included adequacy of number of caregivers, school enrolment, and adequacy of housing such as number of rooms with good ventilation and absence of overcrowding. Furthermore, Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:70) state that others included nutritional status of the children, provision of safe and potable water, toilet facilities, and evidence of birth registration and immunization status (card) of each child. Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:70) add that the security within the orphanage was assessed based on the presence of a perimeter wall fence and at least one security officer. Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:71) report that the best practices assessed in this study were compared with standards in literature and was recorded as appropriate and inappropriate.

Nwaneri and Sadoh (2016:73) state that the results showed the following: only one orphanage met all the criteria for the best practices assessed in the study; seven out of 10 had inappropriate child-caregiver ratio; children who had stayed longer than 5 years in the orphanages were significantly more stunted than those who had stayed for shorter periods (a reflection of under-nutrition over a period of time); all the orphanages had appropriate primary and secondary school enrolment; four of orphanages were over-crowded; four orphanages had inadequate toilet facilities; all orphanages had access to potable water either from the bore hole (80%) or municipal water sources (20.0%); nine orphanages had a perimeter concrete fence walls and had iron gates at least one security officer at the entrance post.

One of the limitations of the study is the reporting bias of the proprietors/proprietresses of the orphanages on variables that could not be independently verified by the researchers (Nwaneri & Sadoh, 2016:75). A case in point is that most of caregivers in the study did not provide the birth certificates of the children to the researchers

during the period of this study resulting in exclusion in the final analysis (Nwaneri & Sadoh, 2016:75). The study lacks baseline scores that could make it easy to determine the causality relationship between malnutrition and the duration of stay in the orphanages. For instance, the study concludes that most of the children who stayed longer than 5 years in the orphanages were significantly stunted than those who had stayed for shorter periods (Nwaneri & Sadoh, 2016:72). Since there are no baseline scores, the conditions of these children are not known prior to their arrival at the institutions. However, the study is significant for donors, funders, policy makers, NGOs, FBOs, and CBOs. The study highlighted the plight and poor conditions under which these children are cared and supported. The study raises the need for monitoring and support of orphanages by independent officials from Department/Ministry of Social welfare (Local authority). Furthermore, the study raises the need for the government in charge in the area to budget for such institutions.

3.7.8 Intervention Programs Focusing on Economic Strengthening of Households

Richter, Sherr, Makhweya, Dirks and Yeboah (2008:10) point out that in many countries, families living with, affected by and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS have been advocating the strengthening of families and support communities that care for children living in HIV/AIDS contexts. For many years, families and extended families have been caring and supporting orphans and vulnerable children. Richter et al. (2008:11) note that research has demonstrated that children can cope with their vulnerabilities when their adult caregiver is healthy and provides love and cognitive stimulation. Furthermore, Richter et al. (2008:10) note that global partners and international implementing agencies have endorsed the framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV and AIDS. This framework relies on a family- centred approach. Richter et al. (2008:10) argue that despite this commitment, implementing agencies continue to grapple with how to translate these global and national strategies into actual practice, and to define exactly what a family centered approach means in practice.

In the light of the above, Richter et al. (2008:12) investigated the understanding of a family- centered model by implementing agencies and partners to contrive a global

perspective. Richter et al. (2008:12) note that the study collated the views and perspectives of respondents from selected implementing agencies about family centered approach to care for vulnerable children, and how they integrate such an approach into the design of their programs that focus on orphans and other vulnerable children.

Richter et al. (2008:15) collected data using a three-pronged, namely, a global literature search of peer-reviewed articles published in English; a web-based search of other literature published in English on the subject, to include reviews and evaluations of orphans and other vulnerable children programs; and interviews with key respondents from selected implementing agencies supporting programs that seek to support orphans and other vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa. Interviews were conducted through phones and questionnaires were distributed through OVC-related listservs (Richter et al., 2008:15). Richter et al. (2008:16) state that the analysis of the literature and information from the key informant questionnaire was divided into seven domain areas that were considered essential to a family-centred approach:

- A definition for family centered care, a strategy of family centered care, or model of a family centered approach to care and support of orphans and vulnerable children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.
- Strengthening the capacity of families to protect and care orphans and other vulnerable children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.
- Partnership with key service providers, i.e., governmental and non-governmental and private sector to provide comprehensive services to adults and children affected by HIV/AIDS in the families being served.
- Leveraging the provision of services and resources by other key service providers i.e., governmental and non-governmental and private sector, to cater for the comprehensive needs of entire families made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.
- Referral networks and linkages that exist or are strengthened and include community volunteers, staff and other health and social workers who can monitor the capacity of families affected by HIV/AIDS to cope and the children within them to grow and strive.

- Regular monitoring of children at child outcome level according to specific domain areas to assess whether they are thriving and the care of a surviving parent or other adult caregiver.
- Community capacity-building and sustainability, i.e., building technical and programmatic capacity through training and technical assistance; working with local individuals, organizations, institutions and structures; provide resources (people, currency, commodities, structures) to continue to deliver services; or using another mechanism of sustainability.

52 articles were selected from a global literature search of previewed articles published in English, 6 pieces of gray literature from the web were identified (Richter et al., 2008:18). Richter et al. (2008:18) state that 17 key informant interviews were conducted from US implementing agencies and South African partners. 4 respondents completed the questionnaires circulated through the list-servs (Richter et al., 2008:18). Richter et al. (2008:19) add that respondents from 13 organizations completed the questionnaire through a phone interview.

Richter et al. (2008:19) state that the findings revealed that there was a lack of literature and respondents who either defined family centered care or a strategy for family centered approach. Richter et al. (2008:19) state that many articles, reports and respondents indicated a familiarity with the framework document and all five strategies described therein. Richter et al. (2008:19) argue that families and “family centered approaches” were often equated to communities and community level interventions and in some cases an assumption that “family” is a Western concept and not common in African given the reliance on the extended family or “community.” The findings revealed that the general trend from the respondents showed that the majority of implementing agencies did not have a working definition of a family centered approach (Richter et al., 2008:19).

On the domain of strengthening the capacity of the family. Findings from literature showed that there were a few descriptions on various mechanisms through which a comprehensive program could strengthen the capacity of families to protect and care for orphans and other vulnerable children, that is, by promoting the lives of parents and providing economic, psychosocial and other support (Richter et al., 2008:19).

Richter et al. (2008:20) note that several articles also determined that for families to provide proper care to orphans and other vulnerable children, there is a need for wider sectoral responses such as universal access to primary and secondary education as well as health care for women and children. Richter et al. (2008:20) add that the key informant interviews revealed that considerable efforts were being made to provide comprehensive services using a family centered approach.

The study revealed that partnership through a grant, agreement, memorandum of understanding or informal verbal agreement is essential step that allows different sectoral actors to come together to provide services together to a vulnerable population (Richter et al., 2008:21). This was derived from literature, and interviews respondents (Richter et al., 2008:21).

Leveraging services/resources by other sector actors is another strategic mechanism through which a service provider can increase or improve services to the vulnerable through a formal written or informal verbal agreement (Richter et al., 2008:21). Findings showed that this was a common strategy among the implementing organizations (Richter et al., 2008:21).

Referral networks is another strategy used by service providers due to the multi-sectoral needs of vulnerable children and the adults within their family and the inability of any one provider to cater for the needs of the entire family on their own (Richter et al., 2008:22). Findings revealed that referral networks were common although the strength of those networks varied (Richter et al., 2008:22). Richter et al. (2008:22) note that respondents from most organizations described referrals as typically informal.

Richter et al. (2008:22) argue that monitoring child outcomes at the family level including the status of the adults is an indicator of the status of the child is key in any kind of family-centered model. Richter et al. (2008:22) state that many programs found in the literature describe the use of a regular monitor of children and/or households they lived in including social workers, community volunteers and teachers. Interviews with most organisations revealed that regular child monitoring was taking place (Richter et al., 2008:22-23). Capacity building and sustainability was limited to the

literature (Richter et al., 2008:23). However, Richter et al. (2008:23) note that many key informants described an attempt to integrate plans for sustainability of the program and build capacity of the community from the outset. Richter et al. (2008:23) observe that partnerships are formed with the community and other stakeholders, local authorities, and traditional leaders to ensure that orphans and other vulnerable children will not be left without any support.

The significance of the study is that it gives a global understanding of the family-centered model. It highlights the discrepancies on understanding of the family-centered approach by many organizations and implementing agencies. The study suggests the framework to be followed when implementing intervention programs for protection, care and support of orphans and other vulnerable children and also shows the strategies of the said framework. This information is useful for program managers and implementing agencies for strengthening and monitoring their activities. Program managers and implementing agencies can use the framework and strategies in designing the intervention programs. However, the study has limitations. The study used different studies that have been conducted which used different designs and methodologies. Some studies did not use random sampling; this implies that the population used was not the representation of the entire population. Telephone interviews have limitations, for example, not reaching all the intended participants.

3.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the background for the phenomenon of OVC and challenges thereof. This was followed by a presentation of OVC-related events which shaped the thinking, frameworks and response actions to orphans and other vulnerable children. Furthermore, these OVC-related events brought about several international declarations and conventions.

Many governments of various countries committed to these declarations and conventions. There are a number of declarations and conventions that have been promulgated in various platforms, including among others; the World Declaration on Survival, Protection, and Development of Child; United Nation Millennium Declaration; Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Education for All (EFA); United Nations

General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS). As a result, several policy documents, national strategic plans for HIV/AIDS, frameworks and programs have been developed and adopted in many countries. For example, one of the salient policies is No fee policy for education in primary school. The introduction of such a policy in many countries resulted in upsurge in the enrolment of orphans and vulnerable children. For example, in South Africa there are two pieces of legislations, namely, the South African School Act of 1996, and the Children's Act of 2005, which aim to fulfil children's rights, including the rights to basic health care, social security, nutrition and education. Another milestone achieved by these declarations and conventions is the development of models/approaches/ frameworks meant to protect, care and support for OVC. For example, the framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV and AIDS was adopted at the international level. Five strategies were incorporated in the framework, namely; strengthen the capacity of families to protect and care for orphans and vulnerable children; mobilise and support community-based responses; ensure access for orphans and vulnerable children to essential services, including education, health care, birth registration and others; ensure that governments protect the most vulnerable children through improved policy and legislation and by channeling resources to families and communities; and raising awareness at all levels through advocacy and social mobilisation to create a supportive environment for children and families affected by HIV and AIDS. At regional level (SADC), Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) was established as a framework. This framework is meant to protect the rights of children including orphans and vulnerable children. This framework focuses on ten priority areas, namely, a rights-based and socially inclusive and cohesive school; social welfare services; health promotion, material support; psychosocial support; co-curricular support; curricular support; infrastructure, water and sanitation; safety and protection; and nutrition support.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the literature review revealed numerous consequences and challenges associated with OVC which amongst others prompted the conceptualisation of the Learner Support Agent Programme. The literature reviews also revealed several strategies and frameworks which are implemented to address these challenges. In addition, the literature review revealed numerous shortcomings of several approaches to the problem. Most importantly, the literature review assessed intervention programs focusing on educational, psychological and co-curricular support aimed at improving self-concept and academic performance of OVC among others.

This chapter presents the framework followed to achieve aim and objectives of the study. Therefore, the chapter discusses the research methods, research paradigm, research design, research methodology, approaches, delimitation of study, population and the sample chosen for the study. The chapter also discusses the processes and procedures followed during data collection and analysis. Finally, the chapter outlines the processes and procedures that were followed to ensure that the study is reliable, valid and trustworthy.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Neuman (1997:62) indicates that there are many definitions of a paradigm. Morgan (2007:50) concurs observing that it is all too easy for social scientists to talk about “paradigms” and mean entirely different things. Wahyuni (2012:69) notes that a research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher. Bailey (1987:25) states that a paradigm is the mental window through which the researcher views the world. Taylor and Medina (2013:1) note that a paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, worldview, or framework that

research and practice in a field. McGreger and Murnane (2010:419) define a paradigm as a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality. All these definitions are correct, depending on an angle at which one views research paradigm and the field of study.

In an attempt to sort out the multiple meanings and uses of the word paradigm, Morgan (2007:49 & 50) summarizes the four most common versions of this term as it is found within the social sciences saying what distinguishes the four versions is the level of generality of that belief system.

a) Paradigms as worldviews

Firstly, paradigms are worldviews or all-encompassing ways of experiencing and thinking about the world, including beliefs about morals, values, and aesthetics (Morgan, 2007:50). This version is too broad; worldview can mean anything for the researcher. Thus, Morgan (2007:52) notes that problems arise if one simply stops at the broad sense of paradigm as a worldview, without carefully specifying the elements that are contained within that worldview. Morgan (2007:52) argues that it is thus little good to think of paradigms as worldviews that include everything someone thinks or believes, instead, it is important to clarify what is contained in a worldview, which in this case would primarily focus on a person's thoughts about the nature of research. With regard to combining qualitative and quantitative methods, there are many factors that the researcher should consider in making decisions about what to study and how to do such a study (Morgan, 2007:52).

Thus, worldview refers to something that exists and can be measured. In reference to my study, self-concept and academic performance are realities that exist. For the current study, self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners are abstract realities that I measured through the multidimensional Self-Concept Scale and school progress mark schedules respectively.

b) Paradigms as epistemological stances

Secondly, paradigms are epistemological stances, for example, realism and constructivism are distinctive belief systems that influence how research questions are asked and answered (Morgan, 2007:52). This definition takes a narrower approach

by concentrating on one's worldviews about issues within the philosophy of knowledge (Moran, 2007:52). Morgan (2007:52) argues that this approach builds on the insight that research inherently involves epistemological issues about the nature of knowledge and knowing. However, Morgan (2007:52) argues that although paradigms as epistemological stances do draw attention to deeper assumptions that researchers make, they tell us little about more substantive decisions such as what to study and how to do so.

The nature of my study warranted for the adoption of a dual stance. On one hand, to answer the first two questions mentioned in paragraph 1.4., I opted for realism. On the other hand, to answer the third question mentioned in the same paragraph, I opted for interpretivism.

c) Paradigm as shared beliefs among members of specialty area

Thirdly, Morgan (2007:53) notes that there is a version of paradigm as shared beliefs within a community of researchers who share a consensus about which questions are most meaningful and which procedures are most appropriate for answering these questions. Morgan (2007:53) notes that this version is common in Science studies and it has appeared in the social sciences, it has typically been applied to whole disciplines. Morgan (2007:53) notes that recent work on combining qualitative and quantitative methods has emphasized a largely pragmatist stance. Paradigms as shared beliefs among members of a specialty area has no relevance to my study. My study is unique because I do not solicit the views of scholars within the same field on how to go about conducting my research.

d) Paradigms as model examples of research

Fourthly, Morgan (2007:53) notes that the final and most specific version of paradigms treats them as model examples that serve as "exemplars" for how research is done in a given field. Morgan (2007:53) states that this usage is most familiar in the form of "paradigmatic examples" that shows newcomers how a field addresses its central issues. This version has some relevance in combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Morgan, 2007:54). Morgan (2007:54) argues that this version of paradigms is relevant to work that demonstrates the value of combining methods in a specific area by summarizing noteworthy examples from that field. In relation to my study, I

had no intention to present my study as a model example for mixed methods research. However, scholars who have interest in using my study as an example are welcome.

e) Dimensions of paradigms

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2008:6) note that paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Mouton and Marrais (2011:11) define ontology as the study of being or reality. Similarly, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2008:6) say ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied and what can be known about it. Mouton and Marrais (2011:11) state that the ontological dimension of research in social science, we have in mind the reality being investigated. Furthermore, Mouton and Marrais (2011:11) argue that the research domain of the social sciences is humankind in all its diversity. Each paradigm that had been discussed in the study entailed its ontological dimension.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2008:6) state that epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher (knower) and what can be known. Mouton and Marrais (2011:14) on the other hand, state that the epistemic dimension is the embodiment of the ideal science, namely the quest for truth. Similarly, each paradigm discussed in the study entailed its epistemological stance.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2008:6) say that methodology specifies how researchers go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known. Mouton and Marrais (2011:15) argue that the methodological dimension concerns the “how” of social sciences research. The methodological dimension indicates how research should be planned, structured, and executed to comply with the criteria of science. Therefore, each paradigm employs its methodology.

4.2.1 Positivist Paradigm

Mack (2010:6) indicate that the positivist paradigm is also called the scientific paradigm. Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:53) state that the term “positivism” was coined

by Auguste Comte to reflect a strict empirical approach in which claims about knowledge are based directly on observed experience and emphasises facts and the cause of behaviour. Neuman (1997:64) states that positivists hold that social and physical reality is real, it is “out there” and is waiting to be discovered. Rehman and Alharthi (2016:53) assert that positivism assumes that reality exists independently of human being, it is not mediated by our senses, and it is governed by immutable laws. Rehman and Alharthi (2016:53) state that the ontological position of positivists is that of realism and that proponents of positivism strive to understand the social world like the natural world. Rehman and Alharthi (2016:53) argue that in nature, there is cause-effect relationship between phenomena, and once established, they can be predicted with certainty in the future. According to positivists, this argument applies to the social world. Rehman and Alharthi (2016:53) state that because reality is context free, different researchers working in different times and places will converge to the same conclusions about a given phenomenon. Guba and Lincoln (1994:109) note that the basic posture of the paradigm is reductionist and deterministic.

Epistemologically, positivists adopt dualism and objectivism positions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016:53). Guba and Lincoln (1994:110) state that the investigator and the investigated “object” are assumed to be independent entities, and the investigator is capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it. Positivists use language and symbols to describe phenomenon in their real form, as they exist, without any interference whatsoever (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016:53). Guba and Lincoln (1994:110) argue that when influence in either direction (treats to validity) is recognized, or even suspected, various strategies are followed to reduce or eliminate it. Guba and Lincoln (1994:110) further argue that values and biases are prevented from influencing outcomes, so long as the prescribed procedures are rigorously followed.

Methodologically, positivists use experimental and manipulative methods (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110). Taylor and Medina (2013:2) state that the positivist paradigm involves quantitative methodology, utilizing experimental methods involving experimental (or treatment) and control groups and administration of pre- and post-test to measure gain score. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:110), questions and/or hypotheses are stated in propositional form and subjected to empirical test to

verify them; possible confounding conditions must be carefully controlled (manipulated) to prevent outcomes from being improperly influenced.

In paragraph 1.8.1.1., I indicated the relevance of this paradigm to my study. In the quantitative part of my study, I employed the post-tests scores acquired through the multidimensional self-concept scale and school progress mark schedules to assess the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of participants respectively.

4.2.2 Interpretivism Paradigm

Rehman and Alharthi (2016:55) note that interpretivism is a “response to the over-dominance of positivism.” Thus Mack (2010:7) states that the interpretivist paradigm is an “anti-positivist” paradigm because it was developed as a reaction to positivism. Mack (2010:7) notes that it is also sometimes referred to as constructivism because it emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning. Rehman and Alharthi (2016:55) argue that interpretivism rejects the notion that a single, verifiable reality exists independent of our senses. Interpretivists’ ontological position is that social reality is seen by multiple people and these multiple people interpret events differently leaving multiple perspectives of an incident (Mack, 2010:8). This ontological position is sometimes referred to as relativist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:110), realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental construction, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions. Similarly, Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:56) state that reality is limited to context, space, time and individuals or group in each situation and cannot be generalized into one common reality.

Epistemologically, interpretivists hold transactional and subjectivist positions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:111; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016:55). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:111), the investigator and object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the “findings” are literally created as the investigation proceeds. Similarly, Rehman and Alharthi (2016:55) note that researchers are inextricably part

of the social reality being researched that is, they are not “detached” from the subject they are studying. Furthermore, Rehman and Alharthi (2016:55) argue that in the case of different well-argued interpretations about one phenomenon, one interpretation is not chosen or preferred over others as the “correct” one, but the existence of multiple knowledge is accepted with acknowledgement that different researchers bring different perspectives to the same issue. The role of the researcher in interpretivism paradigm is not to discover universal, context and value free knowledge and truth but to understand the interpretations of individuals about the social phenomenon they interact with (Mack, 2010:8; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016:55).

Rehman and Alharthi (2016:56) note that interpretive methodology requires that social phenomenon be understood through the eyes of the participants than the researcher. Hence, Guba and Lincoln (1994:111) state that the variable and personal (atramental) nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1994:111) note that these varying constructions are interpreted using conventional hermeneutical techniques and are compared and contrasted through a dialectical interchange. According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016:56), the goal of interpretive methodology is to understand social phenomenon in its context. Furthermore, Rehman and Alharthi (2016:56) note that interpretive researchers employ methods that generate qualitative data, and although numerical data could be involved, they are not relied upon.

The relevance of this paradigm to the current study was mentioned in paragraph 1.8.1.1. I indicated that at some point, it was necessary for me to interact with the teachers, orphans and vulnerable learners through an in-depth individual interview. The purpose was to explore the lived experiences on the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme in their schools.

4.2.3 The Critical Paradigm

The critical paradigm emerged as an alternative paradigm to both positivism and interpretivism (Neuman, 1997:73). The critical researchers criticize positivism paradigm as being narrow, antidemocratic and non-humanist in its use of reason on

one hand; on the other hand, criticize interpretivism approach for being too subjective and relativist (Neuman, 1997:73-74). According to Neuman (1997:74), critical researchers conduct research to critique and transform social relations. Neuman (1997:74) states that critical researchers do this by revealing sources of social relations and empowering people, especially less powerful people. The role of the critical researcher is to explain a social order in such a way that it becomes itself the catalyst which leads to the transformation of this social order (Neuman, 1997:74).

Ontologically, critical paradigm adopts a historical realism stance (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110; Neuman, 1997:74). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:110), a reality is assumed to be apprehendable that was once plastic, but was over time, shaped by congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender factors, and the crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken a “real”, that is, natural and immutable.

Epistemologically, the critical researchers adopt transactional and subjectivist positions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:110), the investigator and the investigated object are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the investigator (and of situated “others”) inevitably influencing the inquiry. Hence, the findings of such inquiry are value mediated (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110).

Methodologically, critical researchers use dialogical and dialectical methodologies (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:110), the transactional nature of inquiry requires a dialogue between the investigator and the subjects of the inquiry; that the dialogue must be dialectical in nature to transform ignorance and misapprehension (accepting historically mediated structures as immutable) into more informed consciousness (seeing how the structures might be changed and comprehending the actions required to affect change).

The current study assessed the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable children in Gert Sibande District. I had no intention to deal with social injustices, economic, cultural, and political issues in my study. Nevertheless, I know the importance of these issues,

but not for the study under discussion. Therefore, critical paradigm did not form part to the study.

4.2.4 The Pragmatic Paradigm

According to Wahyuni (2012:71), pragmatism is a branch of research paradigm that refuses to join the “paradigm war” between the positivism and interpretivism research philosophies. Tran (2017:74) argues that pragmatism rejects the idea that researchers must choose their position between a pair of extremes of either locating their research and research findings in a completely specific way to a particular context (constructivism) or designing their research with a generalized set of principles (positivism). The proponents of pragmatism emphasize that one should view research philosophy as a continuum, rather than an option that stands in opposite positions (Wahyuni, 2012:71). As such, Wahyuni (2012:71) states that pragmatism believes that objectivist and subjectivist are not mutually exclusive. Kaushik and Walsh (2019:2) argue that pragmatism is a paradigm that claims to bridge the gap between the scientific method and structuralist orientation of older approaches and naturalistic methods and freewheeling orientation of newer approaches. According to Kaushik and Walsh (2019:2), as a research paradigm, pragmatism is based on the proposition that researchers should use the philosophical and/or methodological approach that works best for the particular research problem that is being investigated. Wahyuni (2012:71) asserts that the emphasis is on what works best to address the research problem at hand.

The study under discussion required me to adopt an objective approach to collect and analyse quantitative data (self-concept and academic performance) on one hand. On other hand, at some point it was necessary for me to adopt a subjective stance to interact with the research subjects to gather and analyse qualitative data or views and experiences of teachers, orphans and vulnerable children regarding the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme.

Kaushik and Walsh (2019:3) argue that a major underpinning of pragmatist philosophy is that knowledge and reality are based on beliefs and habits that are socially constructed. Kaushik and Walsh (2019:3) add that pragmatists generally agree that

all knowledge in this world is socially constructed, but some versions of those social constructions match individuals' experiences more than others. Thus, the current study explored the experiences and views of educators, orphans and vulnerable children in relation to the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme in their respective schools. Each participant gave his/her views and experiences regarding the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme. As such, some participants shared similar views and experiences.

Studies by Maarout (2019:5); Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:125) assert that pragmatism is the best philosophical partner of mixed methods research. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:125) state that a pragmatist would reject incompatibility thesis and would claim that research paradigms can remain separate, but they also can be mixed into another research paradigm. According to Wahyuni (2012:71), pragmatist researchers favour working with both quantitative and qualitative data because it enables them to better understand social reality.

The first two objectives of my study were to evaluate whether the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme was different from those who did not participate and to assess the difference in Mathematics performance between orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on LSA programme versus those who did not. The scores acquired through the multidimensional Self-Concept Scale and school progress mark schedules were used to test the two hypothesis of the study, namely; there was a significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme compared to those who did not participate on the LSA programme, there was a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme versus those who did not. I opted for the quantitative approach to achieve these objectives. On the other hand, the third objective; to explore the challenges encountered by teachers and OVC in the implementation of the LSA programme in their schools necessitated the use of in-depth individual interviews to achieve this objective. Thus, I opted for the qualitative approach. Therefore, the overall study required the combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Neither quantitative nor qualitative approach could

address all the objectives of the study. Hence, a mixed methods research approach which is underpinned by the pragmatic paradigm was adopted for my study.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Akhtar (2016:71) argues that a research design makes research professional by ensuring that it as yields maximum information with a minimum expenditure of effort, time and money. Akhtar (2016:68) indicates that research design is defined by different social scientists in different terms. Similarly, Harwell (2011:148) notes that the term research design is widely used in education, yet it takes on different meanings in different studies. Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018:247-248) argue that although different authors use different terminologies to define research design, there is significant agreement on what constitutes research design.

Welman, Krugar and Mitchell (2010:52) define a research design as a plan according to which researchers obtain research participants (subjects) and collect information from them. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:52), in research design researchers describe what they are going to do with the participants, with a view of reaching conclusions about the research problem. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:52) outline three critical elements of the research design, namely: to specify the number of groups that should be used to the study; to specify whether these groups are to be drawn randomly from the populations and whether they should be assigned randomly to groups; and what exactly should be done with them in the case of experimental research.

Babbie (2010:91) says research design is a plan that the researcher needs to observe and interpret what he or she observes. Babbie (2010:91) states that although the details vary according to what a researcher wishes to study, a researcher is face two major tasks in any research design. Firstly, he or she must specify as clearly as possible what he or she wants to find out; secondly, he or she must determine the best way to do it. Babbie (2010: 91) concludes that a researcher can handle the first consideration fully, he or she will probably handle the second in the same process.

According to Wagner, Botha and Mentz (2012:21), in social research, the design indicates how research will be conducted; for example, which methodology is appropriate (qualitative and quantitative); the method of data collection (e.g., interviews, questionnaires or experiments); and techniques for analysing the data. Wagner, Botha and Mentz (2012:22) classify research design into six types, namely, action research design, ethnography, experimental research, grounded theory, phenomenology and surveys.

Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012:129) notes that action research is known by a variety of names, such as participatory action research, practitioner research, praxis research, collaborative inquiry, action inquiry or cooperative inquiry. Koshy, Koshy and Waterman (2010:9) define action research as an approach employed by practitioners for improving practices as part of the process of change. Koshy, Koshy and Waterman (2010:9) add that it is a continuous learning process in which the researcher learns and also shares the newly generated knowledge with those who may benefit from it. In this approach, the researcher is actively involved in monitoring by a variety of mechanisms to ensure feedback that may be translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes, and redefinitions to bring about lasting benefit to the ongoing process itself rather than to some future occasion (Koshy, Koshy & Waterman, 2010:9). The main feature of this approach is that it is context-bound and participative. In the current study, I was not actively involved in manipulating the process to bring about change in the study environments. Thus, this approach was not suitable for the study under discussion.

Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012:127) note that ethnography focuses on the study of culture, and the purpose of ethnographic research is to describe and interpret cultural behaviour. The purpose of the study under discussion was not to describe and interpret cultural behaviour. Therefore, ethnography was not suitable.

According to Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012:131), grounded theory differs from other approaches because it emphasises the development of theory from the constant movement between data collection and theoretical analysis. The current study had no intention of developing a theory, instead, the intention was to assess the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and learner performance of OVC,

and to explore the challenges encountered in the implementation of the programme. As such, this approach was not relevant.

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:29) describe experimental design as a design in which the researcher intervenes with a procedure that determines what the subjects will experience. This implies that the researcher has some control over what will happen to the subjects by systemically imposing or withholding specified interventions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:29). Experimental research investigates cause-and-effect relationships between interventions and measured outcomes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:29). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:29) add that the unique characteristic of a true experimental design is that there is random assignment of subjects to different groups. The current study compared two groups in terms of self-concept and academic performance which were already existing. In one group, the Learner Support Agent Programme was implemented, in another group, the Learner Support Agent Programme was not implemented. Hence, I had no opportunity to assign subjects to either the two different groups randomly. Therefore, the experimental design was not used.

In the light of the above discussions, research design is a detailed plan followed in pursuing the study objectives. It is a process of identifying the number of subjects and what should be done with the subjects in the process, of collecting, analysing and interpreting collected data. This process enabled the answering of research questions.

The objectives of the study which involved the quantitative approach were to evaluate whether there were improvements on the (1) self-concept, and (2) learner performance of OVC who attended the Learner Support Agent Programme as compared to those who did not. Another objective which use the qualitative approach was to gain insight into typical experiences and views of teachers, orphans and vulnerable children regarding the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme. Thus, the research design of the current study was two-fold, namely, post-test-only non-equivalent group design (quantitative approach) and phenomenological approach (qualitative approach)

For the quantitative approach of the study, I used two-group post-test only non-equivalent group design. The post-test only non-equivalent group design is also known as a static group comparison (Neuman, 2014:203). Neuman (2014:293) notes that this design lacks random assignment and a pre-test. The post-test only non-equivalent group design is regarded a quasi-experimental design (Mertler, 2012:119). Neuman (2014:293) argues that quasi-experimental designs test for causal relationships in situations in which the classical design is difficult or inappropriate. I opted for post-test only non-equivalent design because, firstly; it was not possible to conduct a pre-test because that the Learner Support Agent Programme had already been in operation. Secondly, it was not possible to assign subjects to either of the two groups since the groups already existed. Thirdly, it was the only design suitable to test the hypothesis of the study as discussed in paragraph 1.4.1.

Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012:132) state that phenomenological studies focus on the meaning that certain lived experiences hold for participants. The most important aspect of this approach is that the researchers set aside their personal biases or prejudgements and collect data about how individuals make sense out of a particular experience or situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:32; Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012:132). The current study explored the experiences and views of teachers, orphans and vulnerable children regarding the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme in schools. These experiences and views were related to the challenges encountered by teachers, orphans and vulnerable children in the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme. To achieve this objective, I selected individual teachers, orphans and vulnerable children in schools where the Learner Support Agent Programme was implemented. Thereafter, I conducted in-depth interviews for exploring the views and experiences of selected subjects regarding the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme. The phenomenological approach was the suitable approach to explore the views and experiences of teachers, orphans and vulnerable children in the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The concept of research methodology is broad. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:2) argue that it has a much wider scope than research methods, which in turn, have much wider scope than research techniques. Sileyew (2019:1) defines research methodology as the path through which researchers need to conduct their research. Sileyew (2019) notes that research methodology shows the path through which these researchers formulate their problem and objectives and present their results from data obtained during the study period.

According to Wahyuni (2012:72), a research methodology is a model to conduct research within the context of a particular paradigm. Wahyuni (2012:72) also notes that research methodology comprises the underlying sets of beliefs that guides a researcher to choose one set of research method over another.

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:28) state that methodology is a broad term used to refer to the research design, methods, approaches and procedures used in investigation that is well planned to find out something. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:28) agree with Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:2) that research methodology explains the logic behind research methods and flow of the systematic processes followed in conducting research to gain knowledge about a research problem. Clearly, research methodology is broad because it involves the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying a research problem along with the logic behind (Kathari, 2004:9). Kathari (2004:9) states research methodology involves not just research methods but also the logic behind the methods used in the context of research and explains why a researcher uses a particular method or technique. This enable research results to be evaluated by the researcher himself or herself or by others. For the purpose of the current study, paragraph 4.2. discussed the paradigm upon which the study was underpinned. Paragraph 4.3 discussed the research design which was followed in conducting the research. In addition, paragraph 4.3 outlined why a specific design was used and not others. Paragraph 4.5 discussed the methods employed in the study. In addition, paragraph 4.5 provided justification for adopting such methods. Approaches used in the study are discussed in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7. In addition, paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 outlined the processes and procedures followed in sampling

and data collection. Furthermore, paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 discussed data analysis methods.

4.5 MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:108) note that the word “design” has at least two distinct meanings in mixed methods research. On one hand, design is used as a verb (e.g., someone can be engaged in designing a study) (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017:108). On the other hand, another meaning is that of a product, namely the result of designing (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017:108). Hence, Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:108) note that the result of designing as a verb is a mixed methods design as a noun. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:108) also note that in mixed methods design, both meanings are relevant. According to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:108), a mixed methods design is characterized by a combination of at least one qualitative and one quantitative research component.

According to Bazeley and Kemp (2012:55), increasing recognition of the utility of applying more than one approach and multiple methods to research problems of many different kinds is leading to the widespread adoption of mixed methods as a valid methodological approach in social research. The current study adopted mixed methods research because it assesses the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme as an intervention strategy about the self-concept and academic performance of vulnerable learners in Gert Sibande District. This warranted the adoption of the quantitative approach as discussed in Section 4.6. The Learner Support Agent Programme is also implemented in a particular context with challenges thus I also wanted to know the challenges encountered by the teachers and OVC themselves in the implementation of the programme. This could only be narrated by the teachers and OVC through their views and experiences and for this part of the study I adopted qualitative approach which I discussed in detailed in paragraph 4.7. Thus, the current study used the mixed methods research.

The next paragraphs outlined briefly the important aspects of the mixed methods research within the current study, namely, definition, rationales and purposes, values, timing, point of integration and typological design.

4.5.1 Definition

According to Ponce and Pagan-Maldonado (2015:116), there is no universally accepted definition of mixed methods research. However, Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:2) and Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:108) indicate that different definitions of mixed methods research involve a combination of at least one quantitative (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words) in the research methodology of a single study. The definitions below bear a testimony to this fact.

Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2011:2) note that mixed methods research involves mixing or combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study.

Creswell and Garrett (2008) note that mixed methods are an approach to inquiry in which the researcher links, in some way (e.g. merges, integrates, connects), both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a unified understanding of a research problem.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:17) state that mixed methods research is a class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:17), mixed methods research is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers' choices (i.e., it rejects dogmatism). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:17) also note that it is an expansive and creative form of research, not a limiting form of research. Furthermore, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:17) note that it is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and thinking about and conduct of research.

Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:123) define mixed methods research as research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g., use qualitative and quantitative

viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broader purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.

Bazeley and Kemp (2012:55) note that mixed methods research is broadly defined to include research in which more than one paradigmatic or methodological approach, method of data collection, and or type of analysis strategy is integrated while undertaking the research, regardless of how these approaches or methods might individually be classified, and with a common purpose that goes beyond that could be achieved with either method alone.

All the above definitions of mixed methods research are characterized by the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Hence, all the definitions are relevant to the study under discussion.

4.5.2 Rationale for using the Mixed Methods

According to Bazeley and Kemp (2012:560), there are multiple rationales for mixing or integrating methods. The most important rationale for adopting mixed methods research in the study under discussion is to answer the research questions with validity. Guest (2013:143) observe that tackling a research problem by collecting several types of data from different sources is generally accepted as a good practice that enhances a study's validity. Similarly, Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:110) recommend that in all studies, the use of mixed methods should contribute to answering one's research questions. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:110) argue that the overall goal of mixed methods research, of combining qualitative and quantitative research components, is to expand and strengthen a study's conclusion and therefore, contribute to the published literature. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:110) stress that ultimately, mixed methods is about heightened knowledge and validity. The central premise of using mixed methods research in studies is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, the strengths of both approaches are combined, leading, it can be assumed, to better understanding of research problems and complex phenomenon than either approach alone (Molina-Azorin & Font, 2015:3, Creswell & Garrett, 2008:322). According to Hung (2012:166), the rationale for mixing both quantitative and qualitative data within one study is

descended from the fact that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves, to capture the trends and details of a situation.

Several studies by Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:110); Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2011:4); Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:115-116); Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:3) mention five purposes for mixing in mixed methods research; namely, triangulation, complementary, development, initiation and expansion.

4.5.2.1 Triangulation in mixed methods

Bazeley and Kemp (2012:57) note that the term triangulation refers to any kind of combination of methods and more specifically, to both corroborative, or convergent, and complementary. Morse (1991:120) states that methodological triangulation is the use of at least two methods, usually qualitative and quantitative, to address the same research problem. Ngulube and Ngulube (2015:4) observe that in mixed methods research, the triangulation design entails collecting and analysing data concurrently and then comparing the results to bring out a comprehensive picture about the phenomenon under investigation. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:114) concur stating that triangulation is the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Similarly, Neuman (1997:151) states that in social research, triangulation means using different types of measures, or data collection techniques, to examine the same variable. Neuman (2014:166) argues that in social research, we build on the principle that we learn more by observing from multiple perspectives. Neuman (1991:151) notes that the basic idea is that measurement improves when diverse indicators are used. Therefore, Neuman (1997:151) claims that as the diversity of indicators gets greater, our confidence in measurement grows, because getting identical measures from highly diverse methods implies greater validity than if a single or similar method had been used. Potter (2012:168) notes that at the data analysis and integration stages, triangulation can be used to increase the rigour of the analysis.

The use of methodological triangulation had many advantages for me. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:115) list the following advantages: it allowed me to be more confident of my results; it stimulated the development of creative ways of

collecting data; it led to thicker, richer data; it uncovered contradictions; and by virtue of its comprehensiveness, it served as the litmus test for competing theories.

The current study sought to determine the cause and effect as stated in section 4.5. The Learner Support Agent Programme is implemented in a context with diverse challenges and its success could be best explained by the combination of numerical data and nonnumeric data. This is why mixed methods research was adopted.

4.5.2.2 Complementarity in mixed methods

Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:110) note that complementarity seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from other methods. For the current study, the combination of two approaches (quantitative and qualitative approaches), created an opportunity for elaboration; enhancement; illustration and clarification of results from one method with the results from another method. This is demonstrated in the next chapter.

4.5.2.3 Expansion in mixed methods

Bryman (2006:105) notes that expansion seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components. Bryman (2006:105-107) provides a list of more concrete rationales for performing mixed methods research. The following is relevant to the current study:

- Offset-refers to the suggestion that the research methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research have their own strengths and weaknesses so that combining them allowed me to offset their weaknesses to draw on the strengths of both.
- Completeness- meant that I could bring together a more comprehensive account of the area of inquiry in which I was interested.
- Different questions- the three questions mentioned in paragraph 1.4 necessitated the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches.
- Explanation- one part helped to explain findings generated by the other.
- Credibility- refers to suggestions that employing both approaches enhanced the integrity of findings.

- Context- in the study, the combination was rationalised in terms of qualitative research providing contextual understanding in which the Learner Support Agent Programme was implemented.
- Diversity of views- two groups, namely, teachers, orphans and vulnerable learners were involved in the study. This meant that different views were solicited from the two groups.

4.5.2.4 Development in mixed methods

Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:110) note that development seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions. In the current study, I did not use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method. Therefore, development as a rationale for mixed methods had no relevance to the study under discussion.

4.5.2.5 Initiation in mixed methods

Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:110) state that initiation seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method. In the current study, I had no intention to seek the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from another method. Hence, initiation could not be regarded as rationale behind the usage of mixed methods in the study.

4.5.3 Advantages for Using Mixed Method

Several authors such as Bazeley and Kemp (2012:56); Brierley (2017:5); Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:18); Murphy, Casey, Devane, Meskell, Begley, Higgins, Elliot and Lalor (2014:14) claim that mixed methods research enables researchers to exploit the strengths of different methods while compensating for weaknesses that are inherent when adopting monomethod research. Brierley (2017:5) notes that combining questionnaires and interviews in a single study brings together the advantages of breadth and depth associated with these two respective methods. Brierley (2017:5), Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:18) and Murphy et al. (2014:14) argue that the effect

of integrating the results of these two methods is the possibility of providing a more complete picture of a research topic (phenomenon) that can address a range of questions and by so doing can provide a more complete knowledge that can enhance theory development and practice. In the study under discussion, the use of the mixed methods made it possible to integrate the results from the two methods, thus providing a more complete picture on the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme in school in Gert Sibande District.

Brierley (2017:5) argues that by carrying out quantitative research along with qualitative research, mixed methods research may overcome some of the drawbacks with qualitative research, including the problem of trying to test hypothesis and prior theories; the influence of the researcher's personal biases with interpreting research results; and the problem of generalising results to other subjects. In reference to my study, the use of two methods took away my prejudice or personal influence towards the interpretation of the results. The quantitative approach made it possible for me to measure objectively the two dependent variables of my study, namely, self-concept and academic performance of the participants through the multidimensional self-concept scale and school progress mark schedules respectively. In addition, quantitative approach made it possible to test the hypotheses of my study mentioned in paragraphs 1.4.1 and 1.4.2. While qualitative approach on the other hand made it possible for me to explore the lived experiences of the participants through the in-depth individual interviews. In the process, I had to bracket my pre-existing experiences and knowledge on the implementation of the LSA programme.

Furthermore, Brierley (2017:6) argues that by conducting qualitative research with quantitative research, mixed methods research may overcome some of the drawbacks with quantitative research, such as reductionist research models that may omit important construct that could be identified by using qualitative method to generate theory; quantitative research model developed from prior quantitative research results may not reflect the understanding of potential research subjects; and generalised quantitative research results may not be in a form that can be applied useful to individual subjects. In relation to my study, quantitative alone could not give a complete picture on the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme in schools. It helped me to test the hypothesis of the study as I have already mentioned

in paragraph 4.2.4. However, it could not give the contextual understanding under which the programme was implemented. Thus, the use of the mixed methods was necessary for the study.

Murphy et al. (2014:14) claim that mixed methods research is thought to have the capacity to generate more convincing and comprehensive results for funders or policy makers and it can increase confidence in the credibility of findings when data gathered through different methods are consistent. In relation to the study under discussion, the results of the study have implication on policy makers. Should the study prove that the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme improved the self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. The policy makers could possibly increase the number of schools to implement the Learner Support Agent Programme. In this way, more job opportunities could be created and more beneficiaries to the programme. This relates to the significance of the study discussed in paragraph 4.8.

Murphy et al. (2014:14) and Hung (2012:116) claim that the use of mixed methods research may enable a more powerful analysis, as findings from different methods are brought together in a way that allows comparison and exploration. In reference to my study, the use of the mixed methods enabled me to provide detailed analysis as I brought together the findings from different methods. The analyses of the findings are discussed in Chapter Five.

Furthermore, another advantage of mixed methods research relates to the participants' point of view. Wilson and Creswell (2013:4) claim that mixed methods give a voice to study participants and ensure that study findings are grounded in participants' experiences. In the study the study under discussion, teachers, orphans and vulnerable learners were interviewed using an in-depth individual interview. This made it possible for me not to rely on data generated through the multidimensional self-concept scale and school mark schedules only, but to give teachers, orphans and vulnerable learners opportunities to voice their views and experiences regarding the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme in their schools.

There are many mixed methods designs. Therefore, it was important for me to identify a specific mixed methods research design that was suitable for my study. As such, in this part of the study, I outlined the specific mixed methods research design for study under discussion. This is found in paragraph 4.5.5.

4.5.4 Specific Considerations for Using Mixed Methods

According to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:113), another important distinction when designing a mixed methods study relates to timing of the two (or more) components. Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:3) state that the options consist of gathering the information from different studies at the same time (concurrent, simultaneous or parallel design) or collecting the information in phases (sequential or two-phase design). Hence, Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:113) emphasise that when designing a mixed methods study, it is usually helpful to include the words “concurrent” (“parallel”) or “sequential “sequenziell” in the title of the study design; a complex design can be partially concurrent and partially sequential. In reference to my study, I opted for parallel mixed methods design as discussed in paragraph 4.5.5. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:113) note that timing has two aspects: simultaneity and dependence.

According to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:113) simultaneity (“simultianitat”) forms the basis of distinction between concurrent and sequential designs. On one hand, Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:113) note that in a sequential design, the quantitative component precedes the qualitative component, or vice versa. On the other hand, Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:113) note that in concurrent design, both components are executed (almost) simultaneously. Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:4) note that the notation “+” is used to indicate a simultaneous design, while the arrow “→” stands for sequential design. In relation to my study, I opted to execute the two components (quantitative and qualitative methods) almost simultaneously. Hence, concurrent design resonated with my study. A detailed discussion regarding this aspect is on Section 4.5.5.

Another important aspect for mixed methods design relates to the prioritisation of data collection methods. Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:3) note that regarding priority,

mixed methods researchers can give equal priority to both quantitative and qualitative research or place the emphasis on certain aspects. Hence, Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:3) state that mixed methods design can therefore be divided into equivalent status designs and dominant-less dominant or nested designs. Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:3) state that these two dimensions and their possible combinations can lead to the establishment of several designs that can be represented using the notation. Molina-Azorin and Font (2015:3) note that the main or dominant method appears in capital letters (QUAN; QUAL) whereas the complementary method is given in lowercase letters (quan; qual). For example, Morse (1991:121) states that if research is driven by an inductive process and the theory developed qualitatively and complemented by quantitative methods, the notation; QUAL+qual is used to indicate simultaneous triangulation. For the current study, no approach was dominant over another. Therefore, the two approaches, namely; quantitative approach and qualitative approach held an equal status. As such, the notation for my study is: QUAN+QUAL as indicated in Section 4.5.5.

Creswell (2014:nk) notes that there have been several typologies for classifying and identifying types of mixed methods strategies (designs). However, Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:117) argue that although some of the current mixed methods design types include more designs than others, none of the current typologies is fully exhaustive. For current study, the researcher adopts Creswell classification and identification. Creswell (2014: nk) identifies three basic mixed methods designs, namely, convergent parallel mixed methods, explanatory sequential mixed methods and exploratory sequential mixed methods; and three more advanced strategies (designs) that incorporate these three basic forms, namely; embedded mixed methods, transformative mixed methods and multiphase mixed methods.

4.5.5 Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design

For the current study, the convergent parallel mixed methods design was adopted. Creswell (2014:nk) notes that the convergent parallel mixed methods design was probably the most familiar of the basic and advanced mixed methods strategies. Ponce and Pagan-Maldonado (2015:119) state that the objective of this design is to study the research problem in its entirety and dimension. The current research studied

the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of OVC learners. Ponce and Pagan-Maldonado (2015:119) note that the quantitative approach is used to measure the properties and objective aspects of the problem while the qualitative approach is used to understand and describe the subjective aspect. Objective aspects of current study were the self-concept and academic performance, while subjective aspects were the views and experiences of teachers, OVC learners about the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme. Ponce and Pagan-Maldonado (2015:119) reiterate that the quantitative approach measures the objective aspects of the problem, and the qualitative phase evaluates the subjective aspects of the problem or experiences of the participants. In the current study, referring to selected teachers, orphans and vulnerable learners.

According to Creswell (2014:nk), the key assumption of this approach is that both qualitative and quantitative data provided different types of information- often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively- and together they yield results that should be the same. Creswell (2014:nk) notes that in this approach, a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyses them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other. Creswell (2014:nk) argues that the key idea with this design is to collect both forms of data using the same or parallel variables, construct, or concept. Hence, Creswell (2014:nk) further argues that if the concept of self-esteem is measured quantitatively, the same concept was asked during the qualitative data collection process, such as in an open ended interview.

Below is the mixed methods research model showing the convergent parallel mixed methods: QUAN+QUA.L.

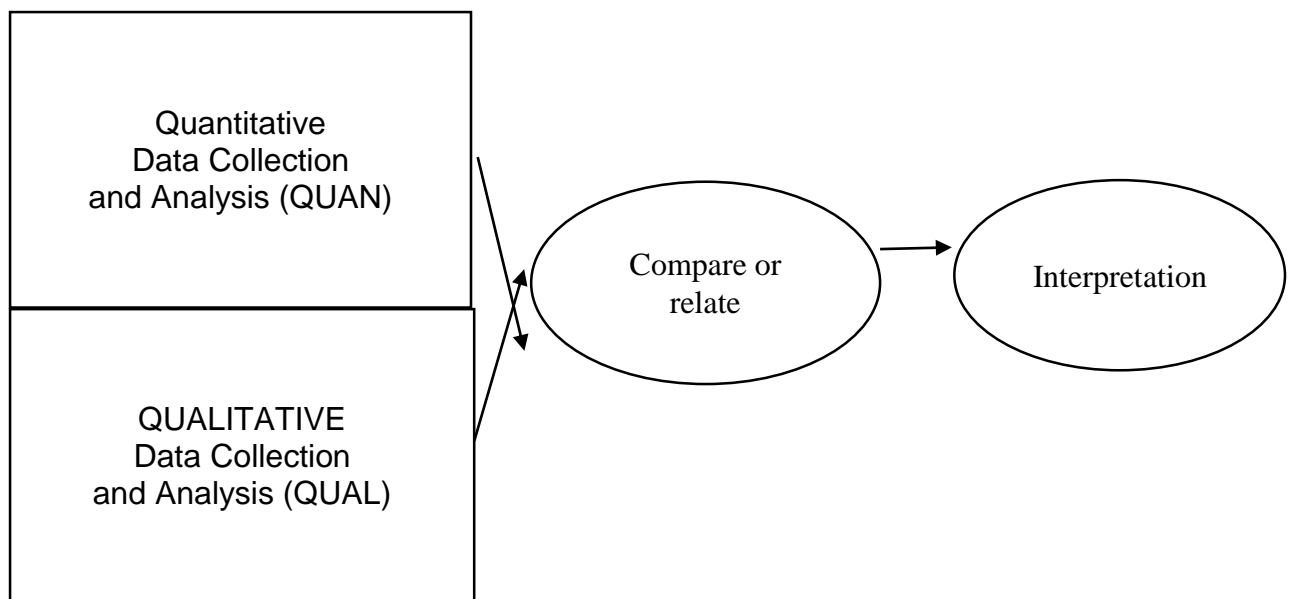


Figure 4.1. Mixed Methods Research Model

Source: Creswell (2014:nk)

4.6 QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

According to Apuke (2017:41), a quantitative research method deals with quantifying and analysing variables to get results. Apuke (2017:41) notes that it involves the utilisation and analysis of numerical data using specific statistical techniques to answer questions like who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how. The quantitative researcher seeks to explain an issue or phenomenon through gathering data in numerical form and analysing with the aid of mathematical methods; in particular statistics (Apuke, 2017:41). Harwell (2011:149) notes that quantitative research methods attempt to maximize objectivity, replicability, and generalizability of findings. Furthermore, Harwell (2011:149) states that integral to this approach is the expectation that a researcher will set aside his or her experiences, perception, and biases to ensure objectivity in the conduct of the study and the conclusion that are drawn.

According to Harwell (2011:149), key features of many quantitative studies are the use of instruments such as tests or surveys to collect data, and reliance on probability theory to test statistical hypothesis that correspond to research questions of interest. Harwell (2011:149) notes that quantitative methods are frequently described as deductive in nature, in the sense that inferences from tests of statistical hypothesis

lead to general inferences about characteristics of a population. Furthermore, Harwell (2011:149) notes that quantitative methods are also frequently characterized as assuming that there is a single “truth” that exists, independent of human perception.

For the current study, quantitative data which relate to self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable children from four schools in Gert Sibande District that implemented the Learner Support Agent Programme, and from four schools in the same district that did not implement the Learner Support Agent Programme was gathered and analysed. My intention was testing the hypotheses of the study and in turn answer the research questions.

4.6.1 Population of the Study

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:52), the population is the study objects and consists of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:52) also note that a research problem relates to a specific population and the population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions.

Babbie (2010:199) notes that a study population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected. Babbie (2010:199) points out that as a practical matter, researchers are seldom in position to guarantee that every element meeting the theoretical definitions laid down has a chance of being selected in the sample. Babbie (2010:199) argues that even where lists of elements exist for sampling purpose, the lists are usually somewhat incomplete. Babbie (2010:199) further argues that some students are always inadvertently omitted from the students’ rosters. Both definitions are correct. However, Babbie’s definition resonate with current the study.

For the current study, the projected study population was based on the number of schools which were implementing the Learner Support Agent Programme in Grade 9. Schools that did not implement the Learner Support Agent Programme then in Grade 9 were excluded from the projected population. The population consisted of 1 844 Grade 9 learners in 53 secondary schools.

4.6.2 Quantitative Sampling Procedures

For the quantitative approach of this study, probability sampling was adopted. Probability sampling involved the process of random sampling which ensures that every element of the population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the samples (Laher & Botha, 2012:89; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2010:56). According to Neuman (2014:250), probability sampling is the “gold standard” for creating a representative sample.

The lists of Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners (only) from the four schools which implement the Learner Support Agent Programme was used. Participants were picked randomly from these lists. Lists of orphans and vulnerable children are readily available at all schools including those implementing the Learner Support Agent Programme. Schools are required by law to keep the list of orphans and vulnerable children. The Department of Basic Education (2017:12) states that schools will be required to monitor the number of OVC in the Basic Education System by school, age, gender and grade.

I determined the interval ratio based on the number of participants required for the study against the study population (from four schools implementing the Learner Support Agent Programme). Similar process was employed for a comparison group (from four schools not implementing the Learner Support Agent Programme).

4.6.3 Sample of the Study

Neuman (2014:246) defines sample as a small set of cases a researcher selects from a large pool and generalizes to the population. For the quantitative approach of the current study, a sample consisted of 40 participants (20 female learners and 20 male learners from four schools which were implementing the Learner Support Agent Programme) and 40 participants for the comparison group (20 female learners and 20 male learners from four schools which were not implementing the Learner Support Agent Programme).

4.6.4 Reliability

Mentz and Botha (2012:80) note that reliability is the degree to which an instrument measures a construct the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same respondents. Neuman (2014:211) points out that all researchers want reliability and validity, which are central concerns in all measurement. However, it is rare to have perfect reliability, but it is an ideal towards which researchers strive (Neuman, 2014:212-213). There are several ways to help ensure reliability. According to Babbie (2010:153), another way to help ensure reliability is to use measures that have proved their reliability in previous research.

For the current study, I used the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (MSCS) by Fleming and Courtney. Arip, Saad, Rahman, Salim and Bistaman (2013:1456) argue that the importance of using the MSCS questionnaire is supported by Keith and Bracken by saying that the enactors of Multidimensional Self-Concept Model (MSCM) have dedicated the MSCS questionnaire to become the manual in intervention programme, and it was even designed based on the intervention strategies. I also determined the academic performance of the subjects using school academic progress records. Schools are the custodians of academic activities. Therefore, instruments used for academic performance are considered as reliable.

4.6.5 Validity

All researchers are concerned with validity of their studies, just as they are concerned with reliability with the measuring instruments. Babbie (2010:153) states that validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of concept under consideration. Similarly, Mentz and Botha (2012:80) say that validity involves the degree to which one measures what one is supposed to. Neuman (2014:212) states: "Validity suggests truthfulness"

Neuman (2014:215) further observes that validity is more difficult to achieve than reliability. Neuman (2014:215) argues that we cannot have absolute confidence about validity, but some measures are more valid than others. However, every researcher has the responsibility to identify potential threats to validity and contrive some means

to minimize their impact on the validity (Creswell, 2014:nk). Creswell (2014:nk) indicates that there are two threats to validity, namely, internal threats and external threats.

4.6.5.1 Internal validity

Mertler (2012:121) notes that internal validity has to do with conditions present in the participants or their environment while the experiment is in progress. Neuman (2014:298) states that internal validity occurs when independent variable, and nothing else, influences the dependent variable. Neuman (2014:298) argues that anything other than independent variable influencing the dependent variables threatens internal validity. Mertler (2012:121) warns that threats to internal validity can cause the researcher to conclude that the treatment caused the effect, when, in fact, it probably did not. Internal validity is important for research, especially where the researcher's intention is to obtain a cause and effect explanation for relationships between variables (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009:157; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2010:107).

Creswell (2014:nk) points out that internal validity threats are experimental procedures, treatments, or experiences of the participants that threatens the researcher's ability to draw correct inferences from the data about the population in an experiment. It is important that the researcher identifies the potential threats and put in place measures to eliminate their impact on the internal validity of the study. Welman Kruger and Mitchell (2010:107) note that once these threats are eliminated, any change to the dependent variable will be attributed to independent variable with confidence. Thus, in this way, maintain the internal validity of the study. The selection of a two-group post-test only design eliminates several threats to internal validity. Bless, Hgson-Smith and Sithole (2013:151) argue that since all the data is collected at one time, the problems of maturation, history, test effects and regression towards the mean do not arise.

For the current study, I identified selection bias as the threat to internal validity. Neuman (2014:300) indicates that selection bias can arise when an experiment has more than one group of participants. This arises when a researcher wants to compare different groups (Neuman; 2014:300). Creswell (2014:nk) notes that participants who have certain characteristics that predispose them to have certain outcomes can be

selected. To eliminate this threat, I employed two strategies. Firstly, the participants were selected randomly so that characteristics had the probability of being equally distributed among the experiment and comparison groups. Secondly, participants were matched in the two groups in terms of gender. Lastly, all the participants were selected from the same grade.

Another possible threat identified to internal validity is diffusion of treatment. Creswell (2014:nk) states that participants in control (comparison) and experiment groups communicate with each other and this communication could influence how both groups score on the outcome. To eliminate this threat, I selected the two groups from different schools. Therefore, the participants in the experiment group did not know the participants in the comparison group and vice versa.

4.6.5.2 External validity

Mertler (2012:121) and Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:157) note that external validity refers to the extent to which results can be generalised to other groups or settings. Gravetter and Forzano (2009:158) concur stating that external validity refers to the extent to which researchers generalize the results to people, settings, times, measures, and characteristics other than those used in the study. Graziano and Raulin (1993:196) note that the population to which researchers generalize is defined by the characteristics of the sample. This type of sample is called as ad hoc sample (Graziano & Raulin, 1993:196). Gravetter and Forzano (2009:158) note that any factor that limits the ability to generalize results from research study is threat to external validity.

According to Creswell (2014:nk), external validity threats arise when experimenters draw incorrect inferences from the sample data to other people, other settings, and past or future situations. Creswell (2014:nk) emphasises that threats to external validity arise when the researcher generalizes beyond the groups in the experiment to other racial or social groups outside the study, settings not examined, or to past or future situations.

External validity can involve several forms of generalizations (Neuman, 2014:306). Gravetter and Forzano (2009:159) observe that there are at least three different kinds

of generalizations, and each can be a concern for external validity. Firstly, it is the generalization from the specific collection of participants in an experiment to an entire population (Neuman, 2014:306). Gravetter and Forzano (2009:159) note that one concern for external validity is that the sample is representative of the population so that the results obtained for the sample can be generalized to the entire population. For the current study, the sample was drawn from a specific population (orphans and vulnerable children). Hence, the results could not be generalized to the entire population.

Secondly, external validity is generalization from one study to another (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009:159). Gravetter and Forzano (2009:159) states that one concern for external validity is that results obtained in one specific study will also be obtained in a similar study. It is possible to repeat the study and get similar results, provided procedures and steps are followed.

Thirdly, external validity is generalization from a study to real world situations (Neuman, 2014:306; Gravetter & Forzano, 2009:159). Gravetter and Forzano (2009:159) argue that one concern for external validity is whether the results obtained in a relatively sterile research environment will also be obtained out in the real world. Though the scale of the current study was small, it can be applicable to real world situations, provided that all the procedures and steps are followed. Furthermore, it should be noted that the study was conducted in natural settings, not in a controlled environment.

In a nutshell, I was careful not to generalize beyond the scope of the sample. The sample was drawn from Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable children from Gert Sibande District, therefore, the generalization was limited to Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable children in Gert Sibande District.

4.6.6 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected for both self-concept and academic performance of the participants in the experiment and comparison groups. Two instruments were

used, namely; Multi-Dimensional Self-Concept Scale (MSCS) and school academic progress records for self-concept and academic performance respectively.

4.6.6.1 Multi-dimensional Self-concept Scale (MSCS)

I opted for a multi-dimensional self-concept scale by Fleming and Courtney to measure self-concepts. The scale (questionnaire) consists of 36 items, which can be clustered into five dimensions of self-concept, namely, self-regard (global self-esteem); social confidence; school abilities; physical appearance; and physical abilities (Cody, 2013:26). Cody (2013:26) indicates that the items are rated on a seven-point Likert scale. Therefore, the scale measures the self-concept in five dimensions, namely, self-regard, social confidence, school abilities, physical appearance, and physical and physical abilities. The Multi-Dimensional Self-Concept Scale is attached as Appendix D.

4.6.6.2 School academic records for academic performance

I used school academic progress records for academic performance. Marks (scores) for formal assessment and written tests of the learners (participants) are recorded on mark sheets. These mark sheets are used to compile mark schedules for a particular subject (learning area) in a grade. This is done quarterly and yearly. Then, report cards for individual learners are completed based on the mark schedule. Hence, I used mark schedule from the schools.

4.6.7 Quantitative Data Analysis

I used an independent samples t-test to analyse quantitative data for both dependent variables (self-concept and academic performance). Tredoux and Durrheim (2014:149) say, this test is used to compare two distributions that are independent of each other. Tredoux and Durrheim (2014:149) note that the independent samples t-test was suitable in most situations where a researcher creates two separate groups by random assignment. The current study had two groups, namely, the experimental group (orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the Learner Support Agent Programme) and comparison group (orphans and vulnerable learners who did not take part in the Learner Support Agent Programme). Participants in these two groups were randomly selected. Therefore, an independent samples t-test was suitable for the

study because it evaluated the difference between two means (for both self-concept and academic performance) based on null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis for both dependent variables. The null hypotheses of the study stated in Section 1.4.2. were the following: Firstly; there was no significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme compared to those who did not take part in the LSA programme; secondly, there was no significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme compared to those did not take part. The research hypotheses of the study as mentioned in Section 1.4.1. were the following: Firstly, there was a significant difference on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme compared to those who did not participate; secondly, there was a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme versus those who did not.

4.7 THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Qualitative research is an approach rather than a particular design or set of techniques (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2010:188). Babbie and Mouton (2002:270) state that this approach to qualitative research also suggests that we view “qualitative” as referring to a broad methodological approach to study social action. Harwell (2011:148) notes that qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants-that is qualitative research explores meaning, purpose, or reality. Therefore, the data collected through qualitative methods is in the form of text or words (nonnumeric). Babbie and Mouton (2002:270) point out that qualitative researchers attempt to study human action from the perspective of social actors themselves. According to Harwell (2011:148), inherent in this approach is the description of interactions among participants and researchers in naturalistic settings with few boundaries, resulting in a flexible and open research process. Harwell (2011:148) notes that these unique interactions imply that different results could be obtained from the same participants depending on who the researcher is, because results are created by a participant and researcher in each situation. Hence, the central feature of this approach is the presence of multiple “truths” that are socially constructed (Harwell, 2011:148).

Harwell (2011:149) notes that qualitative methods are also described as inductive, in the sense that a researcher may construct theories, or hypothesis, explanations, and conceptualisations from details provided by a participant. Harwell (2011:149) argues that embedded in this approach is the perspective that researchers cannot set aside their experiences, perceptions, and biases, and thus cannot pretend to be objective bystanders to the research.

Furthermore, Harwell (2011:149) notes that there are several categorizations of research designs in qualitative research, and none is universally agreed upon. Creswell (2014:nk) mentions five strategies on inquiry in qualitative research, namely; ethnographies, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research, and narrative research.

For the current study, I used phenomenological research. Creswell (2014:nk) notes that phenomenological research is a strategy in which the researcher identifies the “essence” of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as had been described by participants in the study. According to Creswell (2014:nk), understanding the “lived experiences” marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. One of the objectives of the current study was to explore experiences and views of participants regarding the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme.

4.7.1 Qualitative Sampling Procedure

For the current study I used purposive judgement sampling for the qualitative part of the study. According to Bolderston (2012:68), purposive sampling involves the researcher selecting potential participants who represent the group to be studied to talk, talking to a reasonable cross-section of people. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:177) note that this type of sampling assumes that the researcher knows what type of participant is needed. Laher and Botha (2012:93) advance that with purposive sampling, a researcher relies on his or her own experience, previous research or ingenuity to find participants who are representative of the population and uses a

specific criterion to identify the most suitable individuals. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:177) argue that in qualitative research, the element that is the most complex and rich in information is the most valuable. Purposive sampling was applied to participants who were orphans and vulnerable children. Bolderston (2012:68) proposes that for a typical phenomenological study, the total number might be around 10 participants. The aim in participants' selection in phenomenological research was to select participants who had lived experience that focused on the implementation of LSA programme in schools, who were willing to talk about their experiences, and those who came from diverse background to enhance possibilities of rich and unique stories of the LSA programme (Lavery, 2003:18).

Regarding teacher participants, one educator (School-based Life Skills Co-ordinator) per school was selected. These educators were selected because they were School-based Life Skills Co-ordinators. The School-based Life Skills Co-ordinators were well informed about the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme.

4.7.2 The Qualitative Sample of the Study

The sample for the qualitative approach of the study consisted of 10 Grade 9 learners (Orphans and vulnerable children) who were purposively selected from four schools which were implementing the LSA programme. The five types of OVC were represented in the sample and each type had one male and one female. The OVC were from child-headed households, single-parent mothers, single-parent fathers, grandparent paternal, and grandparent maternal.

In addition, four educators formed part of the sample. These educators were selected because they were School-based Life Skills Co-ordinators.

4.7.3 Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Study

Kawulich and Holland (2012:243) state that when someone is reading a research study, he/she needs to be assured of the validity of the results. This implies that the researcher must produce a good quality of research. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:236) note that in qualitative research, this is achieved through how much trust

can be given to research process and findings. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:236), the concept of trustworthiness evaluates the quality of qualitative research on the basis of four concepts: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

4.7.3.1 Credibility

According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:236), credibility corresponds to the concept of internal validity, since it seeks to prove that the findings depict the truth of the reality under study, or, in other words, that they make sense. Furthermore, Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:236) argue that studies with high credibility are those in which the researcher has convincingly demonstrated the appropriateness and overall internal logic of the research questions, the study design, the data collection method and the approach to data analysis used. Babbie and Mouton (2002:277) suggest several techniques to address credibility; these include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referral adequacy, debriefing and member checks.

For the current study, the researcher used triangulation and referral adequacy to address the question of credibility. For referral adequacy purpose, a voice recorder was used during data collection and triangulation was also used for data interpretation. Triangulation was the greatest advantage for the mixed methods research for the study as I brought together findings of the quantitative approach and qualitative approach as discussed in Section 4.5.2.1.

4.7.3.2 Transferability

Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:237) state that transferability can be compared to external validity since it refers to the extent to which results apply to other, similar, situations. A qualitative researcher is not obliged to generalize his or her results to the entire population as all observations are defined by a specific context in which they occur (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277). Babbie and Mouton (2002:277) argue that in a qualitative study, the obligation for demonstrating transferability rests on those who wish to apply it to the receiving context.

Nevertheless, the qualitative researcher is responsible to make it possible for other researchers to judge transferability. This is possible if the researcher uses purposive sampling and provides thick description of the research. For current study, I provide a detailed report to demonstrate that the plan was followed.

4.7.3.3 Dependability

According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:237), dependability demands that the researcher thoroughly describes and precisely follows a clear and thoughtful research strategy. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:237) note that the researcher must show that each step has been completed thoroughly and carefully. For the current study, a detailed plan followed in conducting the research is provided. At the end of the study, I provide a detailed report to demonstrate that the plan was followed.

4.7.3.4 Confirmability

Babbie and Mouton (2002:278) note that confirmability is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of an inquiry and not biases of the researcher. Morrow (2005:252) notes that confirmability addresses the core issue that findings should represent, as far as is humanly possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, petty theories or biases of the researcher. Morrow (2005:252) argues that it is based on the perspective that the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader can confirm them. Morrow (2005:252) advises that many of the procedures used to accomplish the goal of dependability are also applicable here, particularly accountability through an audit trail, and management of subjectivity is essential. Babbie and Mouton (2002:278) note that conducting such a trail involves reviewing at least six classes of data, namely, raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, material relating to intentions and dispositions, and instrumental development information. For the current study, I provide a detailed research report and indicate all source materials I used for data collection and analysis.

4.7.4 Qualitative Data Collection

The current study employed in-depth individual interviews as methods for qualitative data gathering. Boyce and Naele (2006:3) describe in-depth interviewing as a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. According to Bolderston (2012:68), interviews are used primarily in phenomenological research, where the researcher is interested in the individual participant's lived experience rather than a group process (as grounded theory) or examination of the culture of a particular group (as in ethnography). Boyce and Naele (2006:3) concur stating that in-depth interviews are useful when you want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours or want to explore new issues. Boyce and Naele (2006:3) also note that interviews are often used to provide context to other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the program and why. The specific "phenomenon" that I focused on was the implementation of LSA programme in schools, and more particularly, on challenges encountered by the educators, orphans and vulnerable learners. The main question was: "What challenges are you encountering in the implementation of the LSA programme?". The responses from the participants were in narrative form which related to lived experiences of the participants regarding the implementation of LSA programme. The probing question that I asked was: "How would you describe the experience of working with LSAs? This probing question was meant to encourage the participants to talk about their lived experiences. I also wanted to know their views and thoughts about the LSA programme. Hence, I asked each individual participant the following question: "What do you think about the LSA intervention programme in your school, is it helping?"

The use of in-depth interviews had many advantages. According to Boyce and Naele (2006:3), the primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide detailed information than what would be available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. Boyce and Naele (2006:3) also note that in-depth interviews provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information- people felt more comfortable having a conversation with the researcher about their program as opposed to filling out a survey. Bolderston (2012:68) notes that advantages of the interview included

that the interviewees can express their viewpoint, in private, without a framework imposed by the researcher. Bolderson (2012:68) also notes that the researcher can adopt the line of questioning to explore emerging topics- an approach that is not usually possible in surveys research. Bailey (1987:174) notes many advantages, namely, the interviewer could make a follow-up for more specific answers and can repeat a question when the interviewer senses that the respondent has misunderstood the question; the interviewer is present to observe nonverbal behaviour and to assess the validity of the respondent's answer; the interviewer has control over question order and can ensure that the respondent does not answer the questions out of order or in any other way thwart the structure of the questionnaire; and that the interviewer can record spontaneous answers.

In the light of the above advantages and the nature of the current study, the researcher used in-depth individual interviews as discussed above. The in-depth individual interviews were used for educators, and orphans and vulnerable learners regarding their experiences and views on how the Learner Support Agent Programme is implemented in schools.

4.7.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis in the current study was preceded by transcription of audio-recording of in-depth individual interviews that I conducted with the participants. These readable transcripts formed the sources of my qualitative data. The process of transcription required me to listen to each audio-recording of the interview and write word for word, sentence by sentence.

I used an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) for my study to explore in detail how teachers, orphans and vulnerable learners were making sense of their lived experiences regarding the implementation of the LSA programme. I wanted to understand the challenges and views from the point of view of the teachers, orphans and vulnerable learners. Below, I outline the steps that I followed in analysing the qualitative data gathered through the in-depth individual interviews with the participants.

- **Bracketing**

Greening (2019:89) describes bracketing as the process where preconceived beliefs and opinions concerning the phenomenon research are identified and held in abeyance. I put aside all my beliefs and thoughts regarding the implementation of the LSA programme in schools to confront the data in a very pure form.

- **Looking for themes in the First Case**

I read and re-read my first transcript several times to fully understand the text. I listened to the audio-recording of the first interview whilst reading the script. This ensured that I get as close as possible to the data and that nothing significant was left out. I used the left-hand margin to annotate what was interesting or significant about what the respondent said. As I went through the script, I made comments on similarities and differences, echoes, amplifications and contradictions in the respondent's statements. This process continued for the whole script.

I documented all the themes that emerged from the scripts. I used the right-hand margin to document emerging themes. Here, then transformed the initial notes recorded on the left-hand margin into concise phrases to capture the essential quality of what I found in the text. The transformation of the initial notes continued until the whole script was completed. This process resulted into a list of themes.

- **Connecting Themes**

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012:368) note that this stage involves looking for connections between emerging themes, grouping them together according to conceptual similarities and providing each cluster with a descriptive label. I did this on a separate sheet of paper, with the emergent themes listed in chronological order based on the sequence on the transcript. I compiled themes for the whole transcript before I looked for connections and clusters. During this process, some of the themes were dropped if they did not fit well into the emerging structure or because they had weak evidence base. Finally, I compiled a list of major themes and subthemes, and relevant short extracts from the transcript, followed by the line number, to make it easy to return to the transcript and check the extract in context. This resulted to a master list with major themes and subthemes.

- **Continuing to the Next Case**

Smith and Osborn (2007:773) note that a single participant's script could be written up as a case study or, more often, the analysis could move on to incorporate views with a number of different individuals. For the current study, I incorporated interviews with the number of different individuals. Smith and Osborn (2007:73) caution that whichever approach one opts, one should be disciplined to discern repeating patterns but also acknowledged new issues emerging as one works through the transcripts-recognising ways accounts from participants are similar but also different.

After having all the transcripts analysed through the interpretive process, a final list of superordinate themes was constructed. The themes were not selected basis on their prevalence within the data, but other factors were considered, including the richness of the particular passages that highlighted the themes and how the themes helped illuminate other aspects of account.

- **Writing-up**

The preceding stages led to a writing up stage where there was movement from the final themes to a write-up and final statement outlining the meaning inherent in the participants' experience. The section translated the themes into a narrative account. Identified in the final list and write them up one by one. Each theme was described and exemplified with extracts from the interviews, followed by analytic comments. The strategy that I opted for the presentation of data at this stage is known as: "The Most Important to least important or from Major to Minor". The most important findings were presented first and minor discoveries came last.

4.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study is two-fold. Firstly, the study reveals the impact that the Learner Support Agents have on academic performance of the vulnerable learners. Secondly, the study hopes to provide information about the impact that the Learner Support Agents have on the self-concept of the vulnerable learners.

The study results can inform future programme design, promoting a decision to replicate an effective intervention in other areas with a high number of orphans and

vulnerable children. If there is an improvement on the self-concept and academic performance of the vulnerable learners, the authorities responsible for providing care and academic support to orphans and vulnerable children will hopefully increase the number of Learner Support Agents. This would mean that more schools and more orphans and vulnerable children benefit from the Learner Support Agent Programme. It would also mean more job opportunities for the unemployed youth, as the rate of unemployment amongst the youth is very high in South Africa.

However, if the results show that there is no impact on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable children, the programme will require strengthening and improving to make it more effective.

4.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019:157) note that delimitations are in essence the limitations consciously set by the authors themselves. Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019:1570) add that delimitations are concerned with the definitions that the researchers decide to set as boundaries or limits of their work so that the study's aims and objectives do not become impossible. As such, the current study was confined to Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable children who were beneficiaries of the Learner Support Agent Programme of Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga, Republic of South Africa.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Bean (2011:174) states that before proceeding with an examination of research methods, there are some ethical and legal considerations that have obtrusively entered the development of a research protocol. Bean (2011:174) recommends for research design to be useful, it should be ethical. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:181), the principles underlying research ethics are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) note four overlapping guidelines that are standard for organizations' codes of ethics: informed consent, avoiding deception, privacy and confidentiality.

4.10.1 Gatekeeping

Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) state that gatekeepers are people who enable researchers to gain entry into an organisation or company to conduct research. Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) note that they may be community or organisation leaders, elected officials, or heads of households. Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) advise that the researcher must consider who needs to be made aware of the study and gain permission from them to conduct research.

For current study, I wrote a letter to the Head of the Department of Education in Mpumalanga to ask for permission to conduct research in schools before embarking on the study. A sample of this letter is attached and marked Appendix A. In response to my letter, the HOD granted me the permission to conduct research and the letter from the HOD granting me permission is attached and marked Appendix B.

4.10.2 No harm to Participants

According to Babbie (2010:65), human research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer for the study. Babbie (2010:65) notes that in social research practice, this often concerns being careful not to reveal information that would embarrass subjects or endanger their home lives, friendships, jobs, and so forth. People can be harmed psychologically or emotionally in social research (Ogletree & Kawulich, 2012:65; Babbie, 2010:65). Babbie (2010:65) advises that the researcher must look for the subtlest dangers and guard against them.

For current study I was very careful and conscious at all times of participants' feelings during research. I ensured that the relationships I established for research purpose were developed with care and that neither the OVC participant nor myself was placed in harm's way either emotionally or psychologically. I was ever conscious to weigh the potential understanding from the findings against possible harm that might be caused to OVC participants.

4.10.3 Avoiding Deception

Deception is forbidden in social research and is unethical (Ogletree & Kawulich, 2012:64). Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) note that forbidding deception in ethical standards emphasises that researchers must not deceive the participants in any way. However, Babbie (2010:70) argues that because deceiving people is unethical, deception within social research needs to be justified by compelling scientific or administrative concerns.

For the current study, there were no reasons to justify deception. Hence, I was honest and truthful in my interaction with all the participants. The informed consent forms were signed by both the guardians and participants. Before the signing of these informed consent forms, the content was fully explained to the participants and opportunity was granted for them ask clarity seeking questions. Where necessary, explanation was provided through the local language that participants understood. The same applied during the course of interaction with participants regarding the answering of the questionnaire in writing and in-depth individual interview.

4.10.4 Anonymity

According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:523), a respondent may be considered anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. It is the responsibility of researchers to conceal the identity of participants. Bolderston (2012:75) argues that although the data are acquired, all personal information should be made as anonymous as possible.

To achieve this requirement, participants' identities were kept secret. Unique codes were used to conceal the participants' identities during data gathering. Hence, questionnaires (Multi-dimensional Self-Concept Scale) used in the study never required participants or schools to reveal their names.

4.10.5 Confidentiality

Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:32) state that confidentiality is an ethical requirement in most research. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:32) recommend that information provided by participants, particularly sensitive and personal information, should be protected and not made available to anyone other than the researchers. Hence, Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:32) advise that data collected from participants should be kept under secure conditions. As such, information gathered through questionnaires, progress academic school records and in-depth individual interviews was treated with confidentiality. For quantitative data I used unique codes to conceal the identities of participants and for qualitative data, I used pseudonyms.

4.10.6 Informed Consent

Ogletree and Kawulich (2012:64) note that informed consent means that participants agree to participate without feeling coerced, and that they are fully informed about the purpose, duration, methods, and potential use of the research. All participants have the right to know what the research is about, the risk and benefits of participation and potential effects on them (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013:32). Bolderston (2012:75) argues that as in all research, the risks, and benefits should be explained to the respondents so that they make informed decision to participate. Bolderston (2012:75) also notes that they should be aware of the research topic and the questions they may be asked as well as how data will be stored and used.

To meet this principle, each participant was given an informed consent form to sign, before participating in the study. An adult in the life of an orphan or vulnerable learner was regarded as a guardian. Hence, these guardians signed the informed consent forms on behalf of their minors. The topic, purpose, duration, anticipated outcomes and methods for data collection were communicated as fully as possible to participants and groups to be likely affected. A sample of the informed consent form is attached and marked Appendix C.

4.10.7 Voluntary Participation

Participation in a study must be voluntary, no one should be forced to participate (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:521). According to Fox and Bayat (2013:148), voluntary participation is a principle that requires that people participate voluntarily in research and that, if they have agreed to participate, they are free to withdraw at any time they wish. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:32) advise that usually a researcher or an assistant will take some time to explain to participants what the study entails and what is required of them in terms of participation. Furthermore, Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:32) propose that each participant may be asked to sign an informed consent form, which is an indication that they indeed understand what has been explained to them.

To observe the requirement of this principle, the informed consent forms which indicated fully that participation was voluntary were signed by both guardians and participants. The informed consent forms indicated that participants could withdraw from the research at any time even where informed consent forms were signed by both guardians and participants. In addition, at the beginning of each session, whether participants were expected to answer a questionnaire in writing or participate in an interview, this principle was explained to the participants that they had the right to decline to participate or to discontinue their participation at any time during the process if they choose to do so. A sample of the informed consent form is attached and is marked Appendix C. The schedule for the in-depth individual interview for Grade 9 learners marked Appendix E also explained the principle of voluntary participation.

4.11 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the framework followed in conducting the current study. The framework entailed a number of key features. The framework entailed several key features which started with outlining the pragmatic paradigm which underpinned the study. The pragmatic paradigm was the most suitable paradigm for the study because Kaushik and Walsh (2019:2) argue that pragmatism is based on the proposition that

researchers should use the philosophical and/or methodological approach that works best for the particular research problem that is being investigated.

Following my choice on the pragmatic paradigm, my study research design adopted both the quantitative approach (post-test-only non-equivalent design) on one hand, and qualitative approach (phenomenological approach) on the other hand. The quantitative approach was used to achieve the first two objectives, while the qualitative approach was used to achieve the third objective. The use of the two approaches resulted in mixed methods research which had many advantages for my study as discussed in Section 4.5.3. For the quantitative approach, 80 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners were randomly selected, 40 for experimental group (orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the LSA programme) and 40 for the comparison group (orphans and vulnerable learners who did not take part in the LSA programme). I used an independent samples t-test for the quantitative data analysis. For qualitative approach, 10 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners who were part of the LSA programme were purposively selected. In addition, 4 educators were also selected and I used the IPA for qualitative data analysis.

The significance of the study is that the result findings can be used to inform future programme design, promoting a decision to replicate an effective intervention in other areas with high number of orphans and vulnerable children as discussed in Section 4.8.

My study was confined to Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners in Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga, South Africa. Lastly, I adhered to principles underpinning the standard ethical codes for research, namely, gate keeping, and informed consent, no harm to participants, avoiding deception, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. The next chapter data presents and analyses data.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research design and method. In pursuit of the aim of the study as stated in Section 1.3.1 of Chapter One, mixed methods research involving quantitative and qualitative strands was selected. A post-test only non-equivalent design and phenomenological approach were adopted for quantitative strand and qualitative strand respectively. For quantitative data, an independent sample t-test was used to compare Mathematics performance and self-concept of the experimental group with that of the control group, while an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the qualitative data.

In this chapter, the findings from the quantitative and qualitative strands are presented and discussed. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents and discuss the results from the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale and Mathematics mark schedule. The second section presents and discusses the results from interview transcripts from OVC learners and educators.

5.2 BACKGROUND OF THE QUANTITATIVE STRAND

The study was conducted in 8 schools in Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The quantitative strand was used to pursue the two objectives of the study namely;

- a) To assess whether the LSA programme has an impact on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners.
- b) To assess whether the LSA programme has an impact on Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners.

A total of 80 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners (N=80) were selected from 8 schools for both the experimental group and control group as indicated in Section 1.8.4.3. of Chapter One. Four schools that implemented the LSA programme were identified and selected and another four were selected because they did not implement the LSA programme. Forty (n=40) Grade 9 OVC learners were randomly selected from the four schools which were implementing the LSA programme to form an Experimental group. From each school, 10 learners were selected, five males and five females. Similarly, forty (n=40) Grade 9 OVC learners were randomly selected from the four schools which were not implementing the LSA programme to form a control group. From each school, 10 learners were selected, five males and five females.

The post-test only non-equivalent group design was used as mentioned in Section 4.3. of Chapter Four. This design enabled the comparison of the Experimental group and the Control group in terms of self-concept (Mean scores) and Mathematics performance (Mean scores). The two groups were compared to answer the following research questions mentioned in Section 1.4. of Chapter One, namely;

- a) Was there a significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme and those who did not?
- b) Was there a significant difference in Mathematics performance between orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme versus orphans and vulnerable learners who did not?

The Multidimensional Self-concept Scale and Mathematics mark schedules were used to determine the self-concept scores and Maths scores of the participants.

5.3 PRESENTATION OF THE QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

5.3.1 Univariate Descriptive Analysis

Table 5.1: Distribution of Subjects by Gender

Gender (Females & Males)		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Females	40	50,0
Males	40	50,0
Total	80	100,00

Table 5.1 indicates the distribution of female participants and male participants in the sample. The proportional representation of females and males in the sample is equal, that is, 40 female participants (50%) and 40 male participants (50%).

Table 5.2: Distribution of Subjects by Group

Group (1-experimental & 0 Control)		
Group	Frequency	Percentage
Experimental group	40	50,0
Control group	40	50,0
Total	80	100,00

Table 5.2 shows that the subjects of the study are equally distributed in the two groups, namely, experimental and control group. There are 40 participants (50%) in the experimental group and 40 participants (50%) in the control group.

Table 5.3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std Error	Statistic	Std Error
Self-regard	80	24	100	63.92	15.708	.050	.269	-.247	.532
Social confidence	80	18	80	51.31	12.304	-.196	.269	.215	.532
School abilities Academic self- concept	80	29	88	53.81	12.342	.435	.269	.225	.532
Physical appearance	80	29	91	56.58	15.032	-.038	.269	-.600	.532
Physical abilities	80	14	94	57.05	16.289	-.248	.269	.216	.532
Maths score	80	2	100	36.54	20.022	.791	.269	.888	.532
Valid N (listwise)	80								

From Table 5.3 descriptive statistics, the mean score for self-concept dimensions ranged from $51.31 \pm 12.304\%$ for social confidence to $63, 92 \pm 15.71\%$ for self-regard. Physical abilities with a mean score of $57.05 \pm 16, 29\%$ and physical appearance with a mean score of $56, 58 \pm 15, 03\%$ were the other areas where the learners rated themselves highly. It is noteworthy that learners rated themselves lowly on school abilities (mean score $53, 81 \pm 12, 34\%$). The mean Maths score was $36, 54 \pm 20,022\%$. Since the skewness coefficients are close to zero, it can be concluded that the distributions of all the scores except Mathematics (0.791) and school abilities/academic self-concept (0.435) are nearly symmetric about their mean values.

Table 5.4: Tests of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig
Self-regard	.988	80	.655
Social confidence	.990	80	.797
School abilities/Academic self-concept	.976	80	.134
Physical appearance	.974	80	.103

Physical abilities	.985	80	.447
Maths score	.957	80	.009
*This is a lower bound of the true significance.			
a. Lilliefors Significance Correlation			

The application of the t-test independent samples is premised on the assumption that the data are drawn from a normal distribution. If this requirement is not met, the results of the t-test will not be reliable. Therefore, the Shapiro-Wilk test was also applied to see if the self-concept scores were normally distributed. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test indicate that the scores of all self-concept dimensions were normally distributed ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$) while the Maths scores were not normally distributed ($p = 0.009$). This meant that the t-test could be applied to all self-concept scores. The same test would be applied to the Maths score since the skewness coefficient was not far away from 0 and sample size (80) was large.

5.3.2 Bivariate Description Analysis

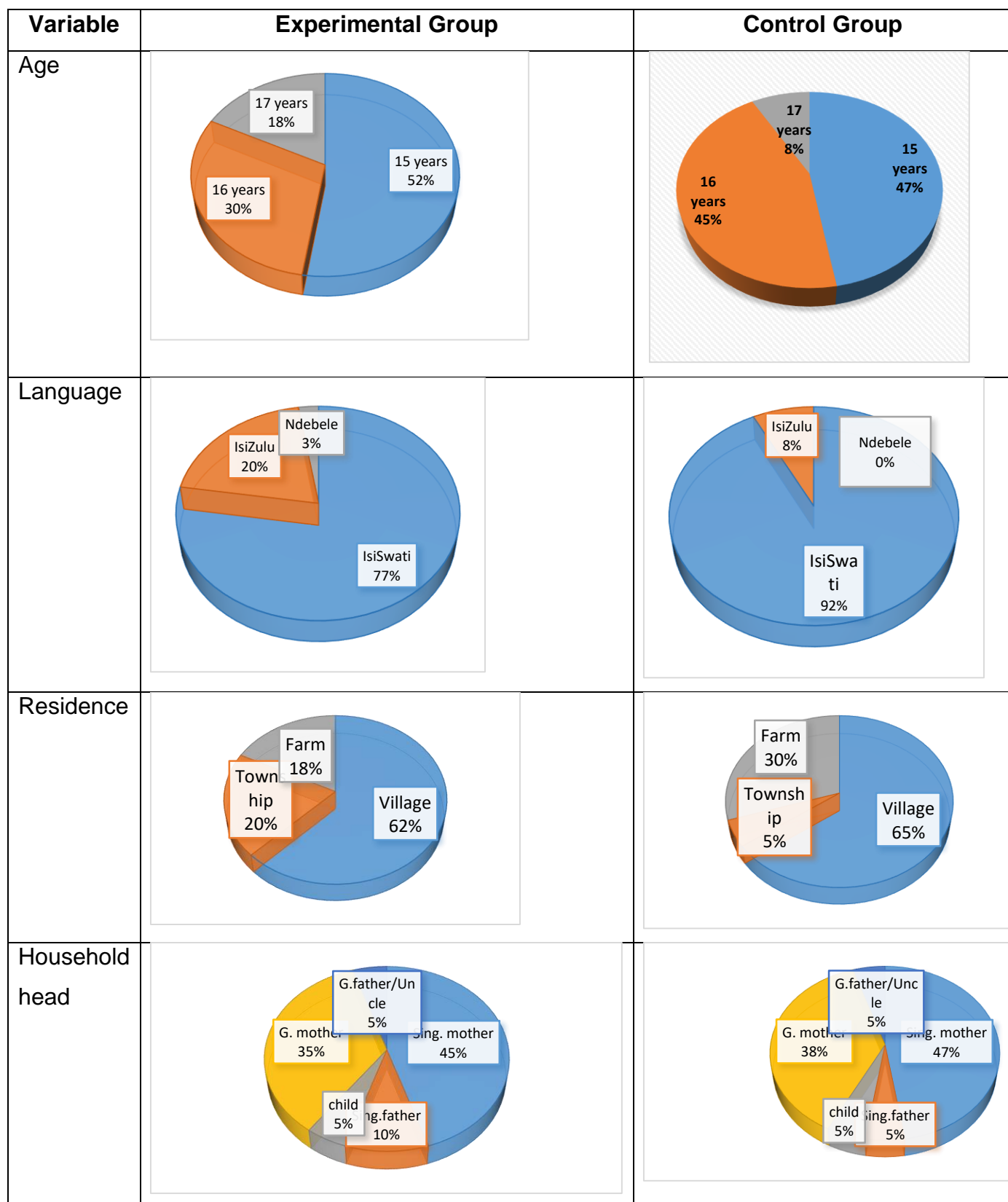


Figure 5.1 Frequencies of the Respondents in the Control and Experimental Group by Age, Language, Residence Type and Household Head Type

Figure 5.1 shows that for both the control and experimental groups, about 5 in 10 of the respondents were 15 years old. For the experimental group, about 3 in 10 of the respondents were of 16 years old while about 4-5 in 10 of the respondents in the control group were 16 years old. The control (92%) and experimental (77%) groups were dominated by IsiSwati speaking students. In each of these two groups, the rest of the learners were Zulu-speaking.

Respondents were either from a village, township, or farm. For both the experimental and control groups, slightly over 60% of the learners were from the village. For the control group, 30% came from townships while the rest were from farms. For the experimental group, 20% were from townships.

In both the control and experimental groups, about 5 in 10 of the respondents came from households headed by single mothers while about 4 in 10 came from households headed by single grandmothers. In both groups only 5% of the respondents came from child-headed households.

5.3.3 Comparison of the Scores for Treatment and Control Groups using Box and Whisker Plots

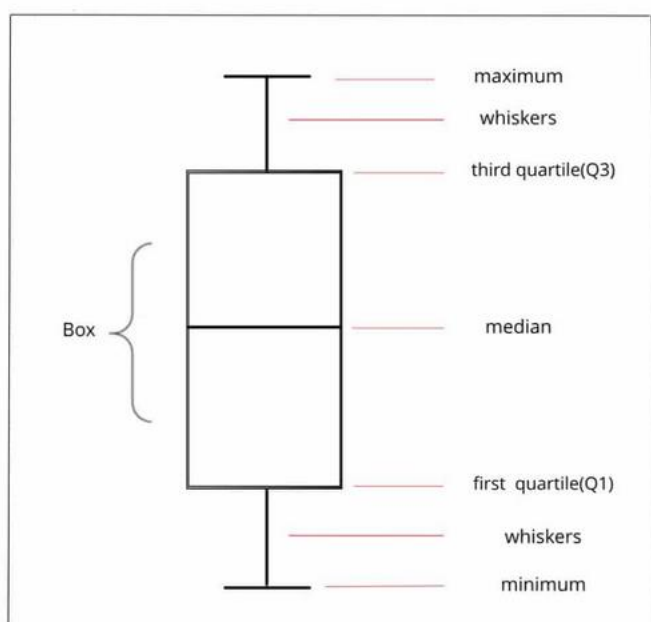
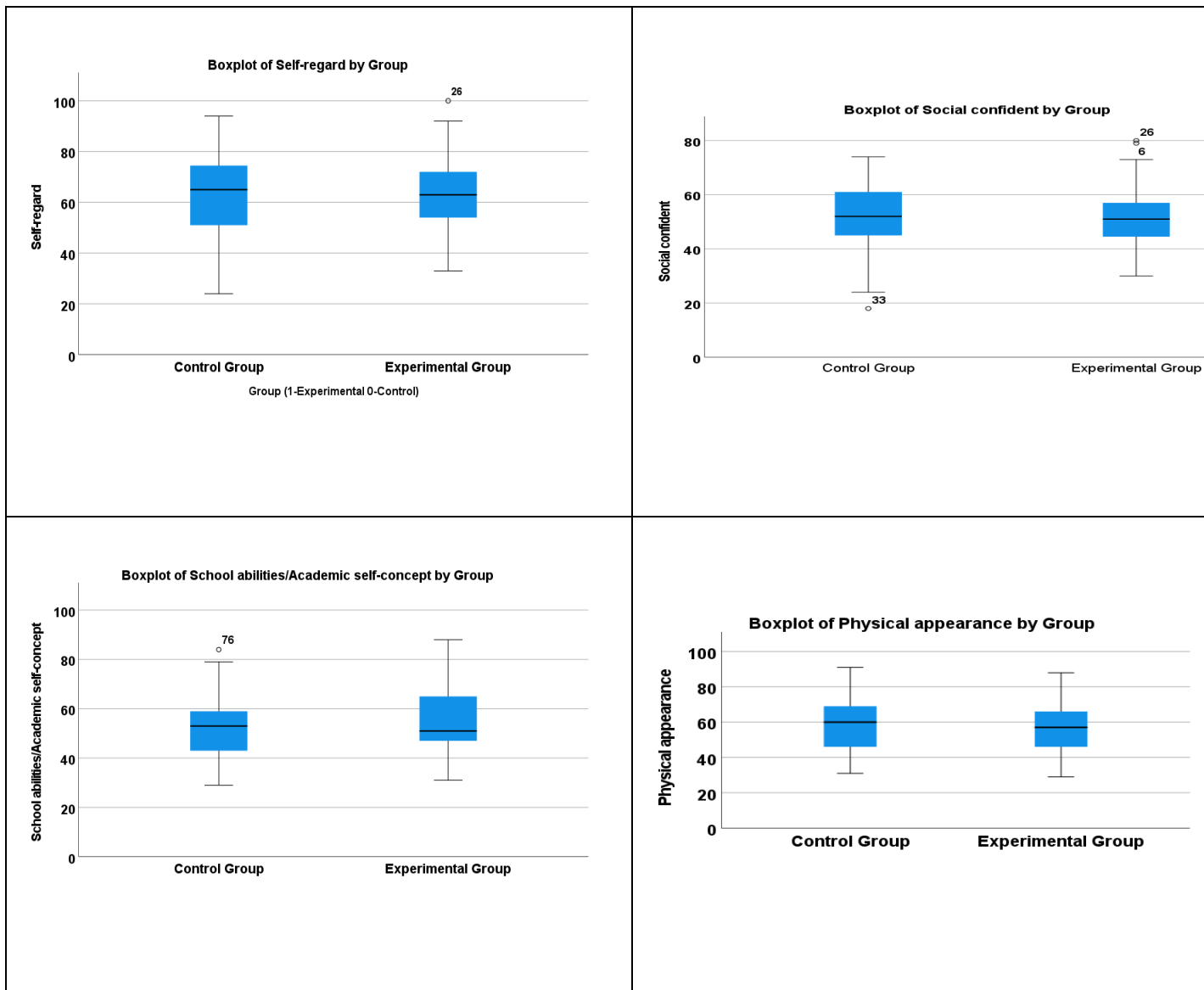


Figure 5.2: Illustration of a Box and Whisker Plot

As part of the preliminary data analysis, I present side-by-side Box and Whisker plots in Figure 5.3 the Box and Whisker plot is a five number summary of the data as depicted in Figure 5.2. The five numbers provided are the minimum, the first quartile, the median, the third quartile and the maximum. For data arranged in ascending order, the first quartile is the value below which there are 25% of the observations in the data while the third quartile is the value below which 75% of the observations are found.



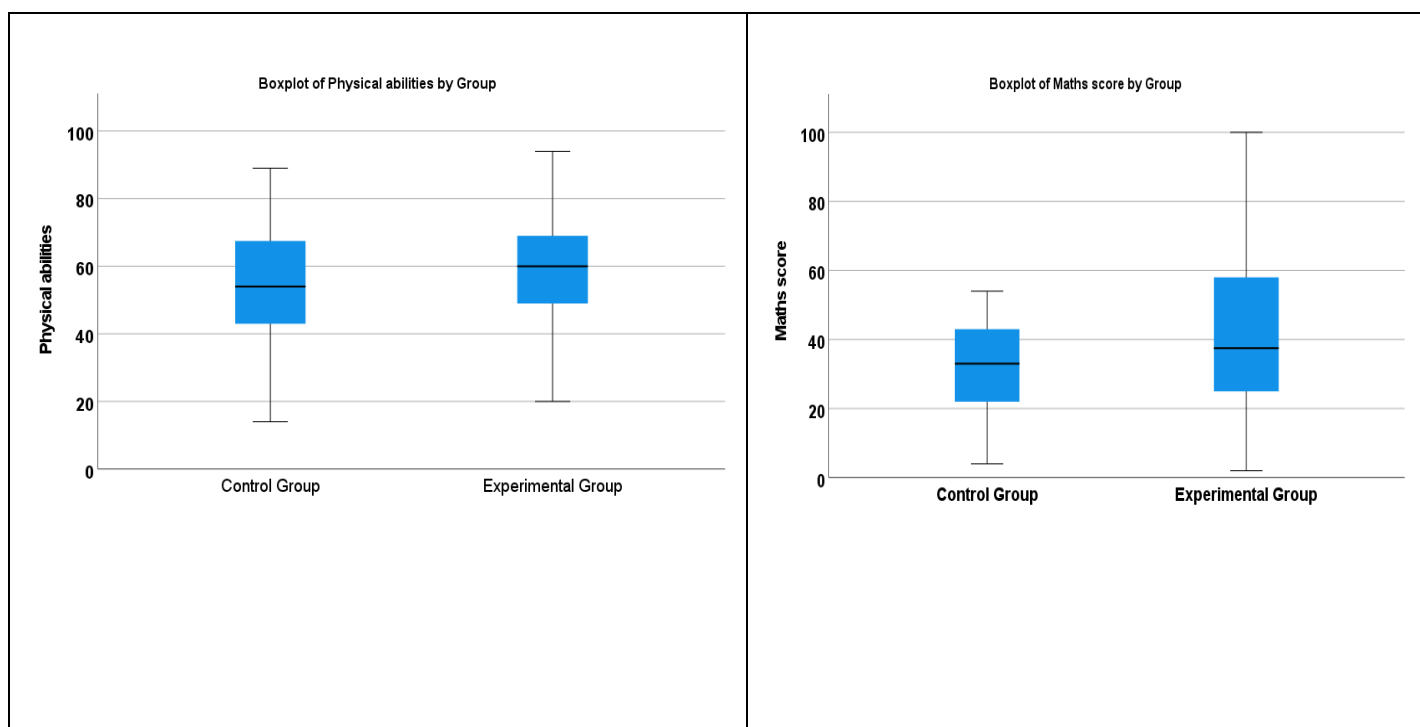


Figure 5.3: Comparison of Self-Concept and Maths Scores by Treatment

In Figure 5.3 the distribution (the whole body from the minimum value to maximum value) of the Maths scores for the experimental group is above that of the control group. This suggests that the experimental group performed better in Maths compared to the control group. For all the self-concept dimensions, the distribution of the scores for experimental and control groups do not differ much suggesting that the self-concept rating of the control group matches that of the experimental group. In the next section, I use t-tests to compare the mean scores for experimental and control groups.

5.3.4 Comparison of the Mean Scores for Treatment and Control Groups Using Box and Whisker Plots

The aim of the t-test is to see if the experimental and control groups differ significantly in terms of their mean self-concept and Maths scores. The null and alternative hypotheses for each variable are:

NO₁: There is no significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in LSA Programme compared to those who do not.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme compared to those who do not.

NO₂: There is no significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in LSA Programme.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme versus those who do not.

In the independent samples t-tests, information derived from two samples of data is used to test if the means of the two populations from which the samples were drawn are equal or not. The choice of formula for the t-test statistic depends on whether the populations from which the two samples are drawn have equal variances or not. If the population variances are equal, the t-test is computed through.

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_T - \bar{x}_C}{S_p \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_T} + \frac{1}{n_C}}}$$

where

$$S_p = \sqrt{\frac{(n_T - 1)s_T^2 + (n_C - 1)s_C^2}{n_T + n_C - 2}}$$

and

x_T = Mean of treatment group

x_C = Mean of control group

n_T = Sample size of treatment group

n_C = Sample size of control group

s_T = Standard deviation of treatment group

s_C = Standard deviation of control group

s_p = Pooled standard deviation

The degrees of freedom for the t-test above are given by $n_1 + n_2 - 2$.

If the variances of the two populations are not the same, the applicable formula for the t-test is

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_T - \bar{x}_C}{\sqrt{\frac{s_T^2}{n_T} + \frac{s_C^2}{n_C}}}$$

with a degree of freedom

$$d_f = \frac{(\frac{s_T^2}{n_T} + \frac{s_C^2}{n_C})^2}{\frac{1}{n_T-1}(\frac{s_T^2}{n_T})^2 + \frac{1}{n_C-1}(\frac{s_C^2}{n_C})^2}$$

In practice, an F-test is used to decide whether to use the equal variances t-test or not. Below is the procedure adopted in this work:

- Once a value of the t-test statistic has been obtained, a p-value corresponding to the observed value of the t-test statistic is computed and the decision whether to reject or accept the null hypothesis is made on the basis of that p-value. If the chosen level of significance is 5%, as is the case of this study, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5.5: Independent Samples Test

Variable	t-value	d.f	p-value
Self-regard	-.738	78	.463
Social confidence	.117	78	.907
Academic self-concept	1.042	78	.300
Physical appearance	-.622	78	.536
Physical abilities	1.086	78	.281
Maths performance	2.202	78	.031

Table 5.6: Summary Statistics Self-Concept and Maths Scores for the Control and Experimental Group

Group statistics					
	Group (1- Experimetnal 0-Control)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-regard	Experimental Group	40	62.63	15.377	2.431
	Control Group	40	65.22	16.122	2.549
Social confidence	Experimental Group	40	51.48	11.936	1.887
	Control Group	40	51.15	12.811	2.026
School abilities/Academic self-concept	Experimental Group	40	55.25	12.366	1.955
	Control Group	40	52.38	12.305	1.946
Physical appearance	Experimental Group	40	55.53	13.736	2.172
	Control Group	40	57.63	16.334	2.583
Physical abilities	Experimental Group	40	59.03	14.591	2.307
	Control Group	40	55.08	17.793	2.813
Maths score	Experimental Group	40	41.35	23.827	3.767
	Control Group	40	31.73	14.029	2.218

Table 5.5 gives the results of the t-tests while Table 5.6 summarises statistics for each variable according to the group. Participants in the control group (Mean=65.22, SD=16.12), does not show any significant difference from the experimental group (Mean=62.63, SD=15.38) in terms of self-regard, $t(78) = -.738$, $p=0.463$. Similarly, there are no significant differences between the experimental and the control groups on the rest of the dimensions for self-concept, namely, social confidence, academic self-concept, physical appearance and physical abilities.

Participants in the experimental group (Mean=41.35, SD=23.83) demonstrated significantly higher $t(78) = 2.2$, $p=.031$ Maths performance than participants in the control group (Mean=31.73, SD=14.03).

5.3.5 Comparison of the Scores for Male and Female Learners Using Box and Whisker Plots

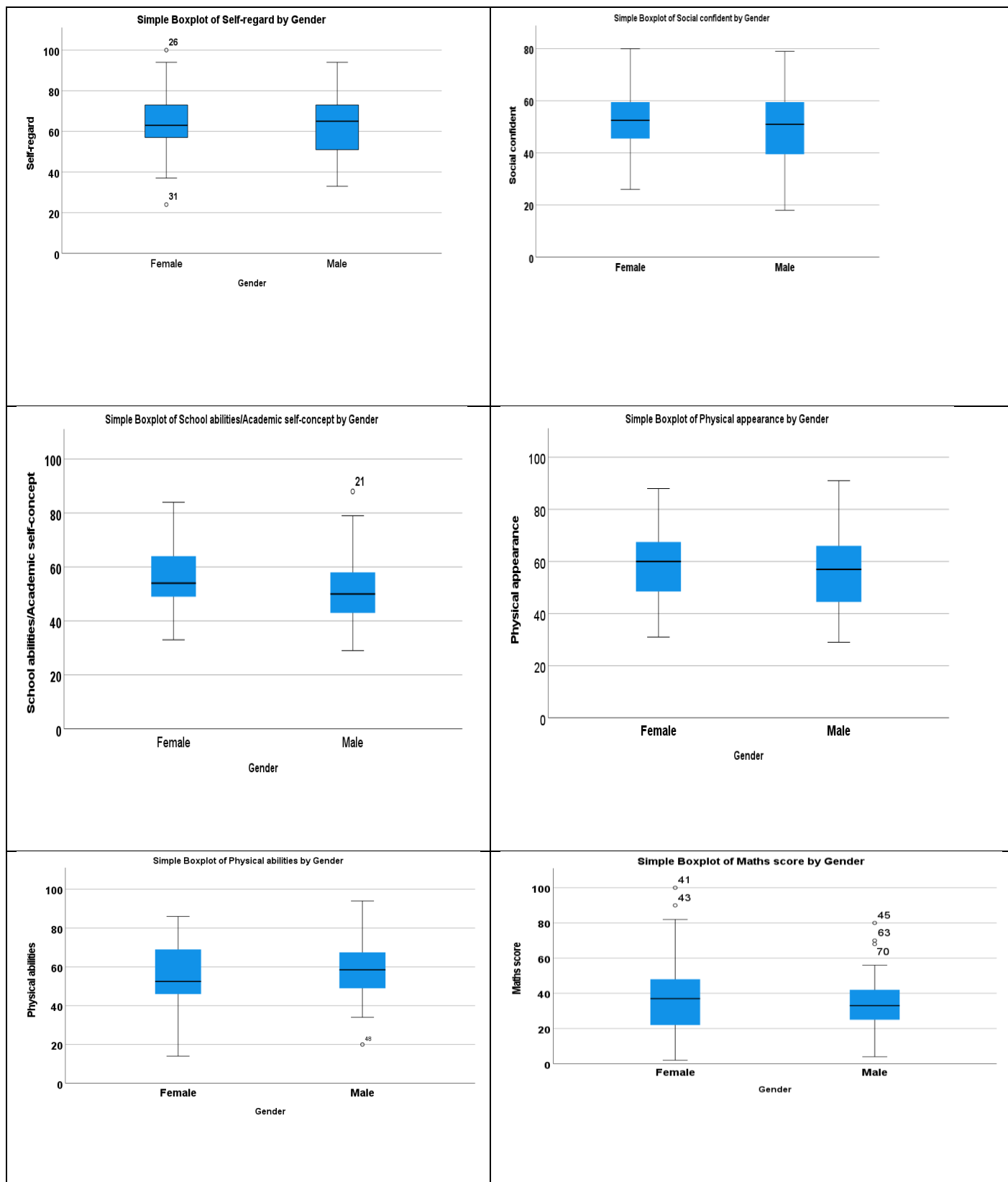


Figure 5.4: Comparison of Self-Concept and Maths Scores by Gender

Figure 5.4 compares the self-concept and Mathematics performance by gender. There is no significant difference between male and female orphans and vulnerable learners on self-concept and Mathematics performance.

Table 5.7: Independent Samples Test Results Comparing Males and Females

	t	df	P-value
Self-regard	-.368	78	.714
Social confidence	-1.083	78	.282
School abilities/Academic self-concept	-1.190	78	.238
Physical appearance	-.906	78	.368
Physical abilities	.863	78	.391
Maths score	-.842	78	.403

Table 5.7 shows independent samples test results comparing males and females. The p-values of all dependent variables are greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This implies that there is no significant difference between males and females on any of the variables, namely, self-regard, social confidence, academic self-concept, physical appearance, physical abilities, and Mathematics performance.

Table 5.8: Summary Statistics of Self-Concept and Maths Scores for Male and Female Learners

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-regard	Male	40	63.28	14.820	2.343
	Female	40	64.58	16.713	2.643
Social confident	Male	40	49.83	13.644	2.157
	Female	40	52.80	10.768	1.703
School abilities/Academic self-concept	Male	40	52.18	13.171	2.083
	Female	40	55.45	11.384	1.800
Physical appearance	Male	40	55.05	14.991	2.370
	Female	40	58.10	15.108	2.389
Physical abilities	Male	40	58.63	15.473	2.447
	Female	40	55.48	17.116	2.706
Maths score	Male	40	34.65	16.397	2.593
	Female	40	38.42	23.149	3.660

The p-values in Table 5.7 show that male and female learners do not differ significantly in terms of self-rating and Maths scores. The means and standard deviations for each variable according to gender are given in Table 5.8. Therefore, gender differences had no impact on the self-concept and Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners.

5.3.6 Investigating the Effect of Gender and Experimental Group Using a Multiple Linear Regression Model

As an addition to the independent samples t-tests presented above, a multiple linear regression of the form

$$\text{Score} = \beta_1 \text{Gender} + \beta_2 \text{Group}$$

was fitted to the data. The advantage of a multiple linear regression model is that it reveals the effect of a variable in the model after controlling for the other variables in the model. In this case, it gives the effect of the treatment group after controlling for gender and vice versa.

Table 5.9: Multiple Linear Regression for Maths Score Versus Gender and Group

Parameter	B	Std. Error	Hypothesis Test		
			Wald Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
(Intercept)	39.463	3.7206	112.495	1	.000
Gender-Female	3.775	4.2962	.772	1	.380
Group-Control	-9.625	4.2962	5.019	1	.025

Table 5.9 gives estimates of coefficients of gender and group, the standard error, the test statistic for testing if the coefficient is significantly different from zero, the degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value. The p-value for gender (0.380) is not significant while that for group (0.025) is. This means that boys and girls do not differ in their performance in Maths. The coefficient for gender (B=-0.9625) is for comparing the control group to the treatment group (the reference category). Since the coefficient is negative, it can be concluded that learners in the control group performed lower than those in the experimental group. According to the regression model, after controlling

for gender, the average Maths scores for the experimental group are about 9% higher than those for the control group. For the self-concept dimensions, the results (not presented here) reveal that the scores do not differ significantly according to gender and treatment group.

5.3.7 Conclusion from the Independent Samples T-Test and Regression Analysis

Based on the results of the independent samples t-tests and regression models, the null hypotheses that relate to self-concept are accepted, namely;

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA Programme compared to orphans and vulnerable learners who do not.

Sub-null hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference in self-regard of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme compared to those who do not.
- There is no significant difference in social confidence of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme compared to those who do not.
- There is no significant difference in academic concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme compared to those who do not.
- There is no significant difference in physical appearance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme compared to those who do not.
- There is no significant difference in physical abilities of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme compared to those who do not.

Therefore, the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme was not different to the self-concept of those who did not. This

implied that the LSA programme had no effect on the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners.

On the other hand, based on the result of the independent samples t-test and regression analysis, the second hypothesis is rejected, namely;

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in LSA Programme versus those who did not.

An alternative hypothesis is accepted, that is, there is a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme versus those who did not.

Hence, orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme performed higher in Mathematics than those who did not. This implies that the LSA programme had a positive impact on the Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners.

5.4 BACKGROUND OF THE QUALITATIVE STRAND

The participants in this qualitative strand of the study were 10 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners who were purposively selected from 4 schools in Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. This allowed me to find a defined group for whom the research problem has relevance and personal significance (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014:7). Two orphans and vulnerable learners were purposively selected from School A, Ayanda a female learner aged 15 and Amos a male learner aged 16, and both were from child-headed households. Two orphans and vulnerable learners were purposively selected from School B, Busisiwe a female learner aged 15, and Ben a male learner aged 16, and both were from households headed by single mothers. Three orphans and vulnerable learners were purposively selected from School C, Chiliza a male learner aged 15 from a household headed by a single father, Celiwe a female learner aged 15 also from a household headed by a single father, and Cynthia a female learner aged 16 from a household headed by paternal grandparents. Three orphans and vulnerable learners were purposively selected from School D,

Dumazile a male learner aged 17 from a household headed by paternal grandparents, Duduzile a female learner aged 16 from a household headed by maternal grandparents, and David a male learner aged 15 from a household headed by paternal grandparents.

In addition, four educators were selected because that they were co-ordinators of the Life Skills programme. From School A, Mr Mashaba, a 41-year-old Natural Sciences teacher for Grade 10 & 11 and has been with the school for 13 years. From School B, Mr Madonsela, a 31-year-old Mathematics teacher for Grade 10 & 11 and has been with the school for 6 years. From School C, Mrs Khanyile, a 38-year-old Mathematics teacher for Grade 8 & 9 and has been with the school for 2 years. From School D, Mr Gumede, a 49-year-old business studies educator for Grade 11 & 12 and Deputy Principal of the school. Mr Gumede has been with the school for more than 20 years. The objective of the study as stated in Section 1.3.2. (c) of Chapter One was: To explore the challenges encountered by teachers and OVC learners in implementing the LSA programme in the Mpumalanga Province schools. Participants were drawn from five types of OVC, namely, child headed households, single parent fathers, single parent mothers, paternal grandparent and maternal grandparent headed households as indicated in Section 1.9.2 of Chapter One. A sample of 10 participants from the five types of OVC plus 4 educators was deemed appropriate to generate rich information about the challenges encountered by OVC learners in the implementation of the LSA programme in the four identified schools in Gert Sibande District.

In-depth individual interviews were conducted on the sample using an interview schedule attached and marked Appendix C. The 14 interviews with the OVC learners were audio recorded and were later transcribed into readable text. Interview transcripts were read and reread ensure understand the views and lived experiences of educators, orphans and vulnerable learners regarding the challenges of implementing the LSA programme in the four schools. Several themes were identified as indicated on Table 5.10 below.

5.5 IDENTIFIED THEMES FROM INTERVIEWS

From the interviews conducted with four educators, ten orphans and vulnerable learners from four schools, results are organised into seven main themes and twenty-six corresponding sub-themes as indicated in Table 5.10 below:

Table 5.10: Table of Themes

Theme	Sub-theme
1. Participants conceptualisation of LSA programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The key stakeholders in LSA ▪ LSA as poverty mitigation scheme ▪ Academic element of LSA ▪ Discrimination of OVCs through LSA ▪ Application of inclusive education through LSA
2. Participants' experiences of LSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learner participants' experiences on LSA programme as self-concept and learning enriching tool for OVCs ▪ Educators' experiences on LSA as self-concept empowering tool for OVCs ▪ Educators' views on LSA as an academic empowering tool for OVCs
3. Outcomes of LSA programme versus expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Life skills ▪ Homework assistance ▪ Motivation ▪ Problem-solving mechanism
4. Challenges encountered in implementing the LSA programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource provision challenges ▪ Inadequate participation in LSA programme by some learners

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unexpected disruption ▪ Inadequate guardian/parental support ▪ Time constraint
5. The impact of LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-confidence ▪ Attitude towards schoolwork ▪ Performance in Mathematics
6. Recommendations for redressing challenges in LSA programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training of LSAs ▪ Parental/guardian involvement ▪ Time management ▪ Awareness campaign on LSA programme
7. Opportunities for utilisation of LSAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extra classes ▪ Networking with stakeholders

5.6 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

The qualitative data was analysed using an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as discussed in Chapter Four. After conducting the IPA, seven major themes emerged from transcripts as indicated in Table 5.10 above. These are: participants' conceptualisation of the LSA programme, participants' experiences of the LSA programme, outcomes of the LSA programme versus expectations, challenges encountered in implementing the LSA programme, the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance, recommendations for redressing challenges in the LSA programme and opportunities for utilisation of LSAs. These themes are presented as well as their sub-themes referring to extracts from interview transcripts and literature.

5.6.1 Participants' Conceptualisation of LSA Programme

Participants' conceptualisation of the LSA programme is divided into five subthemes, namely, the stakeholders in the LSA programme, the LSA programme as a poverty

alleviation scheme, de-stigmatisation of OVCs through the LSA programme and application of inclusive education through the LSA programme.

5.6.1.1 The key stakeholders in LSA programme

Orphans and vulnerable learners had diverse needs, therefore the provision of care and support for these learners required different stakeholders. For the LSA programme to be effective, it required cooperation from different key stakeholders.

Educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners had convergent views and divergent views on the key stakeholders of the LSA programme. Orphans and vulnerable learners saw themselves as key stakeholders on the LSA programme, without them, the LSA programme could not be effectively implemented. Duduzane from School D indicated the key contribution they played in the LSA programme. He said: *“We are no longer able to meet like previous. Where we met and discussed challenges faced by other learners. Where their needs were raised and discussed.”* (Duduzane). The suggestion put forward by Ben from School B further emphasised the fact that orphans and vulnerable learners were key stakeholders in the LSA programme. He said: *‘It is possible to meet on Saturdays or form study groups, and study subjects like Maths and physical science. Those subjects that are giving us difficulties.’* (Ben).

Mr Gumede, deputy principal from School D acknowledged that orphans and vulnerable learners were key in the implementation of the LSA programme. Their cooperation was essential for effective implementation of the LSA programme. Therefore, the success and failure of the LSA programme rested upon the hands of orphans and vulnerable learners. *“Yes, sir, there are challenges. In fact, most of the challenges are emanating from actions of the learners. Yes, such as not coming to school all the time.”* (Gumede). This extract demonstrated the fact that even if support could be made available through the LSA programme, if orphans and vulnerable learners did not cooperate, the implementation of the LSA programme could not be effective.

Parents are key role players when it comes to the education of their children. Studies have shown that involvement of parents in their children’s education improves performance. The LSA programme was meant to support orphans and vulnerable

learners in disadvantaged schools, therefore, the support from guardians and parents is essential. The extract from Mrs Khanyile from School C indicate that parents are key stakeholders in the implementation of the LSA programme. She said: *“It is. It is...because we had problems with the learners who are challenged, and we were able to consult parents. They gave us permission. From there, we were able to consult the relevant stakeholders.”* (Mrs Khanyile).

Central to the implementation of the LSA programme were the LSAs themselves. Educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners acknowledged the care and support provided by the LSAs in schools. One participant said: *“It is helping, it helps people, if there is a need, and you can go to the LSA. If you have problems, even at home.”* (Chiliza). This extract from Chiliza demonstrates how key the LSAs are in providing care and support for orphans and vulnerable learners, not only in schools, but even at home. Similar sentiments were shared by Busisiwe from School B. She said: *“Yes, it does because there are learners with serious problems, and they are not able to speak to other teachers. So, it is much easier to get somebody they trust and able to speak to, like Sesi Noma (LSA) is doing, and is helping a great deal here at school.”* (Busisiwe). Agreeing with Chiliza and Busisiwe, Mrs Khanyile being new in the School Based Support Team (SMT) for School C, praised the services rendered by the LSAs saying:

“A.... experience.... Actually, they are teaching me some of the things because I am still learning. Because I am still new in this School Based Support Team. So, I am a new co-ordinator. I am learning. But with them (LSAS), they just give me work, mam, there is a child, it is like this and this. They are cooperating...” (Mrs Khanyile).

Mrs Khanyile’ extract shows that LSAs depend on Life Skills School based co-ordinators for the operations of the LSA programme and that she knows whom LSAs should consult for co-ordination and support.

Learners spend most of their schooling time in front of educators. Therefore, educators are key stakeholders in the teaching and learning of children. In programmes that provide care and support for learners, the involvement of educators

is essential for effective implementation. LSA programme implementations in schools were co-ordinated, supervised and supported by Life Skills school-based co-ordinators who were educators in schools. Mrs Khanyile said:

“I like people.... to talk good about it. Especially because.....it has great work. Me being in the programme, I have seen great things. I have short period” (Mrs Khanyile).

These words show that educators are key stakeholders in the implementation of the LSA programme. Mrs Khanyile is the co-ordinator of the LSA programme. As she was new then, she had to learn the operations of the LSA programme.

5.6.1.2 LSA programme as a poverty mitigation scheme

Most orphans and vulnerable learners came from poor families. Therefore, these learners needed various types of support ranging from food and health care to psychosocial support and economic self-sufficiency (Stover, Bollinger, Walker & Monasch, 2007:22).

Most orphans and vulnerable learners believed that the LSA programme was designed to provide care and support for their physical needs, such as food and clothing. They indicate that when anyone had a need, he/she approaches the LSA at the school and help is provided. Chiliza a male learner from a single mother provided explanation on who to approach when one need assistance with food. He said: *“Maybe you run out of bread, maybe things are not right at home. You get help. Just talk to the LSA and get food.”* (Chiliza). Duzane a male learner staying with paternal grandparents said that he had seen one learner being given clothes. He said: *“For example, there was a child who use to wear a t-shirt even when it was cold, he/she didn’t have a jersey. The LSA got him/her a track-suite. He/she used to wear that track-suite, she never felt cold again.”* (Duduzane). This testifies to the fact that the LSA programme assists needy learners. Similarly, Celiwe a female learner staying with single father testified to receiving care and support from the LSA programme. She said: *“Yes, because we get, ever since it came, we receive food parcels and uniform. Children who look like they don’t have uniform, are able to get it. And those who have nothing get.”* (Celiwe). Similarly, Cyntia a female learner staying with paternal grandparents said:

“Because some of us, some learners, us as learners we come from different backgrounds, our homes, some of us are poor, some of us are rich, we are different. Some of us we don’t have uniforms, as you see this jersey I am wearing right now, it came from the LSA intervention. Food parcels, there are a lot” (Cyntia).

Participants’ words show that the impact of poverty for orphans and vulnerable learners is mitigated by the LSA programme. This suggests that this programme should be extended to other schools in poverty-stricken areas. If the challenges that relate to basic needs for survival are mitigated, this may result to absenteeism or school dropout. Several studies by Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38), Shann et al. (2013:1), Kiragu and Chepchieng (2014:736) have noted that if basic needs of the OVC are not mitigated, they are likely to drop out of school.

5.6.1.3 Academic element of the LSA programme

The LSA also monitors attendance, checks learner books to see that homework is done, if not, find out what the challenges are and ask the teacher to clarify the task and concepts, as needed (DBE, 2020:38). Educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners from schools where the LSA programme is implemented acknowledge that the programme supports OVC academically through homework assistance, study groups and extra classes. In the following extract, Chiliza talks about how extra classes or extra lessons provided by LSA assisted him in reducing workload from school. He said:

“I have attended it (Maths lesson) and this gives me time. I study other subjects at home. The work is less in that way. The work doesn’t become too much for me, ending not knowing what to do” (Chiliza).

Ayanda expressed the feeling of happiness because of the help she gets from the LSA. She stated: *“They help us with homework, we don’t know how to write work given by teachers, and we are happy that they are here and continue helping us” (Ayanda).* Ayanda also wishes the LSA to continue to operate in her school.

The academic support provided by LSAs through extra classes and study groups had an impact on teaching and learning of orphans and vulnerable learners. Some learners indicated that their academic performance had improved as a result. Busisiwe commented:

“I was not able to understand some subjects, so Noma (LSA) was contributing after classes and early classes. So, I was being helped academically, and yes, I have improved. I have seen it, and it has helped me” (Busisiwe).

In this extract, Busisiwe explains how the LSA supported her academically. The academic support provided to Busisiwe improved her academic performance.

These views held by Chiliza, Ayanda and Busisiwe were also shared by Mr Mashaba and Mr Gumede. Mr Mashaba elaborated on the positive impact of the LSA programme on orphans and vulnerable learners’ academic performance. He observed:

“To the larger extent, it has great impact on their academic [[performance] because these learners are helped by the teachers and relevant people, and even referrals. So actually, this help their academic [performance]” (Mr Mashaba).

The same views were shared by Mr Gumede, the deputy principal from School C. He said:

“They are indicating to me that there is much better. They are seeing in terms of the learners’ performance, because in most cases they are giving these learners extra classes. Where they are redoing the work that was done by the teachers during their periods. So that improves the performance of the learners” (Mr Gumede).

These observations show that the LSA programme makes a positive impact on teaching and learning of orphans and vulnerable learners. The LSA programme helps them to cope with schoolwork.

5.6.1.4 Stigmatisation of OVCs through the LSA programme

Some orphans and vulnerable learners who were identified to participate or benefit from the LSA programme felt that they were stigmatised. Hence, some of them were reluctant to participate. Instead of joining the programme when invited, some ran away or showed no co-operation. Wood and Goba (2011:282) made similar observation saying that one of the biggest problems facing teachers in addressing OVC issues, according to their participants, was the stigma attached to OVC.

In the current study, Ayanda advised that learners who uncomfortable to be part of the LSA programme should not be forced to participate. She said: *“I think those who don’t want to come and be helped by those people (LSAs), to leave us who need help from those people (LSAs)”* (Ayanda). This extract shows that while they are learners who are reluctant to participate in the LSA programme some are quite eager to do so. Below, Duduzile explains how some learners refused to co-operate when invited to participate in activities related to the LSA programme. She said:

“Is that children like when we are attending here at school, they run away like, they don’t want to attend, and we have to come after them that sort of things, and that like. Sesi (LSA) comes to our classes and asks us to attend, but you find many children not attending” (Duduzile).

Mr Madonsela, a Mathematics educator from School B, observed that some orphans and vulnerable learners were uncomfortable to be part of the LSA programme. He said:

“Challenges ... I encountered, is like some of the learners are feeling discriminated. They are not comfortable because they didn’t select all of them. So, they wonder why they choose them” (Mr Madonsela).

This suggests that some orphans and vulnerable learners were reluctant to be part of the LSA programme likely because they were stigmatised due to their situation.

5.6.1.5 Application of inclusive education through LSAs

The interview transcripts showed that the LSA programme was promoting inclusive education in schools where it was implemented. Learners with learning difficulties or learning barriers were identified and referred to relevant stakeholders for intervention. Below, Mrs Khanyile from School C, explains that orphans and vulnerable learners encountered challenges that led to learning difficulties. She said:

“Because some of the learners are psychologically challenged, because of situation under which they live at home. Some of the situations they have been through. Some of them that we have encountered, they can’t study. You see, but after[wards], we have been successful to involve them in the relevant programme” (Mrs Khanyile).

Mrs Khanyile also explained the impact of intervention programme in addressing learning difficulties. The nature of causes to barriers to learning are different, some are physical in nature, and some are psychological in nature. She pointed out: *“If the child is not psychological well, physical well, the child cannot focus”* (Mrs Khanyile).

Mrs Khanyile further explained how they supported learners with barriers to learning saying: *“It is. It is...because we had problems with the learners who are challenged, and we were able to consult parents. They gave us permission. From there, we were able to consult the relevant stakeholders”* (Mrs Khanyile). LSAs were key in promoting inclusive education in schools where the programme was being implemented.

Mrs Khanyile’s comments show that the implementation of the LSA programme in her school promoted inclusive education. Mrs Khanyile’s words indicate that she understood the role of the educator in inclusive environment. Mrs Khanyile demonstrated a conceptual understanding of inclusion and diverse needs of learners including learning difficulties as provided in the South African education landscape on equal education opportunity (DBE, 2014:35).

5.6.2 Participants' Experiences about the LSA Programme

This theme explored participants' experiences and views on the LSA programme as a tool for enhancing and empowering self-concept and learning of OVC. Three sub-themes were derived, focusing on the two key role players in the programme, namely, educators and learners. The sub-themes are learner participants' experiences on the LSA programme as self-concept and learning enriching tool for OVC, educators' experiences about the LSA programme as self-concept and learning empowering tool for OVC, and educators' views about the LSA programme as an academic empowering tool for OVC.

5.6.2.1 Learner participants' experiences and views on the LSA programme as self-concept and learning enriching tool for OVC

The views and experiences were solicited from learner participants to explore their perception regarding the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and learning of OVC. Common responses that emerged from orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme indicated that the programme was a tool that enriched their learning. This meant that the LSA programme did not focus on the curriculum only. This is captured in Ben's words below:

"We are aware as we study this, what is happening in other subjects. Furthermore, we are aware what is happening outside, things that we will come across when we complete our studies at school. What is happening and how we can protect ourselves" (Ben).

These words suggest that the LSA programme prepares orphans and vulnerable learners for life beyond the school. Ayanda from School A shared similar when she said: *"For some of us, it is helping because it can teach us many things we do not know here at school. If they are things" (Ayanda).*

Most learner participants indicated that their self-confidence had improved because the programme. Ben from School B explained how his self-confidence had improved after joining the LSA programme:

"My confidence has improved. In the past, I had low self-esteem. In class as we were studying, I was afraid to raise up my hand. Now

that I have joined the LSA programme, I am now able to raise my hands, share my ideas, share difficulties in order to get help” (Ben).

A similar experience was shared by Busisiwe who said: *“My confidence has improved a lot, and I know that if I get to Grade 12, I will get 100% in Mathematics”* (Busisiwe). These sentiments suggest that the LSA programme enhances participants’ sense of self-concept. Therefore, the LSA programme achieved one of its objectives, namely, to empower learners with skills and knowledge that increase self-confidence. Kumari and Chamundeswari (2013:105) found that there was a significant and positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of students at the higher secondary level. Improved self-concept and academic achievement would enhance orphans and vulnerable learners to stay at school until they complete Grade 12. Thus, achieving one of the objectives of the LSA programme, that is, support optimum learning, retention, and achievement in school (DBE, 2020:11).

5.6.2.2 Educators’ experiences about LSA programme as self-concept empowering tool for OVC

Educators held divergent experiences and views about the LSA programme as a self-concept empowering tool. Mr Mashaba from School A said that the LSA programme was a tool to empower orphans and vulnerable learners in terms of their self-concept. However, he said the LSA programme did not have enough resources. Thus, he recommended that resources should be made available for improving self-concept and academic performance. He said: *“I think more resources should be put to the programme for the learners, for betterment in terms of academic and self-concept”* (Mr Mashaba). Similarly, Mrs Khayile from School C hoped that the LSA programme would improve the confidence of the OVC. She observed: *“They are able, the child becomes confident and be focused at school”* (Mrs Khanyile).

Mr Gumede, deputy principal of School C stated that learners had a negative self-concept towards Mathematics. He said: *“Most learners have a negative concept of that subject; I don’t know why. But because they are keeping time with them”* (Mr Gumede).

It was evident from the interactions with the educators that the LSA programme can have a positive impact on self-concept of OVC, provided more resources are made available for the programme. Learners with high self-concept tend to approach school related tasks with confidence and success of those tasks reinforces this confidence (Kumari & Chemundeswari, 2013:106).

5.6.2.3 Educators' views on LSA programme as an academic empowering tool for OVC

Educators said that the LSA programme was an academic empowering tool for OVC. For example, Educators Mr Mashaba from School A said:

“To the larger extent, it has great impact on their academic because the learners are helped by teachers and relevant people, and referrals. So actual this helps their academic” (Mr Mshaba).

Similarly, Mr Gumede, deputy principal from School D, indicated that the LSA programme empowered OVC. He observed:

“They are indicating to me that there is much better. They are seeing in terms of the learners' performance, because in most cases they are giving these learners extra classes” (Mr Gumede).

The above sentiments show that educators believed that the LSA programme is an academically empowering tool for OVC because it improved the academic performance of the OVC

5.6.3 Outcomes of LSA Programme Versus Expectations

This theme explored the outcomes of the LSA programme as an intervention strategy as experienced by educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners versus their expectations. Four sub-themes emerged from interactions with educators, orphans and vulnerable learners, namely, life skills, support for OVC's needs, homework assistance and motivation.

5.6.3.1 Life Skills HIV and AIDS education

It emerged from interviews with orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme that they were also taught life skills. In the following extract, Ben from School B explains how helpful the LSA programme is in intervening when they had challenges regarding school uniform and food. He further indicates that they were taught life skills:

“It helped us as there were children who couldn’t have uniform. Those who couldn’t get food, because we come from different families. So, we get food parcels, and then learn more about HIV/AIDS and other STIs” (Ben).

Cynthia from School C also indicated that they learnt about HIV/AIDS. She explains:

“I have gained many things, like when we are together, they caution us to..., and there are many things, mam, like respecting teachers and abstaining from sex and substance abuse. There are many things” (Cynthia).

These sentiments indicate that Life Skills HIV and AIDS education was taught in schools through the implementation of the LSA programme. One of the objectives of Life Skills education is to empower young people to make informed decisions and abstain from sex. Studies show that young girls from poor backgrounds often engage in unprotected sex resulting in unwanted pregnancies. For example, Panday, Makiwan, Ranchod, and Latsoalo (2009:11) note that learner pregnancies are higher in schools that are poorly resourced and located in poor neighbourhoods. If the implementation of the LSA programme also catered Life Skills programme, it could curb the number of learner pregnancy and curb substance abuse which is prevalent in some schools. If the LSA programme taught Life Skills, it could be of great help. According to DBE (2017:x), Life Skills HIV/AIDS education’s main objective is the integration of HIV and relevant life skills into the school curriculum as a strategy to prevent and mitigate the spread of HIV infection and provide care and support for learners that are infected and affected.

5.6.3.2 Homework assistance

Interviews with orphans and vulnerable learners revealed that LSAs assisted them with homework. Chohan and Khan (2010:18) state that homework are tasks that are assigned to students by teachers and are meant to be performed during non-school hours. One of the roles outlined in a guide for Learner Support Agents and school on providing psychosocial support to learners is that LSA should monitor attendance, check learner books to see that homework is done (DBE, 2020:38). DBE (2020:38) further states that if homework is not done, the LSA must find out what the challenges are and ask the teacher to clarify the task and concepts. In most cases, LSAs take it upon themselves to assist OVC with homework without asking for assistance from teachers. For example, Ayanda from School A shared her view about LSAs in her school. Saying:

“They are a help here at school. They help with homework, we don’t know how to write work given by teachers, and we are happy that they are here and continue helping us” (Ayanda).

Duduzane from School D shared the same view saying: *“If we have homework. We are able to sit down with her (LSA) and assist us to write the work that sort of things” (Duduzane).*

Homework is part of the learning process. Agarwal and Gaur (2015:100) note that homework is a vital part of learning and is expected by students, parents, and teachers. Through homework, the educator can identify gaps and provide remedial work. While learners can learn from their own mistakes. Agarwal and Gaur (2015) add that the benefits of homework are that students retain class-taught language, reinforce what they have learnt, develop study habits which ultimately allow them to develop as independent learners, and their cognitive understanding of language increases.

5.6.3.3 Role of LSA in learner Motivation

The results of interviews held with orphans and vulnerable learners revealed that while LSAs were expected to conduct sessions on Life Skills education and assist them with homework, it also emerged that orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in LSA programme were motivated. Moe, Pazzaglia, Tressoldi and Toso (2009:260)

point out that motivation refers to a wide range of aspects capable of sustaining, driving and initiating behaviour.

Orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the LSA programme were motivated and motivation contributes to high level of self-confidence, positive attitude towards schoolwork and improvement on academic performance in subjects such as Mathematics. Below is what Amos said about motivation:

“Yes, like.... they are very motivational when they speak to us. They encourage us to focus on our schoolwork” (Amos). The LSAs’ interaction with orphans and vulnerable learners seemed to be a factor behind the high motivation levels.

Below, Mrs Khanyile from School C, was talks about how being part of the LSA programme motivated orphans and vulnerable learners:

“I think being part of the programme, it educates them about the importance of their education because the problem in the society in which we live, children sometimes they come to school, but they don’t understand why they are here. They are just here” (Mrs Khanyile).

Mrs Khanyile further stressed the fact that the LSA programme had a positive impact on the learning of orphans and vulnerable learners, saying: *“I have seen great things, that, it has great impact on learning of children”* (Mrs Khanyile).

However, Mr Gumede, Deputy Principal from School D, said that that there was a need for motivation of orphans and vulnerable learners in his school. He observed:

“Yes, like I am saying some of them are not coming to school. There is that, they do not know why they should go to school. We need to give them the purpose of going to school, and then I have seen that it is utmost important to meet their parents” (Mr Gumede).

Im Mr Gumede’s experience, orphans and vulnerable learners were not motivated, and he hoped that talking to parents and guardians could help to motivate them.

This is important because highly motivated learners can persevere under pressure and challenges and orphans and vulnerable learners usually face a lot of challenges.

If the LSA programme can enhance the motivation of orphans and vulnerable learners, they are likely to persevere in school until they complete Grade 12.

5.6.3.4 LSA as a problem-solving learning mechanism

From the interviews with orphans and vulnerable learners, it was revealed that these learners partly viewed the LSA programme as a problem-solving mechanism. Some orphans and vulnerable learners witnessed problems of their peers being solved by the LSAs. Some orphans and vulnerable learners developed resilience against bullying because the support of LSAs. In the following extract, David from School D explains how a fellow learner's problem was solved through the intervention of the LSA.

“Yes, other children they go to the person representing the LSA here at school when they face challenges, like, I remember a child, when we were in Grade 8. He failed when we were doing Grade 8 but..... He has passed. He went to the LSA and told her secret (problem). Yes, and she (LSA) sorted the issue” (David).

David's words demonstrate how the LSAs solve problems encountered by OVC through the LSA programme. Furthermore, comments about the implementation of the LSA programme were solicited from orphans and vulnerable learners. David's comment was: *“I can comment by saying that the LSAs are helping our school. Yes, it solves problems, eh that just cannot be solved, personal problems.”*

Duduzane indicated that the knowledge gained through LSAs helped him withstand bullying from fellow learners. He said: *“Because I know, if they touch me, I go to the LSA. The LSA will call their parents” (Duduzane).*

The implementation of the LSA programme as problem-solving mechanism was a welcome relief for some of orphans and vulnerable learners who were being bullied at school. Orphans and vulnerable learners are prone to bullying and abuse in schools, and even in communities. According to Motsa and Morejele (2016:38), the negative constructions held about them, and their menial status makes these children susceptible to bullying and ridicule by peers. The presence of LSAs in school assists in creating safe environment.

5.6.4 Challenges in the Implementation of the LSA Programme

This theme addresses the research question 1.4(c) in Chapter One: What are the challenges encountered by teachers and OVC learners in the implementation of LSA programme in Mpumalanga Province. The sub-themes within this major theme are resource provision challenges, inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners, unexpected disruption, inadequate guardian/parental support and time constraints.

5.6.4.1 Inadequate resource provision for effective LSA programme implementation

The results from the interviews with educators and vulnerable learners revealed a need for making adequate resources available for the effective implementation of the LSA programme. Mr Mashaba from School A said: *“I think more resources should be put in the programme for learners, for their betterment in terms of academic and self-concept.”* These comments reveal a need for adequate resources to be made available for the effective implementation of the LSA programme. The effective implementation of the LSA programme in turn, could improve academic performance and self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners.

Ayanda, a girl learner from a child-headed household attached to school A said food should be made available for them when they stayed for afternoon studies. She said: *“If we have afternoon studies, the school should be able to provide food we can eat.”* This suggests that orphans and vulnerable learners go hungry during afternoon studies, and this could contribute to some OVC not attending the afternoon studies. Those who attend may not get the maximum benefit of the lessons because they would be hungry. Mr Mashaba and Ayanda’s submissions, show that the LSA programme depends on schools’ resources for its effective operation.

5.6.4.2 Inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners

Some learners do not take the LSA programme seriously. This was deduced from Ayanda’s response. She observed:

“In the LSA intervention programme the challenge that we are facing is that there are other learners who are not taking the people (LSAs)

who are teaching and helping us serious. They are a help to here at school. They help us with homework, we don't know how to write work given by teachers, and we are happy that they are here and continue helping us."

Duduzile also concurred with Ayanda, saying:

"Children like when we are attending here at school, they run away like, they don't want to attend, and we have to come after them that sort of things, and that like, Sis (LSA) comes to our classes and asks us to attend, but you find many children not attending" (Duduzile).

Similar views and experiences were shared by Mr Madonsela and Mr Gumede from School B and School D respectively. Mr Madonsela said some were not doing well in their schoolwork. He said: *"Some of them are not performing well because the attendance..., is not always good."* Mr Gumede also said some orphans and vulnerable learners were not committed to their schoolwork as they do not do their work properly.

Although there was a view from both educators, and orphans and vulnerable learners that there was inadequate participation in the LSA programme, there were some orphans and vulnerable learners who took full advantage of the LSA programme. These learners were committed to their studies and did their homework as expected.

5.6.4.3 Unexpected disruption of LSA programme due to COVID-19 pandemic

The outbreak and spread of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 disrupted the economy of the country and school programmes. The LSA programme was also negatively affected in many ways. Educators, orphans and vulnerable learners gave testimonies to this fact. One of the protocols for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 pandemic was to maintain a physical distance of at least 1 meter with others, at all the times (DBE, 2020:13). Due to a large number of learners, schools were required to consider one of the three options, namely, platooning, alternating day per week and bi-weekly rotational attendance that would be most suitable to comply with the requirement of physical/social distancing (DBE, 2020:15). Cynthia shared her experience on the negative impact of COVID-19 on the LSA programme saying:

“As I have already said, the programme is a very good programme, but I think we should more often like Noma (LSA) is doing inviting people to teach us about teenage pregnancy, like even this year she wanted, but because of COVID-19 regulations, we’ve got to follow and there is nothing we can do about it” (Cynthia).

Ben agreed with Cynthia saying:

“Yes, there are challenges that we are encountering due to COVID-19. Because others, maybe today is their turn, the Grade 10 and Grade 8, then others attend the following day. We are no longer able to meet and share ideas like before” (Ben).

Celiwe also added:

“Is that due to COVID-19 we are not able to attend well, and that we are coming on certain days at school. We are not coming full-time like Mondays to Fridays. We are not able to attend.”

Similarly, Duduzane said: *“We are no longer able to have, celebrate calendar events, like women’s month” (Duduzane).* Duduzane added: *“We are no longer able to organise events.”* Mrs Khanyile shared a similar experience about the COVID-19 pandemic. She said: *“Since COVID-19, learners do not come to school regularly. They come some of the days, three or twice per week”.* Learners, educators, and support staff were expected to maintain physical distance during the prevalence of COVID-19 (DBE, 2020:13).

5.6.4.4 Time constraints for LSA programme activities

Educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners indicated that time constraint was a challenge to the effective implementation of the LSA programme. Schools do not have fixed times for performing activities related to the LSA programme. Learner Support Agents rely on the afternoon and other time slots available during the day. When Mr Mashaba from School A was asked about challenges, he was facing in the implementation of the LSA programme He said:

“Eh, the problem of time management. We have got learners who stay far away. So, as a result, if they want to go home and their

scholar transport is about to leave. They can actually say, no, you cannot carry on with the interview because I won't have a transport to take me home" (Mr Mashaba).

Mrs Khanyile said something similar:

"Ah..., we got a challenge actually..... of time in that regard. You see. So, some of them, we have challenges of time because some of them are using transport. Because during the day the LSAs cannot access well these learners.

Time constraint was largely because schools did not set time aside to perform activities for the LSA programme as they did with other co-curricular activities.

5.6.4.5 Inadequate guardian/parental support

Educators had divergent experiences on guardian/parental support for orphans and vulnerable learners. In Mrs Khanyile's experience, parents were co-operative and supportive when it came to affairs that affected the education of their children. In regard, Mrs Khanyile stated:

"It is. It is.... because we had problems with the learners who were challenged, and we were able to consult parents. They gave us permission. From there, we were able to consult the relevant stakeholders" (Mrs Khanyile).

However, Mr Gumede, Deputy Principal of School D claimed that orphans and vulnerable learners lack guardian/parental support because they came having done their homework. He said: *"Because I indicated somewhere that they do not do their homework. It means that they do not have someone who can help them at home".* Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) also state that lack of support provided to OVC by their parents/guardians in doing school/homework was cited as a challenge for teachers who were motivated to help them. Support, even if it is just perceived support, for children's education plays important role in children's performance. Wentzel (1998:207) notes that perceived support from parents predicted students' academic goal orientation.

Mrs Khanyile experienced parents' actions being co-operative and supportive because she consulted parents about the education of their children. On the other hand, Mr Gumede never consulted or engage parents. However, Mr Gumede was aware that consulting parents/guardians about education of their children was necessary and important. He said: Thus, Mr Gumede at some point said:

“So meeting their parents, you know, and talking to them. So that they can assist the learners even at home when they are doing homework. I think some of the problems can be solved in that way.”

Therefore, educators should consult and engage guardians/parents about the education of their children. In this regard, Chohan and Khan (2010:18) note that studies indicate that parental support in doing home tasks has significant effects in students' achievement.

5.6.5 The Positive Impact of LSA Programme on Self-concept and Academic Performance

The results of the quantitative strands showed that the LSA programme had no impact on self-concept and its related dimensions of orphans and vulnerable learners except for Mathematics performance (see Section 5.3.7). On the other hand, the results of qualitative strands showed that the LSA programme had a positive impact on dimensions related to self-concept such as self-confidence and attitude towards schoolwork of orphans and vulnerable learners. It also had an impact on Mathematics performance and psychosocial support for orphans and vulnerable learners. The study shows that self-concept is multidimensional in nature (Ghazvini, 2011:1034), hence, a multidimensional self-concept scale was used to measure the dimensions of self-concept in quantitative strands. The qualitative strand the focused on the dimensions that arose from the interactions with participants through the interviews, namely, self-confidence, attitude towards schoolwork, and academic performance. These aspects are presented below.

5.6.5.1 Growth of self-confidence

The LSA programme had a positive impact on self-confidence of orphans and learners. According to Verma (2017:447), self-confidence refers to a person's

perceived ability to tackle situations successfully without leaning on others and to have a positive self-evaluation. Many orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed agreed with this view. For example, Amos explained why his self-confidence had improved saying: *“My confidence has gone up because when they teach, you understand, and the more you understand, and you get passion. You want to know more”* (Amos). Ben concurred and said:

“My confidence has improved. In the past, I had low-esteem, in class as we were studying, I was afraid to raise my hand. Now that I have joined the LSA programme, I am now able to raise my hand, share my ideas, share difficulties in order to get help” (Ben).

Chiliza expressed similar sentiments saying: *“Yes, I am very much confident here because..... even if they say we must present a speech in English. It will be me first.”* Busisiwe was more confident than others. She said: *“My confidence has improved a lot, and I know that if I can get to Grade 12, I will get 100% in Mathematics.”*

Self-confidence plays an important role in the learning of children and learners with high levels of confidence are not afraid to attempt new challenges and difficulty tasks. The learning process requires learners to tackle challenges and difficult tasks head on new, and in this way, enhances learning. Verma (2017:448) observes that self-confident people trust their own abilities, have a general sense of control in their lives, and believe that, within reason, they can do what they wish, plan, and expect. If the LSA programme improves self-confidence of orphans and vulnerable learners, more could be achieved through the LSA programme.

5.6.5.2 Positive attitude towards schoolwork

Findings from the interviews showed that the LSA programme had positive impact on the attitude of orphans and vulnerable learners towards their schoolwork and is essential for better academic performance. Attitudes are directly linked to motivation and provide key information to a better understanding of attitudinal and motivational process (De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro & Peixolo, 2012:3). De Lourdes, Mata, Monteiro and Peixolo (2012:3) note that several aspects of school contexts, such as teacher support, student-student interaction, and the academic and behaviour expectations of the teacher are significantly related to student attitude and behaviour. A common

response amongst orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed was that they had positive attitude towards their studies. In the following extract, Ben explains how the LSA programme changed his attitude towards schoolwork:

“Yes, it changed, because last year I didn’t focus on my schoolwork. We spent time playing soccer. We would focus on schoolwork later. Since I joined the LSA programme, I can now see the need for school. School must come first; others will come later” (Ben).

Busisiwe also said something similar: *“Yes, it does, because I was hating Maths telling myself that it is a subject, I will never be able to do in my life, but since they’ve arrived, now I love and enjoy it, and my mark have improved a great deal.”* Ben concurred saying:

“Yes, it changed a lot, because last year I told myself that-last year I was in Grade 9 and I failed Maths, and then the LSA programme came in and improved a lot in my school, my schoolwork, especially in Maths because they assist us and introduced after school, and morning classes. Sometimes we start at 6:30 and they assist us where we have problems” (Cynthia).

Mr Mashaba also stated: *“Ah, they have improved, and they have a positive attitude.”* It was evident from the responses of orphans and vulnerable learners that the LSA programme resulted in positive attitude towards their schoolwork. Clearly, the implementation of the LSA programme in schools enhanced positive psychosocial environment for teaching and learning. Orphans and vulnerable learners were enjoying and loving to be at school and there was improvement on academic performance in subjects such as Mathematics. This positive attitude will likely enable learners to stay at school until they complete Grade 12 thus achieving one of the objectives of the LSA programme.

5.6.5.3 Improved performance in Mathematics

Results from interviews with educators, orphans and vulnerable learners confirmed the results of the quantitative strand indicated that orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme performed better than those who did not as

indicated in Section 5.3.7 above. In qualitative strands, orphans and vulnerable learners reported that they had improved in performance for Mathematics.

Duduzane from School D said his performance had improved with his marks moving up from 29% to 31%. However, Duduzane showed concern about the level of improvement saying: *“Improvement is on percentage. The level is constant, maybe....”* (Duduzane). Busisiwe also said her performance for Mathematics had improved:

“Yes, because when Mr Nkosi (LSA) was here, he was helping us in the afternoons, and when we were attending Saturdays, he was helping, and I have improved. If you compare my marks in term 1, there is improvement” (Busisiwe).

Celiwe expressed similar sentiments saying: *“Yes, the teacher who is teaching, we are able to go to him if there is something we don’t understand in maths. We are able to go to him. He is ok, and easy to talk to.”*

Cynthia also said:

“A lot. There’s this LSA member, which is Mr Thomo who helps us in Maths, after school classes if any. If you have any problem, he helps us a lot, and then, after school, as I have already said it. He helps us in afternoon classes and morning classes. If you have any problem, you can go and talk to him, he assists you with Maths” (Cynthia).

Mr Mashaba and Mr Gumede confirmed the students’ responses. Mr Mashaba said: *“Yes, to a great extent. We got very, very remarkable improvement in Mathematics and science academics. During Saturdays and afternoons some of them are being helped by the teachers.”*

Gumede concurred saying:

“Yes, there is an improvement in Mathematics, because you know when it to come Mathematics, most learners have a negative concept of that subject, I don’t know why. But because they are keeping time with them. Then, learners are starting to improve, little by little in Mathematics” (Mr Gumede).

Improved Mathematics performance seems linked to the improvements in learners' self-confidence and attitude towards schoolwork as presented in 5.6.5.1 and 5.6.5.2. Therefore, the LSA programme had a positive impact in the academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. Singh, Granville and Dika (2002) note that achievement in Mathematics and science in secondary school is a function of many interrelated variables related to students' ability, attitudes and perceptions, socioeconomic status variables, parent and peer influences and school-related variables,

5.6.6 Recommendations for Redressing Challenges in LSA Programme

Educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners who were interviewed made recommendations to redress some of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme. These recommendations included the training of LSA programme implementers, parental involvement, time management and awareness campaign. These recommendations are discussed below.

5.6.6.1 Training of LSA programme staff

Interviews with educators revealed a need for the training of the LSAs. Most young people contracted to work as LSAs had Grade 12 certificate only. They did not have any working experience or requisite skills to deal with orphans and vulnerable learners. Being contracted as the LSAs gave them an opportunity to gain experience in working with orphans and vulnerable learners. In this regard, Mr Gumede said:

“Eh, you know, I will say, is a wonderful one because what I have noted, as we are with them. It becomes a learning curve to them. As well, because they are taking much from us as teachers that are working with, and then, they are improving their skills as teachers”
(Mr Gumede).

Mr Gumede also recommended that LSAs should be provided with training. Saying: *“Yes, eh, I would say I am happy with the programme, and I would love that they get some sessions. So that they are given, you know some, let me say classes.”*

Although the LSA programme provided an opportunity for young people to gain experience and skills. However, Mr Gumede had a point in recommending training for LSAs, while they gain knowledge, skills and experience in work environment.

5.6.6.2 Mitigating to shortage of time

Time constraint is another challenge encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme as presented in Section 5.6.4.4 above. To mitigate this challenge, participants made several suggestions. For example, on, Duduzane from School D proposed that Saturdays should be used to carry out LSA programme activities:

“In my opinion, I was of the view that we meet on Saturdays.”

(Duduzane), Mrs Khanyile from School C recommended that LSA activities should be accommodated within normal school hours. She said: *“Having time with them does have an impact, but it should be normal hours”* (Mrs Khanyile).

In view of Duduzane and Mrs Khanyile’s proposals, the School Management Teams (SMTs) should structure the schools’ timetable to accommodate LSA programme activities. The SMTs should make sure that as they structure the schools’ timetable, notional time allocated for each subject is not compromise. Alternatively, schools can consider the time allocation for co-curricular activities to allocate LSA programme activities.

5.6.6.3 Guardian/Parental involvement in LSA programme activities

Another challenge was inadequate guardian/parental support in the implementation of the LSA programme as presented in Section 5.6.4.5 above. The Possible reason for inadequate support for the LSA programme was that some of the guardians/parents were not aware of the LSA programme. Mr Madonsela from School B advanced this possible reason why guardians/parents were not supporting the LSA programme. *“I think parents are not aware of this programme”* (Mr Madonsela).

In the interviews with educators, suggestions were presented on how to get guardian/parental support. Mr Madonsela suggested: *“I think under this programme we should inform parents about this programme”* (Mr Madonsela). *“Hopeful, if parents were informed about the LSA programme, parents could have supported the*

programme” (Mr Madonsela). This was evident in School C where parents were consulted about the activities of the LSA programme and parents were co-operative and supportive when it came to affairs that affected education of their children. Mr Gumede, deputy principal from School D also recommended meeting with parents and guardians, saying: *“So meeting their parents, you know, and talking to them. So that can assist the learners even at home when they are doing homework. I think some of the problems can be solved in that way”*.

There is a relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of the child. According to Lara and Saracostti (2019:1), school parental is a key factor for children’s outcomes. Therefore, it is important the School Management Teams ensure that guardians/ parents are involved in programmes that are meant to support their children.

5.6.6.4 LSA programme awareness campaigns

Interviews with educators revealed that not all parents were aware of the LSA programme. In addition, some OVC were not aware of the importance of the LSA programme. This led to inadequate guardian/parental support on the LSA programme on one hand and on the other hand, there was inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners.

Thus, there should be awareness campaigns to advertise the LSA programme to both OVC and their guardians /parents. Awareness campaigns were endorsed by participants’ views. For example, Mr Madonsela said: *“Mm....., I think... learners should be called, and they should....., we should explain to them about this programme”* (Mr Madonsela). This could make OVCs fully participate on the LSA programme. Mr Gumede agreed with Mr Madonsela, saying: *“So meeting their parents, you know, and talking to them”* (Mr Gumede). This could involve guardians/parents and motivate them to support the LSA programme.

Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) obtained similar findings were participants proposed that government, through schools should organise workshops and seminars for parents/guardians to equip them with skills and knowledge on the importance of caring for OVC.

Mr Gumede said in the proposed workshops, orphans and vulnerable learners should be sensitised on the importance of education. He stated: “*Yes, sir. I think among other things we can do, is to sensitise them of the importance of school.*” This idea of sensitising the learners of the importance of education was not limited to Mr Gumede. Mrs Khanyile also said learners should be sensitised about the importance of education. She said:

“I think being part of the programme, it educates them about the importance of their education because the problem in the society in which we live, children sometimes they come to school, but they don’t understand why they are here. They are just here.”

5.6.7 Opportunities in Implementing the LSA Programme in Schools (OVC)

Though there were challenges in implementation of the LSA programme in the four selected schools, there were also opportunities in implementation of the LSA programme. This major theme generated sub-themes as indicated in Table 5.2. These are discussed below.

5.6.7.1 Extra classes

Extra classes were one of the common themes emerged from the interview transcripts. Participants had different views on exactly when extra classes had been conducted or could be conducted. Schools are making efforts to ensure that learners perform well at school. In this regard, Salemat, Esa, Mohd and Baba (2012:111) note that various measures are planned by schools, parents and students themselves to enhance the image and status of the school, in addition to providing a positive learning environment. Salemat, Esa, Mohd and Baba (2012:111) indicate that extra classes is one way to increase the achievement of excellence in students. One of the learners who was interviewed expressed the view that extra classes had improved his academic performance without specifying the exact time of the day when these extra classes were conducted. Ayanda said: *Yes. Because we were doing extra classes.*

Extra classes conducted in morning the early classes and in the afternoon during afterschool hours improved academic performance of the learners. This view was

expressed by Amos who said: *“I was not able to understand some subjects, so she was contributing after classes and early classes, so I was being helped academically, and yes, I have improved. I have seen it, and it has helped me”* (Amos).

Cynthia shared an experience:

“A lot. There’s this LSA member which is Mr Tsepo (LSA) who helps us in Maths. Afterschool classes if any. If you have any problem, he helps us a lot, and then, afterschool, as I have already said it, afterschool classes he helps us, morning classes. If you have any problem, you can go and talk to him, and he assists you with Maths” (Cynthia).

Due to time constraint, extra classes could be conducted on Saturdays. This view was expressed by Amos who said: *“It is possible to meet on Saturdays or form study groups and study subjects like Maths and Physical Science. Those subjects that are giving us difficulties”*.

The same view was shared by Duduzane who said: *“In my own opinion, I was of the view that we meet on Saturdays”*. Similarly, Ayanda’s response shows that she favours Saturdays accommodate extra classes. She said: *“Is that maybe on Saturdays when we are free to come to school and form study group like communicate in order to be able to meet or during. These responses show that extra classes play a critical role in improving the academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. Most importantly orphans and vulnerable learners showed positive attitude towards these extra classes. The presence of LSAs in schools assist a great deal in conducting extra classes as educators are burden with preparation for lessons and marking of learners’ work.*

5.6.7.2 Working with different education stakeholders

Working with diverse stakeholders emerged as the theme from interviews with educator participants. One participant said: *“To the larger extent, it has great impact on their academic because these learners are being helped by teachers and relevant people, even referrals. So actual this helps their academic [performance] (Mr Mashaba). This response suggest that school personnel cannot render all the*

services required by orphans and vulnerable learners that is why referrals are important. Another participant said: *“It is. It is.....Because we had problems with learners who are challenged, and we are able to consult parents. They gave us permission. From there, we were able to consult the relevant stakeholders”* (Mrs Khanyile). These words indicate that outside school stakeholders are essential in providing for the diverse needs of orphans and vulnerable learners. OVC learners also recommended working with other stakeholders. One participant said:

“That they involve social workers, because there are children you can see that they are being abused, and they cannot talk about what happened. So social workers may be involved here at school, be invited at school, so that the children can be free to talk to them. I think that they are afraid to talk to the LSA, because mam used to stay with other people, so they are thinking that she can talk about their issues to other people. I prefer that they should invite the social worker.”
(Celiwe).

Celiwe raises the issue of trust is raised which can be dealt with by involving social workers. Social workers are trained to keep confidential information. Celiwe’s comments indicate that some learners were uncomfortable to disclose critical personal information to teachers for the fear that it might be made public. Another participant added:

“Ok, in the LSA like, she goes out like, invite people who comes and in sit down with us, like pregnancy was high here at school. She was able to invite nurses to come and talk to us, telling us that to fall pregnant at early age is not right, call SAPS because there were many fights here at school. She was able to call the police to tell us that fighting is not right here at school” (Ayanda).

The LSA programme also needs the cooperation of nurses to deal with health-related issues such contraceptives and learner pregnancy; and the police to deal with issues of safety.

Participants’ words achoe Maslow’s motivational theory, all the hierarchy levels of needs should be met for a child to realise his/her full potential. These involve

physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation. The diverse needs emerged from interviews with educators overlapping with the diverse needs which emerged from interviews with OVC learners. These diverse needs are presented in three broad categories, namely, basic needs, psychological needs and self-fulfillment needs.

5.6.7.2.1 Basic needs

Basic needs such as food and school uniforms were mentioned in Section 5.9.2.4. One OVC learner participant indicated the need for safety, because of violence among learners. Referring to the help provided by one LSA, participant said: *'She was able to call the police to tell us that fighting is not right here at school'* (Ayanda). This could imply that there were also safety needs for OVC learners.

5.6.7.2.2 Psychological needs

The psychological needs emerged in Section 5.9, 2.2., such as motivation, need for school, reduced workload and experienced success. In Section 5.10.1.6., need for parental support emerged. One participant said: *"It means that they do not have somebody who can help them at home"* (Mrs Gumede). The need for self-esteem was mentioned Section 5.9.2.3. Similarly, another learner participant said: *"..... In the past, I had low-self-esteem..."* (Amos).

5.6.7.2.3 Self-fulfilment needs

The need to realise one's full potential emerged from the interview with Busisiwe. She said: *"My confidence has improved a lot, and I know that if I can get to Grade 12, I will get 100% in Mathematics"* (Busisiwe).

OVC learners had diverse needs as briefly discussed above. That is why they should be collaboration with other stakeholders to meet all the diverse needs of the OVC learners because the school on its own could not be able to meet all the diverse needs. Bojer et al. (2007:24) note that some schools partner with NGOs, have social workers available, have school feeding schemes for OVC, and collect data on the status of the children. However, most schools currently do not have the capacity to serve as such centres for care and support.

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and discussed the results from the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study. In the quantitative strand, the results from the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale were in line with the results of the previous studies mentioned in Section 5.8.1. There was no significant difference in the self-concept of OVC learners who participated in the LSA programme and those who did not. There was no significant difference in the five dimensions of the self-concept, namely, self-regard, social confidence, academic self-concept, physical appearance and physical abilities. Furthermore, in the quantitative strand, academic performance, in particular in Mathematics, was compared for OVC learners who participated in the LSA programme and those who did not. There finding was a significant difference between OVC learners who participated in the LSA programme and those who did not.

The qualitative strand of the research explored challenges encountered by educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners. In-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data and challenges regarding the implementation of the LSA programme in schools were uncovered. One of the challenges encountered by educators, orphans and vulnerable learners relate to inadequate resource provision for effective LSA programme implementation. The LSA programme relied to school resources for its implementation. The study also found that there was inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners. One of the reasons for inadequate participation in the LSA programme could be that some learners felt that they were stigmatised through the LSA programme (see Section 5.6.1.4). The study also found that there was unexpected disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learners in primary and secondary school had to maintain 1-meter physical distance apart in classes which resulted in schools introducing rotation systems, including platooning, alternating day per week, and bi-weekly rotations. Since learners could not attend school every day, the implementation of the LSA programme in schools was negatively affected. Furthermore, the study discovered that there was time constraint for LSA programme activities because schools didn't set time aside foe LSA programme activities. In addition, the study found that there was inadequate guardian/parental support for the LSA programme because guardians/parents are not properly informed about the

implementation of the LSA programme and what they are expected to do to support the LSA programme.

Despite all these challenges the LSA programme had positive impact several aspects related to teaching and learning of orphans and vulnerable learners. For example, the LSA programme resulted in the improvement of self-confidence of some learners. The LSA programme had a positive impact on attitude towards schoolwork. Moreover, the LSA programme had a positive impact on the Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners.

To mitigate the challenges encountered in implementation of the LSA programme in schools, several recommendations were put forward by participants. It was recommended that the LSA programme staff should undergo training because the staff lacked sufficient expertise and experience to deal with orphans and vulnerable learners. The School Management Teams should also structure the school timetables in such that they accommodate LSA programme activities. Furthermore, participants recommended that parents/guardians should be informed about the LSA programme to get their support through awareness campaigns.

The next chapter discusses the study findings. The discussion is conducted through reference to literature in the light of quantitative data and interviews with participants.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented and analysed the study data. This chapter identifies and discusses the research findings of the study using quantitative data and extract from interviews with reference to literature. The research findings answer the three study research questions of the study as stated in 1.4. of Chapter One, namely, is there a significant difference on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and those who do not? Is there a significant difference in Mathematics performance between orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme versus those who do not? and what are the challenges encountered by teachers and OVC in the implementation of the LSA Programme in Mpumalanga Province?

The discussion is divided into two sections. Firstly, findings from quantitative strand that answer the first two questions are discussed. Secondly, findings from the qualitative part that answer the third question are discussed. A multidimensional self-concept scale was used to measure self-concept of the learner study participants. The results were analysed and presented in Section 5.3.7 of Chapter Five. Mark schedules were used to determine Mathematics performance of the learner participants. The results were analysed and presented in Section 5.3.7 of Chapter Five. The second section discusses the research findings from the qualitative part of the study, and which answers the third question about challenges encountered in the LSA programme. In-depth individual interviews were used to collect qualitative data and the results were presented in themes and analysed in the previous chapter.

6.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS FROM SELF-CONCEPT AND MATHS SCORES

Research hypotheses of the study, namely, there is a significant difference in self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in the LSA programme compared to those who do not, and there is a significant difference in Mathematics

performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme versus those who do not participate in the LSA programme, were subjected to independent sample t-tests to confirm or dispel the hypotheses. This section discusses the results of independent sample t-tests in relation to self-concept and Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners presented in the previous chapter. The discussion is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the self-concept scores of the participants and the second part focuses on Mathematics scores.

6.2.1 Impact of the LSA Programme on Self-concept Scores

My expectation was that there would be a significant difference of the mean scores between orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the Learner Support Agent Programme compared to those who did not. This expectation was premised on the main aim of the Learner Support Agent Programme cited in Section 1.2. of Chapter One, that is, LSAs will support vulnerable children to gain skills, knowledge and confidence to improve academic performance and stay at school until they complete Grade 12 (MDoE, 2015:1). Contrary to my expectation, there was no significant difference between the mean scores for self-concept between orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the Learner Support Agent Programme compared to those who did not. However, this finding was not surprising as it was in line with other studies.

For example, Kumaketch et al., (2009:1038) found no significant effect of peer-group support on self-concept of AIDS orphans when they are to evaluate the effects of the school-based peer-group support intervention combined with periodic somatic health assessment and treatment on the psychosocial wellbeing of AIDS orphans in the Mbarara District of South-Western Uganda.

Similarly, Mueller et al. (2011:57) found no significant difference between those who attended and those who did not on the CDI (depression), the SDQ (emotional and behavioural problems) and the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (self-esteem) (Mueller et al., 2011:59). This was in the study that evaluated the impact of a community-based

art therapy intervention on the psychosocial health of children affected by HIV in South Africa.

Therefore, the findings of the current study should not raise a concern, since the mean scores on the dimension of the self-concept range between 51.48% to 62.63% for the experimental group, while for the control group, the mean scores range between 51.15% to 65.22%. Therefore, no single dimension of the self-concept for both the groups is below 50%. So, I concluded that the level of self-concept for both the groups were at satisfactory level.

6.2.2 Impact of the LSA Programme on Mathematics Scores

For Mathematics, my expectation was that there would be a significant difference of the mean score between orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the Learner Support Agent Programme compared who did not. This expectation was premised on the main aim of the Learner Support Agent Programme as mentioned in Section 5.8.1 above. My expectation was that orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the Learner Support Agent Programme would perform significantly higher than those who did not. This time the result met my expectation, that is, orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the Learner Support Agent Programme perform higher than those who did not. Participants in the experimental group (Mean=41.35, SD=23.83) demonstrates better Mathematics performance compared to the control group (Mean=31.73, SD=14.03). The difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and control group was 9.63%.

To some extent, the finding of the study is partly in line with that of Shann et al. (2013) which evaluated the effectiveness of educational support to orphans and vulnerable children in Tanzania and Uganda. The study evaluated the effectiveness on three variables, namely, absenteeism, dropout and academic performance. The results showed that ever-supported OVC (17.5%) and non-OVC (20.8%) had significant higher pass rate than never-supported (14.6%) (Shann et al., 2013:6). Shann et al. (2013) suggests that orphans and vulnerable learners can perform at par with children who are not orphans and vulnerable, provided they have the necessary support.

6.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

The results of the interviews with educators, orphans and vulnerable learners revolved around seven major findings, namely, participants' conceptualisation of the LSA programme, participants' experiences of the LSA programme, outcomes of the LSA programme versus expectations, challenges encountered in implementing the LSA programme, the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance, recommendations for redressing challenges in the LSA programme and opportunities for utilisation of LSAs. In this section the seven main themes with corresponding sub-themes are discussed using interview extracts with reference to previous studies.

6.3.1 The Impact of the LSA Programme on Self-concept and Academic Performance

The current study evaluated the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance, particularly on Mathematics, of orphans and vulnerable learners from schools in Gert Sibande District. Findings about self-concept (self-confidence), attitude towards schoolwork, and academic performance in Mathematics were obtained after interviewing participants.

6.3.1.1 The LSA programme and learners' self-confidence

Study findings showed that orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme had high level of self-confidence. Self-confidence is one of the dimensions of self-concept as measured by the multidimensional self-concept scale. Lone (2021:561) defines self-confidence as the belief in oneself and his/her abilities. Furthermore, Lone (2021:561) notes that self-confidence being an attribute of perceived self refers to an individual's perceived ability to handle successfully the situations without relying on others and to encourage constructive self-evaluation. A majority of orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the LSA programme indicated that their self-confidence had improved. High level of self-confidence was also observed through the interviews with the learner participants, the manner in which they were expressing themselves.

Self-confidence is pivotal in the learning process of a child. Verma (2017:447) states that the high achievers possess higher level of self-confidence in comparison to low achievers. Kumara and Chamundeswari (2013:106) argue that self-concept and achievement are dynamically interactive and reciprocal, each is mutually reinforcing to the extent that a positive (or negative) change in one facilitates a commensurate change in the other and academic self-concept is more highly correlated with academic achievement than in general self-concept. Furthermore, Kumara and Chamundeswari (2013:106) note that students with high self-concept tend to approach school related tasks with confidence and success of those tasks reinforces this confidence. As it is evident from the extracts of the participants, that through the participation in the LSA programme, their self-confidence has improved, it shows that the LSA programme had a positive impact on self-confidence of orphans and vulnerable learners. One of the objectives of the LSA programme was to empower orphans and vulnerable learners with skills and knowledge in order to improve self-confidence and stay at school until they complete Grade 12, this meant that the implementation of the LSA programme could achieve this objective and so the programme should be enhanced in schools.

6.3.1.2 The LSA programme and positive attitude towards schoolwork

Results of the study showed that the LSA programme had a positive impact on attitude towards schoolwork of orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme. Moe, Pazzaglia, Tressoldi and Toso (2009:260) define attitude towards school as the way a person perceives his/her school attendance. De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto (2012:3) note that attitude towards school is related to both the social and psychological environment, that is, the meaning given by students to social environment which depends, following a socio-cognitive approach, an individual interpretation, academic values and subjective perception. De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto (2012:1) noted that high achievement in Mathematics was a function of many interrelated variables related to students, families, and schools. De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto (2012:1) further argued that among student variables, attitude was regarded as an important/key factor to be taken into account when attempting to understand and explain variability in student performance in Maths. In this regard, four aspects emerged to be critical in improving the OVC

learners' attitude towards schoolwork, namely, motivation, reduced workload, experienced success and LSAs attitude.

The finding of the study shows that orphans and vulnerable learners who attended sessions conducted by LSA s were motivated. Orphans and vulnerable learners needed people (LSAs) who could support and motivate them towards their schoolwork. In their study, Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016;38) noted that motivation was the drive of learning and in the case of orphans, since they lacked basic needs, such as love from parents, good shelter, food and clothes then they would be less motivated to perform well in class.

The results of the study indicate that orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme felt that the workload was reduced by the assistance that they were getting from LSAs at school. The support or assistance provided through the LSA programme to OVC learners reduced the burden of having to deal with difficult work at home alone. In most cases orphans and vulnerable have to deal with house chaos, hence they do not have enough time to deal with their homework. In this regard, Motsa and Morejele (2016:35) noted that orphans and vulnerable learners had additional family responsibilities that competed with their study time.

The support provided to OVC learners by the LSAs helped them to experience success at school environment. The experienced success helped the OVC learners to love and enjoy being at school. According to Ghazvini (2011:1035), academic experiences of success or failure significantly affect the pupil's self-concept and self-image more than vice versa, this being explained by the role of evaluation by significant others. Once orphans and vulnerable learners love and enjoy being at school environment, part of the objective of the LSA programme could be achieved. Part of the objective of the LSA programme was to assist OVC learners to attend school regularly and complete their schooling (DBE, 2020:7).

LSAs attitude had an impact on orphan and vulnerable learners who were being supported by them. The conduct, character and the manner in which the LSAs interacted or handle them played a significant role in changing their attitude towards schoolwork. Positive attitude toward schoolwork could have contributed improve

academic performance of learners in Mathematics as quantitative results of the study reveals. In a nutshell, Mathematics performance of a student is a function of many interrelated factors, namely; the school environment, which includes, teacher support, student-to-student interaction, LSAs' attitude, and academic and behaviour expectations of the teacher; home environment which includes guardian/parental support; and student variables which includes commitment and attitude towards schoolwork (De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro & Peixoto, 2012:1).

6.3.1.3 The LSA and improvement in Mathematics

The current study assessed the impact of the LSA programme on academic performance, particularly in Mathematics of orphans and vulnerable learners. Findings from interviews with educators, orphans and vulnerable learners confirmed the results from quantitative strand as indicated in Section 5.3.7 of Chapter Five that orphans and vulnerable learners who took part In the LSA programme performed higher In Mathematics than those who did not. Most participants who took part in the interviews attested to these findings. De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto (2012:3) argue that students with a higher perception of the learning environment and a more positive perception of their teachers (LSAs) have more positive attitudes towards Mathematics. In this regard, Singh, Granville and Dika (2016:324) note that attitudes towards Mathematics and science are predictive of academic achievement in Mathematics and Science.

Results of the current study show that the LSA programme had a positive effect on Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto (2012:1) argue that high achievement in Mathematics is a function of many interrelated variables related to students, families, and schools (De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro & Peixoto, 2012:1). The implementation of the LSA programme in schools could have therefore enhanced favourable psychological environment in schools for teaching and learning as well as learner performance.

6.3.2 Participants' Conceptualisation of the LSA Programme

Educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners had different conceptualisation of the LSA programme as shown five themes that emerged from the interviews and are

presented in Table 5.10 of Chapter Five. These sub-themes presented the key stakeholders in the LSA programme, LSA programme as poverty mitigation scheme, academic element of LSA programme, de-stigmatisation of OVCs through the LSA programme and application of Inclusive Education through the LSA programme.

6.3.2.1 The key stakeholders in the LSA programme

Study results show that there are four key stakeholders for the implementation of the LSA programme, namely, orphans and vulnerable learners, educators, parents and Learner Support Agents. All participants concurred that learners were key stakeholders of the LSA programme. Orphans and vulnerable learners were key beneficiaries of the LSA programme. Without orphans and vulnerable learners in schools, the LSA programme cannot be properly implemented. The Department of Basic Education acknowledges that it has the responsibility with DOH and DSD for monitoring and management of the impact of HIV, STIs and TB and pregnancy on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and other infected and affected learners, but it is primarily responsible for support of OVC in the Basic Education System (DBE, 2017:12). Through the LSA programme the Department of Basic Education provides support to orphans and vulnerable learners. DBE (2017:12) states that a package of pro-poor programmes will be implemented to mitigate the impact of HIV, STIs and TB as well as any associated vulnerability.

Educator participants indicated that guardians/parents are key stakeholders in the implementation of the LSA programme. The DBE (2020:14) recommend that parents/guardians/caregivers must find out from the school or educator(s) what support services are available to help with their children's additional needs and follow up to see that they receive these. In Chile, Lara and Saracostti (2019:1) found differences in children's academic achievement between parental involvement profiles, indicating that children whose parents have a low involvement have lower academic achievement. Since the LSA programme is meant to support orphans and vulnerable learners in disadvantaged schools, the support from guardians/parents is essential.

Participants indicate that LSAs are key in implementation of the LSA programme. The DBE (2020:6) notes that the Learner Support Agent (LSA) refers to an individual who

is contracted by the department and is placed in a specific school to provide support to vulnerable learners and implement activities relating to care and support. Therefore, LSAs are the key drivers of the programme.

The last key stakeholders that emerged from the interviews were educators. Any programme implemented in schools requires the support of educators. LSAs rely on educators for co-ordination, support and monitoring. Therefore, educators are key in the implementation of the LSA programme. The DBE (2020:13) instructs educators to observe and assess all learners who have experienced a traumatic event to determine their need for psychosocial support.

6.3.2.2 The LSA programme as a poverty mitigation scheme

A common perception held by most orphans and vulnerable children was that the LSA programme was designed to provide care and support in terms of physiological needs such as food and clothing. This perception was driven by the underlying challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable learners. The study found that orphans and vulnerable learners have challenges that relate to survival needs such as food and clothing as indicated in Section 5.6.1.2 of Chapter Five. Several researchers like Mwoma and Pillay (2006:89), Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38), Nayak (2014:13), Motsa and Morojele (2016:35) also found that orphans and vulnerable learners were lacking necessities like food, school uniform and candles to help them with studying, and had additional family responsibilities that competed with their time. I indicated in Section 5.6.1.2 of Chapter Five that most orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme indicated that they approached the LSA at the school when they had a need and they received provisions. Some of learner participants said they seen fellow learners being helped. One learner participant gave a testimony on what he witnessed in relation to care and support. For example, Chiliza a male learner from a single mother household knew who to approach when he runs out of bread. He said: *“Maybe you run out of bread, maybe things are not right at home. You get help. Just talk to the LSA and get food”* (Chiliza). Another example, Duzane a male learner from paternal grandparents he had seen a learner being given clothes. He said: *“For example, there was a child who use to wear a t-shirt even when it was cold, he/she didn’t have a jersey. The LSA got him/her a track-suite. He/she used to wear that track-suite, she never felt cold again”*

(Duduzane). This suggests that orphans and vulnerable children conceptualised the LSA programme as a poverty mitigation scheme.

6.3.2.3 Academic element of the LSA programme

The study investigated the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners in Mathematics. Interviews with educators, orphans and vulnerable learners proved that the LSA programme had an academic enhancement element. This finding is in line with a guide for Learner Support Agents and schools to provide psychosocial support to learners (DBE, 2020:38). LSAs are expected to monitor, check learner books to see that homework is done, if not, consult the educator to provide clarification of task and concepts (DBE, 2020:38). LSAs assisted orphans and vulnerable learners in academic activities, such as homework, study groups and conducting extra classes.

A learner participant explained how extra classes organised by the LSA reduced his burden of doing the work alone. Hirsch (2007:6) claims that very few children from primary school in a more deprived area got help with homework from a parent on a regular basis and some got no help. The study also uncovered that academic support provided by LSAs through extra classes and study groups had positive impact on academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. Several orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme said they had been assisted by LSAs.

Educator participants such as Mr Mashaba Natural Science teacher from School A and Mr Gumede deputy principal from School D. made observations similar to those of learners. Mr Mashaba explained on the impact of the LSA programme on orphans and vulnerable learners' academic performance. He said: "*To the larger extent, it has great impact on their academic because these learners are helped by the teachers and relevant people, and even referrals. So actually, this helps with their academic [performance]*" (Mr Mashaba). The same opinions were shared by Mr Gumede deputy principal from School C who said:

"They are indicating to me that there is much better. They are seeing in terms of the learners' performance, because in most cases they are giving these learners extra classes where they are redoing the

work that was done by the teachers during their periods. So that improves the performance of the learners” (Mr Gumede).

The experiences of educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners show that the LSA programme had positive impact on academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. Orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed indicated that they were coping with their schoolwork because of the support provided by the LSAs. No doubt, the LSA programme had an academic element which was making a positive impact on learning.

6.3.2.4 Stigmatisation through the LSA programme

The study found that orphans and vulnerable learners felt that they were stigmatised through the LSA programme. Thus, some were reluctant to participate in the LSA programme. In this regard, Nginya, Odundo, Ngaruiya, Kayiga and Mariithi (2016:1) note that HIV/AIDS orphans lack basic needs which lead to withdrawal and self-pity and eventually poor performance or dropping out of school. However, it was also evident that there were some learners who were desperate for the services of the LSA programme.

The reluctance of some orphans and vulnerable learners to participate in the LSA programme was also mentioned by educator participants who said some learners questioned why they were the only the ones who were attending because they felt stigmatised through the LSA programme. This finding is in line with the finding from the study conducted by Wood and Goba (2011:282), care and support or orphaned and vulnerable children at school: helping teachers to respond. According to Wood and Goba (20282), one of the biggest problems facing teachers in addressing OVC issues, according to the participants (teachers), was the stigma attached to OVC. Similar finding was made by Mwoma and Pillay (2016:88) that OVC experienced stigma which was challenging for life orientation teachers who could not prevent it from happening.

limo and Kibowen (348), found stigmatisation affected by AIDS. To the question whether stigmatisation affected the participation of learner negatively, 56% of the respondents answered in the affirmative (limo & Kibowen, 2017:349). The DBE

(2017:3) states that every person of school age has the right to Basic Education. Furthermore, the DBE (2017:3) notes that no learner will be denied access to Basic Education based on his or her actual or perceived HIV and/or TB status, or as a result of pregnancy. Therefore, schools should make sure that whatever programme is implemented at school, orphans and vulnerable learners shouldn't feel stigmatised, otherwise they will be discouraged to participate.

6.3.2.5 Application of Inclusive Education through the LSA programme

Study findings indicate the utilisation of the LSA programme did promote Inclusive Education. Inclusive Education requires that a wide spread of educational support services should be created in line with what learners with disabilities or learning barriers require (DBE, 2001:15). Furthermore, DBE (2001:15) notes that this means that learners who require low-intensive support will receive this in ordinary schools and those requiring moderate support will receive this in full-service schools. It is evident in school C that Inclusive Education was applied through the LSA programme. One educator participant from School C explained how they dealt with orphans and vulnerable learners who were experiencing psychological challenges because of home situations.

“Because some of the learners are psychologically challenges, because of situation under which they live at home. Some of the situations they have been through. Some of them that we have encountered, they can't study. you see, but after, we have been successful to involve them in the relevant programme” (Mrs Khanyile).

Mrs Khanyile indicated that she consulted parents/guardians of such learners and asked permission to refer these learners to relevant stakeholders. Consequently, the parents/guardians gave her the permission and the learners were referred to the relevant stakeholders for support/intervention. This is in line with DBE (2020:13) that the educator should engage with the parents/caregivers of children needing psychosocial support on the support provided in class and how parents can support at home to ensure that their children attend school.

The causes of barriers to learning are different, some are physical in nature, and some are psychological in nature. In this regard, DBE (2014:13) states that barriers to learning and development may include:

- Scio-economic aspects (such as lack of access to basic services, poverty and under-development)
- Factors that place learners at risk, for example, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, political violence, HIV and AIDS and other chronic health conditions
- Attitudes
- Inflexible curriculum implementation at schools
- Language and communication
- Inaccessible and unsafe structural environment
- Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services
- Lack of parental recognition and involvement
- Disability
- Lack of human resource development strategies
- Unavailability of accessible learning and teaching support materials and assistive technology.

In the current study, LSAs were actively involved in identifying and reporting orphan and vulnerable learners who were experiencing learning difficulties and other challenges and this shows that Inclusive Education in schools where there was LSA programme was implemented. Inclusive education is based on understanding that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support (DBE, 2006:6). Based on the above discussion with reference to Mrs Khanyile from School C, it is clear that the implementation of the LSA programme promoted the application of Inclusive Education.

6.3.3 Participants' experiences on the LSA programme

The study also explored participants' experiences about the implementation of the LSA programme and based on participants' responses, these findings were made, namely, learner participants' experiences of the LSA programme as self-concept and learning enriching tool for OVCs, educators' experiences of LSA programme as self-concept

empowering tool for OVCs, and educators' views of the LSA programme as an academic empowering tool for OVCs.

6.3.3.1 Learner participants' experiences and views of the LSA programme as self-concept enhancing and learning enrichment tool for OVCs

It was evident from the interviews with orphans and vulnerable learners viewed the LSA programme as empowering tool for self-concept and learning enrichment for OVCs. A majority of respondents indicated that through the LSA programme, they were taught things that were normal not taught at schools. This meant that they were taught things beyond the curriculum in schools. Things that prepared them for life beyond schooling. One male learner participant from a household headed by a single mother indicated that they were taught life skills that they could use when they complete Grade 12. This demonstrates that the LSA programme was a tool that serves as learning enrichment for OVC. This notion regarding the LSA programme as the tool for enrichment was not limited to one learner's view. Similar view was shared by another female learner from a child-headed household.

It was also evident that the LSA programme was viewed as self-concept empowering tool for OVC. The most common dimension of self-concept that emerged from the interviews with learner participants was self-confidence. Verma (2017:448) notes that self-confident people trust their own abilities, have general sense of control in their lives, and believe that, within reason, they will be able to do what they wish, plan, and expect. In this regard, Lone (2021:563) states that self-confidence has significant role in development of academic performance, learning and success. One male learner participant from a household headed by single mother indicated that since he joined the LSA programme his self-confidence had improved. Similar feeling of improved self-confidence was also expressed by a female learner from a household headed by single mother. This female learner went even further to indicate that she would get 100% in Mathematics in Grade 12. In line with the learner participants' feeling, Lone (2021: 563) states that self-confidence act as a predictor of academic performance. Thus, the female learner was hopeful to get 100% in Mathematics in Grade 12. According to Lone (2021:563), better the self-confidence, better the academic performance. Based on the learner participants' views and experiences, firstly, it was concluded that learner participants experienced and viewed the LSA programme as

self-concept empowering tool for OVC, and secondly, the LSA programme was experienced and viewed as learning enrichment tool for OVC. According Lone (2021:563), self-confidence has significant role in development of academic performance, learning and success.

6.3.3.2 Educators' experiences of the LSA programme as self-concept empowering tool for OVC

The study findings indicate that educators had divergent experiences on the notion that the LSA programme was self-concept empowering to for OVC. Two educators experienced the LSA programme as a self-concept empowering tool for OVC, namely, one male natural science teacher from school A and one female Mathematics teacher from school C. However, the male educator felt that more resources should be made available for the programme. The two educators were in agreement that the LSA programme could improve self-concept of OVC.

Mr Gumede who happened to be the deputy principal from school D had a different experience regarding self-concept of OVC. According to him, he could not regard the LSA programme as self-concept empowering tool for OVC. This is what he said: *"Most learners have a negative concept of that subject; I don't know why. But because they are keeping time with them"* (Mr Gumede). In his view, most of the learners had negative self-concept. It was evident that this was exceptional experience for the deputy principal as a majority of learners and educators who were interviewed experienced the LSA programme as self-concept empowering tool for OVC. The discussion in 6.3.2.1 above demonstrated that learner participants experienced the LSA programme as self-concept empowering tool for OVC. In addition, two educators were in agreement on the notion that the LSA programme could be regarded as self-concept empowering tool for OVC.

6.3.3.3 Educators' views on the LSA programme as academic empowering tool for OVC

The finding of the study was that educators viewed the LSA programme as an academic empowering tool for OVC. This was inferred from observations and experiences of some of the educators who were interviewed. Mr Mashaba, a male Natural Science educator from School A, said he had observed great improvement in

academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who were participating in the LSA programme. He said: *“To the larger extent, it has great impact on their academic [performance] because the learners are helped by teachers and relevant people, and referrals. So, actually this helps their academic [performance]”* (Mr Mshaba).

Thus, it was concluded that the LSA programme can have a positive impact on the academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. This is a demonstration that the LSA programme can be regarded as an academic empowering tool for OVC. Mr Gumede, the deputy principal from School D was in agreement with the Natural Science educator from school A that there was great improvement on academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who were participating in the LSA programme. He said: *“They are indicating to me that there is much better. They are seeing in terms of the learners’ performance, because in most cases they are giving these learners extra classes”* (Mr Gumede).

Based on the experiences of the two educators, it is inferred that the LSA programme was viewed by educators as an academic empowering tool for OVC. Orphans and vulnerable learners who were participating in the LSA programme gave testimonies that the LSA programme was empowering them academically. This view was also strengthened by the facts that there were also orphans and vulnerable learners who gave testimonies to the fact that the LSA programme was an empowering tool. This finding collaborates with the finding from the quantitative strand, that is, orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme performed much better in Mathematics than orphans and vulnerable learners who didn’t participate in the LSA programme.

6.3.4 Challenges Encountered in Implementation of the LSA Programme

In this study, one of the focus areas was on challenges expressed by orphans and vulnerable learners, who happened to be participants themselves. Many challenges emerged as themes such as inadequate resource provision for effective LSA programme implementation, inadequate participation by some learners, unexpected disruption of LSA programme due to COVID-19 pandemic, time constraint for LSA

programme activities, and inadequate guardian/parental support. However, it should be noted that participants had diverse views and lived experiences regarding these themes. It is important to note that each participant experienced or observed each challenge differently and had diverse ways to express each challenge.

In Chapter 3 Section 3.3., several challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable learners were discussed from literature review. This included diminishing household income, property dispossession, material needs of orphans, health and nutrition, child-headed households, missed opportunities in education, psychological and emotional well-being. Several researchers such as Kiragu and Chepchieng (2015:736), Baldo-Sangian (2015:385), Mwoma and Pillay (2015:2), Motsa and Morojele (2016:36), Mutiso and Mutie (2018:25), Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38), Thupayagale-Tshweneagae et al. (2010:012), Tefera and Refu (2019:319) alluded to most of the challenges which were also revealed by this study. Most of these live hood challenges are found around poverty that OVC find themselves in after loss of parental figure.

6.3.4.1 Resource provision challenges

The current study revealed that resources were not available for the implementation of the LSA programme. These findings were uncovered through the general comments solicited from one of the educators who were interviewed regarding the implementation of the LSA programme. Mr Mashaba, educator participants made submission that resources should be made available for effective implementation of the LSA programme. *“I think more resources should be put in the programme for learners, for their betterment in terms of academic and self-concept”* (Mr Mashaba). This finding was in line with the study finding conducted by Wood and Goba (2011:281), care and support of orphaned and vulnerable children at school: helping teachers to respond. In the said study, participants (teachers) experienced stress as a result of feeling responsible for responding to the needs of children (Wood & Goba, 2011:281). According to Wood and Goba (2011:281), the participant teachers felt the pain of learners, leading them to try to provide for their needs in the absence of coordinated response from the school.

Furthermore, Ayanda, learner participant indicated that some learners come to school on an empty stomach. This might be one of the reasons why some learners were reluctant to attend afternoon classes. Ayanda made a plea that food should be provided for afternoon studies, saying: *“If we have afternoon studies, the school should be able to provide food we can eat”* (Ayanda). This finding was in with the finding from the study conducted by Mwoma and Pillay (2016:89), educational support for orphans and vulnerable children in primary schools: challenges and interventions. According to Mwoma and Pillay (2016:89), findings revealed that although schools had feeding programs, some OVC lacked meals in their homes compelling them to come to school without having breakfast. Mwoma and Pillay (2016:89) also noted that due to the lack of food at home, some OVC would even come to school when they were sick to have one meal a day provided in school.

On the basis of learner and educator participants’ comments, it is clear that the LSA programme depended on schools’ resources for its implementation. The Department of Basic Education should make resources available to support the implementation of the LSA programme in schools.

6.3.4.2 Inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners

The study investigated the challenges that were encountered by orphans and vulnerable learners in the implementation of the LSA programme. In pursuit of the challenges encountered by OVC, participants were asked what challenges were encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme. The response from Duduzile, female learner from school D indicates that there were learners who declined to participate in activities that relate to LSA programme. *“Children like when we are attending here at school, they run away like, they don’t want to attend, and we have to come after them that sort of things,”* (Duduzile). Inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners was due the fact that some learners didn’t take the LSA programme serious.

Ayanda, a female learner from School A indicated that some learners were not taking the LSA programme serious. : *“In the LSA intervention programme the challenge that we are facing is that there are other learners who are not taking the people (LSAs) who are teaching and helping us seriously (Ayanda).* Similar inference was made from

two educators' views and experiences. Mr Madonsela, the educator from school B indicated that some of the orphans and vulnerable learners were not performing well because of poor attendance. He observed: *“Some of them are not performing well because the attendance..., is not always good”* (Mr Madonseal). While Me Gumede, the deputy principal from School D indicated that some of the orphans and vulnerable learners were not committed to their schoolwork, hence they were not doing their work properly as expected by the educators. *“Some of them are not performing well because the attendance..., is not always good”* (Mr Gumede).

My interpretation on this aspect was that there could be underlying reasons why the LSA programme was not taken serious by some OVC learners. One of the reasons could be that those learners felt that they were discriminated by being given special attention not others. I deduced this interpretation from one of the male Mathematics educators from school B who indicated that some orphans and vulnerable learners were not feeling comfortable to take part in the LSA programme. Similar argument was made by Thupayagale-Tshweneagae et al. (2010:0120). According to Thupayagale-Tshweneagae et al. (2010:012), some participants wrote that some teachers while trying to be kind, would give them unwanted favouritism by giving them special treatment such as asking after their welfare or giving them uniform, money for sports, and other things. *“Although offerings were viewed as generous, the adolescents didn't like being singled out even among the poorer children of the class”* (Thupayagale-Tshweneagae et al., 2010:012).

Inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners was the result of some of the learners not feeling conformable to be part of the LSA programme as alluded to this finding in 5.6.1.4 of Chapter Five. This tendency of unwilling to participate in the LSA programme was also observed by some of the orphans and vulnerable learners themselves. Thus, one of them indicated that those who were not willing to take part in the LSA programme they shouldn't be forced.

6.3.4.3 Unexpected disruption of LSA programme by COVID-19 pandemic

The findings of the study uncovered that there were unexpected interruptions in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools. It was evident from interviews with educators, orphans and vulnerable learners that the implementation of the LSA

programme was disrupted unexpectedly by the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. On the 15 March 2020, President Ramaphosa announced drastic measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 (DBE, nd:3). One of the protocols for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 was that schools should work on the practicality of maintaining physical distance of 1 meter in primary and secondary schools per class (DBE, 2020:22). One female learner from household headed by paternal grandparents attached to school C indicated that they had planned to invite stakeholders to educate them about learner pregnancy, but they were unable due to COVID-19 regulations, they had to comply with COVID-19 protocols.

One of the protocols was that learners should maintain 1 meter apart in primary and secondary schools as alluded above. In order for learners to maintain the physical distance of 1 meter apart in schools, high enrolment schools were required to consider one of the three options, namely, platooning, alternating day per week and bi-weekly rotational attendance that would be most suitable to comply with requirement of physical distancing (DBE, nd:15). DBE (nd:6) notes that platooning refers to a school or system in which classes use limited classroom space in turn on rotational basis, being taught outdoors for the remainder of the school, weather permitting. According to DBE (nd:6), the current experience of platooning is that it places added burden on teachers, support staff and learners. The utilisation of platooning results in a shorter school day that has consequences for depth and scope of learning. "It may lead to added pressure for teachers, such as less time for preparation and marking" (DBE, nd:6).

The second option, that is, alternating days per week, implies that grades/groups of learner's alternate classes/lessons on different days of the week, e.g., alternate days (DBE, nd:9). This option was commonly utilised in schools in Gert Sibande District. For example, one boy learner from single-mother household attached to school B explained that they were no longer attending every day, instead they were alternating with another group for attendance on certain days in a week. Some of orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed indicated that they were no longer able to meet and share ideas, plan and organised calendar events. This frustration was also shared by educators who were part of the interviews.

The third option, bi-weekly rotational attendance, this refers to groups/grades of learners attending school on alternative weeks (DBE, nd:12). DBE (nd:12) caution that this model requires careful planning by teachers to balance teaching time in the classroom and developing appropriate homework activities while learners are not at school for a week. Furthermore, DBE (nd:12) states that teachers must track learner progress carefully to ensure curriculum coverage is achieved. This option lends itself more to the lower grades such as foundation phase and intermediate phase (DBE, nd:12). DBE (nd:12) notes that communication with parents, guardians and caregivers on bi-weekly basis in a rotational attendance model is important and must ensure follow-up-through on the completion of homework activities. Whatever option was chosen, it resulted in unexpected interruption for the implementation of the LSA programme.

6.3.4.4 Time constraints for implementing LSA programme activities

The findings of the study revealed that educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners experienced time constraints regarding the implementation of the LSA programme. Similarly, Mwoma and Pillay (2016:88) stated that the findings from their study indicated that the challenges deterring teachers from supporting OVC include lack of sufficient time for individual attention to OVC. This meant that the schools didn't have enough time to effectively implement the activities related to LSA programme. As mentioned in Section 5.6.4.4 of Chapter Five, schools didn't have fixed time set aside for carrying out activities related to LSA programme. Hence, Learner Support Agents relied heavily on afternoons and other time slots available on the day. When an educator from School C was asked about challenges, he was encountering in implementation of the LSA programme. His response was that they've time constraint. Considering using afternoons was also a challenge as some learners were staying far away and they were using scholar transport. This kind of a response was not limited to one educator but was a concern for other educators as well.

6.3.4.5 Inadequate guardian/parental support

There were divergent views and experiences regarding parental/guardian support on implementation of the LSA programme. On one hand, there was one educator participant who was interviewed who felt that there was inadequate guardian/parental support on implementation of the LSA programme. On the other hand, another

educator who was interviewed felt that there was adequate guardian/parental support on implementation of the LSA programme. Chohan and Khan (2010:15) argue that research studies indicated that socio-economic status is correlated strongly with parents' educational ambition for their children. In this regard, Hirsch (2007:6) indicates that very few children from primary school in a more deprived area got help with homework from a parent on a regular basis and some got no help at all, while children from in better-off area studied had opposite experiences, with parents invariably helping and going extra mile to offer views and opinion to stretch their children's thinking and speaking skills. Chohan and Khan (2010:15) argue that in families with low socio-economic status, majority of the illiterate parents do not have understanding of the requirements of their children's education.

One female Mathematics female educator from School C indicated that parents/guardians/caregivers were co-operative and supportive when it came to matters relating to education of their children. She explained that in her school parents/guardians/caregivers were consulted regarding challenges of their children and permission was given by the said parents/guardians/caregivers. Hence, she felt that parents/guardians/caregivers were co-operative and supportive. While the deputy principal from School D felt that parents/guardians/caregivers were not co-operative and supportive in his school. The difference between the two schools relied on consultation, in School C parents/guardians/caregivers were consulted, thus they were viewed as co-operative and supportive. While in School D parents/guardians/caregivers were not consulted, thus they were seen as non-co-operative and non-supportive.

Similarly, Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) found that lack of support provided to OVC by their parents/guardians in doing school/homework was cited as challenge for teachers who were motivated to help them.

Chohan and Khan (2010:15) note that the pivotal role of parents still continues as it has been recognised by the teachers and parents themselves that they are essential for complete development of the personality and career of their children. In this regard, Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) note that cooperation between teachers and parents/guardians is critical for everyone involved, so as to understand what OVC go

though at home and in school. Lara and Saracostti (2019:2) note that there is also strong support from international research showing the positive influence of parental involvement over academic achievement, as has been demonstrated in a variety of meta-analysis across different populations and educational level.

6.3.5 Outcomes of the LSA Programme and Expectations

Interactions with participants revealed that the implementation of LSA programme raised expectations with regard to empowering learners with Life Skills HIV/AIDS Education and provision of homework assistance. The outcomes of the LSA programme were problem-solving mechanism and motivation.

6.3.5.1 Life Skills HIV/AIDS Education

The findings of the study were that Life Skills were taught through dialogues and open discussion. These dialogues and open discussion were part of the implementation of the LSA programme. One male learner from household headed by a single mother attached to School B explained that they were taught a lot about HIV/AIDS and other STIs. These findings are in line with the National policy on HIV, STIs and TB for Learners, Educators, School Support Staff and Officials in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Basic Education Sector (2017:9). According to DBE (2017:9), the limited time available for Life Skills in the curriculum would be supplemented through the innovative development and the introduction of co-curricular, evidence-based learning modules. From the explanation provided by this male learner, then it was evident that Life Skills was taught through the LSA programme.

Educating learners with Life Skills HIV/AIDS Education was expected as per contractual obligation. DBE (2019:11) states that one of the responsibilities of the LSA is to render care, support and protection to vulnerable learners in line with the implementation of the HIV and AIDS Life Skills Education Programme as well as the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) and Peer Education Programme in schools. The notion that Life Skills HIV/AIDS Education was taught by the LSAs was not limited to the male learner from school B. It was also shared by a girl learner from household headed by single father attached to school C. This girl learner further explained that they were taught that they should respect teachers, abstain from sex

and substance abuse. On the basis of interaction with these learners, it was concluded that Life Skills HIV/AIDS education was implemented through the LSA programme.

Life Skills HIV/AIDS education is important for learners, in particular, orphans and vulnerable learners because the DBE (2017:4) states that every person in the Basic Education Sector should access relevant and factual comprehensive sexuality education, including the prevention of HIV, STIs, TB and pregnancy, as well as the knowledge and skills appropriate to their age, gender, culture, and context, in order that they can make informed decisions about their personal health and safety. According to UNICEF (2003:4), education can leverage the significant improvements in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children by conferring knowledge and skills. Furthermore, UNICEF (2003:4) states that a child who knows how to read, write, do basic arithmetic, and develop Life Skills has a solid foundation for continued learning throughout life.

6.3.5.2 Homework assistance

The study finding revealed that LSAs were expected to provide homework assistance irrespective of the contractual obligation. In terms of a guide for Learner Support Agents, the LSAs were expected to monitor attendance, check learner books to see if homework is done, if not done, find out what challenges are and ask the teacher to provide clarity on task or concept (DBE, 2020:38). Most of the interviews held with OVC, indicate that orphans and vulnerable learners were assisted with homework by LSAs.

One girl learner from child-headed household from School A explained that they have been struggling when they were writing the homework as they were not sure, hence the homework assistance provided by LSAs was appreciated. This notion of appreciating LSAs was not limited to the girl learner from School A, a boy learner from household headed by maternal grandparents attached to School D also shared the same appreciation. One boy learner from household headed by a single father from School C, went further to indicate that homework assistance at school reduces the burden at home as he would not be expected to do homework alone at home. Home assistance provided by LSAs should be appreciated by these learners as the study

conducted by Mwoma and Pillay indicates that orphans and vulnerable learners lack support from parents/guardians when it comes to homework (2015:6).

Some orphans and vulnerable learners do not have someone to help them at home. To make things worse, Motsa and Morejele (2016:35) note that orphans and vulnerable learners had additional family responsibilities that competed with their study time. In concurrence with this argument, Hirsch (2007:6) notes that very few children from primary school in a more deprived area got help with homework from parents on regular basis and some got no help at all. Agarwal and Gour (2015:100) note that homework plays a very good role in student's life. Furthermore, Agarwal and Gour (2015:100) advance that the most common purpose of homework is to have students practice materials already presented in class so as to reinforce learning and facilitate mastery of specific skills.

6.3.5.3 The LSA programme and learner motivation

The study findings indicated that orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme were motivated. Motivation resulted from high level of self-confidence, positive attitude to schoolwork and improvement in academic performance in subjects such as Mathematics. In this regard, De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto (2012:1) note that high achievement in Mathematics is a function of many interrelated variables related to students, family and school. One boy learner from child-headed household from School A indicated that the manner in which the LSAs were speaking to them was motivational, and they were encouraged to focus on their schoolwork. The manner in which the LSAs were interacting with orphans and vulnerable learners seemed to be a factor behind the motivation. This was also observed by female educator from School C that orphans and vulnerable learners who were part of the LSA programme were motivated. The said female educator also stressed the fact that academic performance of these learners had improved.

However, a deputy principal from School D said there was a need for the motivation of orphans and vulnerable learners in his school. The said Deputy Principal felt that his learners were not motivated. He hoped that talking to the parents/guardians/caregivers of orphans and vulnerable learners might help in motivating them.

It is common knowledge that highly motivated learners are able to persevere under pressure and challenges and orphans and vulnerable learners usually face a lot of challenges. If the LSA programme was able to enhance motivation for orphans and vulnerable learners, it meant that they could persevere to be at school until they completed Grade 12 despite the challenges they were facing. Motivation means a wide range of aspects capable of sustaining, driving and initiating behaviour (Moe, Pazzaglia, Tressoldi & Toso, 2009:259).

6.3.5.4 Problem-solving mechanism

An unexpected outcome of the implementation of the LSA programme was the programme became a problem-solving mechanism by orphans and vulnerable learners. This might be due to the fact that some orphans and vulnerable learners face a lot of challenges. It was evident from the interviews with orphans and vulnerable learners who were participating in the LSA programme that whenever they encountered problems or challenges, the first point of call was to approach the LSA, irrespective of the nature of the problem or challenge. Several studies such as Baldo-Sngian (2015:384), Kiragu and Chepchieng (2016:38), Motsa and Morejele (2016:38), Stover, Bollinger, Walker and Monasch (2009:22) indicate that orphans and vulnerable learners face a lot of challenges ranging from the basic needs for survival, such as food and health care, lack of parental support, emotional problems like low self-esteem and self-pity, high labour demand at home, stigmatisation at school because of lack of school uniform, bullying and ridiculing by peers.

One boy learner from household headed by maternal grandparents from School D indicated that they use to approach the LSA whenever they had challenges or problems, even personal problems that couldn't be discussed with any person. This shows the level of trust that orphans and vulnerable learners had about the LSAs. The level of trust was also demonstrated by a girl learner from the household headed by a single-mother, where she indicated that some learners had serious problems that couldn't be discussed with educators, but it could be easier to discuss with somebody they trust, like LSA.

It also emerged from interviews with orphans and vulnerable learners that when they had challenges regarding the basic needs for survival such as food and school

uniform, they also approached the LSA. A majority of orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed confirmed that they were given food parcels, and, in some instance, they were given school uniform. Therefore, it was evident that a majority of orphans and vulnerable learners benefited from the LSA programme.

The implementation of the LSA programme curbed levels of learner pregnancy and conflicts in schools. A girl learner from a single-mother household from School B explained that learner pregnancy had decreased in her due to the fact that the LSA invited a health professional who came and educated them about learner pregnancy. The said health professional taught them that it was risky for them to get pregnant at a young age. In addition, policemen were invited to her school to deal with infighting, because there was a high rate of infighting. Furthermore, the incidents of bullying had decreased due to the presence of the LSA.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN THE LSA PROGRAMME

Study findings of identified four recommendations that can be implemented to address challenges faced in the implementation of the LSA programme. The four recommendations are: training of LSAs, parental involvement, time management, and awareness campaigns.

6.4.1 Training of LSA Implementers

One of the challenges encountered in the implementation of LSA programme was that LSAs were insufficiently trained and lacked experience of working with orphans and vulnerable learners. Though LSAs are expected to provide psychosocial support for OVC, no knowledge and special skills are required for one to be contracted as an LSA. One of the objectives of LSA programme is to create job opportunities for young people between the ages of 18 and 35 and for them to acquire knowledge and work experience. Thus, the DBE (2019:8) states that the employee will be employed as a Learner Support Agent participant with the purpose of acquiring the necessary skills.

Despite the purpose outlined on the LSA's contract, a deputy principal from School D had identified a need for the training of LSAs. Being part of the School Management Team as a deputy principal, it was easy to identify gaps. This is not surprising as the minimum requirement to be contracted as LSA was Grade 12. Not much can be expected from a young person with Grade 12 as minimum qualification. Therefore, the deputy principal had a point to recommend training for LSAs. This finding for recommendation of training of LSAs is in line with findings which were made for teachers. In the study conducted by Mwoma and Pillay (2015:5), found that, lack of expertise and training of educators in Life Orientation were cited as challenges, limiting educators from providing psychosocial support for OVC. In mitigating these challenges, training of all teachers in Life Orientation and basic counselling skills was recommended as a strategy that could be utilised to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to identify and refer OVC to the right services (2015:5). If educators who were trained for years to be educators had challenges in providing psychosocial support for OVC, therefore, LSAs should be provided with training as recommended by participants.

6.4.2 LSA Programme Activities Time Schedule

To mitigate time constraints experienced by educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners in the implementation of LSA programme, submissions were put forward by participants. Time constraint was the result of the fact that schools didn't put aside time for activities related to LSA programme as mentioned in Section 5.6.4.4 of Chapter Five. Most orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed recommended afternoons to be used for LSA programme activities. Some even went further and recommended Saturdays. For example, a boy learner from single-mother household from School B indicated that it was possible for them to meet on Saturdays and discuss subjects which were giving them difficulties. Similar submission was made by a boy learner from household headed by paternal grandparents from School B.

Though afternoons were used for activities related to LSA programme, it had its own weaknesses. One boy learner from household headed by maternal grandparents from School D indicated that using afternoon (afterschool) had its own challenges as some

learners could be rushing for scholar transport. This weakness was also identified by the natural science educator attached to school A. Furthermore, a female Mathematics educator attached to school C also made submission that time should be made available for the LSA programme, but it should be within working hours. Considering all the submissions and weakness identified in using afternoons, the best option is to consider the submission made by the female Mathematics educator from School C. In this regard, School Management Teams (SMTs) of schools should structure schools' timetable in such a way that it will accommodate LSA programme. When structuring schools' timetables, STMTs must make sure that notion time allocated for each subject is not compromised.

6.4.3 Guardian/Parental Involvement

To mitigate the challenge of inadequate guardian/parental involvement, submissions were made on how they can be involved in affairs their children's education. Guardian/parental involvement is key for academic achievement of a child. International research has shown that guardian/parental involvement has positive influence on academic achievement of a child (Lara & Saracostti, 2019:2). In this regard, cooperation between teachers and guardians/parents is essential as to know what challenges the OVC go through at home and at school (Mwoma & Pillay, 2015:6). For example, one male Mathematics educator from School B made a submission that parents/guardians should be informed about the LSA programme. According to this educator, if parents/guardians/caregivers were informed about the programme, parents/guardians/caregivers could support the LSA programme. Informing guardians/parents of OVC is important, informed guardians/parents/caregivers do support programme that benefit their children's education. A female Mathematics educator from School C proved that when parents/guardians were consulted did support their children. She said in her school, parents were consulted, hence they were co-operative and supportive. A deputy principal from School D, was also aware that if guardians/parents were informed of the LSA programme, they could have supported the programme. Chohan and Khan (2010:23) found that parental support in doing homework and other academic activities has significant impact on the academic performance as well as on the development of self-concept of children.

Therefore, SMTs and teachers should encourage guardians/parents to support the LSA programme.

6.4.4 Awareness Campaign

The study findings established challenges of inadequate participation by orphans and vulnerable learners in the LSA programme on one hand, on the other hand, the inadequate parental/guardian involvement on matters of the LSA programme. To mitigate these challenges, participants suggested. OVC and guardian/parental should be fully involved in the programme. This implies that awareness campaigns can be used for both learners and parents/guardians.

In this regard the deputy principal from School D made his submission on what to be done to get guardian/parental support on the LSA programme. According to him, he felt that meeting the parents/guardians of orphans and vulnerable learners, they might support the programme. As indicated in Section 5.6.6.4 of Chapter Five, awareness campaign can be structured in such a way that it caters both guardians/parents and learners. On one hand it must appeal to guardians/parents to support the LSA programme, on the other hand, encourage the learners to participate on the LSA programme and realised the value of education. Participants in the study conducted by Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) made similar submission. In order to mitigate inadequate parental/guardian involvement, participants proposed that government through schools organised workshops and seminars for parents/guardians with a view to equip them with knowledge and skills on the importance of caring for OVC (Mwoma & Pillay, 2015:6). The said workshops and seminars would also provide parents/guardians with an opportunity to understand the reasons why OVC should be supported, to complete schooling without dropping out of school to attain their full potential (Mwoma & Pilay, 2015:6).

In the same awareness campaign, either in a form of workshop or seminar, orphans and vulnerable learners should be sensitised on the importance of education. In this regard, the deputy principal from school D proposed that orphans and vulnerable learners should be sensitised of the importance of education. This idea of sensitising the learners of the importance of education was not limited to the deputy principal. It

was also supported by the female educator from school C who indicated that some of the orphans and vulnerable learners come to school without knowing the purpose of coming to school. So, she felt that they should be sensitised of the importance of school. On the basis of these submissions, awareness campaign or advocacy campaign should be conducted to get buy in of stakeholders in order to support the programme.

6.5 OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LSA PROGRAMME

Though there were challenges in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools, there were also opportunities. Schools were ideally suited to provide care and support for orphans and vulnerable learners. Bojer et al. (2007:24) argues that because practically every community has a school, finding a solution for schools to become more functional as centres of services and care has a high potential of success.

6.5.1 Extra Classes

The study findings revealed that extra classes helped to improve academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. Three educators out of four who were interviewed shared the lived experiences that extra classes helped to improved academic performance of the OVC learners. One of the male natural science educators attached to School A who was part of the interviews indicated that there was great improvement in academic performance, particularly in Mathematics and Science subjects. According to this educator, this was the results of extra classes which were conducted in the afternoons and Saturdays. This claim was collaborated by a female Mathematics educator attached to School C and the deputy principal attached to School D.

The finding that extra classes could improve academic performance was in line with a study conducted by Salamat, Esa, Salleh and Baba (2012:111). Salemat et al. (2012:111), conducted the study to evaluate extra classes' effectiveness at Smart Secondary School, Johor. Research findings indicated that additional classes could improve performance in learning, and it was extended by the students' excellence in

tests (Salamat et al., 2012:111). However, extra classes were not supported by some researchers. Santhi (2011:935) and Fernanda (2019:2) argued that extra classes were creating a lot of stress and tension to the students and teachers who have to arrive early in the morning and leave late in the evening. Santhi (2011:935) further argued that this issue has led to lot of problems like resignation of teachers and students being overburden. Santhi (2011:936) noted that the charge had been made that some teachers “hold back” in their teaching duties during regular school hours because they have extra classes or time to complete the syllabus.

Despite the critics levelled against extra classes, they are an essential part of the schooling system because children do not learn at the same rate and have different level of understanding. Slow ones, need extra time to master content and achieve their goal or target (Santhi, 2011:936).

6.5.2 Working with all Stakeholders

The study finding shows that it was essential to work with various stakeholders to provide for the diverse needs of orphans and vulnerable learners. This is in line with the DBE’s (2020:17) directive that the LSA should establish and manage networks with local stakeholders that support the provision of care and support for learners. This finding was collaborated by educators, orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the interviews. One female educator from School C said parents/guardians gave her permission to consult relevant stakeholders to assist learners with diverse needs. Two girl learners, one from School A and one from School C indicated that outside stakeholders, such as social workers, nurses and policemen were invited to their schools to cater for the diverse needs of learners.

Maslow’s motivational theory presented in Chapter Two indicate that for the child to realise his/her full potential, all the hierarchy of needs should be met. From the interviews with educator, orphans and vulnerable learners, diverse needs were raised which correspond with the hierarchy of needs identified in Maslow’s motivational theory. These needs are catalogued into three broad categories, namely, basic needs, psychosocial needs and self-fulfillment needs.

6.5.2.1 Basic needs of OVC

Most orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed indicated that when they were in need of basic needs for survival such as food or school uniform, they consulted the LSA. For example, a boy learner from a single-father household from School C indicated that if you have a need such as bread you could consult the LSA, the LSA would provide you with food. In concurrence with this boy learner, another girl learner from child-headed household made submission that food should be provided for afternoon classes. According to DBE (2020:38), one of the LSA's roles is to monitor whether the vulnerable learners have access to at least two meals per day including the school meal. Another girl learner from paternal grandparent's household from School C said she had been given a jersey by an LSA.

It was also uncovered that some learners had concern with regard to safety issues in their schools. In one of the interviews with one of orphans and vulnerable learners indicated that at some points they were fights amongst learners. This girl learner from maternal grandparents' household indicated that the LSA in collaboration with School Based Support Team in her school invited policemen. For school safety, DBE (2013:18) mandates schools to have at least one form of safety and security measures, such burglar proofing to all windows sections on all ground floor building that are accessible by learners and educators, a security guard arrangement, or alarm system linked to rapid armed response.

6.5.2.2 OVC's psychosocial needs

Psychosocial needs identified among orphan and vulnerable learners included motivation, low-esteem, workload, lack of parental support, and personal problems. For example, a boy learner from child-headed household attached to school A indicated that they were motivated by LSAs through their interactions. A boy learner from single-mother household from School B indicated that he had low-esteem, but after joining the LSA programme his confidence had improved. Another boy learner from a single-father household from School C indicated that he felt that his school load had been reduced through the assistance of the LSA. Lastly, a girl learner from a single-father household from School B indicated that some of their personal problems required the services of someone they could trust such as a social worker.

6.5.2.3 OVC's Self-fulfilment needs

The study also uncovered self-fulfillment needs among orphans and vulnerable learners. For example, a girl learner from a single-mother household from School B indicated that she would get 100% in Mathematics when she gets to Grade 12 because her confidence levels had been boosted by the LSA programme.

In view of all the diverse needs raised by educators, orphans and vulnerable learners, schools should collaborate with other stakeholders. No school can satisfy all learners' needs on its own no matter how it is well-resourced. Thus, the DBE (2020:15) recommends that the school should create a network of support around the school, including parents, Non-Governmental Organisations, South African Police Service and other government departments, as well as private businesses around the school.

6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the results from the quantitative and qualitative strand sections of the study. In quantitative strand, the results from the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale were in line with those from previous studies mentioned in Section 5.8.1 of Chapter Five. There was no significant difference on self-concept between OVC learners who participated on the LSA programme and those who did not. There was no significant difference on the five dimensions of the self-concept, namely, self-regard, social confidence, academic self-concept, physical appearance and physical abilities.

In the quantitative strand, academic performance, in particular Mathematic, was compared for OVC learners who participated in the LSA programme and those who did not. There was a significant difference between OVC learners who participated in the LSA programme and those who did not. Orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme performed better than those who did not.

The qualitative strand of the study explored the lived experiences of educators, orphans and vulnerable learners in terms of challenges encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools. Study findings of the study show that orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme had high

levels of confidence and had improved in Mathematics performance. In addition, they had positive attitude towards their schoolwork

The study findings also revealed that educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme regard parents, learners, educators, and Learner Support Agents as key stakeholders of the LSA programme. Most orphans and vulnerable learners said the LSA programme entails an academic element and life skills HIV/AIDS education component. Nevertheless, there were those who said the LSA programme stigmatised by targeting orphans and vulnerable learners.

The study also uncovered several challenges encountered by educators, orphans and vulnerable learners in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools. Amongst other challenges, include inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some learners, unexpected disruption, time constraints, and inadequate parental/guardian support.

To mitigate the identified challenges, several submissions and proposals were made by educators, orphans and vulnerable learners who were interviewed. These include training of LSAs, time management, guardian/parental involvement, and awareness campaigns. Lastly, the study revealed opportunities in the implementation of the LSA programme, such as extra classes and networking with stakeholders. The next chapter is the conclusion. It highlights the study limitations and makes recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the study and compared them with studies mentioned in the literature review. This chapter concludes the study by presenting the summary of the findings of the study. The summary of findings is divided into two parts. The first part highlights the quantitative findings related to self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. The second part presents highlights on the findings from qualitative strand which involved the exploration of experiences and views were of participants through individual in-depth interviews. The chapter also presents the limitations of the study and makes recommendations based on the study findings.

7.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN THE FINDINGS

The assessed the impact of the LSA intervention programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners from schools in Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The summary of findings is presented below following data collection through the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale, Mathematics mark sheets, and in-depth individual interviews with educators, orphans and vulnerable learners.

7.2.1 Findings from the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale

The Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale was used to measure the self-concept of 40 orphans and vulnerable learners (20 males & 20 females) from experimental group and 40 orphans and vulnerable learners (20 males & 20 females) from control group. The Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale measured the self-concept of the participants on five dimensions, namely, self-regard, social confidence, academic self-concept, physical appearance and physical abilities.

The null hypothesis: There was no significant difference on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme as compared to those who did not. Five sub-null hypotheses were formulated based on the five dimensions as measured by the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale as follow:

- There was no significant difference on self-regard between the experimental group (Group 1) and the control group (Group 0).
- There was no significant difference on social confidence between experimental group (Group 1) and control group (Group 0).
- There was no significant difference on academic self-concept between the experimental group (Group 1) and control group (Group 0).
- There was no significant difference on physical appearance between the experimental group (Group 1) and control group (Group 0).
- There was no significant difference on physical abilities between the experimental group (Group 1) and control group (Group 0).

After collecting, scoring and capturing the data, data was subjected to the linear regression model and independent sample t-test. The participants in experimental group had (Mean=62.63, SD=15.38) compared to participants in the control group (Mean=65.22, SD=16.12) and demonstrated no significant difference in self-regards dimension of self-concept, $t(78) = -.738, p = 0.463$. There are no significant differences between the experimental group and the control group on the rest of the dimensions of the self-concept, namely, social confidence, academic self-concept, physical appearance and physical abilities. Therefore, there was no significant difference on the self-concept between orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme and those orphans and vulnerable learners who did not.

7.2.2 Finding from Mathematics Mark Schedules

Mathematics scores of the participants both from the experimental group and the control group were extracted from Mathematics mark schedules of the eight schools. Mathematics mark schedules for the experimental group and the control group were compiled into a composite schedule marked Appendix H and the Mathematics scores was subjected to statistical analysis using linear progression model independent sample t-test.

The research hypothesis was that there was a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme versus those who did not. The null hypothesis thereof was that there was no significant difference in Mathematics performance between the experimental and control groups. Participants of the experimental group had a Mean=41.35, SD=23.83 compared to the participants of the control group a Mean=31.73, SD=14.03 demonstrated significantly higher Maths performance, $t(78) = 2.2, p = .031$.

Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme versus those who did not. In terms of direction in Mathematics performance, orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme performed higher than those who did not.

7.2.3 Findings from In-depth Individual Interviews with Participants

The qualitative strand of the study explored the lived experiences and views of educators, orphans and vulnerable learners from schools in Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga Province. Individual in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data and findings relate to several topics, namely, the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance, participants' conceptualisation of the LSA programme, participants' experiences on the LSA programme, challenges encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme, outcomes of the LSA programme and expectations, recommendations for redressing challenges in the LSA programme, opportunities in the implementation of the LSA programme.

7.2.3.1 The impact of the LSA programme on the self-concept and academic performance

The study investigated the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners from four schools in Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga. The findings show that orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the LSA programme had better self-concept. Thus, the LSA programme had positive impact on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners, though this finding differed to the findings from quantitative strand. Kumari and

Chamundeswari (2013:105) claim that there is a significant relationship and positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of students at the higher secondary level. Furthermore, Kumari and Chamundeswari (2013:106) argue that students with high level of self-concept tend to approach school related tasks with confidence and the success of those tasks reinforces this confidence. Orphans and vulnerable learners in the current study demonstrated high level of self-confidence. According to Verma (2017:447), self-confident person perceives himself to be socially competent, emotionally mature, intellectually adequate, successful, satisfied, decisive, optimistic, independent, self-reliant, self-assured, forward moving, fairly assertive and having leadership qualities.

Another dominant dimension of the self-concept that emerged from the learner participants was positive attitude towards schoolwork. Most of orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme indicated that they had positive attitude towards their schoolwork. De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto, (2012:1) argue that attitude is a function of many interrelated variables related to students, family and school (De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro & Peixoto, 2012:1). Moe, Pazzaglia, Tressoldi and Toso (2009:271) note that attitude towards school is related to both the school and psychological environment, that is, the meaning given by the students to the social environment which depends, following a socio-cognitive approach, individual interpretation, academic values and subjective perceptions. In the current study, four variables played part in shaping their attitude towards schoolwork. These are motivation, reduced workload, experienced success and LSAs' attitude.

Participants were motivated by LSAs while they were attending their sessions. Homework assistance provided by LSAs helped to reduce the workload of some of orphans and vulnerable learners as they faced other family responsibilities that compete with their study time at home (Motsa & Morejele, 2016:35). The psychosocial support provided through the LSA programme helped orphans and vulnerable learners to experience success in their academic tasks. This led to change of attitude towards schoolwork. Lastly, the attitude or relationship between LSAs and the OVC learners played a role as well because OVC learners described LSAs patient, open and down to earth individuals.

The study also found that there was improvement on Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme. Most orphan and vulnerable learners who took part in the LSA programme said that their performance on Mathematics had improved. This finding was in line with the finding of the quantitative strand of research. Students with a high perception of learning environment and a more positive of their teachers (LSAs) have more positive attitude towards Mathematics (De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro & Peixoto, 2013:3). Attitude towards Mathematics and science were shown to be predictive of academic achievement in Mathematics and science (Singh, Grandville & Dika, 2016:324). The implementation of the LSA programme had an impact on Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners.

7.2.3.2 Participants' conceptualisation of the LSA programme

Educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners who took part in the interviews viewed learners, educators, parents/guardians/caregivers, and LSAs as key stakeholders of the LSA programme. OVC were viewed as the main beneficiaries of the LSA programme. Guardian/parental support was essential for the implementation of the LSA programme. Some services from the LSA programme require authorisation of parents/guardians/caregivers, hence their support is crucial. The DBE (2020:14) mandates parents/guardians/caregivers to find out from the school or educator(s) what support services are available to help their children's additional needs and follow up to see that they receive these. Educators were responsible for co-ordination, support and supervision of Learner Support Agents. Learner Support agents were the key drivers of the LSA programme.

Learner participants saw the LSA programme as a poverty mitigation scheme. This was because orphans and vulnerable learners had a variety of needs, ranging from those things necessary for survival, such as food and health care, to those interventions that will provide a better quality of life in the future such as education, psychosocial support and economic self-sufficiency (Stover, Bollinger, Walker & Monasch, 2007:22). Most orphans and vulnerable learners said they had benefitted from the LSA programme by receiving food and school uniforms.

The LSA programme also entailed an academic element because LSAs LSAs provided academic support through extra classes and assistance with homework. However, a few OVC felt stigmatised through the LSA programme.

The study findings also revealed that Inclusive Education was achieved through the LSA programme. Orphans and vulnerable learners with learning barriers were identified and provided with the necessary psychosocial support and where necessary they were referred to the relevant service providers, or alternatively the relevant service provider was invited to the school. Inclusive Education is based on the understanding that all children and youth can learn as long as they are provided with the necessary support (DBE, 2006:6).

7.2.3.3 Participants' experiences on the LSA programme

The learner participants viewed the LSA programme as self-concept enhancing and learning enrichment tool for OVC. Most orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme indicated that their self-confidence had improved. Verma (2017:448) argues that self-confident learners trust their own abilities, and believe that, with reason, they will be able to do what they wish, plan, and expect (Verma, 2017:448). In this regard, Lone (2021:563) notes that self-confidence has significance role in development of academic performance, learning and success. Due to high-level of self-confidence that orphans and vulnerable learners had, one female learner said she will get 100% on Mathematics in Grade 12. Orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme indicated that they were taught things that prepare them for life which went beyond the schooling.

Educator participants had divergent views regarding the LSA as self-concept empowering tool for OVC. Two educators, one male and one female regard the LSA programme as self-concept empowering tool for OVC. However, one educator indicated that some orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme had negative self-concept.

7.2.3.4 Challenges encountered in implementation of the LSA programme

The study also explores the challenges encountered by educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners in the implementation of the LSA programme in school from Gert

Sibande District. There were indeed challenges of resource provision. Resources were not adequate for the implementation of the LSA programme. Wood and Goba (2011:281) state that teacher participants in their study experienced stress as a result of feeling responsible for responding to the needs of children.

The study also found that some orphans and vulnerable learners went to school hungry empty, and this explains why some orphans and vulnerable learners were reluctant to attend after school classes. One learner pleaded for food to be provided for afternoon classes. Similarly, Mwoma and Pillay (2016:89) found that although had feeding programs, some OVC lacked meals in their homes compelling them to come to school without having breakfast. It is clear that the LSA programme depends on schools' resources for its implementation.

The study also found that there was inadequate participation in the LSA programme by some of the learners because some orphans and vulnerable learners did not take the LSA programme seriously. This notion of not taking the LSA programme serious was shared by learner and educator participants. Some orphans and vulnerable learners felt being discriminated and targeted through the LSA programme. Thupayagale-Tshweneagale et al, (2010:0121) made similar finding, that is, some participants said that some teachers while trying to be kind, would give them unwanted favouritism by giving them special treatment such as asking their welfare or giving them uniform, money for sport and other things.

The study also uncovered unexpected interruption in the implementation of the LSA programme. The implementation of the LSA programme was interrupted by the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic. Educators, orphans and vulnerable learners pointed out that the implementation of the LSA programme was disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic. Educators, orphans and vulnerable learners indicated that there were no longer attending school every day in a week, as schools introduced the rotational system that required physical distancing. According to DBE (nd:15) high enrolment schools were required to consider one of the three options, namely, platooning, alternating day per week and bi-weekly rotational attendance that would be most suitable to comply with the requirement of physical distancing. Platooning refers to a school or system in which classes use limited classroom space in turn on a rotational

basis, being taught outdoors for the remainder of the school, weather permitting (DBE, nd:6). Alternating days per week implies that grades/groups of learner's alternate classes/lessons on different days of the week (DBE, nd: 9). The third option, bi-weekly rotational attendance, this meant that groups/grades of learners attending school on alternate week (DBE, nd:12). Whatever option was chosen, school programmes were interrupted, including the implementation of the LSA programme.

The study found that educators, orphans and vulnerable learners faced time constraint regarding the implementation of the LSA programme. Similarly, Mwoma and Pillay (2016:88) indicated that the challenges deterring teachers from supporting OVC included lack of sufficient time for individual attention to OVC. In the current study, schools did not have sufficient time to effectively implement the LSA programme. The LSAs relied heavily on afternoons and other time slots available on the day. Schools did not have a timetable for the implementation of the LSA programme.

The study found that educators had divergent views on guardian/parental support on the implementation of the LSA programme in schools. It was found that one educator who was interviewed felt that there was inadequate guardian/parental support on the implementation of the LSA programme on one hand. On the other hand, another educator felt that parents/guardians were co-operative and supportive in her school. The difference between the two educators depended on consultation. The first educator assumed that guardians/parents were not supportive without having consulted them. The later educator felt that guardians/parents were co-operative and supportive because at some point she consulted the guardians/parents. The finding in the study, that is, inadequate guardian/parental support on the LSA programme, was in line with the previous study conducted by Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6). The study found that lack of support provided to OVC by their guardians and parents in doing school/homework was cited as challenges for teachers who were motivated to help them. Chohan and Khan (2010:15) argue that the pivotal role of parents still continues as it has been recognised by the teachers and parents themselves that they are essential for complete development of the personality and career of their children. Thus, Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) advise that cooperation between teachers and parents/guardians is critical for everyone involved, so as to understand what OVC go through at home and in school.

7.2.3.5 Outcomes of LSA programme and expectations

Despite the challenges found in the study regarding the implementation of the LSA programme, positive outcomes and expectations were noted. For example, Life Skills HIV and AIDS Education was incorporated in the implementation of the LSA programme. In this regard, the DBE (2017:9) states that the limited time available for Life Skills in the curriculum will be supplemented through the innovative development and introduction of co-curricular, evidence-based learning modules. The implementation of the Life Skills HIV and AIDS Education through the LSA programme was expected as per contractual obligation of the LSAs (DBE, 2019:11) because one of the responsibilities of the LSA is to render care, support and protection to vulnerable children. I noted that Life Skills HIV and AIDS Education is important for orphans and vulnerable learners and UNICEF (2003:4) states that education can leverage the significant improvement in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children by conferring knowledge and skills. A child who knows how to read, write and do basic Arithmetic, and develop life skills has a solid foundation for continued learning throughout life (UNICEF, 2003:4).

Orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the LSA programme were assisted with homework. A guide for Learner Support Agents and Schools on Providing Psychosocial Support to Learners requires that the LSA to monitor attendance, check learner books to see if homework is done, if not done, find out what challenges are and ask the teacher to assist with clarifying the tasks and concepts as needed (DBE, 2020:38). The LSAs went beyond the call of duty by providing homework assistance to orphans and vulnerable learners. The homework assistance provided by LSAs reduced the burden of learners doing homework alone. Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) found that orphans and vulnerable learners lack support from parents/guardians when it came to homework. Homework plays a critical role in student's life (Agarwal & Gaur, 2015:100). Agarwal and Gaur (2015:100) argue that homework is important because it helps learners to practice material already presented in class so as to reinforce learning and facilitate mastery of specific skills.

The study also found that orphans and vulnerable learners who took part in the LSA programme were motivated. The most important factors that played a role in motivating orphans and vulnerable learners in this study were high level of self-

confidence, positive attitude towards schoolwork, improvement on academic performance in particular Mathematics, and the relationships that they had with the LSAs. De Lourdes Mata, Monteiro and Peixoto (2012:1) agree that high achievement in Mathematics is a function of many interrelated variables related to students, family and school. Orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme had high level of self-confidence. Findings also showed that orphans and vulnerable learners who took part on the LSA programme had positive attitude toward schoolwork and had better performance in Mathematics. The last factor that played a role in motivation of the learners was the relationships that they had with the LSAs. For example, one learner participant indicated that the way LSAs speak to them was motivational which encouraged them to focus on schoolwork. Highly motivated learners can persevere under pressure and challenges. This is ideal for orphans and vulnerable learners as they faced a lot of challenges.

Furthermore, the study found that the LSA programme operated like a problem-solving mechanism for orphans and vulnerable learners. Several researchers such as Mwoma and Pillay (2015:2), Motsa and Morojele (2016:36), Mutiso and Mutie (2018:25), Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016:38) documented challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable learners ranging from the basic needs for survival, such as food and health care, lack of parental support, emotional and problems like low self-esteem and self-pity, high labour demand at home, stigmatisation at school because of lack of school uniform, bullying and ridiculed by peers. So, the presence of the LSAs in the schools were regarded as relief for many of them because the LSA programme was regarded as a problem-solving mechanism.

7.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR REDRESSING CHALLENGES IN THE LSA PROGRAMME

To mitigate the challenges encountered by educators, orphans, and vulnerable learners in the implementation of the LSA programme, participants made several submissions. Firstly, participants recommended that LSAs should be properly trained because they lack experience in dealing with orphans and vulnerable learners. Currently, the only requirement is that a young person should be between 18 and 35 years of age with the minimum of Grade 12. Similarly, Mwoma and Pillay (2015:5)

indicated that lack of expertise and training of educators in Life Orientation were cited as challenges, limiting educators from providing psychosocial support for OVC. Mwoma and Pillay (2015:5) recommend the training of all teachers in Life Orientation on basic counselling skills was recommended. Therefore, the recommendation of training for LSAs is justified on similar ground.

Secondly, to mitigate time constraint in the implementation of the LSA programme, time management was recommended by the participants. Schools do not have a timetable for LSA programme activities. LSAs relied on the afternoons and other time slots that are available on a particular day. It is recommended that SMTs of schools structure the school's timetable to accommodate LSA programme activities.

Thirdly, in order to mitigate the challenge of inadequate guardian/parental involvement or support, participants suggested that guardian/parental should be informed about the LSA programme. Lara and Saracosti (2019:2) note that international research has shown that guardian/parental involvement has positive influence on academic achievement of a child. Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) also argue that cooperation between teachers and guardians/parents is essential as to know what challenges the OVC experience at home and in school. Chohan and Khan (2010:23) also argue that that parental support in doing homework and other activities has significant impact on academic performance as well as on the development of self-concept of the children. Fourthly, awareness campaign was suggested to encourage both learners and guardians/parents to participate in the LSA programme. Mwoma and Pillay (2015:6) state that participants in their study proposed that government through schools should organised workshops and seminars for parents/guardians to equip them with knowledge and skills on the importance of caring for OVC.

7.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LSA PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS

Despite the challenges encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools, schools provided opportunities for effective implementation of the LSA programme because schools are ideally suited to provide care and support for orphans and vulnerable learners. Extra classes were conducted in schools thereby

improving academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. Salamat, Esa, Salleh and Baba (2012:111) also found that additional classes can improve performance in learning. Though not all researchers support extra classes. However, Santhi (2011:935) and Fernanda (2019:2) claim that extra classes create a lot of stress and tension of students and teachers who have to arrive early in the morning and leave late in the evening.

Nevertheless, findings of the current study show that schools are suitable to work with other stakeholders in providing psychosocial support for orphans and vulnerable learners. According to contractual obligations of LSAs, one of the LSA's responsibilities is to establish and manage networks with local stakeholders that provide care and support for learners (DBE, 2019:17). Furthermore, the DBE (2020:13) states that SMT should establish a referral network between the school and service providers in the surrounding community, DSD and other governmental departments that provide psychosocial support. The Department of Basic Education acknowledges that it shares the responsibility with other stakeholders for monitoring and management of the impact of HIV, STIs, TB and pregnancy on orphans and vulnerable children and infected and affected learners but is primarily responsible for support to and to retention of OVC in the Basic Education System (DBE, 2017:12).

The current study showed that orphans and vulnerable learners have diverse needs that cannot be met only by the expertise of educators and LSAs in the schools. Similarly, Stover, Bollinger, Walker and Monasch (2007:22) note that children need various types of support ranging from those things necessary for survival, such as food and health care, to those interventions that will provide a better quality of life in the future such as education, psychosocial support and economic self-sufficiency. This view collaborates with Maslow's theory of motivation that underpinned the study.

Figure 7.1 below summarises challenges and recommendations of the study.

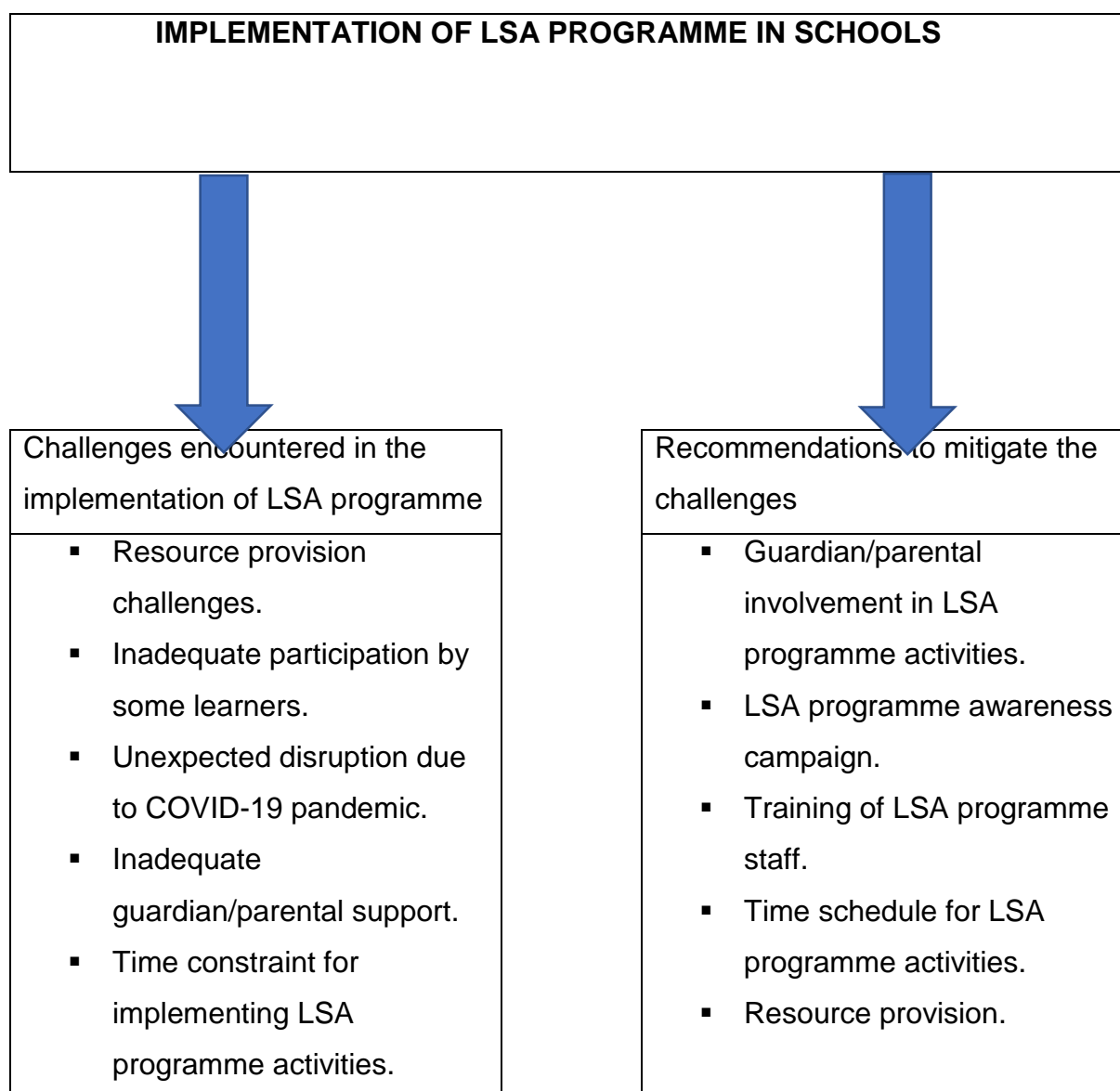


Figure 7.1: Summary of Challenges and Possible Mitigating Strategies for LSA Programme Implementation

Figure 7.1 summarises the challenges encountered in the implementation and suggested strategies to mitigate the identified challenges. Participants indicated that there was challenge regarding resource provision since the LSA programme relied on the schools' resources for its implementation. The inadequate participation by some learners when felt stigmatised by the LSA programme was another challenge. Inadequate guardian/parental support was another challenge experienced in the implementation of the LSA programme. Guardians/parents were not well informed

about the LSA programme and what role they had to play to support it. Time constraint was another challenge faced in the implementation of the programme activities. This was because schools did not have a timetable for LSA programme activities. Lastly, there were unexpected disruption due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Several strategies were recommended to mitigate the above challenges. Firstly, to get guardian/parental support, it is important that they are informed or made aware of the LSA programme. Secondly, to mitigate both inadequate participation by some learners and support by guardians/parents, there should be LSA programme awareness campaigns. It was also recommended that LSA programme staff should receive effective and adequate training. To mitigate time constraint in implementing LSA programme activities, it is recommended that SMTs should structures the school timetables in such a way that LSA programme activities are accommodated as they do with other co-curricular activities. To address resource provision challenge, the government should consider making resources available for the LSA programme.

7.5 RESPONDING TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first research question was: Is there a significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme and those who do not?

To answer this question, research and null hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- **Research Hypothesis:** There is a significant difference on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme as compared to those who do not.
- **Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant different in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in LSA Programme and those who do not.

In the quantitative strand of the study, the post-test only design was used. Two groups were formulated, one experimental and the other control group. 40 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners were randomly selected from four schools which implemented

the LSA programme for the experimental group. 40 Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners were randomly selected from four schools which were not implementing the LSA programme. The Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale was administered to determine the self-concept score for each participant. A schedule for self-concept scores was compiled and it is attached to this thesis as Appendix H. Then, the self-concept scores were subjected to the independent sample t-test for analysis.

Table 5.5 shows independent samples t-test p-values of all the dimensions of the self-concept score were greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), that is ranging from 0.281 to 0.907. Therefore, the research hypothesis was rejected, and the null hypothesis was accepted. There is no significant difference in the self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in LSA Programme and those who did not.

The second question was: Is there a significant difference in Mathematics performance between orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme versus those who do not?

- **Research Hypothesis:** There is a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme versus those who do not.
- **Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate in LSA Programme versus those who do not.

The same two groups, namely, experimental and control groups used to answer the first question were used for the second question. The difference is that, to determine Mathematics score for each participant, mark schedules from the eight schools were used to extract marks for the participants. Then, a Mathematics score schedule was compiled just as it happened with the self-concept and the Mathematics mark schedule is attached and marked Appendix H. Subsequently, Mathematics scores were subjected to the independent sample t-test for analysis.

Table 5.5 shows independent samples t-test and the p-value=0.031 for Mathematics score. Therefore, the p-value is less than 0.05 and the research hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference in Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners who participate on the LSA programme versus those who do not. Furthermore, Table 5.6 shows the summary of Mathematics scores for the control and experimental groups, participants in the experimental group (Mean=41.35, SD=23.83) compared to control group (Mean=31.73, SD=14.03). This indicates that participants in the experimental group performed much higher than the participants in the control group. Therefore, orphans and vulnerable learners who participated in the LSA programme performed much better than orphans and vulnerable learners who did not. The third question was: What are the challenges encountered by teachers and OVC in the implementation of the LSA Programme in Mpumalanga Province? To answer the question. Ten Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners were purposively selected from schools which were implementing the LSA programme. From each category of OVC, one male and one female were selected. The five categories were child-headed household, single-parent mother, single-parent father, paternal grandparents, and maternal grandparents. In addition, four educators were selected by virtue of the role they played on the LSA programme in their respective schools. In-depth individual interviews were used to explore the participants' views and lived experiences regarding the challenges encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed into readable text. The qualitative data was analysed using IPA. The main findings were resource provision challenge, inadequate participation by some learners, unexpected disruption due to COVID-19 pandemic, inadequate guardian/parental support, and time constraint for implementing LSA programme activities. Recommendations to address some of these challenges are; guardian/parental involvement in LSA programme activities, LSA programme awareness, training of LSAs, time schedule for LSA programme activities, and resource provision.

7.6 GENERATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE

A few studies by Bakir (2018:7), Fleming (2015:11), Kavak (2014:7), Mba (2007:201), Mishra and Van Assche (2008:1), Smart (2003:3), Statistics South Africa (2016:6), UNICEF and UNAIDS (2006:3) documented the magnitude of the prevalence of

orphans and vulnerable children. Orphans and vulnerable children are faced with a lot of challenges, such as diminishing of household income, property disposition, basic needs for survival such as food, clothing and shelter, separation of sibling and school dropout.

In response to the prevalence of OVC, governments of many countries came up with frameworks/policies to support OVC, such as no fee policy, school feeding schemes and cash transfers. Similarly, several NGOs, FBOs, and CBOs contrived psychosocial intervention programmes to support OVC. According to Mueller et al. (2011:57), the need for psychosocial interventions for OVC is widely acknowledged and community-based programmes in Southern Africa are mushrooming, yet little is known about the content of such interventions and what impact they are having on child psychosocial health. Mueller et al. (2011:57) stress the fact that empirical evidence is needed to inform the development of psychosocial intervention for OVC.

The quantitative strand of the study suggests that the LSA programme had no impact on self-concept of orphans and vulnerable learners. Nevertheless, the study has found that the LSA programme had a positive impact on academic performance (Mathematics) of orphans and vulnerable learners. The qualitative strand of the study revealed challenges in relation to implementation of the LSA programme in schools. The information that the current study generated will be useful for SMTs as they will be aware of the challenges associated with the implementation of LSA programme, and how to mitigate these challenges. Furthermore, the developers of intervention programmes will know which aspects of the intervention programme need improvement.

7.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of the current study. The nature of the study and the conditions which prevailed during the study necessitated the use of two groups post-test only design for quantitative strand. This design eliminated several threats to internal validity, selection bias and diffusion of intervention remained as threats to internal validity.

Selection bias emanate fact that the two groups, namely, experimental and control groups were not equivalent. Orphans and vulnerable learners in the experimental group were from different schools compared to orphans and vulnerable learners in the control group. Other factors that made the two groups to be different included among others, family background, interest, attitudes, and abilities. All these extraneous factors might have affected the results of the (dependent variable) self-concept scores and Mathematics scores. To minimise this threat, participants were randomly selected so that characteristics had the probability of being equally distributed among the experimental and control group. Secondly, I matched males and females in the two groups to balance the gender. In addition, participants were drawn from the same grade, and this meant that they were of the same age group. Lastly, all the participants were classified as orphans and vulnerable learners.

Diffusion of the LSA intervention programme was another threat to internal validity. This meant that participants from control group could learn about the intervention programme for the experimental group (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:285). To eliminate this thread, I selected participants for the control group from schools in different villages which were far apart to schools where participants for the experimental group were selected. Hence, the participants in the control group did not know the existence of the experimental group. Therefore, they did not know the LSA intervention programme.

Another key limitation to the study was the lack of baseline scores for dependent variables (self-concept and mathematic performance). It was impossible to conduct the pre-test on self-concept and Mathematics performance as the LSA programme was being implemented in schools where orphans and vulnerable learners were drawn for the experimental group. Therefore, there might be some threats to internal validity based on the pre-existing differences. Similar steps used to mitigate the impact of selection bias also applied to minimise the impact of the lack of baseline scores on self-concept and academic performance.

Another limitation of the study relates to the generalisation of the research findings to the entire population. The sample of the study consisted of 80 orphans and vulnerable learner in Grade 9 drawn from eight schools in Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga,

South Africa. Therefore, the sample didn't represent the entire population. In addition, the sample was too small to be representative of the entire population. However, the sample was suitable for the study. Therefore, the research findings cannot be generalised to the entire population beyond its scope.

Despite all these limitations, the study was the first to evaluate the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and learner performance of orphans and vulnerable learners in Grade 9 from schools in Gert Sibande District. The study lays a foundation for other research who have interest in care and support for orphans and vulnerable learners to conduct further research on evaluation of the LSA programme on other aspects and including other intervention programmes implemented in schools.

7.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

Several recommendations to improve the implementation of the LSA programme in schools are presented below.

7.8.1 Recommendations to Improve on Implementation of the LSA Programme

Henceforth, it is envisaged that the LSA programme will form an integral part of structures and stakeholders that provide psychosocial support for orphans and vulnerable learners in schools, particularly, in rural areas. Therefore, it is important that School Management Teams, School Based-Support Teams and NGOs that provide care and support for orphans and vulnerable learners in schools embrace the operation of the LSA programme. Below are the recommendations for schools, government and NGOs.

7.8.1.1 Recommendations for school level

It is recommended that the School Management Teams should structure the school timetables so that LSA activities are accommodated without interfering with tuition time.

It is recommended that the SMT should conduct induction/orientation of the newly appointed Life Skills School-based co-ordinator on the functioning of the LSA

programme. It is not enough to rely on the Learner Support Agents who still need to be guided.

School-Based Support Teams should strengthen collaboration with non-governmental organisations that provide care and support for orphans and vulnerable learners. SBSTs should also ask for donations from local businesses.

To improve interest in schoolwork and for the LSA programme to be taken seriously, home visits should be conducted by the LSA with the help of the social worker where possible to determine the living circumstances of orphans and vulnerable learners who would have shown no interest in schoolwork and failing to take the LSA programme seriously. Then intervention strategies should be contrived to raise the interest in schoolwork and for the LSA programme to be taken seriously. These activities can involve co-curricular activities such as sport, debates and being part of Learner Representative Council in schools. Secondly, School Management Teams should organise motivation sessions from time to time where they bring motivational speakers from outside to motivate educators and learners.

7.8.1.2 Recommendations to government level

It is recommended that government should make more funds available to sustain the LSA programme in schools which are already benefiting the existence of the LSA programme. Furthermore, the LSA programme should be extended to other schools in rural areas where it is not yet implemented.

It is also recommended that ongoing capacity building through training and workshops should be organised for both educators and LSAs. However, the workshops shouldn't be the same considering the differences in roles and responsibilities that they play in supporting the learners.

Among others, one of the findings of the study was that orphans and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme did much better as compared to orphans and vulnerable who didn't participate on the LSA programme. Hence, it was concluded that the implementation of the LSA programme in schools improved Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learners. Secondly, orphans

and vulnerable learners who participated on the LSA programme gave testimonies in terms of benefits they received from the LSA programme, such as clothes, food and psychosocial support. Thirdly, both educator, orphans and vulnerable expressed the wish for the continuation of the LSA programme in their respective schools. On the basis of all these findings, it is recommended that the government should make more funds available to sustain the LSA programme in schools which are already benefiting to the existence of the LSA programme. Furthermore, the LSA programme should be extended to schools in rural areas where it is not yet implemented.

The government should track orphans and vulnerable learners who are beneficiaries of the LSA programme. Such learners should be linked with other governmental departments or organisations to continue to support these learners until they obtain a tertiary qualification.

7.8.1.3 Recommendations to non-governmental organisations

It is recommended that the non-governmental organisations should prioritise schools in rural areas where there is a great need for care and support for orphans and vulnerable learners.

It is recommended that such organisations should offer training for LSAs in order to improve their skills and expertise in providing psychosocial support for orphans and vulnerable learners.

7.8.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Since the study was confined to Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable learners from schools in Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga, to get a bigger and clearer picture on the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and Mathematics performance of orphans and vulnerable learner, it is recommended that future studies should cover the entire Mpumalanga Province. In addition, the mere fact that the study focused on Grade 9 orphans and vulnerable, the impact of the LSA programme on orphan and vulnerable learners in primary school is not known. Therefore, future research studies should consider assessing the impact of the LSA programme on learners in primary schools.

Furthermore, the assessment of the impact of the LSA intervention programme focused on two aspects only, namely, self-concept and learner performance. Future research studies should focus on the other aspects of the LSA programme, such as retention of orphans and vulnerable learners in schools until they complete Grade 12. This kind of the study can be conducted through longitudinal study, and it requires more time.

It is recommended that a comparative study is done to compare Mathematics performance between vulnerable learners and non-vulnerable learners. Secondly, it is recommended that a comparative study for Mathematics performance between Grade 9 learners with learners in similar grade in other countries with similar Gross Domestic Product to South Africa be done.

It is recommended that a study be conducted to determine baseline score on dependent variables in schools where there is a possibility to introduce the LSA programme. This can be done as soon as such schools are identified by the Department of Education to be next to benefit from the LSA programme.

7.9 CONCLUSION

Despite its limitations, the current the study has laid a foundation for future researchers. The study is the first to assess the impact of the SA programme on self-concept and learner performance of orphans and vulnerable learners from schools in Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanga, South Africa. On the quantitative strand, the study findings show that the LSA programme had a positive impact on academic performance. These findings were confirmed by the qualitative study. The findings from the qualitative strand revealed that the LSA programme had positive impact on self-confidence, attitude toward schoolwork and academic performance. The study also found that the LSA programme was in forefront in solving challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable learners. Academic support and Inclusive Education were implemented through the LSA programme.

Though there were positive findings, there were weaknesses in the implementation of the LSA programme in schools. Some learners felt that they were stigmatised through

the LSA programme. Other challenges found through the study were inadequate participation by some learners, inadequate parental/guardian support, resource provision challenges, unexpected disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and time constraint for LSA programme activities. To mitigate these challenges, participants recommended the following strategies, namely, parental/guardian involvement the LSA programme activities, the LSA programme awareness campaign, training of LSAs, timetabling of the LSA programme activities, and resource provision.

The study demonstrated the effective the use of mixed methods research on assessing the impact of the LSA programme on self-concept and learner performance. The study also made a number of recommendations for future studies in relation to the impact of the LSA programme on orphans and vulnerable learners. Furthermore, the study made recommendations to relevant stakeholders on how to improve the implementation of the LSA programme in schools. Lastly, the study made recommendations to the government to consider extending the implementation of the LSA programme to schools in poverty stricken rural areas.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT ASKING PERMISSION

ENQ: Mazibuko RP
Cell Number: 082 709 1125

PostNet Suite 573
Private Bag X9013
ERMELO
2350
E-mail: zibukor@gmail.com
05 OCTOBER 2020

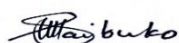
THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MBOMBELA
1200

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

I am a DEd student studying at the University of Venda. As part of the requirements for completing my studies, I am expected to conduct research. As such, I have chosen a topic which will make use of educators, orphans and vulnerable learners. The research will be conducted in schools where the Learner Support Agent Programme is implemented. Herein, I attached a proof of registration and an approval letter for my topic.

The aim of the study is to assess the impact of LSA programme on self-concept and academic performance of orphans and vulnerable learners at schools in Gert Sibande District. The study will be of benefit to the Department, as the report will be submitted with recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme.

Thank you.



Mazibuko RP (Mr)

APPENDIX B: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Spring 2020



Monanga Building, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Middelburg-Province
Private Bag X71241, Middelburg, 1209
Tel: 013 758 5476/5148, Toll Free Line: 0800 200 110

Litika le Tsefundo, Umnyango we Phando

Departamenti we Onkanyisa

Mizobuko ka Dyandya

Mr RP Mazibuko
Private Bag X9013
Emele
2300
Email: zibuko@gmail.com

RE: ASSESSMENT OF LEARNER SUPPORT AGENT ON SELF – CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC LEARNER PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOLS IN GERT SIBANGI DISTRICT OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The title of your research project reads: "Assessment of learner support agent on self – concept and academic learner performance at schools in Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanga province, South Africa".

I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments' annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476/5148 Or sibonelo@mpumalanga.gov.za

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.


MR JIR NKOSI
[A] HEAD: EDUCATION


DATE



Open Public

APPENDIX C: UNIVEN RESEARCH ETHICS LETTER

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear research participant

Thank you for showing interest in this study

Title of the Research Study : Assessment of Learner Support Agent on self-concept and academic learner performance at schools in Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanga province, South Africa.

Principal Investigator/s/ researcher : Ronald Patrick Mazibuko, MED

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s : Prof T. Runhare

Dr LP Ramabulane

Dr A. Bere

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of the Learner Support Agent Programme on self-concept and academic performance of learners.

Outline of the Procedures : Participants will be selected randomly from schools in Gert Sibande district for quantitative data. For self-concept, a multidimensional self-concept scale will be used which consists of 36 items. There is no correct or wrong answer for the items, the participant is expected to rate each item between 1 and 7. This will require approximately 45 minutes to an hour of the participant. For academic performance, the researcher will extract scores of performances from school records for each participant.

Participants will be purposively selected for qualitative data. An in-depth individual interview will be used to collect data regarding participant's experiences and views on the implementation of the Learner Support Agent Programme in schools. This will require 30 minutes to 45 minutes of the participant. A classroom or staffroom will be used for answering the questionnaire (scale) or conducting the interview, depending on what will be provided by the school.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: There is no foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants regarding participation on the study.

Benefits : The possible benefit of the study would be improvement in self-concept and academic performance.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: Participation to the study is voluntary and the participant has a right to withdraw from the study at any stage. There will be no adverse consequences for withdrawing from the study. The participant can withdraw when he/she feels sick or uncomfortable to continue in the study.

Remuneration : No monetary value will be paid to the participants.

Costs of the Study : No cost will be incurred by the participants.

Confidentiality : Information provided by participants will protected and will not be made available to anyone other than the researchers. Participants will remain anonymous. To achieve this, the researcher will assign codes to participants' data to ensure that data remain anonymous.

Research-related Injury : There is no foreseeable risks for injury in the participation on the study.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Supervisor: Prof. T Runhare

Researcher: Mr RP Mazibuko

Please contact the researcher (082 709 1125), my supervisor (015 962 9094) or the University Research Ethics Committee Secretariat on 015 962 9058. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Innovation, Prof GE Ekosse on 015 962 8313 or Georges Ivo.Ekosse@univen.ac.za

General:

Participation in the study is voluntary. To ensure this principle is adhered to, each participant will receive copies of the letter of information and consent form. The content of the letter of information and consent form will be read in primary spoken language to each participant, making sure that each participant understands the content.

The approximate number of participants expected to the study is 90. For quantitative study, 80 potential participants are expected. While 10 potential participants are expected for qualitative study. In addition, 4 educators are expected to be part of qualitative study due to the role they play as co-ordinators of the Learner Support Agent Programme.

For consideration of the rights of participants in general, the researcher will make sure:

- That the venue, date and time are agreed upon with the participants so as to suite everyone.
- That before the beginning of each session (answering questionnaire or participating in interview) participants will be reminded of important points:
 - ✓ The purpose of the study.
 - ✓ That their participation in the study is voluntary and is based on mutual agreement.
 - ✓ That they still have a right of choosing to stay or withdraw anytime irrespective of having signed the consent form.
 - ✓ That their responses will be confidential and that they need not write or mention their names anywhere during the course of answering the questionnaire or participating in the interview.

CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, **Ronald Patrick Mazibuko**, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: **SEDU/20/CSEM/24/2501**
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (*Participant Letter of Information*) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature
I,

Ronald P Mazibuko herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully Informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher

Ronald Patrick Mazibuko

Date...**22/06/2021**.....

Signature........

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)

.....

Date

Signature.....

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)

.....

Date.....

Signature.....

Please note the following:

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level- use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counseling (Department of Health, 2004)

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. a wrong date or spelling mistake, a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant's file and not thrown away, and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

References:

Department of Health, 2004. *Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Structures and Processes*

<http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/factsheets/guidelines/ethnics/>

Department of Health, 2006. *South African Good Clinical Practice Guidelines*. 2nd Ed. Available at:

http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page_id=14

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

DATE	___/___/2021
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Please tick (√) what is appropriate about you.

1. Your gender

1 [] Male

2 [] Female

2. Your age

1 [] 15 and less

2 [] 16

3 [] 17 and more

3. Your home language

1 [] Zulu

2 [] SiSwati

3 [] Xhosa

4 [] Ndebele

5 [] Sotho

6 [] Tsonga

7 [] Pedi

8 [] Venda

9 [] Other

4. Your place of residence

1 [] Village

2 [] Township

3 [] Farm

4 [] Urban

5. The head of your household/family

1 [] Single-Mother

2 [] Single-Father

3 [] Sister

4 [] Brother

5 [] Grandmother

6 [] Grandfather

7 [] Uncle/Aunt

8 [] cousin

9 [] Other

6. You live with: Please tick (√) ALL that apply

1 [] Single-Mother

2 [] Single-Father

3 [] Sister

4 [] Brother

5 [] Grandparent(s)-paternal

6 [] Grandparent(s)-maternal

7 [] Uncle/Aunt

8 [] cousin

9 [] Friend

10 [] Other

SECTION B

RESPONDENT'S UNIQUE CODE:	
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MULTIDIMENSIONAL SELF-CONCEPT SCALE

Rate yourself on each of the following items by circling the number closest to your position on a 1-7 scale. For example, if you are asked how often you worry about the impression you make on others, circle a 1 if you are very concerned, circle a 7 if you are not concerned, or circle some point between to indicate your degree of concern.

PLEASE NOTE.: IF THERE IS A QUESTION THAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, RAISE UP YOUR HAND SO THAT IT IS TRANSLATED TO YOU IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE.

How often do you feel less important to most of the people you know?	Very Often							Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
How often do you feel worried about what other people think of you?	Very Often							Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
How sure are you that others see you as being physically appealing?	Very Often							Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Have you ever thought of yourself as physically badly organised?	Very Often							Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
How much do you worry about how well you get along with other people?	Very Often							Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

When you make a stupid mistake or have done something that makes you look foolish, how long does it take to get over it?	Very Often 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Almost never
Do you ever think that you are a useless person?	Very Often 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Almost never
When trying to do well at a sport and you know other people are watching, how rattled or flustered do you get?	Very Often 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Almost never
When you have to read an essay and understand it for a class assignment, how worried do you feel about it?	Very Often 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Almost never
Compared with classmates, how often do you feel you must study more than they do to get the same grades?	Very Often 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Almost never
When in a group of people, do you have trouble thinking of the right things to talk about?	Very Often 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Almost never
How often are you troubled with shyness?	Very Often 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Almost never

How often do you have the feeling that there is nothing you can do well?	Very Often	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Almost never
How confident do you feel that someday people you know will look up to you and respect you?	Very Often	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Almost never
How often do worry about criticisms that might be made of your work by your teacher or employer?	Very Often	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Almost never
Do you feel uneasy meeting new people?	Very Often	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Almost never
When you have to write an argument to convince your teacher, who may disagree with your ideas, how concerned or worried do you feel about it?	Very Often	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Almost never
Have you ever felt less important to other people in athletic ability?	Very Often	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Almost never
In turning in a major assignment such as a term paper, how often do you feel you did an excellent job on it?	Very Often	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Almost never
Do you ever feel afraid or anxious when you are going into a room by yourself	Very Often								Almost never

where other people have already gathered and are talking?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How often do you worry whether other people like to be with you?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How often do you have trouble expressing your ideas when you have to put them into writing as an assignment?	Very Often						Almost never
		2	3	4	5	6	7
Do you often feel that most of your friends or peers are more physically attractive than yourself?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When involved in a sports requiring physical coordination, are you often concerned that you will not do well?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Have you ever felt guilty about your physique or figure?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, how confident do you feel about your abilities?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How often do you feel that you are aware of yourself?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How often do you have trouble understanding things you read for class assignment?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How often do you wish that you were better looking?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Have you ever thought that you lacked the ability to be a good dancer or do well at enjoyable leisure activities involving movement of the different parts of the body?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How much do you worry about whether other people regard you as a success or failure in your job or at school?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How often do you dislike yourself?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When you think that some of the people you meet might have a negative opinion of you, how concerned or worried do you feel about it?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How often do you imagine that you have less study ability than your classmates?	Very Often						Almost never
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Do you ever feel so discouraged with yourself that you wonder whether you are a worthwhile person?	<p>Very Often</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Almost never</p>
Have you ever been concerned or worried about your ability to attract members of the opposite sex?	<p>Very Often</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Almost never</p>

(This instrument is the Fleming-Courtney revision of Janis-Field Scale)

APPENDIX E: KEY TO MULTIDIMENSIONAL SELF-CONCEPT SCALE

Total Score: All 36 items

Obtain sum items, reverse scoring those with asterisks.

Self-Regard (global self-esteem): 7 items.

1, 7, 13, 14*, 26*, 32, 35

Social Confident: 12 items.

2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 27, 31, 33

School abilities: 7 items.

9, 10, 17, 19*, 22, 28, 34

Physical appearance: 5 items.

3*, 23, 25, 29, 36

Physical abilities: 5 items.

4, 8, 18, 24, 30

NOTE: An asterisk indicates that an item should be reverse scored (1→7, 2→6, 3→5, 4→4, 5→3, 6→2, 7→1)

APPENDIX F: IN-DEPTH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: GRADE 9 LEARNER

GUIDING TOOL

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of the Learner Support Agent Intervention Programme on self-concept and academic performance of the learners. Therefore, your contribution is essential for this study to be successful. Questions are completely anonymous, and the information collected will be used for this current study only. Should you have any queries or things you do not understand, please ask, explanation will be provided. You have a right to refuse to answer a particular question if you feel uncomfortable to answer it. You also have a right to withdraw at any stage of the interview. So, feel free.

Questions

1. What difficulties (challenges) are you encountering in the implementation of LSA intervention programme?
2. How should these difficulties (challenges) be overcome if any?
3. What do you think about the Learner Support Agent Intervention Programme in your school, is it helping you?

Impact

Probe will be around the following questions:

- Is there any improvement on performance in Mathematics?
- What impact does the LSA Programme have on your overall academic performance?
- Has your attitude towards schoolwork changed in comparison to last year when you first joined the programme?
- How is your confidence in relation to schoolwork?
- What would you like people to say about the programme behind your back?
- How would you describe the experience of working with LSAs?
- What is your general comment on the programme?

- Any other aspects that you think have been left out, that should be considered for the effective implementation of the programme? END

Thank you for your contribution.

APPENDIX G: IN-DEPTH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: EDUCATOR

GUIDING TOOL

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of the Learner Support Agent Intervention Programme on self-concept and academic performance of learners. Therefore, in order to carry out this study successfully, your contribution is essential. Questions are completely anonymous, and the information collected will be used only for the purpose of this study. Should you have any queries or things you do not understand, please ask, explanation will be provided. You have a right to refuse to answer a particular question if you feel uncomfortable answering it. You also have a right to withdraw at any stage of the interview. So, feel free.

Questions

1. What challenges have you encountered in the implementation of the LSA programme?
2. How should these challenges be addressed?
3. What do you think about the Learner Support Agent Intervention Programme in your school, is it making an impact on the learners' academic performance and self-concept?

Impact

Probe will be around the following questions:

- Is there any improvement in Mathematics performance of the learners who are part of LSA Programme?
- What impact does the LSA Programme have on the learners' overall academic performance?
- How is the learners' attitude towards their schoolwork now in comparison to last year when they first joined the programme?
- What would you like people to say about the programme behind your back?
- How would you describe the experience of working with the LSAs?
- What is your general comment on the programme?

- Any other aspect that you think have been left out, that should be considered for the effective implementation of the programme? END

Thank you for your contribution.

APPENDIX H: QUANTITATIVE DATA

Schedule A: Experimental group (group 1): 20 Males & 20 females

Codes	Gender (M/F)	Multidimensional self-concept scale (scores)					Maths scores
		Self-regard	Social confidence	Academic self-concept	Physical appearance	Physical abilities	
EBA 21/020	F	84	45	67	71	66	28
EBA 21/017	M	59	30	47	57	60	32
EBA 21/012	F	59	61	57	69	57	48
EBA 21/016	M	51	30	51	66	49	12
EBA 21/004	F	61	46	49	57	46	38
EBA 21/009	M	84	79	65	51	71	32
EBA 21/024	F	59	63	57	66	69	44
EBA 21/005	F	57	44	51	49	51	38
EBA 21/001	M	39	54	51	34	54	18
EBA 21/014	M	65	38	45	49	49	26
EDL 21/009	M	80	51	88	69	71	48
EDL 21/035	F	69	54	69	66	80	36
EDL 21/022	F	73	45	43	74	46	30
EDL 21/025	F	57	57	57	60	69	48
EDL 21/029	F	63	61	55	34	40	35
EDL 21/038	F	100	80	67	66	80	70
EDL 21/018	M	33	32	49	66	69	24
EDL 21/003	M	43	62	31	57	46	38
EDL 21/005	M	45	36	47	40	54	38
EDL 21/014	M	73	37	49	40	60	37
EME 21/001	F	90	51	63	63	69	100
EME 21/014	F	45	64	65	48	63	22
EME 21/006	F	92	45	51	88	51	90
EME 21/002	F	71	56	69	45	66	72
EME 21/013	M	47	36	41	46	34	80
EME 21/004	F	63	50	39	31	49	60
EME 21/015	M	67	51	43	29	51	30
EME 21/009	M	47	51	71	43	20	18
EME 21/005	M	43	43	43	74	60	10
EME 21/011	M	63	40	43	57	63	20
ESW 21/008	M	73	64	53	57	66	56
ESW 21/011	F	65	56	82	57	80	82
ESW 21/012	M	71	50	41	57	46	70
ESW 21/014	F	57	73	67	51	46	64
ESW 21/002	M	58	53	65	46	94	40

ESW 21/005	F	65	48	49	66	51	20
ESW 21/004	F	37	57	55	60	48	2
ESW 21/015	F	57	57	51	66	74	4
ESW 21/003	M	75	57	75	66	83	26
ESW 21/007	M	66	52	49	29	60	68

Schedule E: Comparison group (group 0): 20 Males & 20 Females

Codes	Gender (M/F)	Multidimensional self-concept scale (scores)					Maths scores
		Self-regard	Social confidence	Academic self-concept	Physical appearance	Physical abilities	
CES 21/036	F	47	68	53	83	63	46
CES 21/026	F	59	65	59	51	52	26
CES 21/001	F	71	48	47	57	51	18
CES 21/020	F	71	31	59	37	37	34
CES 21/030	F	45	58	49	57	69	16
CES 21/009	M	69	24	51	74	37	28
CES 21/008	M	61	71	57	60	54	32
CES 21/007	M	76	61	65	51	57	26
CES 21/033	M	59	62	59	60	57	42
CES 21/005	M	76	46	41	31	71	20
CMS 21/005	F	24	51	43	34	14	48
CMS 21/017	F	88	26	57	37	71	27
CMS 21/008	M	51	18	29	49	43	50
CMS 21/012	F	82	49	53	77	37	46
CMS 21/001	F	94	36	51	66	49	40
CMS 21/010	M	73	61	55	49	66	28
CMS 21/011	M	88	64	79	83	66	35
CMS 21/002	M	47	46	43	74	63	36
CMS 21/014	F	63	64	39	31	14	49
CMS 21/020	M	45	54	35	31	51	42
CTH 21/004	M	90	49	29	69	89	42
CTH 21/005	F	73	44	33	49	86	4
CTH 21/010	F	49	53	63	37	34	54
CTH 21/009	M	71	39	49	37	51	48
CTH 21/002	M	80	53	49	49	34	22
CTH 21/017	F	73	37	37	74	69	32
CEG 21/007	F	47	52	67	74	54	42
CEG 21/005	M	65	57	67	69	83	26
CEG 21/004	M	69	52	53	43	74	48
CTH 21/008	F	69	63	67	63	80	44
CUB 21/022	F	51	44	53	57	51	24

CUB 21/040	F	63	49	41	40	63	22
CUB 21/005	F	63	50	51	83	31	8
CUB 21/026	M	65	74	43	60	46	40
CUB 21/027	M	51	69	55	66	43	10
CUB 21/004	F	88	56	84	60	54	16
CUB 21/010	M	57	46	69	60	66	4
CUB 21/016	F	39	55	49	69	40	10
CUB 21/001	M	63	58	57	63	57	34
CUB 21/003	M	94	43	55	91	77	50

APPENDIX I: ETHICAL CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR: Mr RP

Mazibuko

STUDENT NO:

18022951

PROJECT TITLE: Assessment of learner support agent on selfconcept and academic learner performance at schools in Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanqa province, South Africa.

ETHICAL CLEARENCE NO: SEDU/20/CSEM/24/2501

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof. T Runhare	University of Venda	Promoter
Dr L Ramabulana	University of Venda	Co - Promoter
Dr A Bere	University of Venda	Co - Promoter
Mr RP Mazibuko	University of Venda	Investigator — Student

Type: Doctoral Research

Risk: Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment

Approval Period: January 2021 - January 2024

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

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE Date Considered: September
2020

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof Takalani Mashau

Signature. 

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
<u>2021-01-25</u>
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APPENDIX J: EDITOR'S LETTER

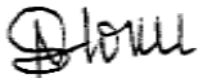
Editing and Proofreading Report

25 July 2022

This letter serves to confirm that I, Dr I. Ndlovu of the Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics at the University of Venda, have proofread and edited a PhD thesis titled “Assessment of Learner Support Agent on Self-concept and Academic Learner Performance at Schools in Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga Province, South Africa” by Ronald Patrick Mazibuko.

I carefully read through the document, focusing on proofreading and editorial issues. The recommended suggestions are clearly highlighted and can either be accepted or rejected using the Microsoft Track Changes Function.

Yours Sincerely



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