FACTORS LEADING TO POOR PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12 LEARNERS

by

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DECLARATION

I, MODJADJI AMANDA MASETLA hereby declare that the dissertation for the M.ED degree at the University of Venda has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my own work in design and in execution and that all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature _____ Date 24 July 2012

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Malesela Timotious Masetla.

ABSTRACT

The study seeks to investigate the causes of poor performance of the grade 12 in Thabina cluster. To acquire data required, qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. Educators in high schools and learners in grade 12 completed the questionnaires. The circuit managers were interviewed. The study recommended that talk shows with all the stakeholders, i.e. learners, parents, educators, principals, circuit managers be initiated by the Department of Education. Resources should be equally distributed and Educators should be placed on suitable posts based on their qualifications. The study recommended that further research can be conducted based on Parents Involvement in the Education of their Children and also Ill Discipline in Schools as a source of poor performance.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

Grade 12 results are the yardstick upon which secondary schools performance in South Africa can be gauged. In every locality a school's standing is determined by the examination results of its learners (Lynn, 1988:26). Lynn further argues that the educational achievements of children are a product not only of the characteristics of the children themselves, but also of their teachers and their schools. High failure rate at grade 12 level is a challenge to countries all over the world. In some countries, for example Japan educational standards are exceptionally high, whereas in the West, educational Standards have in recent decades become an increasing cause of concern (Lynn, 1988:1).

Hawkins (2001:1) also shows that current education reform initiatives, like those in South Carolina and around the United States rely heavily upon systems of testing and accountability. These assessment tools can be effective means for helping educators' benchmark on existing performance levels and for setting attainable goals, and be used as a basis for offering potent motivations in the form of performance incentives. Morris & Pai (1994:347) also say that in many accountability programs utilizing performance contracting, the level of children's academic achievement is measured primarily by their scores on standardized tests. And it is on such scores that teachers' promotion and salary raises often depend. In this way, accountable teaching often occurs.

Morris & Pai (1994:327) say that if we see education through the systems perspective and the industrial model, the schools are plants where the administrators direct the operation and the teachers engage in engineering. In that context the learners are the raw materials to be processed according to the product specifications demanded by the consumer, the public. To be consistent with this view, teaching effectiveness should be evaluated according to the quality of the product, that is, the extent to which a child can perform certain specified acts according to performance standards.

Leadership energy has recently received greater attention as people grapple with the complexity, not only of achieving substantial improvement under challenging circumstances, but also of maintaining organizational momentum for continuous improvement (Fullan & Sharratt, 2007:116). In their work, they cite the case of York Region District School Board, a large multicultural district just north of Toronto, Ontario Canada. In 2000 when the district began its student achievement improvement strategy in earnest, Director of Education, Bill Hogarth, set out to develop the best possible model for reform drawing heavily on external ideas but developing a capacity from within the district to lead the reform with a critical mass of leaders at all levels of the district. The district decided that the foundation for improving student achievement was to focus on improving literacy through a model which came to be known as Literacy Collaborative.

In South Africa, Grade 12 examination results are used as a barometer to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of the school system. Good performance in Grade 12 examinations is judged by the pass rate (Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego (2002:113). Looking at the record of Grade 12 results, for example, in Limpopo Province the pass rate in 2005 was 64,3%, 2006 the pass rate was 55,7% and in 2007 the pass rate was 58,0%. All major stakeholders: learners, educators, parents, National Ministry of Education are concerned about the problem of poor performance in Grade 12 examinations in South Africa. This low internal efficiency of the education system simply implies more wastage and increases in the cost of education. By failing to complete their high school education within the stipulated time, the social cost of secondary education increases without necessarily increasing the social benefits (Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego, 2002:113). In the Thabina cluster, from 2005 to 2007, there are schools that continuously underperform and by this picture the schools are failing to give our future generation the academic footing they deserve.

Due to this challenge there is a need for a scientific research to find out more on the causes of poor performance, particularly in Grade 12 in this cluster.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to examine the causes of poor performance in Grade 12 examinations with reference to Thabina cluster. Therefore, this study would like to respond to the question: What are the causes of poor performance in Grade 12 examination results in the Thabina cluster?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to investigate causes of poor performance in Grade 12 examination results in the Thabina cluster.

The secondary objectives are:

- To find out whether parents are involved in the education of their children.
- To find out as whether adequate resources are allocated equally to all schools.
- To find out whether there is lack of discipline in schools.
- To investigate whether managers are addressing the problem of poor performance of the Grade 12.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are parents involved in the education of their children?
- Are adequate resources allocated to all the schools?
- Is there lack of discipline in schools?
- Are managers addressing the problem of poor performance?

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

Schumacher & McMillan (1993:89) define a hypothesis as a tentative statement of the expected relationship between two or more variables. A hypothesis is a tentative (uncertain) and testable explanation of how two or more events or things are related (Bertram, 2004:24).

In this research, the hypothesis is that:

- Lack of parental involvement is a challenge for learners to perform well in Grade 12.
- Inadequate resources are a challenge as it impacts on poor performance of the Grade 12 learners.

1.6 REVIEW OF LITERATURE (Preliminary)

A. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This study was informed by Habermas's critical theory. Critical theorists' purpose is not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them. Critical theory and critical educational research, then, have their substantive agenda, for example, examining and interrogating the relationships between school and society; how schools perpetuate or reduce inequality and the social construction of knowledge and curriculum (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2003:28).

According to Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego (2002:117) major causes of poor performance in Grade 12 examinations include inadequate physical and human resources, lack of discipline and commitment, ineffective and unclear policies, and failure to develop effective strategies to address the unanticipated consequences of implementing changes in the school system. Adams (1996:314-315) continues the discussion by saying "there is an acute shortage of fully trained teachers with, on average, less than one graduate per high school, together with a severe shortage of classrooms which

results in large classes working in crowded conditions". Adams (1996) further indicate that "English is used as a medium of instruction for all subjects and that many teachers have only a basic command of English and equally basic understanding of their subjects. Therefore any inadequacies in the teaching and learning of English compound the other difficulties experienced by pupils in learning school subjects".

Singh and Mbokodi (2004:301) state that the learner's background is considered a crucial factor that influences the learner's performance; the community constitutes part of this background. They further say that the black parents' role is crucial in the enhancement of a learner success. Parents who played little or no role in their children's homework and study programmes contribute to the poor performance of their children in the classroom. Also, the extremely limited success thus far in the implementation of OBE in historically black communities is significant since it shows the absence of co-operation between the school and the home.

Berkhout (2007:407) states that, matric results in South Africa have become the most prominent indicator, with huge signifying power, of the achievement (or not) of the education system and concomitantly of racial injustice. Although the statistics for the national examination have not been published by race group since 1995, the unequal achievement is reflected in the annual provincial statistics where the provinces with the most so-called 'ex-model-C' schools achieve better pass and matriculation exemption rates. Notwithstanding the implementation of a new curriculum in 1997 (Curriculum 2005) and its revision RNCS (RSA, 2001), the national examination prominently shapes the public discourse in education. According to Hawkins (2001:7) Standards –Based education in the USA has revealed that many students are performing at lower than expected levels, and that a disproportionate share of these students are African American and Hispanic youth living in poverty. He further adds that the learning environments of poorer schools are not equal to those of more affluent schools. Schools with heavy concentrations of student poverty are substantially more likely to have more inexperienced and uncertified teachers than are the schools of more affluent children, a finding reported upon in a research by the Education Trust and others.

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Since there are many factors that lead to poor performance in Grade 12 result examinations, and more research related to my study was done, so it will be dealt much in detailed in the full literature review.

B. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

- **Poor performance**

Strebler (2004:406) defines poor performance as when an employee's behavior or performance might fall below the standard. In this study, poor performance would be defined as a situation when a learner fails to reach acceptable level of performance.

- **Learner**

A learner means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education (ELRC, 2003:B-4). According to the South African Oxford School Dictionary (2004) a learner is a person who is learning something, therefore, a learner is defined, throughout this study, as a person of school-going age who attends school.

- **Educator**

Educator means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution or assists in rendering education services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994 ELRC, 2003:A-3).

Thus, an educator means any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extracurricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and educational psychological services, at a school (ELRC, 2003:B-4). In this study, an educator is a professional person who has a responsibility to educate learners or students in an institution.

- **Principal**

Principal means an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school (ELRC, 2003:B-4).

This definition would be extended for the purpose of this study to mean the chief executive and accounting officer of a public further education and training institution (ELRC, 2003:D-5). In this study, a principal is therefore, the school manager.

- **School**

According to Gillmer, Pienaar and White (1996:14) a school is the secondary educational situation in which teaching and learning takes place, while Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC, 2003:B-4) defines a school as a public school or an independent school which enrolls learners in one or more grades from Grade R (Reception) to Grade twelve (ELRC, 2003:B-4). It further defines the school as any educational institution or that part of such an institution at which education and training, including pre-primary education , is provided and which is maintained, managed and controlled or subsidized by a provincial education department, excluding a university and technikon (ELRC, 2003:C-26). School in this study is a place where formal education takes place.

- **Education**

Education means any education and training provided by an education institution, other than training as defined in Section 1 of the Manpower Training Act, 1981 9 (Act No. 56 of 1981, ELRC, 2003:A-3). Engelbrecht, Yssel, Griessel and Verster (1983:2) define education as the conscious, purposive intervention by an adult in the life of a child with the aim of guiding him to responsible adulthood. According to Gillmer et al (1996:3) education is an interaction between at least two persons, one of whom is an adult (educator) and the other a child (educand). In this study, education is way of accompanying a learner to become a responsible adult.

1.7 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Research Design

Research design is the planning of a scientific inquiry; designing a strategy for finding out something (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:72). Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:52) define research design as the plan according to which we obtain research participants and collect information from them.

The study was based on both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in order to facilitate triangulation.

1.7.1.1 Qualitative approach

The reason for choosing this is that with qualitative method, the research questions are general and broad, and seek to understand participants' experiences with the central phenomenon (Maree, 2007: 257). The importance of using this is that:

- Qualitative researchers ensure that their findings are transferable, which means that they help to understand other context or groups similar to those that were studied (Bertram, 2003:67).
- Qualitative methods are used when depth is required (Bertrams, 2003:59).
- These methods are useful in answering 'why' questions (Bertrams, 2003:59).

1.7.1.2 Quantitative approach

The reason for selecting this method is to seek an explanation and predictions that will be generalizable to other persons and places (Leedy & Omrod, 2001:102). Quantitative approach was used because:

- Data validity might be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of data (Cohen, Manion and Marrison, 2000:105).
- It establishes, confirms, or validates relationships and to develop generalizations that contribute to theory (Leedy & Omrod, 2001:102).

- The process of this method represents mainstream approach to research and structured guidelines exist for conducting them (Leedy & Omrod 2001:102).
- Quantitative methods are used to answer questions of prevalence (Bertram, 2003:59).
- They are used when breadth is required or to answer 'what' questions (Bertram, 2003:59).

1.8 METHODOLOGY

1.8.1. Population

Babbie & Mouton (2001:173) define population as the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements. Bertram (2004:64) says population is used to mean the total number of people / groups or organizations who could be included in a study. In this research, I have included educators, learners, and circuit managers of Thabina cluster.

1.8.2. Sampling procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting observations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:164). Bertram (2004:64) says sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, events or behaviors to observe. In this research, I used random sampling. The reason for selecting this method was that every member of the population had an equal chance of being included in the sample (Bertram, 2004:67).

1.8.3 Sample

The researcher did not use the entire population of Thabina cluster. In Thabina cluster there are 24 schools. I used 2 educators from each school which equaled 48 educators; I also used 2 learners from each school which equaled 48 and 3 circuit managers from Thabina cluster. I divided the learners by 2, which equaled 24. I used multiple of 2 to

reduce the population in the sample. The sample was 24 educators, 24 learners and I chose 2 circuit managers from Thabina cluster, who were selected randomly. The researcher's sample was therefore, 50.

1.9 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

1.9.1 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected through interviews.

- **Interview schedule**

An interview is a conversation between a researcher and a respondent (Bertram, 2004:86). In this research, I used an interview guide (qualitative instrument) to collect data for this study. I designed a questionnaire to be completed by the 2 circuit managers. I used structured interview, where I used interview schedule. I used a structured interview because I had in mind particular information that I wanted from the respondents, and have designed questions to be answered. These questions were open-ended. I recorded every word said by the respondent.

1.9.2 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected through questionnaire.

- **Questionnaire**

I visited selected schools and asked permission from the school managers to consult the relevant stakeholders who were the educators and the learners and distributed questionnaires. I explained to the respondent how to complete the questionnaires. For ethical reasons, respondents were informed of anonymity when completing the questionnaires. I then arranged a day on which I collected the completed questionnaires for analysis and interpretation.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes and other sources of material that can be accumulated to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others (Creswell, 1994:153). Miles and Huberman (1994:10-11) explain data analysis as consisting of three flows of activity that take place at the same time; data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. In this research, I used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

A. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:479). In this research, I used data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion in analyzing the data collected.

B. Quantitative Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 was used in analyzing data. This made it easier for descriptive statistics to be used to analyze data. Descriptive statistics transforms a set of numbers into a single number that describes the data (Bertram, 2004:174).

1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research was conducted in Thabina cluster which is in Limpopo Province. The cluster is found in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality under Mopani District. The research focused on poor performing secondary schools in Thabina cluster. The study focused on investigating causes of poor performance in schools and thereby suggested intervention measures. Thus, these are the only issues driving this research.

1.12 ETHICAL ISSUES

Mouton (2001:238) defines ethics as what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research. The researcher got the consent of the respondents to participate in the study. The respondents participated in the study voluntarily. Respondents received a clear explanation of what the research expected of them, so that they could make an informed choice to participate in the research. All the respondents were assured of their confidentiality, as their names were not used in the collection and reporting of data. I was always responsible, vigilant, mindful and sensible to human dignity.

1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research will benefit the educators, learners and circuit managers as it will help them to improve their Grade 12 results. It will be useful as it will serve as a source of reference in the library where various stakeholders in education and prospective researchers can use the information.

1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH CHAPTER

The research project consists of five chapters as follows.

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter deals with the introduction, statement of the problem, aim of the study, definition of key concepts, methodology of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, ethics and outline of the chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter consists of the literature reviews which include introduction, explanation of poor performance, factors leading to poor performance, effect of poor performance and strategies for improving performance and conclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

It discusses the methodology of the research hence details are provided on research design, sampling procedure, population and instrumentation.

CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter concentrates on data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER FIVE

The final chapter presents the overview, findings, recommendations and conclusion of the whole study.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

FACTORS LEADING TO POOR PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12 LEARNERS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the factors that lead to poor performance of Grade 12 learners. In an attempt to address the problem outlined in the previous chapter, this section focuses on the following issues:

- Poor performance of Grade 12 learners
- Causes of poor performance
- Effect of poor performance
- Strategies for intervention
- Conclusion

2.2 POOR PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12 LEARNERS

A poor performance is a challenge to schools and the community at large .Since the schools keep on performing poorly, stakeholders cannot turn a blind eye as if nothing is happening hence the need to identify factors that lead to that problem. High on the to-do list is the stubborn problem of low-performing schools in which a majority of students persistently fail to meet expected academic standards. Despite repeated reform efforts, many of these schools are not performing much better than they did in 1983. While images of failed schools have long been a motivating force in educational reform, the passing of 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) policy has created a new sense of urgency. Confronted with a steadily rising bar for achievement, schools that lag behind will lose students, autonomy, and perhaps even their right to exist (Lashway, 2003:2).

2.3 CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE

2.3.1 Lack of Parental Involvement

A school is a unit within a society, and can only exist through the cooperation of a school community. Establishing a good school community relationship was a key ingredient to success in securing mutual participation of parents in decision – making, school activities, problem–solving, providing assistance and offering services to a school (Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego, 2002:113). Families from working-class homes were considered by schools as deficient, unwilling, and less effective in the preparation of their children's academic success. This was a time when the notion of parents as partners in the education of their children was receiving more attention and parents were asked to be involved in structures and programs such as, reading (Ascher, 1988; Edwards & Warin, 1999).

Teachers must keep in regular contact with their students' parents, sharing information in both directions about the progress that students are making, and coordinating efforts in school with those on the home front. He further says that teachers can keep the lines of communication open through a variety of mechanisms for instance, by getting parent-teacher conferences, sending notes home, and making frequent telephone calls. Teachers need to make an extra effort to establish a productive working relationship with those parents who, on the surface, seem reluctant to become involved in their children's education.

Lynn (1988:87) says parents are the primary agents in the socializing of children, and a strong intrinsic motivation for school children and must be attributed to a considerable extent to the socialization procedure adopted by, parents such as the Japanese ones.

Clarke (2005:105) states that for true school improvement to occur, schools must become communities, involving parents and local businesses as well as teachers and heads; this was clearly brought out in interviews with principals of effective inner-city

schools. In a United State study on improving schools in economically deprived areas, the most successful schools were found to have a very strong community outreach programme, including links with local businesses and parents (Borman, Rachuba, Datnow, Alberg, Maciver and Stringfield (2000). Clarke (2005:105) cite Barth and colleagues survey (1999) where it was found that, effective schools specifically involve parents in raising standards through improving their knowledge of the curriculum and capacity to help their offsprings, rather than use them largely as fundraisers. In their UK study, Barth et al. cite (1999) Maden and Hillman (1996) who found that effective and efficient schools attempt to involve parents, although this is very hard to achieve. Connell (1996) in his study on improving schools in inner-city New York, found that parents were involved in some schools but by no means all; Henchey (2001) reports similar findings in Quebec. Coleman (1998) widens the discussion by seeing parental involvement as part of a triangular relationship between teachers, parents and students, each able to reinforce positive attitudes in the other. Parents and students both need to participate fully in the school. Teachers who were able to improve student commitment and attitudes were characterized by positive attitudes towards parents. However, achieving parental involvement is one of the most difficult areas of school improvement in economically deprived areas.

School community workers – members of the community who liaise between school and home, monitor families' health and welfare needs and give parents information on school programmes and how to help their child learn – have been employed successfully in some effective school districts, as has helping parents with limited English proficiency by providing English language classes (Borman et al., 2000). Some schools have successfully improved parental involvement by supplying parents with incentives to come to school, such as providing them with transport, childcare or, in one highly impoverished district, laundry facilities (Guthrie et al., 1989; Leithwood and Steinbach, 2002).

Banda and Kirunda (2005:7) say that the rural parents conceded that the rural learners lack access to many literacy artifacts which could expose them to information, those

which give them pleasure specifically the television and, those which can help develop self-expression. They intimated that it is rare to find children in rural areas reading on their own. They observed that the common literacy practice these children engage in is revising their notes but this is usually done by a few and only during the examination period. They noted that in a few homes, sometimes the children do some homework and discuss their schoolwork with their peers, visitors or their siblings. Smith (2007:80) cites a research by Tett and Crowther (1998) on that parental involvement in literacy programmes in Scotland which showed that parents who were of a lower social group had less confidence in their ability to help their children, and were therefore unwilling to participate in school-organized support programmes. This is supported by Stevenson and Barker (1987), who found that better educated mothers were more closely involved in their child's education, and that the children of these 'involved' parents were more likely to succeed at school.

2.3.2 Poor Organizational Structure

Leadership plays a key role in school improvement and school effectiveness. The evidence from international literature demonstrates that effective leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the achievement of students in most countries (Harris and Muijs, 2002). Hallinger and Heck (1998) report that principals have an indirect, but highly measurable effect on pupils' achievement, explaining up to a quarter of the school level variance in pupils achievement. What form that leadership should take is less clear. Maden and Hillman (1996) did not find one particular leadership style for improving schools in disadvantaged circumstances, but noted that in many schools there was shared decision-making and collegiality.

Traditionally, leadership has been the preserve of 'great men', inspirational heads who can 'turn round' schools (Harris and Chapman, 2001). Recently, however, there has been a move towards a realization that the most effective means for true improvement lies in more distributed and democratic forms of leadership, involving teachers in

leading their schools. Piontek (1998) found decentralized leadership, using small teams that made decisions on different aspects, to be typical of improving schools in their study of six high poverty urban elementary schools. In Louis and Miles (1990) study of urban high schools, heads were found to be strongly instrumental in formulating a clear vision for the school and in monitoring performance, but likewise involved teachers and middle managers in school leadership. Involving teachers in developing or choosing a school improvement strategy has been found to be a crucial factor in sustaining improvement in a number of studies.

Some experts advocate stronger involvement than is usual of community members as well; involving them in a democratic structure focused on inquiry and school improvement (Joyce et al., 1999; IESP, 2001). They suggest setting up a body specifically charged with school improvement, composed of management, teachers, local business leaders and members of the community. Open communication is obviously an important aspect of this collaborative, distributive leadership style, and has been demonstrated to characterize improving and effective schools in a number of studies (Harris and Chapman, 2001; Hughes, 1995). Collaboration and trust have likewise been found to be related to effectiveness in schools in difficult circumstances, and crucial to being able to deal with the emotional disruption, change almost invariably causes (Lein et al., 1996; Stoll,1999). Leadership in improving schools is often described as transformational, seeking to satisfy higher needs and engaging the full person of the follower, as opposed to transactional leadership, which is characterized by exchange relationships (Harris and Chapman, 2001; Reynolds et al., 2001). Leadership in effective and improving schools has also often been described as instructional, which means that effective heads focus on teaching and learning issues more than on other (administrative) aspects (Connel, 1996; Stoll, 1999; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). This also means being cognizant of current teaching and learning theories, and/or helping and encouraging staff to continually develop their expertise in these areas. Leaders must also be seen by staff to be learners themselves (Stoll, 2001). The pressing issue with which the Department of Education has to contend with is the restoration of a culture of learning in township secondary schools in order to make schools function

properly. The principals' role in restoring a learning culture can hardly be overstated. As managers and instructional leaders, principals must initiate the restoration of a learning culture and they should direct the activities of teachers and learners towards the attainment of a learning culture. To enable them to succeed, principals must have a vast knowledge of both the teaching and learning process and, of how to establish a learning culture. The principal also needs the unqualified support and cooperation of educators, parents and other stakeholders. Principals are, however, often blamed for poor learning culture because they are accountable for everything at school; principals must make things happen at schools (Masitsa, 2005:205).

Strong school cultures are built deliberately around tightly structured beliefs, values and norms within a loosely coupled organizational structure. It is also possible for schools to have a typically loosely coupled organizational structure accompanied by a loosely structured framework of beliefs, values and norms. Such schools could be characterized as having weak cultures and would not even appear to be 'organized anarchies' (Grimmett and Crehan, 1988:60). Grommet and Crehan further say that the laissez-faire, liberal-romantic flavor of such schools can be equated with 'ineffectiveness' in that levels of teacher satisfaction and student learning are generally quite low.

Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002:117) point out that the principle responsibility of subject advisors is to provide professional support. The unavailability of subject advisors in some districts make it difficult for the available person to visit schools on a regular basis. These officers did not meet the expectations of clients, namely, educators and learners. They further said that policies of government clearly had a great impact on learner performance. In an attempt to improve the education system, government enacted many laws and adopted some new policies. However, not all policies were easy to implement. The data revealed that the Provincial Department of Education suffered from poor management procedures and unclear distribution of responsibilities for decision –making at various levels. Communication between various levels, districts and schools, districts and the provincial and national departments of education were weak. To cite a few examples, the paradox in the right sizing of educators is a clear

enough example. There was a shortage and oversupply of relevant educators in schools. Some issues raised under government policy included:

- **Ineffective Policies and Communication**

  Communication between schools and the Provincial Department of Education, especially regarding the appointment of educators, was rather confusing .Schools were uncertain how they should appoint educators and how educators could be transferred from one school to the other. Occasionally educators were temporarily redeployed to other schools without clear procedures and guidelines. Principals observed that they were almost powerless to control such "borrowed educators" regarding sick leave and regular attendance. More importantly, borrowed educators were sometimes not experts in specific areas where assistance was needed (Legotla et.al., 2002:117).

- **Shortage of Senior Management Posts in Schools**

  Many acting school principals, deputies and heads of departments were observed during the fieldwork. Surely school principals cannot be expected to run schools with unpaid school management teams (Legotlo et.al., 2002:117).

2.3.3 Lack of Resources

If school improvement is to succeed, proper resourcing has been shown to be essential (Reynolds, 2001). The direct link between the success of school reform initiatives and the amount of funding school received was shown in at least one study (Borman, 2000), while strong financial support (from the Annenberg Foundation) is undoubtedly one reason for the success of school improvement initiatives in New York and Chicago (IESP, 2001). Lack of resources following cuts was found to be the most common reason for school reforms programmes to fail in Nesselrodt (1997) study of the implementation of school improvement strategies in the USA.

Petro van Niekerk (1993:445) note that educational reforms are associated with a rapid increase in enrolments, which require both financial and human resources. In South Africa, where many people drop out of school or are unable to attend schools, even more time and resources will be necessary to implement a variety of educational options.

Just providing resources is unlikely to automatically lead to improvement. In some studies, effective schools have been found to be more effective at deploying resources, acting as 'wise consumers' (Piontek 1998) and to be more proactive at finding resources (Connell, 1996). A further problem can be that providing resources to ineffective schools may itself be an ineffective strategy as these schools do not have the management capacity which may have to improve before resources are put into failing schools.

Milner and Khoza (2008:155) note that it is widely acknowledged that the provision of quality education in South African schools is one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa in the twenty-first century. A skilled, sophisticated workforce is a prerequisite to competing in today's global, technology-driven economic environment and education is key to developing such a workforce. However, as a result of the apartheid era's grossly inequitable allocation of resources in relation to education, and the espoused policy of apartheid to provide sub- standard education to black South Africans, many South African schools are ill-equipped to meet this challenge. Indeed, the performance of South African schools as measured by matric pass rates is dire.

Resource constraints affect professional support negatively. While platooning normally refers to two schools using the same facilities, it was observed that some schools were platooning while others were practicing double sessions (Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego, 2002:117). They further said that the platoon system that was in place in schools was a reflection of a shortage of classrooms and educators. They said an interesting observation was made where platooning was between various standards in the same school. The worrying factor was that in such situations educators were expected to

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teach both in the morning and in the afternoon classes, which meant that the old double session system was still in place. Legotlo et al., say that shortage of physical facilities was a major problem as revealed by the respondents. Very few high schools visited were well equipped with electricity, libraries, laboratories, water or toilets. In some schools, learners attended in classrooms without chairs, chalkboards, doors or windows. Inadequate teacher preparation and their general limited academic background to some extent, contribute to poor teaching and learning in some schools. Educators are themselves also products of a bad education system. Blandford (1998:75-76) says that in practice, the effect of the physical arrangement of the classroom will impact on discipline. As a resource, classrooms need to be utilized as effectively as possible.

Smith (2007:48) cites Orfield, (2000) that schools in poorer areas are likely to experience skills shortages among staff, as well as unequal funding, curriculum opportunities and involvement and resources from parents. Because of the way that school financing operates, large gaps in budgetary allocations to schools exist and have resulted in many of America's urban districts being funded inequitably. Sikes (1987:42) says that teachers believe that working conditions adversely affect what they do, or more precisely what they are able to do. Many teachers face the daily battle of having to manage with inadequate resources, inadequate and inappropriate accommodation.

Sikes (1987) further says that poor conditions carry messages about the value that is placed upon the work the teachers do. Many teachers believe that if the politicians and administrators valued education they would put more money into improving the conditions, thereby enabling teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. Some, benevolently or naively, put the situation down to ignorance.

Perhaps not surprisingly, low-performing schools in low-income areas are frequently plagued by lack of resources. Greg Orlofsky (2002) found that high-poverty, high-minority schools received significantly less state and local money than did other

schools; also, students in such schools were almost twice as likely to be taught by teachers who were inexperienced or teaching outside their specialties (Jerald, 2002).

2.3.4 Lack of Student Discipline

The phenomenon of discipline refers to an appropriate behavior and as such, to a commitment to uphold certain convictions and norms of decency (Marshall 2005:51).Discipline is associated with the notion of bringing up children in line with the accepted norms of decency, which conjures up the long – standing association of not sparing the rod (Skiba & Peterson, 2003:66). According to Masitsa (2008:234) it is widely acknowledged that discipline is essential for creating a positive school climate conducive to sound academic performance. He further says that numerous township schools experience increasing incidents of poor discipline which impact negatively on their students' academic performance.

De Wet (2003:168) postulates that not only schools, but also structures have an interest in education, structures such as, the family , the church and the state (including the local community), determine what kind of behavior is acceptable and what is not. These behavioural rules may rest on moral, religious, cultural or juridical grounds. The list of unacceptable learner behavior is almost unlimited and includes for example, truancy, smoking, fighting, theft, burglary, murder, disobedience, substance abuse, rape and intimidation.

There are multiple factors which cause learner misbehavior, such as a poor learning and teaching culture, insufficient learning materials, poor motivation, poor role models and the negative influence of peers, the community and the media. A school's code of conduct aims at establishing a disciplined school environment by informing learners of the way in which they should conduct themselves and the type of disciplinary measures that will be applied to correct misbehavior (Squelch, 2000:19). It was found that the discipline in most schools is affected by the activities of early adolescents from child-headed families. It was observed that early adolescents cause trouble and that

educators had no alternative forms of punishment to apply in order to chastise them (Pillay, 2006:138-139).

According to Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002:115) student discipline is viewed as the second major cause of poor performance. Educators argue that some learners were ill – disciplined and difficult to work with. This affected the relationship between educators and learners. All these factors lead to uncontrollable learners in the classroom where some learners intimidated educators and other learners. Such learners deliberately ignore instructions from educators; they leave classrooms during lessons, come to school late and disappear before noon. It was observed that an atmosphere of no work was the order of the day, and expecting them to do well in examinations would have been a miracle. One learner remarked on ill – disciplined learners as follows: "Lack of respect for educators is the main cause of discipline problems in the classroom." When students are asked to do something in class, they protest, and refuse to carry out the instruction. Most students abuse the so – called "rights" and the teachers are unable to curb this situation, more especially after the abolition of corporal punishment. Because they do not respect teachers, this leads to the process whereby a teacher chucks the student out of the class and he or she loses a lot. So teachers spend more time on discipline issues. Students relax and neglect their school work until the last minute".

Salfi and Saeed (2007:617) say disciplinary problems because of large schools may also be another factor for average or poor performance among the students. Stockard and Mayberry (1992) found that the increase in behavior problems in large schools was sufficient to abolish any benefits that might occur from having larger schools. In small schools, administrators can control disciplinary problems easily as compared to large schools. The increase in disciplinary problems in large schools tends to create negative changes in administrators' behavior. Gregory (1992) found that the control of students' behavior becomes a primary concern of administrators in large schools. As a result, school policy tends to become restrictive and disciplinary actions highly punitive (Meier, 1996).

Legotlo et al., (2002:116) say that the level of learner's disruptive behavior was increasing at a higher proportion and this impacted negatively on their commitment to work. Learners sometimes ignored the instructions of educators and promoted a culture of "no work". Commenting on the impact of educated people's unemployment on student performance, one head of department remarked as follows: "Lack of job opportunities and high rates of unemployment among educated people is demotivating learners, e.g. many teachers are unemployed which encourages learners to overlook the value of education".

Roberts (1988) cited by Conoley and Goldstein (2004) say that centering convictions can be used as a base for public rituals and symbols. The functions of rituals and the symbols around which they are built provide personal and collective meaning and serve as guiding themes that allow connections to be made among seemingly disparate phenomena. Fullan and Miles (1992) note that symbols can provide personal and collective meaning in situations of change, where complex situations and unclear goals foster confusion. For this discussion of safe schools, the obvious centering conviction is that all children have a right to learn in a safe school environment, and that schools should be a place where children are not harmed. For all children to exercise this right, they must be provided with school environments that maximize their chances for learning and positive development. A critical characteristic of such environment is safety. Two related convictions that also have implications for educator' approach to change in educating children is that all children are innately resilient and that they deserve respect (Conoley and Goldstein, 2004:276).

2.3.5 Lack of Educator Discipline

According to Lynn (1988:94) the educational achievement of children are a product not only of the characteristics of the children themselves, but also of their teachers and their schools. It is to the significance of this input into educational achievement in Japan that we now turn. Few will doubt that an important contribution to children's educational achievement lies in their teacher's professionalism, their dedication to learning, their

enthusiasm, professional skills and conscientiousness in the thorough preparation of lessons and marking of homework.

Masitsa (2008:245) says that learners with verbally hostile teachers may be more likely to act with peers in hostile ways, and that these learners may take on some of the teachers behavior. Social learning theory supports the contention that children develop behavioural habits through observational learning. Masitsa further says that because teachers are role models for learners, their behavior, even when not meeting our disciplinary measures, is seen by learners as an example to be emulated. Thus, teachers should always set an example to learners by applying acceptable and corrective disciplinary measures.

Hornby (1983:16) says that there have been periods during this century when it has been quite clear to the public at large, and to teachers in particular – what schools were trying to achieve and the methods to be used. Today this has been replaced by a feeling of uncertainty, especially at the secondary school stage. Most primary school teachers seem to have more confidence about their work. Their techniques may be constantly revised and the curriculum content, methods and basis for motivating pupils changed, but they are conscious that their task is to introduce children to the educational process and to pass them on to the next stage of it. In contrast, the secondary school teacher is all too often confused about what he is required to achieve with his pupils. The issue is complicated because of the pressures from so many different directions.

Morant (1983:206) says that in those situations in which a teacher is promoted or changes his job laterally, without appropriate preparation, he could quite easily be exposed to having to obtain the necessary experience through making mistakes while in post. Alternatively, although he might undertake, what he would assume to be suitable in-service study prior to commencing his new work, it may happen that because of flaws in its design the course may fail to provide the personal professional enhancement sought. Looked at with these possible dangers in mind, professional development is

sine qua non in teaching. Morant (1983:208) further says that until a teacher is reasonably clear about what he wants to do and where he wishes to go, professional development and his own in-service education may lack direction. For this reason, the teacher who wants to become professionally effective must orientate himself in order to mould his career rather than have events dictated for him by external forces or agencies. Until fairly recently, a constantly expanding education service carrying with it a correspondingly large number of unfilled teaching posts meant that teachers would often be appointed to positions for which they were not initially trained. In an entirely different situation in which the education service is placed today, the problem is one of overcoming redundancy through a superfluity of teachers and to bring about redeployment (Morant, 1983:215).

Dunham (1983:184) says in studies of stress in schools, teachers have identified many pressures. Their most significant problems have been concerned with the changes which have altered their schools and the work they do in the classrooms. They have had to meet the demands of working in larger schools and coping with the pressures of teaching a number of pupils whose behaviour is disruptive. They have been asked to participate in the pastoral care of pupils with personal and family problems and they have been subjected to pressures to use new teaching methods. These organizational and curricular changes have necessitated their attendance at numerous meetings which have added to their frustrations. Experienced teachers who have been teaching for some years will have developed ways of doing things which they have found to work for them in their situations. Consequently they may be reluctant to abandon tried and tested methods for new ones which they may be 'afraid' of or using new equipment; they may doubt their ability to learn how to use it (Sikes,1987:47).

Stoll (1999) sees continuous learning as dependent on the school's capacity, which is in turn influenced by the school's teachers, the school's social and cultural learning context and the school's external context. The 'teacher as learner' is central to school capacity, teachers' practices being the key to school improvement and school effectiveness. Teachers are, however, not working in isolation, but are influenced by

their interaction with others, their pupils, the culture, its management, and so on. Joyce and colleagues (1999) suggest the building of small teams that engage in school improvement activities, which will increase teachers' sense of belonging and minimize alienation. Teamwork is crucial to creating a learning community. Hughes (1995) found teamwork, along with strong teacher accountability, to be a factor that differentiated between effective and from less effective schools in West Virginia, while in their study of improving high poverty schools in Massachusetts, Piontek and colleagues (1998) likewise found that teamwork and positive communication were present in all schools despite the performance of their learners. These teams therefore needs to be fluid, impermanent and oriented to achieving a particular goal (Lein et al., 1996). To be effective, collaboration needs to be purposeful and action-focused. Working together on a shared plan of action, for example, is likely to lead to positive outcomes and avoid the pitfalls of 'contrived collegiality' (Connell, 1996).

Schools need to ensure that time for common lesson planning and collective enquiry is available – for example by rescheduling the school timetable – and that teachers can observe one another's lesson, as many instances of good practice will be found in any given school (Connell, 1996, Guthre et al., 1989; Seely et al., 1990). Many effective and improving schools therefore have policies in place that support staff professional development (Henchey, 2001; Reynolds and colleagues forthcoming) analysis of the relationship between components of the High Reliability Schools improvement programme and improvement in participating schools over a five-year period. To be effective, professional development needs to be linked to school and not just individual goals, and needs to be embedded in the workplace (Joyce et al., 1999). As well as these factors, Joyce and Showers (1995) suggest that the following elements should be present in effective staff development:

- Practical, classroom-relevant information. Teachers prefer training to be grounded in practical classroom concerns.
- An element of theory aimed at fostering deep understanding.

- The incorporation of some element of demonstration, which likewise increases the effectiveness of training substantively.
- A combination of these three makes an even bigger difference. Their combination makes more difference than one would expect of the components.
- Coaching and feedback, through the use of mentor programmes, for example, makes even more difference, leading to further large positive effects on student outcomes.
- In most cases, professional development in schools at present does not include all these elements and, where it does, there is not sufficient time allocated to teachers for development; for example, by reserving all staff meetings for professional development, as is done in at least one of the improving schools studied by Piontek and colleagues (1998).

Legotlo et al., (2002:116) say the major cause of poor performance is low educator commitment and morale. One parent remarked that some teachers absented themselves from schools particularly towards month-end. On this challenge of poor morale and lack of discipline, one educator remarked: "Lack of discipline among teachers and students has reached higher levels. There might be no punishment for educators and learners if they commit any offence. So they practice late – coming, absenteeism, non-performance of duties. In addition lack of job security has led teachers to market themselves in the private sector for worthwhile incentives. Educators always have to go on strike for higher salaries/increments". One principal lamenting on the cause of poor educator morale said: "... since the beginning of this school no textbooks for Std 9 and Std 10 Maths were supplied. No substitution for the teachers who go on leave. In each school one or more teachers apply for sick leave or maternity leave and there are no substitutes. As a result students stay for three or more months without teachers for some learning areas. In addition, senior posts are not filled, e.g. deputy principal and HOD posts. So, teachers are working under very difficult conditions but with disgracing(sic) emoluments".

Sikes (1987:45) says that when changes are introduced older teachers who have a longer term perspective often claim to 'have seen it all before'. They point to the way in which educational fashions come and go: 'We've gone full circle' and 'If you wait long enough you end up swimming with the tide again', are typical comments. Sometimes what teachers say suggests that changes have taken place but in reality the gap between rhetoric and practice is wide. It may be that the more experienced teachers are adept at constructing screens made up of "instrumentalist" vocabularies to protect continuing "expressive" practices. Even when changes are legally enforced it may be possible to go through the motions and present an appearance of change without any real change taking place.

2.3.6 Curriculum

Van Niekerk (1993:430) defines a curriculum as a planned and organized activities pupils undertake in school which includes the subject matter they are exposed to, as well as teaching and evaluation. These activities are closely linked to aims and differing values about the purpose of schooling. Matthew Reesor (2003:57) says for many years, Japan has been held up as a poster child for industrialized countries that have been largely unsuccessful in regard to English language education. The performance of Japanese learners across the major English proficiency tests bears out this fact. Scores on their Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) have consistently been lower than those of other Asian countries.

Matthew Reesor (2003:57) further says that changes to the national curriculum implemented in 2002 have hastened the introduction of English language study from the first year of junior high school to the first year of elementary school. He continued by saying that the most interesting explanation is that Japanese cannot speak English because they have an innate physiological inability to do so. It has been claimed that the unique working of the Japanese brain prevents them from acquiring English. Indeed, research done in psycholinguistics has shown that self-perception of one's

abilities has been identified as a key factor in determining whether an individual learner succeeds or fails in mastering another language.

Richard Lynn (1988:97) says that the Japanese ministry of education sets out in detail the curriculum which has to be taught in schools. Britain and the United States are unusual among economically advanced nations in the freedom of schools from the requirement to follow curricular laid down by the government. Lynn (1988:97) adds that in Britain the curriculum is under the control of head teachers and the government has no power to direct what should be taught. A broadly similar degree of autonomy generally prevails in the United States, where the content of the curriculum is normally determined by head teacher's in conjuction with local education officials. There is clear evidence that the decentralized control of the curriculum in Britain and the United States has led to basic subjects being less taught than in Japan.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the presence of a curriculum stipulated by government and monitored by schools inspectors imposes a discipline on teachers which is lacking in Britain and the United States. Without these guidelines there is bound to be a certain lack of direction and sense of purpose in Britain and American schools (Lynn, 1988:99).

Coherence is a key element to improving schools in economically deprived areas. Pupils need to know what to expect, and have the right to experience a high quality of teaching in all lessons. Continuity in approach is important, especially for pupils from disadvantaged areas, and this should be extended to coherent assessment methods across subjects and interrelated courses within the school curriculum (Clarke, 2005:101).

Terry Wrigley says that the curriculum is not a parcel to be 'delivered', but a space to find and make meaning; school improvers cannot just take it for granted. Redesigning the curriculum for changing times should be central to such a project .For many years now, mathematics educators have been concerned about the quality of learners'

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knowledge and understanding of elementary algebra (Vermeulen, 2007:14). Vermeulen adds that numerous research projects have been undertaken internationally and a wealth of knowledge regarding learners' understanding and the way in which they learn has been accumulated. Based on these insights and often under the banner of "reform in algebra", researchers have made a number of suggestions to improve the practice of elementary algebra teaching. These not only include suggested approaches in the early high school years, but also essential groundwork to be done in the primary school years.

Orton and Frobisher (1996) identify two major categories of causes of learners' lack of understanding and errors in elementary algebra, namely, "unhelpful teaching and learning difficulties". "Unhelpful teaching" practices usually stem from the traditional approach to teaching elementary algebra, where the emphasis is on manipulation. For example, learners do not get the opportunity to understand algebra in its fullest context, as generalized arithmetic, since little attempt is made by the teacher to encourage conceptual links between arithmetic and algebra.

Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002:117) say that the current promotion criteria could be seen as automatic promotion; some learners were promoted from one grade to another grade, although they had not mastered the basic skills and knowledge. Legotlo et al., (2002) further say that some learners and educators argue that Grade 12 candidates were confronted with an unknown examination format. Therefore, understanding and carrying out instructions seemed difficult. Candidates in Grade 12 failed to carry out examination instructions because they were not familiar with them. This problem pointed to issues in the introduction of change in the curricula and examination format, and inadequacy of the in-service training provided.

The South African education system has been undergoing extensive restructuring since the advent of democracy. Coinciding with the introduction of democracy in South Africa in 1994, an Outcomes-Based Education system was formulated. Introduced in 1998 and amended in 2001, this system asserts that all learners have the ability to succeed, and

focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, unlike the traditional practice that was based on content mastery only (Maree, Aldous, Hattingh, Swanepoel and Van der Linde, 2006:230). However the introduction of an Outcomes-Based Education system did not appear to be yielding satisfactory results. Teachers throughout the country, who were in no way responsible for or involved in developing the new curriculum, agree that learners in the Further Education and Training Phase (Grade 10) achieve increasingly bad results, with unacceptably high percentage of learners failing mathematics, and dropping the subject in mid-year (Perry, 2003).

Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:302) record that there are several critics who have argued that, among other things, the limited success of OBE was due to its hasty implementation. Singh et al., (2004:302) cite Christie (1985) who points out that the problematic nature of OBE's implementation was due to its hasty introduction and poor planning. As a result of this haste, teachers were not well prepared. A considerable amount of evidence suggest that the best curriculum for socially, economically or culturally disadvantaged children will often be the rich curriculum typically experienced by relatively advantaged students. But this is not often taken into consideration in designing a curriculum. Rather, the typical curriculum experienced by such children is narrowly focused on basic skills and knowledge and lacks much meaning for these students. Why this should be the case has much to do with a widely mistaken understanding about what kind of curriculum these children will most benefit from (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, undated: 62).

Leithwood et al., (undated) in a comprehensive synthesis of empirical evidence, cite Brophy (1983) who touches on the main features of a "rich" curriculum, one similarly beneficial for most students no matter their background. This is a curriculum in which the instructional strategies, learning activities and assessment practices are clearly aligned and aimed at accomplishing the full array of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions valued by society. In schools serving diverse student populations, instructions, as well as the curriculum, should meet the same standards of effectiveness that would be expected in schools serving relatively advantaged students. But such

standards are not often met. A significant proportion of these schools lack minimally adequate instructional resources and are in physical disrepair.

According to media release by Gaum (2003) in studies commissioned by the Western Cape Education Department found that more than 60% of learners in the Western Cape are not achieving the reading and numeracy learning outcomes at the level set in the National Curriculum. The reasons for this poor performance include too little time spent on reading, writing and calculating, poor understanding of the levels that learners should be achieving, and poor teaching practices.

Smith (2007:65) cites Murphy (1988) who reported that he has found several ways in which gender bias is very much a feature of the National Curriculum assessment. The manner in which the different genders perceive and answer questions is different – boys in isolation, girls more in context; girls tend to express themselves in a more reflective way than boys – and this may give them an advantage in subjects like English and the humanities but less so in Science and Maths; likewise the types of questions are preferred differently-with boys generally preferring more multiple-choice styled responses.

According to Pollard and Triggs (1997:107) a significant feature of managing the curriculum lies in the terminology schools use to identify subjects in the curriculum. Some identify subject departments, each a separate curriculum subject. At whole-school level, academic planning will be concerned with curriculum and associated issues such as equal opportunities, and provision for special needs. Faculty heads, heads of department, subject leaders are key contributors here, especially to curriculum planning and the discussions that surround the creation of the timetable- the invisible expression of a school's approach to delivering the curriculum. Critics argue that the new curriculum restricted creativity and burdens teachers with unnecessary paperwork (Weinstein, 1996:11).

2.3.7 Teacher Union Activities

Since1994, unionization of educators has been a major development in South Africa. More than 200 000 educators in South Africa belong to unions of their choice. The employer (the National Ministry of Education) has made several agreements with teacher unions, which include: access to work place; union meetings at the work place; and time off with full pay for union activities. Respondents argued that major challenges have emerged in implementing these agreements. Occasionally union officials had caused some disturbance during normal working hours by holding meetings or taking time off (Legotlo et al., 2002:117). They also note said that the respondents in their study complain that some union members would prolong organized strike; or take more teaching time than necessary to organize for strike. One chairperson of a school governing body remarked as follows: "Teacher unions (particularly SADTU) played a most important role as they closed the school or took teachers out of school during school hours. Principal have no power over teachers, because of unions".

2.3.8 Community

According to Lashway (2003:3) some schools serve low-income children living under such highly stressful conditions that inhibit they are learning. The issue is not just low income, but an environment that destabilizes home life, undermines support, and creates despair. In addition, many low-income children are also members of racial minorities that face additional barriers to high achievement (Shannon and Bylsma, 2002).

An increasing body of research has pointed to the need for schools to become learning communities, engage in continuous improvement efforts and concerned about both school conditions and out-of-school developments, rather than being merely reactive to inspection or government initiatives. Such schools are open to change and experiment, and engage in continuous improvement through enquiry into existing practices and

evidence-based adoption of innovation (Clarke 2005:102). He goes on to say that in professional learning communities the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning and they act on what they learn. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit.

School community workers – members of the community who liaise between school and home, monitor families' health and welfare needs and give parents information on school programmes and helping their children to learn – have been employed successfully in some effective school districts, helping parents with limited English proficiency by providing English language classes (Borman et al., 2000).

Banda and Kirunda (2005:1) say that data from the Ministry of Education in Uganda suggests that in terms of academic performance, urban learners continually outperform rural schools at primary and secondary school level. At present all government examinations are written in English. However, the language in education policy in Uganda differentially stipulates the use of English as medium of instruction in urban schools and the use of mother tongue in rural schools. The authors explain that other factors which mitigate against rural learners successful academic performance are untrained educators, poor infrastructure and school management practices and with rural parents, poverty, lack of supportive academic discourse practices, and a general lack of enthusiasm among rural parent for the their children's education.

In Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2002:302) the experiences of two countries are briefly examined in two international studies and the relationship between communities in their involvement in schools was apparent in these studies. They support their findings by citing Rugh and Bossert who show the importance of community involvement in a programme referred to as 'FEY Alegrai' (FYA) practiced in Bolivia.

Hawkins (2001:19) says that critics of rigidly applied testing standards warn that socio-economically disadvantaged students may disproportionately suffer consequences of results-based policies, resulting in broadened rather than bridged gaps in achievement.

A major tenet in the National Education Association's mantra is that "all children can achieve high and rigorous standards". However, even they acknowledge that the tremendous inequity in learning opportunities and resources between poor and affluent students is the primary threat to making this deal a reality, and a sufficient reason to be wary of levying consequential penalties based solely on test scores. This research shows that the factor most powerful in explaining performance in our national standards-based Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) is school-level poverty. This level of poverty, measured by the percentage of a school's students enrolled in free- or reduced- lunch programs at a school, records a one-percentage point decrease in students meeting or exceeding standards on PACT.

Hawkins (2001:21) explains that learning is a function of schools, families, communities, peer interactions, and various other social, economic, and cultural factors. Hawkins (2001:21) cites the author of "A Nation at Risk," (Wong, 2004) a report that proved instrumental in the education standards and testing movement, who writing a decade later says "...have foolishly concluded that any problems with the levels of academic achievement have been caused by faulty schools," and added that more attention should be given to the many negative influences from outside the school.

2.3.9 Anxiety

According to Ormrod (1998:500-501) too much anxiety often interferes with effective performance. Excessive anxiety distracts people and interferes with their attention to the task at hand. An excessive level of anxiety in difficult situations can interfere with several things, critical for successful learning and performance. Highly anxious students tend to achieve at levels lower than those at which they are capable of achieving, in other words, they are underachievers.

2.4 EFFECTS OF POOR PERFORMANCE IN GRADE 12

2.4.1 Lack of Confidence

Teachers, school administrators and board personnel are all involved in the search for excellence. 'How can we improve our schools?' is a frequently posed question. Schools, however, still need to deal with the practicalities of how to translate this knowledge into realistic implementation strategies. 'The effective schools research provided a vision of a more desirable place for schools to be, but gave little insight as to how best to make the journey to that place'. Many principals have felt burdened with the responsibility that it is their duty to make their schools more effective, while they lack confidence in their ability to be change agents. Many teachers have viewed this process as an implication that they are inadequate (Stoll, 1992:104).

2.4.2 Retrenchment

The Jim Self Center note that the effects of test performance – based consequential penalties are not limited to students. Schools and districts face takeover by the state if it is determined that their performance is sufficiently poor, and principals and teachers face losing their jobs. According to Bridges (1992:2) on one occasion nearly half of the public school parents indicated that there were teachers in the local schools who should be fired. The most frequently cited reason for this drastic action was incompetence.

2.4.3 Redeployment

According to De Jarger (1980), to redeploy means to move workers from one place to another. Vandevelde (1998:3) defines redeployment as the transfer of permanently employed full-time teaching staff from one educational institution to another within a specific region. Such redeployment is prompted by the desire to secure judicious staffing of institutions against the background of falling rolls within a framework which avoids resorting to compulsory redundancy.

Reports have also been received that at some Limpopo schools, at-risk educators refused to teach and learners were regularly being sent home (Herald, 20 April 1992:2). Clearly stability in education will not be achieved as long as the threat of being in excess hangs over the educators' heads. This invariably leads to feelings of insecurity, demotivation and depression, which, in turn, adversely affect the commitment of educators to fulfill their teaching obligations.

2.4.4 Enrollment Decline

Bridges (1992:2) says that parents in districts with declining enrollment have begun to question layoff policies which ignores the problem of teacher incompetence. Decline in enrollment also exert pressure on school officials to do something about incompetent teachers. If enrollments begin to decline, administrators confront the need to lay off teachers. According to the Californian law prevailing at the time of this study, these layoffs must be on the basis of seniority. The seniority principle creates problems for administrators because incompetent teachers are much more likely to appear among the most senior segment of the teaching force than among the least senior. The likelihood of this occurrence is not due to the age or the experience of the teacher, rather, it is accounted for by the selection ratios (i.e., the proportion of applicants who were hired) in effect at the time the most experienced and least experienced teachers were employed (Bridges, 1992:41).

Students and parents are not, however, the only ones who are being shortchanged by incompetent teachers. These poor performers tarnish the vast majority of American's teachers who are competent and conscientious professionals (Bridges, 1992:3).

2.4.5 Withdrawal of Learners

According to Bridges (1992:38), the emergence of parental complaints may also stimulate the administrator to confront the poor performer. If parents choose to voice their complaints, the administrator is apt to take these complaints seriously. Whether

these parents choose lumping, avoiding or voicing issues depends to some extent on their socio – economic status (SES). If they are upper-middle or middle-class and can afford a private school, they may withdraw their children from public schools and enroll them at private school. If they are middle-class parents who lack the money but care deeply about the education their children are receiving, they are apt to voice their complaint. If these parents belong to the lower socio-economic class, they probably will suffer in silence (Bridges, 1992:38). Many cases of low performance result from a confluence of forces. Students at high academic risk are assigned to a school with limited resources, making it difficult to initiate (much less sustain) improvement efforts. The perceived undesirability of the school leads teachers, principals, and parents to look elsewhere for opportunities, creating further instability. Finding a way to break into this vicious cycle is the key challenge for reformers (Lashway, 2003:3).

2.4.6 Disruptive Behaviour

Many teachers do not find it satisfying to work with students in especially challenging schools, they move on to less demanding environments at the first opportunity. Teachers want to feel certain about their ability to meet the goals they have for students, and to know when they have done so (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, undated:63). Blandford (1998:870 says that the relationship between academic achievement and disruptive behavior is evident in mainstream schools. Pupils, frustrated by a lack of understanding and inability to access the curriculum, are likely to behave badly. In many cases learning and behaviour difficulties apply. In general, support for statemented pupils are provided on-site. This has inevitable consequences for teachers and other professionals. The inclusion of pupils in mainstream classes will also impact on the school-life of other pupils. Mainstream teachers may find it difficult to be able to give the necessary time to support a disruptive pupil effectively without assistance. Teachers should not have to spend the majority of their time in the classroom trying to maintain order.

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When students encounter failure too frequently, they will develop low self-efficacy, believing that nothing they do will produce positive results. Ideally then, students should experience occasional failure within the context of overall success. This way, they learn that they can succeed if they try, while also developing a realistic attitude about failure- that at worst it is a temporary setback, and at best can give them useful information about how to improve their performance. To keep failure from becoming too frequent an occurrence, we may often want to balance challenging classroom tasks with some that students can accomplish with relative ease (Ormord, 1998:482).

According to Hawkins (2001:20), the effect of test performance-based consequential penalties are not limited to students. Schools and districts face takeover by the state if it is determined that their performance is sufficiently poor, and principals and teachers face losing their jobs. Recently the Greenville News reported that some South Carolina school districts are considering suing the state Department of Education to block implementation of the school and district "report card" program, required by state law by the state school accountability law. These school districts argue that they cannot be held accountable for meeting high education standards when they lack financial and other resources necessary for academic improvements; yet a further reverberations of poverty's effects in the era of high stakes testing.

Teachers need to feel good about their practice. There is a tendency within education to criticize practice and, in doing so, belittle the professional status of practitioners. A paradox exists between the celebration of examination success and dissatisfaction with pupil behavior. Good practice is not an imaginary phenomenon, it happens in the majority of schools on a daily basis. There is much to be celebrated. Teachers should feel confident that they are able to provide a safe, secure environment in which children learn (Blandford, 1998:105).

2.4.7 Imposed Change

Teachers who are no longer satisfied with their jobs following imposed change may decide to shift the balance or weight which they give to their work in the context of their lives as a whole. In other words they reduce the importance they attach to work and put more time, effort and energy into their families or into a particular interest or an alternative, supplementary career (Sikes, 1992:36).

Changes which are imposed from outside threaten and can undermine the values and beliefs and the ways of doing things which make up teacher cultures. The result can be that people lose their sense of meaning and direction, their 'framework of reality', their confidence that they know what to do, and consequently they experience confusion and a kind of alienation. Under such conditions their work is likely to suffer and their commitment to decrease (Sikes, 1987:43). If imposed changes affect all state-maintained schools, the option of leaving and moving elsewhere is obviously not viable-unless, that is, the teacher is prepared to move into the independent sector. Some teachers may choose to leave teaching entirely and to start a new career (Sikes, 1987:46).

Stoll (1992:113) comments that in recent years, it has been unusual for schools to work through a planning process to set future improvement goals. Priorities are set, often based on gut feeling of what should be changed. Ttraditionally, teachers in many schools have not been closely involved in the decision-making process. This has led to a lack of teacher commitment to these goals and, frequently, no subsequent improvement.

2.4.8 Drop Out

Richard (1995:2) says although the transition to high school poses difficulties for all students, American Indian/ Alaska Native (AI/AN) students regularly face additional obstacles that can impede their progress in school. Indeed, according to a recent study,

25,4 percent of AI/AN students who should have graduated in 1992 dropped out of school- the highest percentage of all racial/ethnic groups in the U.S to reflect such problem (National Center For Education Statistics, 1994:34). Educational theorists and researchers have provided various explanations for this high failure rate, each with its own set of prescriptions. Recently, much attention has focused on cultural discontinuity. This digest suggests that addressing cultural obstacles is an important but incomplete approach to increasing AI/AN students' success.

2.5 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE POOR PERFORMANCE

2.5.1 In- service Training

Staff development, long known as in-service education, can take place in a variety of settings, can include an almost limitless number of activities, and can be conducted to achieve many differing objectives (Hickcox, 1988). The National Education Association (1996) list nineteen different types of in-service staff development activities, from professional reading to the standard after-school workshop. Although staff programmes vary widely in context and format, they generally share a common purpose. Specifically, they are designed to 'alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end'. In most cases, that end is the improvement of student learning. In other words, staff development programmes are a systematic attempt to bring about change –change in classroom practices of teachers, change in their beliefs and attitudes, and change in the learning outcomes of students (Guskey, 1986:5).

The James Report in 1972 (James Report, 1972) recommended that teachers should be entitled to regular in-service education and training through a programme of leave to engage in such work. While this has not systematically occurred, there have been major developments through in-service education being provided within a range of institutions including schools. However, fundamental to all in-service education and training was the notion that in-service training would lead to the improvement of pupil

learning based upon improvements in school and teacher performance- a topic that continues to be presented to those engaged in the provision of in-service education and training and for which researchers are asked to provide evidence (Burges,1993:2).

2.5.2 Team Work

Ouchi (1981) said that the culture of an organization relates directly to its success and that successful organizations share the values of trust, cooperation, teamwork, and egalitarianism. When values are shared, when employees work cooperatively toward the same goals, when employees are customer-oriented and free to innovate, when they have decision-making autonomy, the organization has a process that promotes efficient and effective products. Deal and Kennedy (1984) found similar values and cultural practices in high-achieving schools and relate that values, customs, tacit assumptions, and myths drive the process of schooling. The role of the principal, they maintain, in creating new values and cultural artifacts precludes the infusion of the new process which will be used to transform the outcomes of schooling.

Teachers of a similar age and sex share similar experiences, perceptions, attitudes, satisfactions, frustrations and concerns, and the nature of their motivation and commitment alters in a predictable pattern as they get older (Sikes, 1986:40). For school improvement to occur, the culture within the school has to be right and this is dependent upon the involvement and commitment of teachers (Stoll, 1992:113). Fullan (1985) identifies four essential factors for successful school improvement that mirror several of the effective schools characteristics already described: the 'feel' of the leader for the improvement process; a shared value; a high level of communication and interaction; and collaboration in planning and implementation. In more effective schools, there is an agreement between all the partners in a school community to work together for growth (Stoll, 1992:113).

2.5.3 School Restructuring

Weller (1995:12) maintains that the need for educators to be more cost effective with their limited resources, and still provide quality products and services, is a clear and compelling reason to explore new and different ways to restructure the educational delivery system. Restructuring through the application of the principles of total quality management (TQM) can provide a means to revamp the school's inefficient instructional systems and provide quality products and services at a minimal cost to taxpayers. Weller (1995:11) examines the application of Deming's 14 points to promote quality education, reduce waste, eliminate inefficient and ineffective programmers, and negate the need for downsizing. Weller (1995) concludes that through empowered teacher teams, the application of zero-base budgeting, and the quality management principles, educators can provide cost effective programmes, job stability, increase teacher morale, and foster pride in workmanship. Chappell (1994:5) notes that Deming's TQM practices now exist in over 400 public schools district, however, there is a considerable variation in the ways in which these TQM principles are being implemented and in the purpose for their implementation. Chappell (1994) relates that, in many of these schools, TQM principles are used to increase quality performance in administrative services, teaching performance, student's achievement and personnel practices.

2.5.4. Re-engineering

Weller (1998:250) explains that successful school reform requires a paradigm shift which begins with unlocking the school's existing culture before attempts are made to integrate reform variables. Re-engineering, and rethinking and radical redesign of internal processes call for discarding of current practices and reinventing better ways to supply products and services. Educators must think differently about the purpose of schools and their delivery and redesign infrastructures which are built on shared values and beliefs, multiple interacting linkages and teamwork. School leaders are catalysts for change and, working with the schools' power agents and modeling expected behaviors, will motivate teachers to replace the old culture with new processes of schooling.

Shared ownership of case values, realistic and achievable goals and collaboration place the responsibility for creating a re-engineered delivery system on teachers themselves.

Re-engineering in education is about developing a delivery process which is coherent and progressive in scope in order to maximize the learning experience of students (Weller, 1998:251). School leaders will have to be creative engineers of the curriculum and instructional delivery process, be proactive, use broad-based thinking, and involve the school's constituents in its governance procedures and policy-making efforts. The core consumer will have to be identified and the re-engineering process structured in such a way as to provide the core customer with products and services to meet their specific needs and expectations. For educators, the core customer can be no other population than that of the students. The providers of the products and services are the teachers who work through a new delivery process which is supported, modeled, and facilitated by the principal. In the final analysis, the core customer represents what schools are for: educating students, not employing teachers and administrators (Weller, 1998:252).

In re-engineering, Champy (1995) maintains that employee satisfaction with the new process precedes quality products and services. Teachers must have ownership of the new process and be satisfied that the goals of schooling are compatible with their own values and attitudes. When teachers' needs are met, they can then concentrate on meeting the needs of their students and on quality outcomes. Because teachers themselves re-engineered the delivery system, the issue of accountability is moot. Producing quality products now rests squarely on their shoulders. And because they developed the goals of schooling, they know the evaluation standards and criteria for performance.

2.5.5 School Growth Plan

Stoll (1992:114-115) says the title 'School Growth Plan' is deliberate. 'Growth', encourages schools to build on previous successes. Starting, therefore, with a focus on

their own strengths, staff examine the effective schools characteristics in relation to the particular context of their schools. Their needs assessment also, takes into account any regional or provincial initiatives that are likely to impact on their schools in the near future. It is hoped that student academic data, self-concept assessment results and historical information will be made available to each school in the form of a school profile. This individualized profile will be developed centrally and is intended to provide further information for the needs assessment process. The profile is not being designed in order that it might be used to compare one school with another; it will be support instrument through which individual schools can examine their own development over time.

Stoll (1992) further notes that the ultimate goals of a school are to enhance student achievement and self-concept, develop young people who are motivated, curious and eager to learn, who feel good about themselves, and who will become positive citizens in society.

2.5.6 Motivation

Marx (1981:193) says that motivation includes all efforts that a business leader makes to incite his colleagues to voluntary perform to the best of their ability. Motivation is the spark which leads to action and therefore determines the direction as well as the success of any human activity. Some writers place such a high premium on goal-directed motivation in management activity on the part of an educational leader, that it is elevated to being the most important task (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:296).

Van der Westhuizen goes on to say that to fully understand motivation, the needs of people, and, in particular, the factors which initiate their behavior and actions, should be understood equally well. Motivation focuses to a great extent on goal-directed human activity and thus bears the stamp of dynamic perseverance and vocational satisfaction. To fulfill his functions effectively the education leader should have extensive knowledge about human needs and how to satisfy them. A principal who has this knowledge will

not only be a more sympathetic, caring person but he will understand people better and handle them better too. In addition, he will be able to better motivate his colleagues and in this way raise and maintain staff morale. Because motivation in the school management situation reflects a principal's ability to give expression to the staff's full potential in the pursuit of the goals and objectives of a school, the ability to motivate will help him to be a more effective leader.

Lynn (1988:61) says motivation is an important determinant of educational achievement continuing. He says that parents are the primary agents in the socializing of children, and a strong intrinsic motivation of school children must be attributed, to a considerable extent to the socialization procedure adopted by parents. Ormrod (1998:472) defines motivation as something that energizes, directs and sustain behavior; it gets students moving, points them in a particular direction, and keeps them going. Motivation determines the specific goals towards which people strive. Thus, it affects the choices that students make. It increases the amount of effort and energy that students expend in a particular activity. Motivated students are more likely to pay attention, and as we have seen, attention is critical for getting information into both working memory and long-term memory. The more student are motivated to achieve academic success, the more pride they will feel (Ormrod, 1998:476).

2.5.7 Change

Change in the school is in the service of improvement. The theory of change and the natural resistance to change implies that change can only succeed with the active involvement and support of the principal. Deliberation concerning the role of the principal as a facilitator of change suggests that it is possible to distinguish between principals who are more successful than others in the implementation of change (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:652).

Van der Westhuizen (1991:652) in addition, notes that a direct correlation is present between the long-term vision of successful principals for the school and their daily

interventions and changes in the functioning of the school. These principals subject themselves to a dynamic process of continual self-examination, self-criticism and self-improvement regarding the effects and significance of their interventions. This basic attitude is an important distinguishing characteristic between successful principals and the more typical and less successful school principals.

Van der Westhuizen (1991) cites Rutherford (1988) when he says a direct correlation exists between the level of effectiveness in the changing process and the competence input of the person/people responsible for change. This implies that the school principal can and should fulfill an important role in the facilitation of change to improve the school situation. Lashway (2003:5) says external assistance can facilitate school renewal, but effective leadership at the school site is essential. Although empirical research has not uncovered a single "best strategy" for low-performing schools, researchers and analysts have identified some promising approaches.

For example, the Washington School Research Center (2002) interviewed teachers and administrators at elementary schools in which the percentage of students meeting state standards was significantly above the state average. They found four "primary factors": a caring and collaborative environment, strong leadership, focused, intentional instruction, and the use of assessment data to guide instruction. In addition, the researchers were struck by the high degree of teacher support for reform efforts, despite the shift in teaching practice that was required. Significantly, these patterns were the same for high-poverty schools.

Similarly, research in Texas (Just for Kids.Inc.2002) has identified half a dozen promising practices used by high-performing schools with low-income students:

- High-energy, hands-on principal leadership that articulates the vision and keeps the school focused on instruction;
- Broad-based planning that sets clear instructional priorities and meaningful benchmarks for improvement;

- Focused, research-based professional development that is driven by identified instructional needs;
- Continual monitoring and assessment;
- Flexible grouping for instruction based on identified student needs; and
- Immediate intervention for struggling students;

Lathway (2003,6) also suggests that turning around a school requires leaders who nurture an educational vision, keep a laser-like focus on instruction, and work to build a professional learning community.

2.5.8 Behaviour Modification

Gorton (1976:286) describes behavioural modification as an attempt to change the behavior of an individual who has misbehaved by changing the response of the person or persons who are reacting to the misbehavior. According to Van der Westhuizen (1984:225), behaviour modification refers to those techniques or methods which can be used to control and change behaviour. The assumption is that all behavior is learnt and a person will continue to entrench a particular type of behavior simply because it is strengthened. The attitude regarding staff motivation is based on the principle that the reaction to misbehavior or undesirable behavior may be gradually corrected by doing away with the strengthening of negative behavior.

According to Good and Brophy (1978:229-233), the following principles must be borne in mind in the course of effecting behavioural modification:

- Desirable behavior should be strengthened by praise and reward.
- Undesirable behavior may be cured by working against its further affirmation or neutralizing the factors which cause undesirable behavior. In certain instances it will be necessary to apply disciplinary measures.
- The strengthening of desirable behavior and discouraging unfavourable behavior should be applied consistently.

Behavioural modification can be used to motivate staff members in such a way that they gradually drop all undesirable forms of behavior and, at the same time, show greater preference for desirable, acceptance behavior (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:298).

2.5.9 Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in school activities is further encouraged by parent-teacher associations as well as parent associations on regional, provincial and national level. It can also be claimed that a willingness and need exist among many parents to contribute constructively to the school's activities. This charitable potential should be tapped. It is an important management task of the principal to activate parents to a partnership with the school and to ensure reciprocal communication between the school and the home (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:425). He adds that parental involvement and participation in school education were largely sporadic and localized in the past. However, progress has already been made in the creation of statutory and non-statutory councils and structures on local, regional, provincial and national level.

The complete and optimum development of the child rests with an educative teaching partnership between parents and teachers. Regular and effective two-way communication between the school and the home is needed to bind the various components of this partnership into a closely knit unit for mutual exchange of information regarding the child (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:430). Bourdieu's 1973 work supports the statement above by showing that children's academic success and parental involvement in the school depend on the comparability of the home and school cultures.

Van der Westhuizen (1991) notes further that for various reasons a principal's communication with parents will vary from the scholastic to the behavioural problems of children to dental appointments. The principal will inform parents about the following matters which are also reasons for communicating and provide important dates with regard to examinations, parents-teacher meetings, school functions, sport and cultural

matters, and so forth; policy statements relating to school uniforms, pupil behavior, school attendance, and so forth; aiding the parent by interpreting school reports, educational standards and optional subjects and fields of study; and important events such as the announcement of staff changes, new educational approaches and pupil performance.

According to Dowling (1992:159-160), schools are also required to offer more information to parents. There is now a parent representation on governing bodies, all parents receive information about the school curriculum, and an annual report on the school from the governors as well as written reports on their child's progress in attainment through the National Curriculum. Information parents now receive by right has always been available to them from schools that have operated in a spirit of partnership. Some information that schools are now required to give is not necessarily seen as relevant to parents. This is evidenced by the general poor attendance of parents at annual governors meetings. It is contrasted by the usual very good parental response to consultation meetings about their child's progress. Such information is now rightly an entitlement and is essential if we are expecting parents to take an active part in supporting their child's learning and development.

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2.5.10 Teacher Remuneration

A further factor which it is frequently, believed to determine the efficiency with which work is performed is remuneration. High pay, it is commonly argued, attracts a good quality of recruit, provides an inducement to stay in the profession rather than to quit, and generates high morale, all of which are conducive to an efficient profession (Lynn, 1988:106). The current pay structure for teachers in the U.S is input-based; teachers are paid on the basis of their skills, which are measured by education and teaching experience (Lazer, 1986).

Merit-pay systems might realign teaching incentives by directly linking teacher pay with classroom performance (Buddin, McCaffrey, Kirby & Xia, 2007). Merit pay is "results

oriented" in the sense that compensation focuses on the production of specific student outcomes. Ideally, merit pay would improve the teacher workforce in two ways. First, teachers would have incentives to increase effort to produce specific student outcomes; second, linking pay directly with classroom outcomes would encourage high-quality teachers to remain in the teaching. Buddin, et al (2007) further state that output-based pay may, however also have adverse incentives on the teacher workforce. First, some tasks inherently involve team production, so individual contributions are difficult to disentangle. A compensation system could reward team output, but this would create incentives for individuals on the team to "free ride" on the efforts of others. Second, individual rewards for quantity produced will encourage undue emphasis on quantity alone in some circumstances. For example, if teachers received bonuses for the number of students reaching a reading proficiency level, then they would have little incentive to focus on student above the proficiency level.

2.5.11 Teacher-pupil Ratios and the Size of Classes

According to Lynn (1988:110) teacher-pupil ratios and the size of classes, are benefits which are generally believed to accrue from increases in expenditure on education, the one to which most importance is usually attached is the reduction in the size of classes. With smaller classes the teachers can give children more individual attention and this must surely raise the efficiency of instruction and result in better learning. Masitsa (2008:264) supported the above statement by saying the DoE should ensure that teachers do not have large classes. Salfi and Saeed (2007:613) observe that the relatively better performance of students in smaller schools might be due to small class size and hence more attention to the students by their teachers, and likewise it may be due to head teachers' closer links with the teaching staff hence properly mentoring them. Another reason is that generally in smaller schools, the head teacher and teachers are likely to put more effort in seeking the quality of education in order to attract the community for admission of the students, while on the hand, larger and medium schools generally do not care for such matters as such schools are already overloaded with students.

Ormrod (1998:662-663) says our students are more likely to perform at their best when they complete a paper-pencil assessment in a comfortable environment- one with acceptable room temperature, adequate lighting, reasonable workspace, and minimal distractions. This comfort factor may be especially important for student who are easily distracted, unaccustomed to formal assessments, or relatively uninterested in performing well, for example, it may be especially important for at-risk students.

2.5.12 Disciplinary Measures

The phenomenon of discipline refers to an appropriate behavior and as such, to a commitment to uphold certain convictions and norms of decency (Marshall 2005:51). Discipline is associated with the notion of bringing children in line with the accepted norms of decency, which conjures up the long-standing association of not sparing the rod (Skiba & Peterson 2003:66).

Consistent and effective teaching (which can only occur when teachers are motivated) minimizes disciplinary problems at school. Stated differently, good learner behavior may be promoted by consistent effective teaching because it instills a love of learning; learners spend more time on school work; regard school as essential because it prepares them for life; and it keeps them from antisocial behavior. Therefore, teachers should promote good learner behavior by teaching effectively and consistently, thus creating more schools with higher academic achievement so that academic becomes the norm and disciplinary problems the exception (Noguera 2003:350). In support of this, Barbetta, Norona and Bicard (2006:9) state that the first line of defense in managing learner behavior is effective instruction. Schools should identify learners who consistently underachieve academically or misbehave and refer them for counseling. Learners who consistently or deliberately misbehave should be suspended or expelled. This will send a clear message that the school does not tolerate or condone misbehavior. Ample evidence has already been presented indicating that disciplinary measures must be effective if misbehavior is to be discouraged or altered.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Poor performance of the Grade 12 learners is a challenge and it has a bad impact on education as a whole. All the stakeholders in education, being the department, the school principals, parents, learners and along with the educators are all responsible for the success of learners.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 of this study gave a broad literature review gathered from different authors on factors that cause poor performance of the grade 12 learners' performance. This chapter focuses on the design of the empirical investigation regarding the poor performance of the grade 12 learner performance in Thabina Cluster. This chapter outlines the purpose of the study, research design and methodology, population, sampling procedure, data collection methods and the processes of data analysis, followed by ethical considerations of the research respondents.

3.2 THE PURPOSE OF THIS EMPIRICAL STUDY

The objective of this study was to investigate factors that cause poor performance of grade 12 learners' performance in Thabina cluster. Specifically, this study aims to:

- Assess out whether parents are involved in the education of their children.
- Examine if adequate resources are allocated equally to all schools.
- To find out whether there is discipline in schools.
- To investigate what are managers doing to address the problem of poor performance of the grade 12 learners.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the plan according to which we obtain research participants and collect information from them (Welman, Kruger & Mitchel, 2005:52). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:72) research design is the planning of scientific inquiry designing a strategy for finding out something. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:22) say

that research design indicates the general plan: how the research is set up , what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used .

In this study, I have used the secondary schools in Thabina cluster as they are involve in the problem of poor performance. To gather data both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in order to triangulate data.

In this study qualitative approach was used because:

- Qualitative researchers ensure that their findings are transferable, which means that they help to understand other contexts or groups similar to those that were studied (Bertram, 2003:67).
- Reliability can be regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:119).

Quantitative research methods are methods which involve collecting numerical data (or data which can be counted) (Bertram, 2003:59).The reason for choosing quantitative research is that it gives explanations and predictions that will generalize to other persons and places (Leedy, 2001:102).

The importance of using quantitative research is that:

- Data validity might be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of data (Cohen, Manion and Marrison, 2000:105).
- It intends to establish, confirm, or validate relationships and to develop generalizations that contribute to theory (Leedy, 2001:102).
- The process of this method represents mainstream approach to research and structured guidelines exist for conducting them (Leedy, 2001:102).

- Quantitative methods are used to answer questions of prevalence (Bertram, 2003:59).

3.4 POPULATION

Population is the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements Babbie and Mouton (2001:173). Bertram (2003:14) defines population as all the people that would fit into the group that is being considered by a particular study.

The population of this study involved both males and females from learners, educators and circuit managers of Thabina cluster .This population was selected because I viewed them as being directly involved and affected by poor performance of the Grade 12 learners performance.

3.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE

Sampling is the process of selecting observations (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:164) Bertram (2004:64) says sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, events or behaviours to observe.

In this study, I used random sampling. The reason for selecting this method was that every member of the population had an equal chance of being included in the sample (Bertrams, 2004:67). This sampling is unbiased and that all members have the same probability of being selected (McMillan et al, 1993:160).

In this cluster there are 24 secondary schools. I have selected 42 learners, 29 educators to complete a questionnaire and 2 circuit managers for interview. My sample was 73. I picked-up any person, male and female as they had an equal chance of being part of the sample and that they were willing to be part of the research.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The data collection methods employed in this study involved qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.6.1 Qualitative Data

- **Interview schedule**

An interview is a conversation between the researcher and the respondent (Bertram, 2004:86). In this study I have used interview guide (qualitative instrument) to collect data. In this research an interview was used for the two circuit managers. I have used structured interview, where I have used interview schedule. I have used structured interview because I had in mind particular information that I wanted from the respondents, and had designed questions to be answered. These questions were open-ended as probing questions were asked for further explanation.

The purpose of using interview according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2000:268) is that:

- It may be used as a principle means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objective.
- It makes it possible to measure what a person knows.
- Interview may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking.

The advantage of using interview is that:

- It allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:269).
- The researcher is present with the respondent, and so can make the questions clear (Bertrams, 2004:88).

- It is usually easier for respondents to talk to an interviewer than to write down very lengthly responses in a questionnaire.
- You can collect much more detailed and descriptive data than through using a questionnaire (Bertrams, 2004: 88).

For the purpose of this study, interviews were used to understand in detail the cause of poor performance in Grade 12 results.

3.6.2 Quantitave Data

- **Questionnaire**

Questionnaire is a list of questions which the respondents answer (Bertrams, 2004:80). Behr (1983:72) a questionnaire is the most technical method of collecting information. In this study, questionnaire completed by 29 educators and 42 learners was designed. Questions were closed-ended. I have chosen closed-ended questions because the respondents were given a number of possible answers to choose.

The purpose of using questionnaire according to Bertram (2004:85) is that:

- Is a good data collection tool to use if one needs to collect data from a large number of people (breadth).
- The questions can be well structured and can be understood without the presence of the researcher.
- Questionnaires are useful if the answers to the questions can yield numerical data.

The advantages of using questionnaire according to Bertram (2004:84-85) is that:

- They can be administered to a large number of people.
- The information can be easily put into a computer programme which will count it.

- It enables the researcher to standardise the questions asked and to control the amount of information that respondent will supply.
- It can reach a large group of geographically spread-out respondents within a short period of time.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

I asked permission from the circuit manager to conduct research in the circuits and schools, and I also asked permission to interview them (circuit managers). When permission was granted, I gave them the consent form, showing information about the study and signature of agreement of participants. The circuit managers were asked questions using the interview schedule with structured open-ended questions. I was writing down every information given.

I also asked permission to conduct a research in the form of questionnaire to the educators and the learners. I visited the selected poor performing schools and asked permission from the school managers to give the educators and learners questionnaires. The covering letters containing appropriate explanation on the purpose of the study, the importance of the respondent's contribution and participation, as well as the significance of the study itself were issued to the school manager. Thereafter I went around and collected the questionnaires from the educators and learners.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the final stage of "listening to hear the meaning of what is said" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:226). It is concerned with making sense and interpreting the data collected so that they are stored and easily accessible for later use (Poggenpoel, 1998:334-335). Creswell (1994:153) states that data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes and other sources of materials that can be accumulated to increase your own understanding of

them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. In this study I have used qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis.

3.8.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

After the interview with the circuit managers, I used data reduction to analyse data. I started by reading the data set as a whole to get a sense of it. I identified the topics which emerged from the data. That topic was the descriptive name for the subject matter of a piece of text. I wrote down the topics and the list of topics that have emerged from the different data sets and see if there was any duplication. I classified or categorised the data. I applied the provisional classification system on all the data sets. After classification of data, I looked for relationships between categories. By so doing I was looking for patterns in the data.

3.8.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

After I collected data from the educators and learners, I systematically reorganised it into an easy readable format using computer programmes. For this study, the analysis of data was done through software programme, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Tables which explain the percentages and frequencies are given, followed by a discussion.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to de Vos, Strydom and Delport (2005), ethical issues serves as standards and a basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate his or her own conduct and they should, therefore, be continuously borne in mind and be internalised in the researcher's personality. In this study, I considered the following ethical issues: permission, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, the right to remain anonymous, no harm to respondents and respect for respondents.

3.9.1 Permission

For this study, I firstly sought permission in writing (see Appendix A) from the Thabina Circuit manager before collecting data in the secondary schools under his jurisdiction . I also wrote letters to principals of the selected secondary schools to make them aware of the study and solicit their cooperation during the research (Appendix B).

3.9.2 Informed Consent

With informed consent, respondents have the right to know what the research is all about, how it affects them, the risk (if any) and benefits of participation before they are involved in the research. I explained to the respondents about the study for purpose of letting them know exactly what was required from them, even to allow them to decide on whether to take part or not. I ensured the respondents the comfortability that they deserve when participating. No form of deception was used to ensure the participation of the participants.

3.9.3 Voluntary Participation

In this study, I made it clear to the respondents that their participation is on a voluntary basis and that they would participate without being threatened or intimidated.

3.9.4 Confidentiality

The respondents were assured that what information they gave would be kept strictly confidential and that they would be used for the purposes of this study only.

3.9.5 The Right to Remain Anonymous

Respondents were assured of the anonymity of their answers to questions asked and that the information they provided for the research would not be divulged, not even to

the principal of their schools. Respondents were further requested not to write their names on the questionnaires to ensure anonymity of the information they provided.

3.9.6 No Harm to Respondents

In this study, I assured respondents that there is no legal arrest or physical harm for participating in the study.

3.9.7 Respect for Respondents

This study does not at any stage intimidate the respondents and is characterised by mutual respect throughout the process. Above the respect for respondents, this study ensured that no deception of respondents occurred. I ensured that there is no misinterpretation or deliberate misrepresentation of facts provided by the respondents.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented procedures used in sampling, designing instruments, collection and analysing of data. The problems, objectives of the study and research questions were the guiding principles during the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

The findings based on the analysis and interpretation of the data is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three (3) focused on research design and methodology. This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the selected high schools in Thabina cluster. The chapter is divided into two sections, the first being the analysis and interpretation of data collected through the questionnaires from learners and the educators. The second is the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data collected through the interview with the circuit managers.

4.2 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES

A total of twenty (20) questionnaires were completed by the sampled high school students.

- **Biographical information**

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution of age

Age	Frequency	Percent
16-20	35	83.3
21-25	6	14.3
Other	1	2.4
Total	**42**	**100.0**

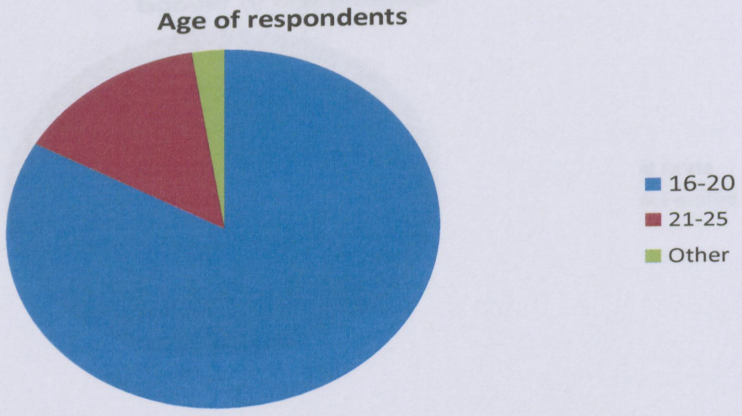

Figure 4.1: Age

The majority of respondents who completed the questionnaire were between the ages of 16 – 20 years. Furthermore, this particular weighting of the ages may suggest that the majority of the respondents (83.3%) are at the stage of making decisions regarding their future careers.

Table 4.2: Frequency distribution of gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	14	33.3
Female	28	66.7
Total	**42**	**100.0**

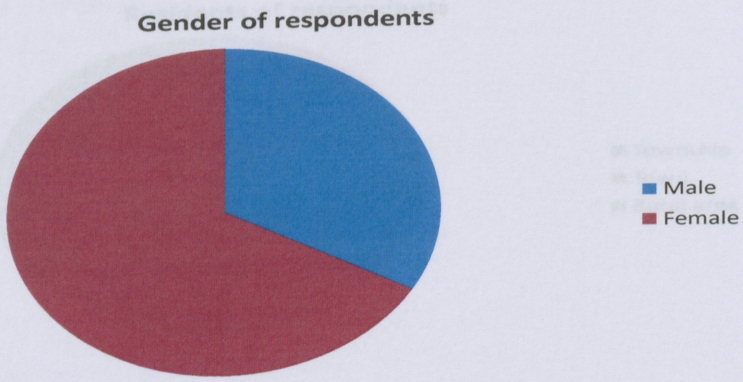

Figure 4.2: Gender

Table 4.2 shows a majority, 66.7%, of female over male respondents. This can be attributed to the fact that respondents were just randomly selected to complete the questionnaire.

Table 4.3: Frequency distribution of respondents' residents.

Respondents' Residents	Frequency	Percent
Township	2	4.8
Town	4	9.5
Rural area	36	85.7
Total	**42**	**100.0**

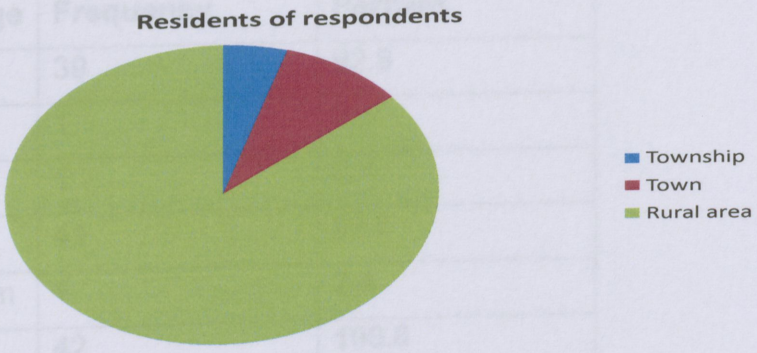

Figure 4.3: Residents

Table 4.3 indicate that the substantial percentage, 85.7% of the respondents are from rural areas. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the Secondary schools in Thabina Cluster are in rural areas that is why most schools are poorly performing. Banda and Kirundi (2005:1) say that from the Ministry of Education in Uganda it is identified that in terms of academic performance, urban learners continually outperform rural schools at primary and secondary school level. They added that other factors which mititate against rural learner's successful academic performance are untrained educators, poor infrastructure and school management practices in rural parents, poverty, lack of supportive academic discourse practices, and a general lack of enthusiasm among rural parent for their children's education.

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Table 4.4: Frequency distribution of respondents' home language

Home Language	Frequency	Percent
Sepedi	39	92.9
Xitsonga	1	2.4
Tshivenda	1	2.4
Total	41	97.6
Missing System	1	2.4
Total	**42**	**100.0**

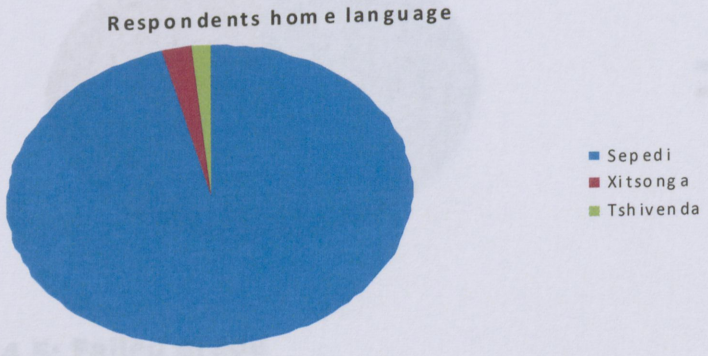

Figure 4.4: Home language

From the results in Table 4.4 one can observe that the largest number of the respondents, 92.9% speak Sepedi. The demographic area in this regard is important as most people in the area are Pedis, that's why the respondents are mostly Pedis. However, the respondent's home language has not emerged as an important variable in this study.

Table 4.5: Frequency distribution of respondents who repeated/failed a grade

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	64.3
No	15	35.7
Total	**42**	**100.0**

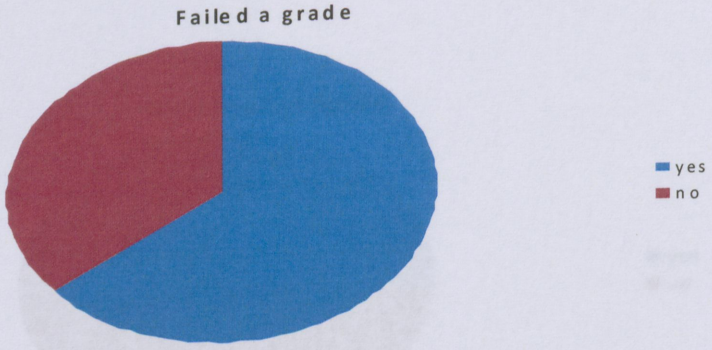

Figure 4.5: Failed grade

The reflection in Table 4.5. Indicates that the majority, 64.3%, of the respondents have repeated/failed a grade. The results may suggest that poor performance is a challenge. Legotla, Maaga and Sebego (2002), suggested that student's discipline was viewed as the second major cause of poor performance. Legotla et al (2002) say that educators argued that some learners were ill- disciplined and difficult to work with. Legotla et al (2000) went on to say that all these factors led to uncontrollable learners in the classroom where some learners intimidated the educators and other learners. Such learners deliberately ignored instructions from educators; they left classrooms during lessons, came to school late and disappeared before noon. It was observed that an

atmosphere of no work was the order of the day, and expecting them to do well in examinations it would have been a miracle.

Table 4.6: Frequency distribution of respondents' child headed household

Child Headed Household	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	26.2
No	31	73.8
Total	**42**	**100.0**

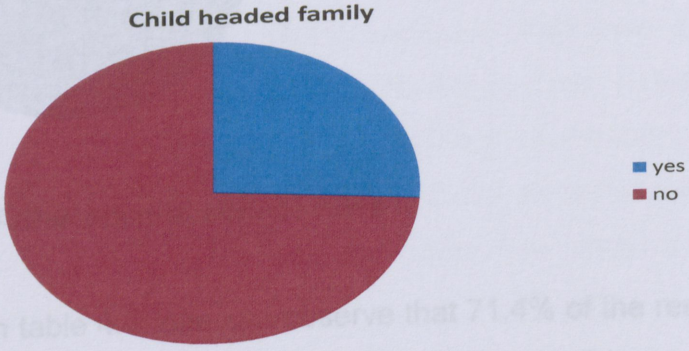

Figure 4.6: Child headed family

The majority, 73.8%, of the respondents are not from child headed family. These results contradict Pillays's (2006) view that the discipline in most schools was affected by the activities of early adolescents from child-headed families.

Table 4.7: Frequency distribution of adherence to school rules

Adherence to School Rules	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	71.4
No	12	28.6
Total	**42**	**100.0**

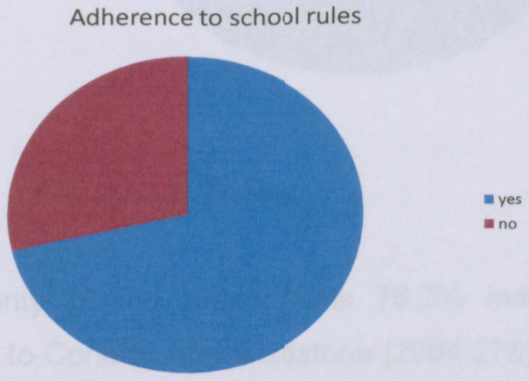

Figure 4.7: Adherence to school rules

From the results in table 4.7, one can observe that 71.4% of the respondents adhere to school rules. It is always known that learners will respond by saying they adhere to school rules in order to put themselves on a good side.

Table 4.8: Frequency distribution on safety at school

Safety at School	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	76.2
No	10	23.8
Total	**42**	**100.0**

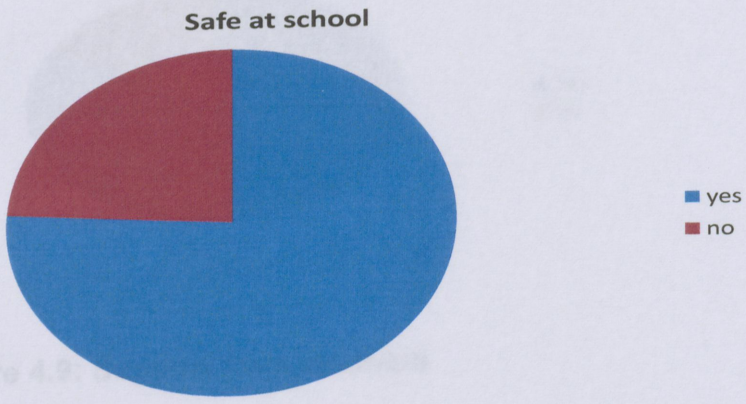

Figure 4.8: Safety

The majority of the respondents 76.2% indicated that they are safe at school. According to Conoley and Goldstone (2004:276) the obvious centering conviction is that all children have the right to learn in a safe school environment, and those schools should be a place where children are not harmed. For all children to exercise this right, they must be provided with school environments that maximize their chances for learning and positive development.

Table 4.9: Frequency distribution on enough support from your teachers

Enough Support from your Teachers	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	83.3
No	7	16.7
Total	**42**	**100.0**

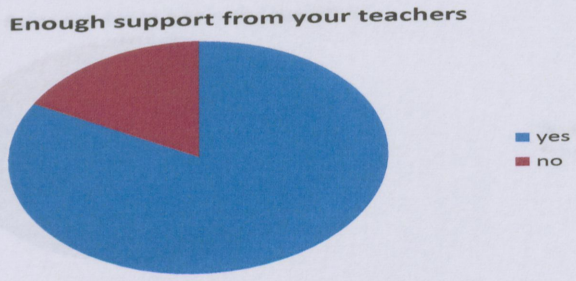

Figure 4.9: Support from teachers

Table 4.9 shows the majority of the respondents getting enough support from their teachers but these results left much to be desired as even if they claim to be having enough support from the educators but they still underperform.

Table 4.10: Frequency distribution on enough support from parents/guardian

Enough Support from Parents/Guardian	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	83.3
No	7	16.7
Total	**42**	**100.0**

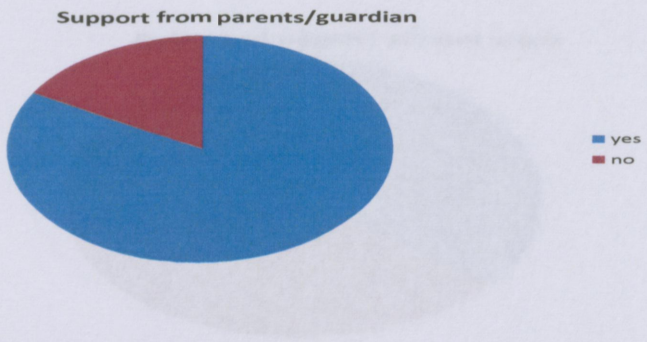

Figure 4.10: Support from parents

The majority of respondents 83.3% indicated that they get support from their parents/guardian. Dekker and Lamer (1994:158) state that when parents become more involved in teaching programme of the school, they are more likely to make school a priority of their children and their children are more likely to achieve better. Coleman (1998) sees parental involvement as part of a triangular relationship between teachers, parents and students, each able to reinforce positive attitudes in the other. Parents and student both need to participate fully in the school.

Table 4.11: Frequency distribution on neglecting school work until the last minute

Neglecting School Work	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	35.7
No	27	64.3
Total	**42**	**100.0**

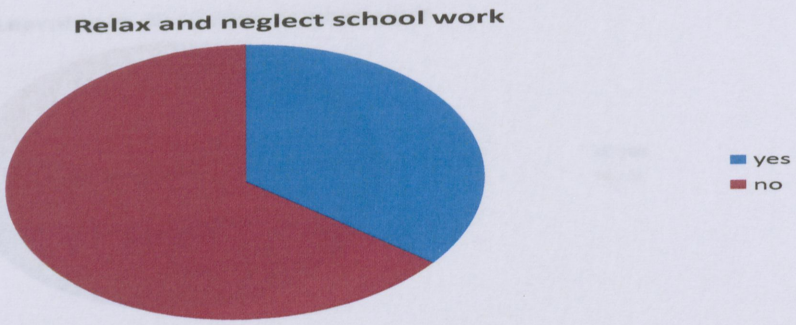

Figure 4.11: Neglecting school work

Although the majority of the respondents say they don't relax and neglect their school work until the last minute, but they still under perform. Literature says most students abuse the so-called "rights" and the teachers are unable to curb this situation, more especially after the abolition of corporal punishment. Because they do not respect teachers, this leads to the process whereby a teacher chucks the student out of the class and he or she loses a lot. So teachers spend more time on discipline issues. Students relax and neglect their school work until the last minute (Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego 2002:115).

Table 4.12: Frequency distribution on learning in a disruptive environment

Learning in a Disruptive Environment	Frequency	Percent
Agree	33	78.6
Disagree	9	21.4
Total	**42**	**100.0**

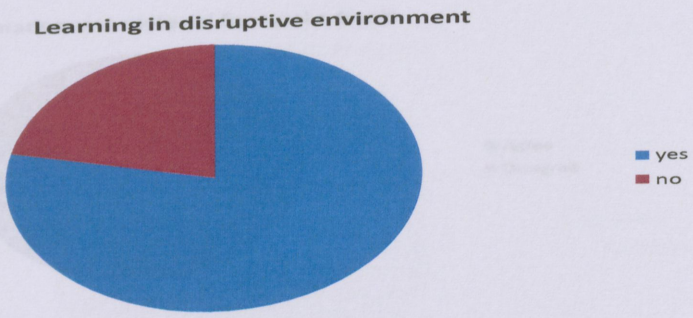

Figure 4.12: Learning in disruptive environment

The overwhelming majority of the respondents agree that is not easy to learn in a disruptive environment. Masitsa (2008:234) says that it is widely acknowledged that discipline is essential for creating a positive school climate, conducive to sound academic performance. He further says that numerous township schools are experiencing increasing incidents of poor discipline which impact negatively on their student's academic performance.

Table 4.13 Frequency distribution of inadequacy of resources

Inadequacy of Resources	Frequency	Percent
Agree	36	85.7
Disagree	6	14.3
Total	**42**	**100.0**

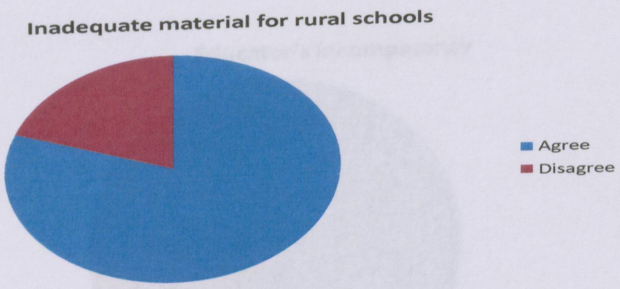

Figure 4.13: Inadequacy of resources

If school improvement is to succeed, proper resourcing has been shown to be essential (Reynolds et al., 2001). Smith (2007:48) cited in Orfield (2000) that poorer areas are likely to experience skills shortages among staff, as well as unequal funding, curriculum opportunities and involvement and resources from parents. Greg Orlofsky (2002) found that high-poverty, high-minority schools received significantly less state and local money than did other schools; also, students in such schools were almost twice as likely to be taught by teachers who were inexperienced or teaching outside their specialties.

Table 4.14: Frequency distribution on educator's incompetency

Educator's Incompetency	Frequency	Percent
Agree	25	59.5
Disagree	17	40.5
Total	**42**	**100.0**

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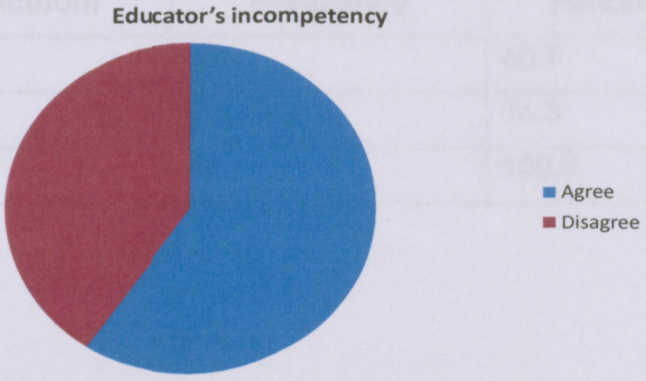

Figure 4.14; Educator's incompetency

The majority of the respondents (59.5%) agree that poor performance in schools is caused by educators' incompetency. Morant (1983:206) says that in those situations in which a teacher is promoted or changes his job laterally, without appropriate preparation, he could quite easily be exposed to obtain the necessary experience through making mistakes while in post. Alternatively, though he might undertake what he would assume to be suitable in-service study prior to commencing his new work, it may happen that because of flaws in its design the course fails to provide the personal professional enhancement sought. Morant (1983:208) further says that until a teacher is reasonably clear about what he wants to do and where he wishes to go, professional development and his own in-service education may lack direction. Until fairly recently, a constantly expanding education service carrying with it a correspondingly large number of unfilled posts meant that teachers would often be appointed to positions for which they were not initially trained. Bridges (1992:2) says on one occasion nearly half of the public school parents indicated that there were teachers in the local schools who should be fired. The most frequently cited reason for this drastic action was incompetence.

Table 4.15: Frequency distribution on change of curriculum

Change of Curriculum	Frequency	Percent
Agree	36	85.7
Disagree	6	14.3
Total	**42**	**100.0**

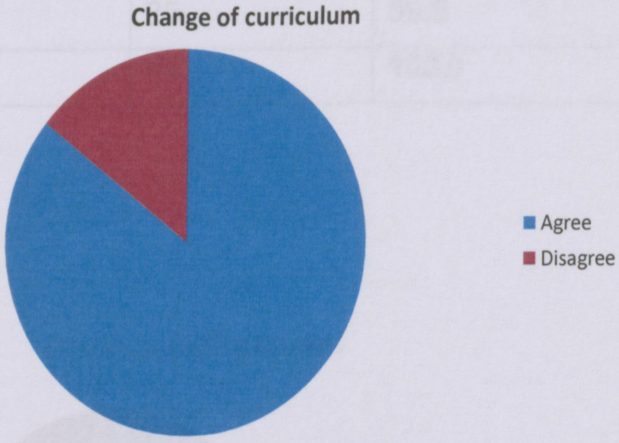

Figure 4.15: Curriculum change

The statistics is consistent with literature as the majority agreed that change of the curriculum frustrate learners. Maree, Aldous, Hattingh, Swanepoel and Van der Linde (2006:230) say the South African education system has been undergoing extensive restructuring since the advent of democracy. Coinciding with the formation of democracy in South Africa in 1994, an Outcomes-Based Education system was formulated. Introduced in 1998 and amended in 2001, this system asserted that all learners have the ability to succeed, and focused on acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, unlike the traditional practice that was based on content mastery

only. However the introduction of an Outcomes – Based Education system at present does not appear to be yielding satisfactory results. Teachers throughout the country, who were in no way responsible for or involved in developing the curriculum, agree that learners in the Further Education and Training Phase(grade10) achieve increasingly worse results, with unacceptably high percentage of learners failing Mathematics, and dropping the subject in mid-year (Perry, 2003).

Table 4.16: Frequency distribution of resources

Resources	Frequency	Percent
More educators	17	40.5
Library	25	59.5
Total	**42**	**100.0**

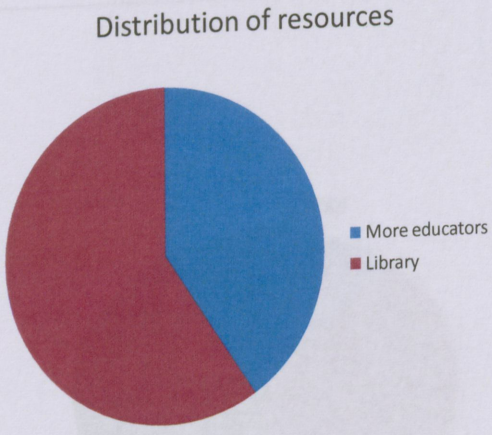

Figure 4.16: Resources

Literature (Bernstein, 2004; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Simkins, Rule,& Bernstein, 2007) suggest that a library is essential to the development of study skills among learners (Mutshaeni, 2008). Results here show that learners saw the need to have libraries as a resource to influence performance.

4.3 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

The following are the response from the educators:

Table 4.17: Frequency distribution of educators' age

Educator's Age	Frequency	Percent
21-30	3	10.3
31-40	10	34.5
41- 50	13	44.8
50 and above	3	10.3
Total	**29**	**100.0**

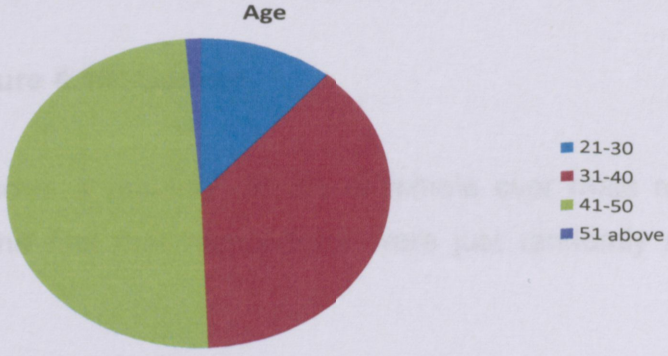

Figure 4.17: Educator's age

The majority of respondents who completed the questionnaire were between the ages of 41-50 years. Furthermore, this particular weighting of the ages may suggest that the majority of the respondents (44.8%, Table 4.17) are at stage of making decisions about their career.

Table 4.18: Frequency distribution of gender of respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	13	44.8
Female	16	55.2
Total	**29**	**100.0**

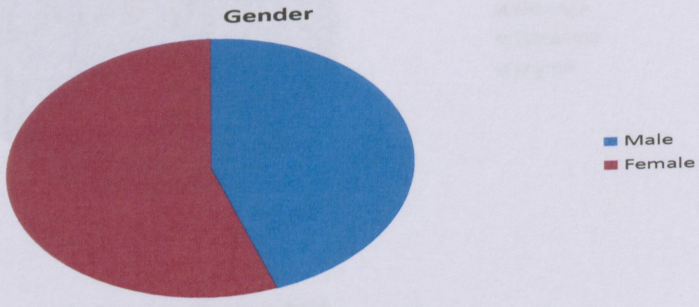

Figure 4.18: Gender

Table 4.18 shows a majority, 55.2% of female over male respondents. This can be attributed to the fact that respondents were just randomly selected to complete the questionnaire.

Table 4.19: Frequency distribution of respondents' home language

Respondents' Home Language	Frequency	Percent
Sepedi	24	82.8
Xitsonga	2	6.9
Tshivenda	1	3.4
English	2	6.9
Total	**29**	**100.0**

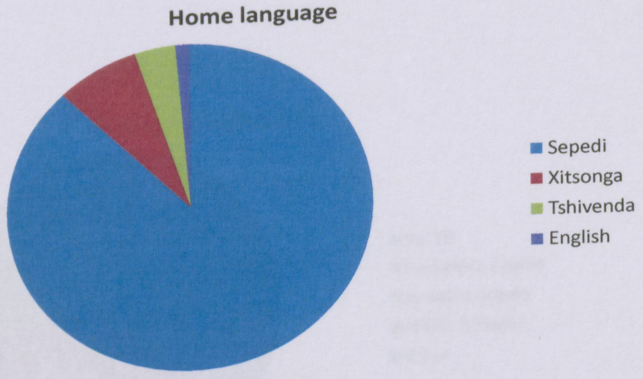

Figure 4.19: Home language

From the results in Table 4.19 one can observe that the largest number of the respondents, 82.8%, are Sepedi. This may be because of the demographic area which is dominated by the pedi's. However the respondents' home language has not emerged as an important variable in this study.

Table 4.20: Frequency distribution on respondents' academic qualification

Respondents' Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Std 10	11	37.9
Bachelor's degree	10	34.5
Honours degree	5	17.2
Master's degree	1	3.4
Other	2	6.9
Total	**29**	**100.0**

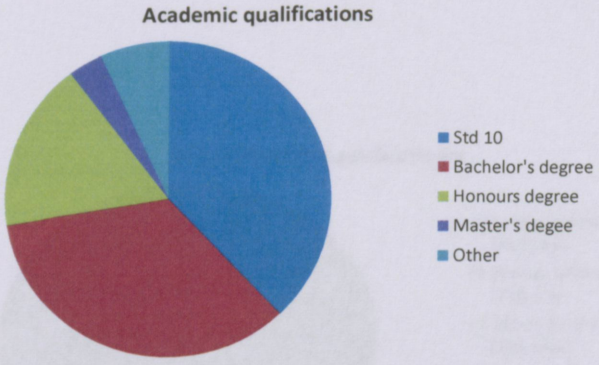

Figure 4.20: Academic qualifications

It may be noted that 37.9% of the respondents have Grade 12 as their academic qualification, and a further 34.5% hold Bachelor's degrees, 17.2% have Honours degree, whereas 3.4% have Master's degree. It is surprising for the learners to perform poorly whereas the majority of the educators hold Bachelor's degree, this may mean that other factors maybe the cause not teacher qualification.

Table 4.21: Frequency distribution on respondents' professional qualification

Respondents' Professional Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Junior Primary Diploma	1	3.4
Senior Primary Diploma	3	10.3
Secondary Teachers' Diploma	18	62.1
University Education Diploma	5	17.2
Other	2	6.9
Total	**29**	**100.0**

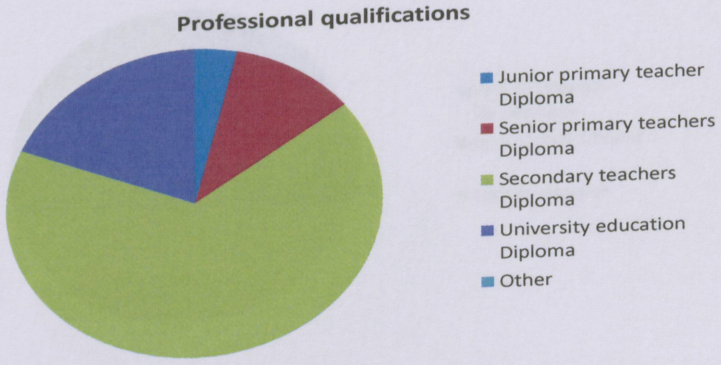

Figure 4.21: Professional qualification

The majority of the respondents (62.1%) have Secondary Teachers Diploma as their professional qualification. These results suggest that since the respondents acquired their Secondary Diploma, then they are qualified. Hickcox (1988) says that staff development, long known as in-service education, can take place in a variety of settings, can include an almost limitless number of activities, and can be conducted to

achieve many differing objectives. Morant (1983) says that the teacher who wants to become professionally effective must orientate himself in order to mould his career rather than have events dictated for him by external forces or agencies.

Table 4.22: Frequency distribution on causes of poor performance in Grade 12

Causes of Poor Performance in Grade 12	Frequency	Percent
Lack of Parental Involvement	10	34.5
Lack of commitment	8	27.6
Lack of resources	11	37.9
Total	**29**	**100.0**

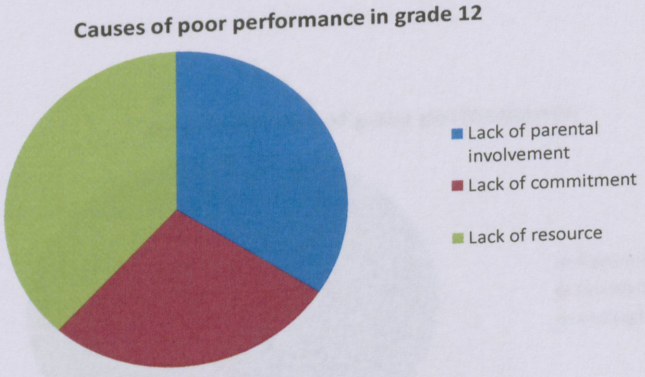

Figure 4.22: Cause of poor performance

The majority of the respondents say that the cause of poor performance in Grade 12 is lack of resources. This is supported by Milner and Khoza (2008) when they say it is widely acknowledged that the provision of quality education in South African schools is one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa in the twenty-century. A skilled, sophisticated workforce is a prerequisite to competing in today's global, technology

driven economic environment and education is the key to developing such workforce. Milner and Khoza (2008) further say however, as a result of the apartheid era's grossly inequitable allocation of resources in relation to education, and the espoused policy of apartheid to provide sub-standard education to black South Africans, many South African schools are ill-equipped to meet this challenge. Indeed, the performance of South African schools as measured by matric pass rates is dire.

Table 4.23: Frequency distribution on ways to improve poor performance

Ways to Improve Poor Performance	Frequency	Percent
Parental involvement	14	48.3
Competent educators	3	10.3
Enough resources	12	41.4
Total	**29**	**100.0**

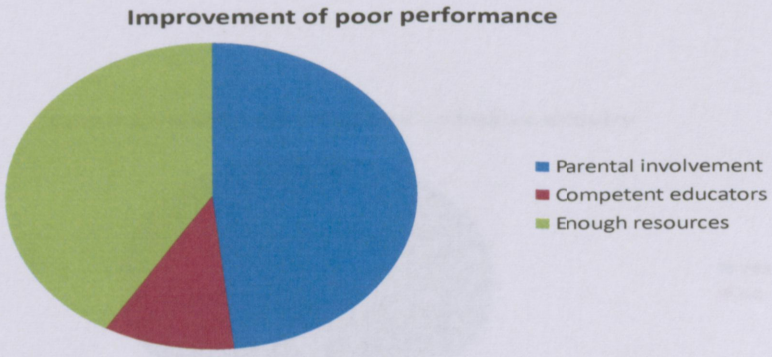

Figure 4.23: Improvement of poor performance

The results show that the involvement of parents in their children's education is crucial. The complete and optimum development of the child rests with the educative teaching partnership between parents and teachers. Regular and effective two-way

communication between the school and the home is needed to bind the various components of this partnership into a closely knit for mutual exchange of information regarding the child (Van der Westhuizen, 1991). The statement was further supported by Bourdieu's (1973) when he says that children's academic success and parental involvement in the school depend on the comparability of the home and school cultures. Furthermore the above literature was supported by the majority 48.3% of the respondents.

Figure 4.24: Frequency distribution on common lesson planning and collective enquiry

Common Lesson Planning and Collective Enquiry	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	72.4
No	8	27.6
Total	**29**	**100.0**

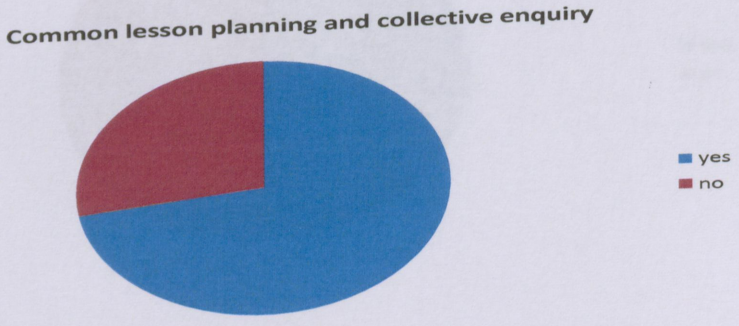

Figure 4.24: Lesson planning

According to the statistics, 72.4% of the educators make time for common lesson planning and collective enquiry. Ouchi (1981) found that the culture of an organisation's

share the values of trust, cooperation, teamwork, and egalitarianism. When values are shared, when employees work cooperatively toward the same goal, when employees are customer-oriented and free to innovate, when they have decision-making autonomy, the organization has a process that promotes efficient and effective products. In more effective schools, there is an agreement between all the partners in a school community to work together for growth (Stoll, 1992).

Table 4.25: Frequency distribution on educators furthering their studies

Educators Furthering their Studies	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	65.5
No	10	34.5
Total	**29**	**100.0**

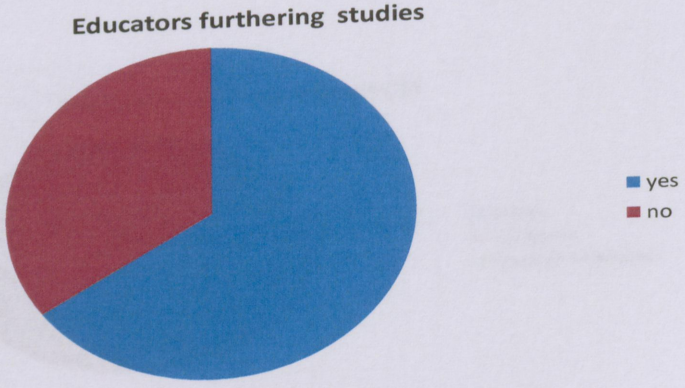

Figure 4.25: Furthering studies

From the educator's response, 65.5% say they are furthering their studies, but this is not a true reflection because on Table 4.20 and Table 4.21, 37.9% responded that their academic qualification is Std 10 (Grade 12) and 62.1% responded by saying Secondary

Teachers diploma is their professional qualification. The James Report (1972) recommended that teachers should be entitled to regular in-service education and training through a programme of leave to engage in such work. Burges (1993) says fundamental to all in-service education and training was the notion that in-service training would lead to the improvement of pupil learning based upon improvements in school and teacher performance.

Table 4.26: Frequency Distribution of Educators as Ideal Example

Educators as Ideal Example	Frequency	Percent
Agree	15	51.7
Disagree	9	31.0
Strongly disagree	5	17.2
Total	**29**	**100.0**

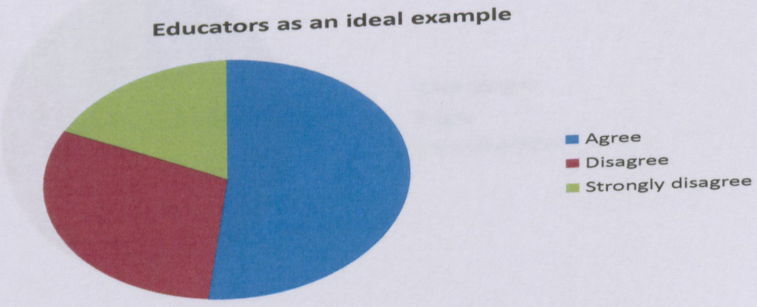

Figure 4.26: Educators as an ideal example

Masitsa (2008) support the statistics above when he says that learners with verbally hostile teachers may be more likely to act with peers in hostile ways, and that these learners may take on some of the teachers' behaviour. Masitsa (2008) further says that

because teachers are role models for learners, their behaviour, even when meeting our disciplinary measures, is seen by learners as an example to be emulated. Thus, teachers should always set an ideal example to learners by applying acceptable and corrective disciplinary measures.

Table 4.27: Frequency distribution on redeployment as cause of poor performance

Redeployment as Cause of Poor Performance	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	8	27.6
Agree	16	55.2
Disagree	5	17.2
Total	**29**	**100.0**

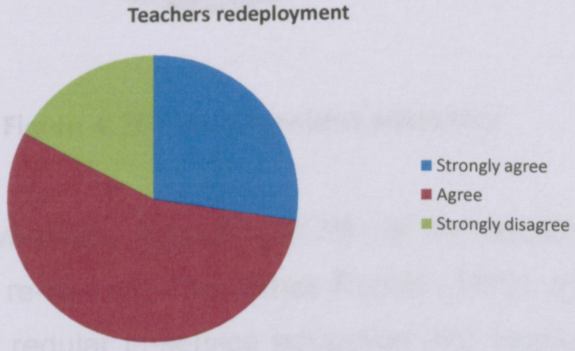

Figure 4.27: Redeployment

The majority of the educators (82.82%) agree that redeployment affect performance. According to Herald (20 April 1992:2), redeployment affected educators refused to teach and learners were regularly being sent home. The report further said that clear stability in education will not be achieved as long as the threat of being in excess hangs over the educator's heads.

Table 4.28: Frequency distribution on educators' incompetency

Educators' Incompetency	Frequency	Percent
Dismissed	2	6.9
Re-trained	26	89.7
Move to another school	1	3.4
Total	**29**	**100.0**

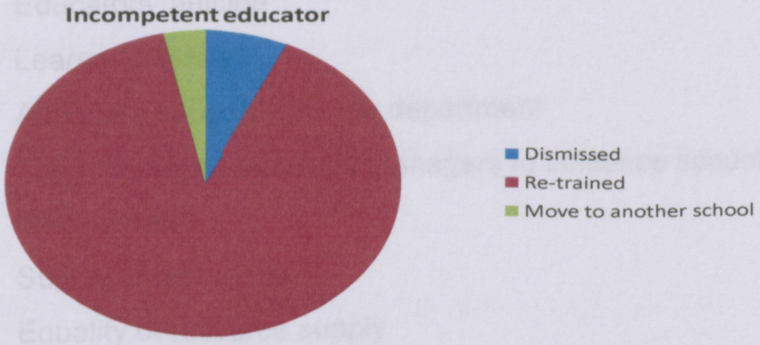

Figure 4.28: Incompetent educator

The overwhelming majority (89.7%) of the educators say that incompetent educators should be re-trained. The James Report (1972) recommended that teachers should be entitled to regular in-service education and training through a programme of leave to engage in such work. While this has not systematically occurred, there has been major development through in-service education being provided within a range of institutions including schools. However, fundamental to all in-service education and training was the notion that in-service training would lead to the improvement of pupil learning based upon improvements in schools and teacher performance (Burges, 1993).

4.4 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS WITH CIRCUIT MANAGERS

In accordance with the triangulation proposals described in Chapter 4 Sections 4.12 and 4.9.1, interviews were conducted with 2 circuit managers. The data collected from interviews with the circuit managers were categorized into sixteen main categories:

- Length of service of the circuit managers
- Causes of poor performance
- Strategies to improve poor performance
- Effect of poor performance
- Educators' attitude
- Learner's safety
- Adequate support from the department
- The role played by circuit managers to influence school improvement and effectiveness
- Supply of resources
- Equality of resource supply
- Educators' development
- Open-door policy
- Educators' lack of subjects' expertise
- Discipline in ill-disciplined learners
- Various stakeholders' involvement in education
- Shortage of educators

I will now discuss each of these sixteen categories separately.

4.4.1 Length of Service of Circuit Managers

The length of service of the other circuit manager is seventeen (17) years and the other circuit manager is two (2) years.

4.4.2 Causes of Poor Performance

According to the circuit managers, poor performance is caused by lack of syllabus coverage, poor study methods, learners' lack of readiness, lack of commitment by both teachers and learners, ill-discipline, lack of human and physical resources. This is supported by literature that poor performance is caused by lack of parental involvement, poor organizational structure, lack of resources, lack of student discipline, lack of educators discipline, curriculum, teacher union activities, community and anxiety.

The findings are supported by Ormrod (1998:719) who says that teachers must keep in regular contact with their students' parents, sharing information in both directions about the progress that student are making, and coordinating efforts in school with those on the home front. Ormrod (1998) further says that teachers need to establish productive working relationships with those parents who, on the surface, seem reluctant to become involved in their children's education.

Clarke (2005:105) cited in Barth (1999) stated that for true schools improvement to occur, schools must become communities, involving parents and local businesses as well as teachers and heads, while in their interview with principals of effective inner-city schools.

4.4.3 Strategies to Improve Poor Performance

The general response of the circuit managers was that there are many strategies to improve poor performance. Educators to improve on their commitment, coverage of the syllabus, pass requirements from lower grades, correct study methods, curriculum delivery by the department, adequate, that is, supplying schools with qualified teachers. Literature says that in-service training for educators, team work, school restructuring, reengineering, school growth-plan, motivation, behavioural modification, parental involvement, teachers' remuneration, teacher-pupil ratios and the size of the classes and disciplinary measures. It is believed that if indeed these strategies can be adhered to, poor performance will improve.

4.4.4 Effect of Poor Performance

The circuit managers responded by saying that learners drop out in big numbers, teachers are redeployed to good performing schools from time to time, schools become white elephant, crime increase, poverty prevails, communities have no future, overpopulation of Grade 12 classes and shortage of resources. According to (Stoll, 1992:104) he says that many principals are burdened with the responsibility that is their duty to make their schools more effective, but they lack confidence in their ability to be change agent.

Herald (20 April 1992:2) clearly stated that, excesses of educators lead to feelings of insecurity, demotivation and depression, which in turn adversely affect the commitment of educators to fulfill their teaching obligations. Drop out (Richard, 1995:2), imposed change (Sikes,1987:46), disruptive behaviour, pupils, frustrated by a lack of understanding and inability to access the curriculum, are likely to behave badly (Blandford, 1998:870).

4.4.5 Educator's attitude

The response by the circuit managers is that the attitude of the educators in their circuit differs as other teachers work very hard whereas others are lazy. Mutshaeni (2008) says that educators lack commitment, they did not respond to the siren or bell. They were not time-conscious. Legotla, Maaga and Sebego (2002:115) say the major cause of poor performance is low educator commitment and morale. Maaga et.al (2002:116) further say one parent said teachers absent themselves from schools particularly towards month –end. One educator remarked by saying, "Lack of discipline among teachers and students has reached higher levels. There might be no punishment for educators and learners if they commit any offence. So they practice late – coming, absenteeism, non-performance of duties".

4.4.6 Learner's Safety

From the circuit managers' response, they say if learners are not safe, for whatever reason, teachers work will be affected negatively. Learners who do not feel safe at

school will not concentrate and therefore teachers will find it hard to teach them. These learners will in turn perform poorly. One of the circuit managers responded by saying that he does not have a challenge of safety with schools under his circuit. Table 4.8 above shows that the majority of learners (76.2%) responded that they are safe at school. Conoley and Goldstein (2004:276) say that all children have a right to learn in a safe school environment, and that schools should be a place where children are not harmed.

4.4.7 Support from the Department

The circuit managers interviewed stated that teachers in their circuits find adequate support from the department, they even say that educators sometimes reject the support by disrupting workshops. They say the department has taken so many underqualified teachers to Universities for further training (NPDE and ACE). Even if workshops are disrupted but Maths and Physical science teachers are taken to Maths, Science and Technology (MASTEC) for in-service training. He further says the current crop of teachers is becoming obsolete and untrainable. They say the department does its bit to manage CASS/ Continuous Assessment and to set common tasks for learners to keep standard acceptable. It also involves Non-governmental Organisation (NGOs) to train teachers on the application of the new curriculum statement. The Curriculum Advisors also assist with the formation and support of subject committees.

Even if the circuit managers stated adequate support by the department, Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002:117) pointed out that the unavailability of subject advisors in some districts made it difficult for the person to visit schools on a regular basis. They further said that policies of government clearly had a great impact on learner performance. In an attempt to the education system, government enacted many laws and adopted some new policies. However, not all policies were easy to implement.

4.4.8 Supply of Resources

Even though the circuit managers acknowledged that resources are supplied, but not enough. They complained that physical and human resources remain a huge problem in

their circuits. For example, there are no libraries nor laboratories worth talking about. Human resource is very scarce in terms of Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting, Agricultural Science and Technology. They further say that sports grounds are unavailable or are shared with communities, there are no school halls or rooms for indoor games.

Sikes (1987) says that poor conditions carry messages about the value that is placed upon the work of the teachers do. Many teachers believe that if the politicians and administrators valued education they would put more money in to improving the conditions, thereby enabling teachers to improve the quality of their teaching.

4.4.9 Equality in Terms of Resource Supply

"Though most of the schools in my circuit are rural, only a few are in the township. Yes, in as far as we can, we practice equity in terms of supplying resources as in the distribution of learner and teacher support materials, teachers and norms and standards allocations" one of the circuit manager said. Smith (2007:48) cited in Orfield (2000) said that schools in poorer areas are likely to experience skills shortage among staff, as well as unequal funding, curriculum opportunities and involvement and resources from parents. High poverty, high minority schools received significantly less state and local money than other schools.

Milner and Khoza (2008:155) say that it is widely acknowledged that the provision of quality education in South African schools is one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa in the twenty-first century. They further sat as a result of the apartheid era's grossly inequitable allocation of resources in relation to education, and the espoused policy of apartheid to provide sub-standard education to black South Africans, many South Africans schools are ill-equipped to meet this challenge.

4.4.10 Teachers Development

The circuit managers interviewed stated that the teachers in their circuits are developed even if is not sufficient. They further say that at the moment there is an intensive training

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of some educators (one per school) in ICT/ Computer literacy. One of the circuit managers says that he would like to see a situation where more and more teachers are trained in all sorts of things like First-Aid, Fire-extinguisher, Life Skills, Laboratory equipments and Library Management, Sports and Music.

Collins (1995) says that computer literacy courses of a theoretical nature normally contain vast amounts of technical terminology and many learners attempt to master such terminology using their second or third language. Learners need to develop the cognitive and academic skills required at school level to succeed in learning academic subject matter. The way to achieve this is for teachers to integrate language learning with content learning, making use of the learners' experiences and to focus on higher – level cognitive skills (Hurley & Tinajero, 2001). They further say that if the problem is not addressed adequately at both primary and secondary school level, the learner has a disadvantage when studying at a Tertiary Education Institution. Morant (1983) says that the teacher who wants to become professionally effective must orientate himself in order to mould his career rather than have events dictated for him by external forces or agencies.

4.4.11 Educator's Lack of Subject Expertise

The circuit managers responded by accepting the question asked, they said most teachers are under qualified others are stuck with college knowledge and this is what leads to poor performance. Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002:117) said that their data revealed that the Provincial Department of Education suffered from poor management procedures and unclear distribution of responsibilities for decision-making at various levels. Legotlo et.al (2002) said that there was a shortage and oversupply of relevant educators in schools. Schools were uncertain how they should appoint educators and how educators could be transferred from one school to other. Educators were temporarily redeployed to other schools without clear procedure guidelines. Principals observed that they were almost powerless to control such "borrowed educators" regarding sick leave and regular attendance. More importantly, borrowed educators were sometimes not expert in specific areas where assistance was needed.

4.4.12 Discipline to Ill-discipline Learners

The circuit managers responded that they encourage discipline to the ill-disciplined learners by engaging the deputy Manager of governance and by visiting and motivating learners particularly in the FET band. They also said they encourage and ensure that schools draw and enforce codes of conduct for teachers and learners. They also encourage learners to take part in extra-curricular activities and also encourage schools to invite Pastors to schools and learners to attend church on Sundays. Masitsa (2008:234) says it is widely acknowledged that discipline is essential for creating a positive school climate conducive to sound academic performance. He further says that numerous township schools experienced increasing incidents of poor discipline which impact negatively on their students' performance.

4.4.13 Involvement of other Stakeholders

In response to the question on how they involve various stakeholders to take part in the education of the communities, they said that they involve them by inviting them on open days at schools, at parents meeting at clusters. Another one said, when they are invited by the stakeholders they honour them, they also allow them free but controlled passage to the schools. Clarke (2005:105) says that for true school improvement to occur, schools must become communities, involving parents and local businesses as well as teachers and heads. In another US study of improving schools in economically deprived areas, the most successful school was found to have a very strong community outreach programme, including links with local businesses and parents (Borman, Rachuba, Datnow,Alberg, Maciver and Stringfield, 2002).

4.4.14 Shortage of Educators

The circuit manager's response to the question was that indeed they experience problem of shortage of educators in scarce skills such as Mathematics, Physical Science, Agricultural Science, Accounting and Business Studies. They also said that to replace a teacher who has been attritioned in one way or another, becomes a huge bereaucratical right.

Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002:116) say that one principal lamented that no substation for the teachers who go on leave. In each school one or more teachers apply for a sick leave or maternity leave and there are no substitutes. As a result students stay for three or more months without teachers for some learning areas. Teachers who are no longer satisfied with their jobs following imposed change may decide to shift the balance or weight which they give to their work in context of their lives as a whole. In other words they reduce the importance they attach to work and put more time, effort and energy into their families or into a particular interest or an alternative, supplementary career (Sikes, 1992:36).

4.5 CONCLUSION

The empirical research study was used to complement the literature review as provided in Chapter 2 on causes of poor performance of the Grade 12. The literature review merely provided theories of causes of poor performance, whilst the empirical research gives the real picture of the situation. This chapter dealt with the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data about causes of poor performance of the Grade 12 in Thabina cluster.

In Chapter 5, a summary of the previous Chapters 1 – 4 is provided, synthesised findings of the empirical study are discussed, recommendations for educational provisions and future research studies on the topic are offered, followed by conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE
SYNTHESIS, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information on the observation made about the topic under investigation. It begins with summary of the previous chapters, followed by combining of the problem statement as provided in Chapter 1 with the findings of this empirical survey. The chapter further draws conclusions arising from the findings reported in the preceding chapters in order to indicate whether or not the research problem has been solved, and present alternative guidelines or recommendations as would be informed by the research findings and literature review that is contained in this research report.

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5.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

The purpose of this research study as outlined in Chapter1 was:

- To examine the causes of poor performance of the Grade 12 results.

Chapter one provides the focus of the research as it highlights the most important aspects of the research such as the research background, statement of the problem, aims of the study, research questions and research design and methodology.

Chapter two provides literature review about the topic under investigation. The following sub-headings were used to review the relevant literature: introduction, causes of poor performance of Grade 12 learners results, effect of poor performance of the Grade 12 and conclusion.

Chapter three provides research design and methodology that has been used in this research. Population, sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection procedure, data analysis, ethical consideration, the right to privacy and the right to remain anonymous, were also presented.

Chapter four is based on data analysis and interpretation of the findings. The analysis of data was restricted to descriptive supported by tables and percentage.

Chapter five provides summary, findings, conclusion and recommendations based on the topic under investigation.

5.3 RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

The presentation that follows in this section is based on fourty-two completed questionnaires that were returned after fourty-three were distributed to learners, twenty-nine questionnaires also completed and returned from educators and an interview to two circuit managers .This means that 99% of the distributed questionnaires to the sampled learners and educators and 100% of interview to circuit managers were secured.

With the view of aligning the problem statement in the first chapter with the findings of this research, the four research questions were formulated and are answered below. With reference to the problem statement presented in Chapter 1, I hold a view that the aforementioned research problem has been solved satisfactory. The problem statement which is: what are the causes of poor performance in Grade 12 examination results in the Thabina cluster? Was made and recapped by means of the following research questions: Are parents involved in the education of their children? Are adequate resources allocated to all schools? Is there lack of discipline in schools? And are managers addressing problem of poor performance?

The empirical study reveals that challenges exist with regard to the poor performance of the Grade 12 learners' results in Thabina cluster. The findings that respond to the problem statement are thematically discussed as research questions below:

- What are the causes of poor performance in Grade 12 results?

It was found from the data collected that poor performance is caused by several factors, lack of syllabus coverage, that is educators are unable to finish their syllabus because of workshops during school hours and teachers activities like teacher forums, memorial services, strikes and matches that are held in communities wherein learners are suppose to pay solidarity. Learners lack readiness, learners get to Grade 12 not being ready, this is observed by their playfulness and not doing their work or being forced to do their school work. Lack of commitment by both teachers and learner, that is, teachers are found coming late to school and classes and sometimes not even honouring their periods, the same behaviour is found on learners. Ill-discipline is also a challenge as learners don't abide to school rules. They are engaged to drugs and alcohol within school premises and also engage in sexual relationships within the school. Parents are not engaged in the education of their children, Banda and Kirunda (2005) say that the rural parents conceded that the learners lack access to many literacy artifacts which could have expose them to information, those which give them pleasure specifically the TV and, those which can help develop self expression. They intimated that it is rare to find children in rural areas reading on their own. They observed that the common literacy practice their children engage in is revising their notes but this is usually done by a few and only during the examination period. Inadequate resource allocation is another problem as some schools have resources whereas in other schools there are no resources. Sikes (1987) says that poor conditions carry messages about the value that is placed upon the work of the teachers do. Low-performing schools in low-income areas are frequently plagued by a lack of resources. Orlofsky (2002) found that high-poverty, high-minority schools received significantly less state and local money than did other schools; also, students in such schools were almost twice likely to be taught by teachers who were inexperienced or teaching outside their specialties.

5.3.1 Are Parents Involved in the Education of their Children?

Although the responses from 83.3% of learners agree that they get enough support from their parents, which is an overwhelming number, it was established that parents

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are not involved in the education of their children. Ormrod (1998) says that teachers need to make an extra effort to establish productive working relationships with those parents who, on the surface, seem reluctant to become involved in their children's education. As sometimes when parents are invited to meetings to discuss their children's performance they do not turn-up, this is because parents are working and their children are left under the care of grandparents who don't see the necessity of visiting schools. The learners further perform poorly as there is no motivation from parents.

5.3.2 Are Adequate Resources Allocated to all Schools?

From the data collected from the learners, educators and circuit managers, it was found that there is no adequate resource allocation especially physical and human resources. There are no libraries, laboratories and human resource which are scarce in terms of mathematics, physical science, accounting, agricultural science and technology. They further say that the process of redeployment affect schools as the principle of last in out, cripple schools as the most dedicated teachers are affected and those lazy once remains this affect the learner's results. One of the problems is that essential educators fill the promotional posts and the movements are done in the middle of the year, this affects the performance of the learners drastically. Really, shortage of resources is a challenge as teachers becomes frustrated to make learners to understand as some of the learning areas need practicals, so without laboratories is not easy to release desired results. Milner and Khoza (2008) say that it is widely acknowledged that the provision of quality education in South African schools is one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa in the twenty-first century.

5.3.3 Is there Lack of Discipline in Schools?

The response from the circuit managers was that, they haven't experience lack of discipline in schools in their circuits. Even if they responded positively to the question, through probing it was realised that in some schools there is no discipline as learners

are seen moving around malls and taxi ranks wearing school uniforms during school hours. One of the shortcomings found is that some of the learners are ill-disciplined, they fight, there are cases of stabbings and girls are not feeling safe around schools especially in toilets. It was found that the discipline in most schools was affected by the activities of early adolescents from child-headed families. It was observed that early adolescents caused trouble and that educators had no alternative forms of punishment to apply in order to chastise them (Pillay, 2006).

5.3.4 Are Managers Addressing Problem of Poor Performance?

The circuit manager's response to the question was that they that they are addressing problem of poor performance. They have the talk shows with high school teachers about poor performance. They encourage schools to do the catch-up in addressing the problem of poor performance. They call SGB's to meetings to talk about poor performance in schools. Teams are sent to poor performing schools to help educators in improving performance in results. As poor performance is not only in high schools, primary schools are also engaged with common tasks of assessment so that they get used to examinations from lower grades. It is well – known that leadership plays a key role in school improvement and school effectiveness. This evidence from the international literature demonstrated that effective leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the achievement of students in most countries (Harris and Muijs, 2002).

5.4 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The most significant findings of this investigation can be summarised as follows:

- Lack of parental involvement,
- Illiteracy amongst parents'
- Child-headed family,
- Lack of facilities and resources such as libraries, laboratories, science centre,
- Shortage of teachers

- Lack of commitment by both learners and educators

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

For the purpose of this study, the following recommendations are advised that with and through them, there can be improvement of Grade 12 results:

- It is recommended that a talk show with all the stakeholders, that is, learners, parents, educators, principals, circuit managers be initiated by the Department of Education.
- Resources should be equally distributed.
- Educators should be placed on suitable posts.
- Through the SGB's parents should be involved in the education of their children.
- Parents should be encouraged to live their children in the guardian of responsible people who will be available in schools if need be, as they are not around.
- Learners and educators should be committed in their school work.
- Schools should have school policies that are signed by both parents and learners and should be adhered to.
- Teachers should be paid satisfactorily so that they become effective and efficient.
- Department of Education should involve all stakeholders in changing of the curriculum.
- Team work should be encouraged by all means.
- Department of Education should make available in-service training to develop educators.

5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It should be emphasised that poor performance of the Grade 12 and its impact in schools is not only experienced by schools in Thabina cluster. This study had its sample as educators, learners and circuit managers who are involve in Grade 12. A further study is recommended on the causes of poor performance of the Grade 12 results to other areas of educational settings, building up from this one.

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5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is not possible to generalise the findings of this study, because the sample size only covered a small part of the schools in Thabina cluster. However, the findings can be transferable and be the same in other areas with similar context. The aim of this research, which was to examine the causes of poor performance in Thabina cluster, was achieved.

The study was conducted following adequate steps and procedures to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Potential biasness was avoided by getting almost full representative of all stakeholders involved being learners, educators and circuit managers from where there is poor performance.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The empirical study has revealed from the findings that unless something is done urgently as suggested in the recommendations, poor performance will continue to impact negatively in schools. Due to poor performance, learners will drop-out from schools, enrolment in schools will decline as parents will withdraw their children from poor performing schools to good performing schools and some of the schools will be overcrowded.



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Cell no. 083 629 0279

CONSENT FORM

Dear Principal

I am currently conducting research into the **factors leading to poor performance of grade 12 results in Thabina Cluster for the years 2007-2009**, and I have been granted permissio by the Circuit managers to conduct research in the school in which you are currently managing as it has been selected to take part in this research.

1. An interview will be conducted and it will take approximately 30 minutes.
2. There is no known risk involved in the research.
3. There are no costs involved.

You are assured that your identity and responses to this interview will be regarded as **extremely confidential at all times and that they will not be made available to any unauthorized user.**

Should you have any queries or comments, you are welcome to contact me.

M.A MASETLA

CONSENT

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Venda, you are now requested to complete the following section:

I _____

Have read this letter and understand the terms involved.

On condition that the information provided by me is treated as confidential at all times, hereby (MARK the appropriate section)

☐ Give consent

☐ Do not give consent that the results may be used for research purposes.

Signature: _____

Date : _____

Private Bag X1411
LENYENYE
0857
Tel. No. 015 355 4529
Fax. N.o 015 355 4029

LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENMENT

DEPARTMENT
OF
EDUCATION

Enq: Kgomo SBT

Cell: 079 510 4015

26.04.2010

To : Thabina Circuit Schools.
Att: School Principals
Educators
To whom it may concern

1. PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

2. Please note that Mrs Masetla M.A an educator at Thabina Primary School has been granted permission to conduct research in the Circuit.

3. Mrs Masetla is studying for her Masters in Education [MED] Degree, and therefore needs to do research that is related to schools.

4. Please give her support and cooperation

5. With regards.

.....
CIRCUIT MANAGER

Thabina Circuit

CHAPTER FIVE

SYNTHESIS, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information on the observation made about the topic under investigation. It begins with summary of the previous chapters, followed by combining of the problem statement as provided in Chapter 1 with the findings of this empirical survey. The chapter further draws conclusions arising from the findings reported in the preceding chapters in order to indicate whether or not the research problem has been solved, and present alternative guidelines or recommendations as would be informed by the research findings and literature review that is contained in this research report.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

The purpose of this research study as outlined in Chapter1 was:

- To examine the causes of poor performance of the Grade 12 results.

Chapter one provides the focus of the research as it highlights the most important aspects of the research such as the research background, statement of the problem, aims of the study, research questions and research design and methodology.

Chapter two provides literature review about the topic under investigation. The following sub-headings were used to review the relevant literature: introduction, causes of poor performance of Grade 12 learners results, effect of poor performance of the Grade 12 and conclusion.

Chapter three provides research design and methodology that has been used in this research. Population, sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection procedure, data analysis, ethical consideration, the right to privacy and the right to remain anonymous, were also presented.

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