

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| CADRE | Community Asset Development Redefining       |
| DSG   | Staff Development Team                       |
| ESD   | Exclusionary School Discipline               |
| HIA   | Health Impact Assessment                     |
| HIP   | Human Impact Partners                        |
| HSRC  | Human Science Research Council               |
| IDC   | Industrial Development Co-operation          |
| IQMS  | Integrated Quality Management Systems        |
| NCS   | National Curriculum Statement                |
| NDoE  | National Department of Education             |
| NGO   | Non-Government Organization                  |
| OBE   | Outcomes Based Education                     |
| PBIS  | Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support |
| PDCA  | Plan- DO- Check- Act                         |
| RJ    | Restorative Justice                          |
| RJP   | Restorative Justice Partners                 |
| SADTU | South African Democratic Educators Union     |
| SAQI  | South African Quality Institute              |
| SDT   | Staff Development Team                       |
| SGB   | School Governing Body                        |
| SMT   | School Management Team                       |
| ZPD   | Zone of Proximal Development                 |

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The high failure rate of learners in Bushbuckridge secondary schools in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa, led to a general outcry for a better academic performance of learners. The Department of Basic Education (2010) tried a special support programme called Operation Tsutsuma for Bushbuckridge region only. The aim of the programme was to intensify support for the region to ensure sustenance of improvement in the delivery of quality education for a successful learner attainment. Despite this effort, the academic performance of learners in Bushbuckridge secondary schools remained at the bottom line. Evidence provided by the Mpumalanga Department of Education (2011) suggests that the academic performance of learners in this region has always been extremely poor since 2008. This is proved by the end of year pass rate of the grade twelve learners (see Table 1.1).

Lack of discipline among learners was cited as a prominent factor that caused the continuation of unsuccessful learning and teaching leading to poor academic performance of learners in South African schools. It was confirmed that discipline problems predict a decline in the academic performance of learners. Overcrowding was cited as one condition, which is prevalent in most rural schools, that erodes discipline in the classroom. Again, large enrolment undermines discipline in the entire school thus lowering the academic performance of the learners (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2011).

The researcher therefore decided to conduct an investigation to understand the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools in order to provide a body of knowledge for the improvement of the quality of education in the region.

A literature review was conducted based on the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in rural schools, particularly in South Africa. Findings from literature review revealed that most schools were plagued with discipline problems. Learners no longer nurture a culture of respect for



and trust in their educators. The literature revealed further that learners who misbehave tend to perform poorly and frequently absent themselves from school. Fellow learner safety, security and success in education were often adversely affected by disruptive behaviour and other forms of misconduct by learners.

The literature review revealed that School Governing Bodies (SGBs), which were entrusted with the duty of adopting a code of conduct for learners through a consultative process with parents and the educators focusing on positive discipline, self-discipline and establishing a standard of behaviour that was recognised and accepted by civil society to result in high academic performance of learners, lacked capacity to perform their duties. Consequently educators were threatened, sworn at, ignored and abused on a daily basis. Learners were frequently absent and late for school. Lessons were repeatedly disrupted by learners. Of particular significance was the absence of a disciplinary mechanism for educators to deal with lack of discipline among learners.

The literature study highlighted numerous reasons why learners absent themselves from school and why they drop out. Some of the reasons are the kinds of association that learners make between school and the effect it has on them. For instance, to some learners school is associated with hostility, cruelty and indifference, as a result of which, many learners would rather not go to school. However, if learners experience school as a friendly place where they are treated with kindness, love and warmth, they are likely to continue at school as long as it is necessary.

Parental support was cited as the primary contextual influence on learners' academic performance. The more support and help that the learners receive at home, the better the chances of their academic performance.

Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) was mentioned as a national strategy developed to ensure quality public education for all and to constantly improve the quality of learning and teaching. This endeavor has, however, proved unsuccessful because educators in some schools do not understand the IQMS instrument as advocacy and training programmes in this regard have proved ineffective.



Thus, a gap in knowledge exists regarding an effective disciplinary mechanism which could be used by all schools to deter ill-discipline in schools for the betterment of the learners' academic performance. Moreover, School Governing Bodies lack the capacity to perform their duties. All these factors contribute to the lack of discipline which is still prevalent in schools.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

The success of a school is measured against its academic achievement. Its quality is measured against the academic performance of its learners. Discipline therefore is essential in ensuring that both educators and learners play their fundamental roles leading to the production of quality education. The task of the school, therefore, is to ensure that effective teaching and learning are taking place through the implementation of discipline. There has been a call for better academic performance of learners at secondary schools in Bushbuckridge, South Africa. Statistics indicate that the overall performance of secondary schools in Bushbuckridge region was always at the bottom line since 2008. This can be seen in the end of year pass rate of Grade 12 learners. The Department of Basic Education in Mpumalanga province (2011) validated this view by revealing regional learner performances ranging from 2008 to 2010 in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Regional learner performance in Grade 12

| Region          | Total learners who wrote |              |              | Total pass   |              |              | % pass      |             |             |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                 | 2008                     | 2009         | 2010         | 2008         | 2009         | 2010         | 2008        | 2009        | 2010        |
| BBR             | 12268                    | 13806        | 12761        | 3670         | 3897         | 5117         | 29.9        | 28.2        | 40.10       |
| Ehlanzeni       | 15822                    | 15365        | 14692        | 9235         | 8751         | 9910         | 58.4        | 56.95       | 67.45       |
| Gert Sib        | 11281                    | 11336        | 11096        | 6123         | 5919         | 6581         | 54.3        | 52.2        | 59.31       |
| Nkangala        | 14005                    | 13471        | 13223        | 8289         | 7287         | 7808         | 59.2        | 53.8        | 59.05       |
| <b>Prov. Av</b> | <b>53376</b>             | <b>53978</b> | <b>51772</b> | <b>27317</b> | <b>25854</b> | <b>29416</b> | <b>51.8</b> | <b>47.9</b> | <b>56.8</b> |

In 2007, the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education (2010) established a special support programme called 'Operation Tsutsuma' for Bushbuckridge. The aim of the programme was to intensify support for the region to ensure sustained improvement in the delivery of quality education with a view to successful learner achievement. However, the region continued to obtain the lowest pass rate when compared to other regions in the Mpumalanga Province.

Historical trends confirmed that not only Bushbuckridge but Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education has also performed poorly in the Grade 12 results as follows:

- In 2001 it was one of the provinces with a Grade 12 pass rate below 50%
- In 2002 it was one of the two provinces with a Grade 12 pass rate below 60%
- In 2003 it was the only province with a Grade 12 pass rate below 60%
- From 2001 to 2005 it never performed above 70%
- According to the Department, the 6.7% improvement in 2006 indicated the possibility of realising a Grade 12 pass rate above 80% by the year 2010 and beyond. However, from 2008 to 2010 the province had the poorest Grade 12 pass rate nationally (Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education 2010).

The learners' achievement clearly indicates that the intervention programme that was designed for Bushbuckridge in 2007 failed. Moreover, the overall academic performance of the province was worse when compared to the academic performance of other provinces of the country.

According to Independent Schools Association (ISASA) (2010), Motshekga argues that lack of work and learning ethics which characterise the resistance to measures of accountability are major challenges that affect the academic performance of learners. She again reveals that educator idealism and dedication have been seriously undermined since the 1994 explosion of hope and optimism. Motshekga (2010) affirms that lack of resources especially in rural areas, changes in the curriculum and inadequate educator development to implement the new programmes, excessive bureaucratic demands, the disheartening socio-economic environment coupled with poverty, poor discipline, drugs, crime and despair, have all contributed to the collapse of basic education.

Myers, Milne, Barker and Gingseng (1987) in Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000) conducted a survey on secondary school learners in the United Kingdom which confirmed that discipline problems predict a decline in the academic performance of learners which in turn lead to greater discipline problems. Researchers such as Lewis (1994), Lindsay (1983) and Moles (1990) define discipline problems as “ill behavior that obstructs successful learning”. They then emphasise that a safe and orderly school is necessary before learning can take place.

According to Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000), “the present situation in South African schools illustrates that lack of discipline among secondary school learners has led to a continuation of unsuccessful learning and teaching”.

Mwamwenda (2004) argues that research findings confirm that overcrowded classrooms erode discipline among learners and large enrolment undermines discipline in the entire school thus lowering the academic performance of learners. Mwamwenda (2004) corroborates his views by divulging that most parents do not realise that the high learner-educator ratio undermine effective discipline management. This results in unwillingness on the side of the parents to provide sufficient resources to alleviate overcrowding in schools. One of the real obstacles to effective discipline is the fact that classes are too large for educators to pay individual attention to learners. Consequently, the absence of effective discipline management in the classroom coupled with lack of individual attention leads to poor academic performance of learners.

Russo, Beckmann and Jansen (2005) affirm lack of discipline among learners as one of the most prominent factors that cause poor academic performance in South African schools. According to Russo et al (2005), lack of discipline refers to disruptive behavior that affects the fundamental right to feel safe and to be treated with respect. Physical violence, threat, theft, graffiti and vandalism, verbal abuse, lack of consideration, boisterousness and disrespect for authority are some of the manifestations of disruptive behavior that educators have to deal with presently (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000). Russo et al (2005) argue further that lack of discipline manifests in poor class attendance, especially in the early morning with learners only turning up after one or more periods.

Moloi (2002) expands the views of Russo et al (2005) by arguing that South African research related to school discipline found that most learners no longer nurture a culture of respect for and trust in their educators. As a result some educators are threatened, sworn at, ignored and abused on a daily basis. Russo et al (2005) argue further that learners who misbehave tend to perform poorly in school and frequently absent themselves. Fellow learner safety, security and success in education are often adversely affected by disruptive behavior and other forms of misconduct by learners.

School violence mirrors the violence of the society which shapes the school. Some learners who grew up in a violent society tend to perceive violence as a legitimate vehicle for conflict resolution. The prevalence of crime and violence around many schools has created an atmosphere of fear of being criminally victimised. This has resulted in learners bringing weapons to school, joining gangs for protection, truancy and dropping out of school. The main issue is not the degree of school crime, but the impact it has on the quality of the learners' education. Schools that have a reputation for defiance and rebellion among their learners yield poor academic results, leading to some educators leaving the profession because they are tired of dealing with discipline problems (HSRC & EPC, 2005).

Gage and Berliner (1984) confirm the findings of the HSRC and EPC (2005) by arguing that what happens at school is a mere reflection of what is going on in the society. They validated their views by presenting that through the media; learners are exposed to violence and see their peers and adults defying authority. They, therefore, model such behaviours and apply it to their relationships with other children and educators at school.

The oppression and exploitation of and contemptuous attitudes towards one ethnic group may lead to resentment and resistance on the oppressed group. This may manifest not only in the society but within its social institutions, such as school. The quality of education diminishes in a climate of violence and fear. If a school climate is healthy, educators are able to provide high quality instruction. Learners too obtain the necessary skills to meet the state standards of education.

Sugai and Horner (2001) cited in Warren (2007) argue that the effectiveness and efficiency of an educator is undermined when learners are defiant and disrespectful, when incidents of classroom disruptive behaviour occur frequently throughout the school day, and when there are re-occurring acts of violent learner behaviour. Therefore, one major responsibility of the public school system is to provide a safe and conducive school climate in which educators and learners can successfully teach and learn, and as a consequence, improve the academic performance of learners.

Pearson and Moomaw, (2006) argue that educators' autonomy is one of the working conditions associated with the teaching profession. It has emerged as a critical factor for educators to remain committed to the teaching profession. The teaching autonomy factor is consistent with the need for educators to:

- a. have control over their work environment
- b. remain satisfied with their jobs
- c. stay committed to the profession.

Pearson and Moomaw (2006) accentuate that bureaucratic governance models need to change to enable educators to have authority over the substance of school. Jacobs, Gawe and Vakalisa (2006) corroborate Pearson and Moomaw's (2006) view that there is a tendency to undermine the educator's authority by arguing that educators have no right to impose their own standards on learners. Jacobs et al (2006) perceive this as affecting classroom management. Consequently, the culture of learning will not be restored in schools unless educators are given the authority to maintain a classroom climate that is conducive to learning.

Mwamwenda (2004) argues that parents sometimes foster misbehaviour in the classroom by interfering with what the educators do and refuse to let their children be punished irrespective of what they have done. Some parents criticise educators in the presence of their children by telling the educators what they should do and what they should not do to their children. It is true that parents must have a say on the way their children are treated and taught; however, they should trust that educators know what they are doing and therefore refrain from interfering in their work and

support them. Such behaviour undermines the authority of the educators and, as a consequence, lowers the academic performance of the learners concerned.

This study seeks to understand the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools in order to provide a body of knowledge for the improvement of the quality of education in the region.

### **1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Bushbuckridge secondary schools are faced with challenges that affect the academic performance of learners. Lack of discipline has been highlighted as one of the contributing factors to the poor academic performance of learners. The challenge of discipline affects both educators and learners. SGBs are not sufficiently trained to execute their duties effectively; consequently schools do not have the necessary techniques to discipline learners. Educator autonomy has emerged as a critical factor for educators to remain committed to their teaching profession. This study therefore informs policy makers, analysts, and top management of educational institutions about the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The general objective of the study was to understand manifestations of indiscipline in relation to learner performance and the relationship between discipline and the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Determine the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Establish the relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In view of the problem statement, and objectives of the study the following main research question was formulated: *What are the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools?*

The following sub-questions were formulated from the main research question above:

- What is the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools?
- What is the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools?
- How does indiscipline influence the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools?

#### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The result of this study might encourage principals and educators in Bushbuckridge rural schools to strive for excellence in terms of discipline and the quality of education for the betterment of the learners' academic performance.

It might encourage stakeholders of schools to establish new ways of improving the academic performance of learners that would exceed the expectations of all through the use of the recommended models of disciplinary mechanisms.

When published, the study might draw attention of the Department of Basic Education to strive for excellence through rendering quality service to all rural schools. This includes empowering educators with the necessary skills to discipline learners who challenge their authority in their classrooms in order to render high quality instruction that would yield high quality results for learners.

#### **1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was limited to four secondary schools in Bushbuckridge region in the Mkhuhlu circuit. More detailed information could possibly be obtained by collecting data in all secondary schools in the same circuit; however the researcher collected



the data until it became saturated to gain in-depth information which answered the research question.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS USED**

### **Academic**

The South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2005) defines academic as something that is related to education and learning.

### **Performance**

Performance entails the actual process of carrying out what a person is capable of doing (Mwamwenda, 2004)

### **Active learning**

Active learning refers to the implementation of learning activities in which learners are afforded significant freedom and management over the activities they wish to engage in (Dewey in Casas, 2010).

### **Data analysis**

Bogdan and Biklen (1986) define data analysis as the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials accumulated to increase understanding and to enable the researcher to present what has been discovered.

### **Culture**

Culture is the accumulated and shared learning of learners covering behavioural, emotional and cognitive elements of the group members' total psychological functioning. For shared learning to occur there must be a history of shared experience, which in turn implies some stability of membership in the group. Given such stability and shared history, the human need for parsimony, consistency and meaning will cause the various shared elements to form into patterns that eventually can be called a culture (Schein, 1992).

Discipline refers to systematic instruction given to a disciple. To discipline thus means to instruct a person to follow a particular code of conduct order. In the classroom discipline is regarded as a code of conduct to both educators and learners which they agree upon and cooperate in its enforcement. It insists on cooperation and agreement in classroom management. Once the rules are set by all learning and teaching participants, it will be hard for them to deny or refuse disciplinary action in case of any transgression of the rules.

Discipline is an integral part of an effective educational endeavor in which parents and the educators give assistance to help, guide and support a learner towards the degree of self-discipline, which is necessary for successful learning and to achieve adequate self-actualisation and responsible and happy adulthood (Nkabinde, 2000).

### **Behaviourism**

Behaviourism is the theoretical framework which suggests that human behaviour can be influenced by external factors in the environment. For example, behaviourists view education as a process in which the behaviour of learners can be modified by arranging the proper conditions for learning.

Any person, who teaches, educates or trains learners, who provide professional service at an institution (South African Schools Act number 84 of 1998).

### **School Management Team**

A School Management Team (SMT) is a body with legal capacity to perform its duties in terms of the South African Schools Act number 84 of 1998.

### **Culture of learning**

The attitudes and beliefs about learning that are shared by learners in a school. (Gadsby, Rundell, Fox, Gillard, Jackson & O'Shea, 1995)

### **Discipline**

Discipline is an integral part of an effective educational endeavor in which parents and the educators give assistance to help, guide and support a learner towards the

degree of self-discipline, which is necessary for successful learning and to achieve adequate self-actualisation and responsible and happy adulthood (Nkabinde, 2000)

### **Behaviourism**

Behaviourism is the theoretical framework which suggests that human behaviour can be influenced by external factors in the environment. For example, behaviourists view education as a process in which the behaviour of learners can be modified by arranging the proper conditions for learning.

### **Educator**

Any person, who teaches, educates or trains learners, who provide professional service at an institution (South African Schools Act number 84 of 1998).

### **School Management Team**

A School Management Team (SMT) is a body with legal capacity to perform its duties in terms of the South African Schools Act number 84 of 1998.

### **Policy**

A policy is a general statement which serves as a guide in decision making (Bisschoff, 2002)

### **Aesthetic**

A set of principles underlying artistic movement which is predominantly found in Life Orientation

### **Sikhothane group of learners**

A gang that consists of learners who are indisciplined. For instance, they arrive at school late and do not wear school uniform. They frequently disrupt teaching and learning.



## **1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

The study consists of five chapters organised as follows:

### **Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 provides the orientation of the study, which covers the overview, the background, the problem statement, research questions, the objectives of the study, research methodology as well as the significance of the study. Key terms are clarified to foster a common understanding.

### **Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 presents the literature review. Literature is examined to identify the effect of discipline on the academic performance of learners at secondary schools. The main concepts are discussed and supported by the available literature.

### **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 provides details of the methodology used in the investigation. A rationale for the choice of a qualitative method used in the investigation is included. The final part of this chapter deals with the data collection strategies used in the investigation.

### **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the collected data. This includes the interpretation of the collected data as well as the discussion of the findings from the data. The strengths and weaknesses of the study are identified.

### **Chapter 5**

In this chapter, summary of the findings of the investigation, recommendations arising from the investigation and a conclusion are mentioned.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter the literature is examined to ascertain the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools. The main concepts are discussed and supported by the available literature.

### **2.1 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION POLICY**

Policy is defined as a statement of intent which specifies the basic principles to be pursued in attaining specific goals (Cloete & Wissink, 2005). According to Rizvi and Lingard (2010), a policy is designed to steer actions and behaviour, guide institutions and professionals in a certain direction and to ensure that power is exercised legitimately through various institutional norms and practices. Policies are therefore normative and either articulate or presuppose certain values, and direct people towards actions authoritatively. The legitimacy is thus derived from an authority such as a school system.

Public policies in education have emanated from a national government and its agencies. They are designed to deliver educational provision in a most effective, efficient and equitable manner. Education is seen as the best economic policy nowadays, which is necessary to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy in the context of globalisation. This implies that education is regarded as the producer of the necessary human capital. Furthermore, commercialisation of education policy serves as a reliable comparative measure of educational outcomes which enables a nation to see its position within a global field of comparison to give it a measure of its potential global economic competitiveness. Therefore, the interactive aspect of education policy includes its intimate relationship to economic policy and to a global field of performance comparison (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

The Teacher (2011) however repudiates the effectiveness and efficiency of the current education policy due to the increase of violence in schools. As a result, educationists have started questioning the government policies and interventions that have already been made since schools are still faced with discipline problems that negatively influence the academic performance of learners.

An example of the education policy is a school policy. A constituent of the school policy according to the South African School Act, Section 8(1) and 8(2) is the code of conduct for learners. The Department of Basic Education has entrusted the School Governing Body (SGB) with the duty of adopting a code of conduct for learners through a consultative process with parents and the educators. The aim of the code of conduct for learners is to establish a disciplined environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. The main focus is on positive discipline, self-discipline and establishing a standard of behaviour that is recognised and accepted by civil society resulting in high academic performance of learners.

Russo, Beckmann and Jansen (2005), however, argue that research conducted in Gauteng reveals that the SGBs are insufficiently trained to execute their duties despite the promise by the Department of Basic Education to provide them with introductory training. The only training that was conducted by the Department focused mainly on explaining the basic functions of SGBs. The research reveals very little evidence concerning any form of continuous development that has taken place in the past since the introduction of SGBs in schools. As a result, some secondary schools are persistently underperforming due to lack of effective discipline management in classes.

Russo et al (2005) argue their point further by describing a conflict which occurred between the SGB of Vryburg High School and the Education Department because, the SGB suspended a Grade 9 learner on a charge of assault with the intention to do a bodily harm (the learner stabbed another learner with a pair of scissors during a class break). According to Russo et al (2002), the High Court declared the proceedings of the disciplinary hearing null and void due to lack of fairness since the learners' parents were not invited to the hearing and the disciplinary committee did not apply the rules of natural justice. The case was then transferred to a criminal court where the learner was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

It is evident; therefore, that one of the most serious challenges facing South African schools is for the SGBs to fulfill their responsibilities as stipulated in the South African Schools act 8(1) and 8(2). The failure of the Department of Basic Education to train the SGBs to execute their duties has resulted in a lack of effective discipline

management in schools, coupled with poor academic performance of learners in most public secondary schools.

## **2.2 RURAL SCHOOLS**

The teaching and learning conditions in rural schools are not conducive; hence they have a negative effect on the academic performance of learners. This is confirmed by the Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan, who according to the Teacher (2014) revealed in his budget speech that in the impoverished Eastern Cape areas, mud and stick schools are still being built to accommodate learners because of lack of sufficient infrastructure, although the need for more schools has been repeatedly raised as a main issue. Moreover, the lack of ablution facilities has an impact on whether girls attend school or not and long drop toilets remain a safety hazard. This implies that the rate of absenteeism among teenage girls in the Eastern Cape is high due to lack of ablution facilities; this further implies a negative effect on their academic performance because they often miss lessons.

Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) & EPC (2005) confirm that the school budget in rural areas is often insufficient to cover the considerable cost of the school's operation. Consequently, lack of resources has resulted in limited implementation of curricular as well as extra-curricular programmes. Moreover, many rural schools are unable to provide the type of subjects needed to prepare learners for further studies due to the shortage of qualified educators. Similarly, low career aspirations may be a factor in indicating that fewer rural graduates prepare for and enroll in post- secondary education.

Special programmes and technological resources offered in rural schools are limited, and affect learners' opportunities to learn. Learners with limited proficiency in language of instruction are often at risk of educational failure due to the classroom challenges they face, particularly where bilingual curricula or English as a second language programmes are not readily available (HSRC & EPC :2005).

Van Wyk (2003) argues further that the lack of infrastructure and resources, as well as the overcrowded classrooms typically found in rural schools make disciplining learners difficult. As a result, their academic performance suffers. Hence, learners in rural schools experience a mix of challenges in gaining sound education. Van Wyk

(2003) emphasises that research has proved that lack of learner discipline coupled with non-conducive learning environment, an irrelevant curriculum and poor instructional methods and inflexible school schedules are major causes of chronic absenteeism and truancy leading to the poor academic performance of learners.

According to Fiske (2000), research shows that learners in urban areas outperform learners in rural areas. Contextual factors that impact on achievement are related to the context in which schools and individual learners function. The factors include whether the school is in an urban or rural area, the socio-economic level of the community and the educational attainment of the parents. The National Department of Education therefore faces the challenge of providing equal learning opportunities to learners coming from a diversity of socio-economic, cultural, attitudinal and other contextual backgrounds. For example, learners from socially disorganised communities with high rates of crime display discipline problems in school and yield poor academic performance.

Fiske (2000) argues that inequalities in achievement among various groups of learners raise important policy issues for national education systems. Analysing the nature of the disparities can be an effective tool for addressing the disparities. Such information can be used to identify learners and schools' needs and to guide decisions on how to allocate resources in the most effective way. This information will again highlight the importance of tailoring the curriculum and teaching strategies to the different needs of learners.

### 2.2.1 Working conditions in rural schools

Educational administrators and the policy makers have a considerable influence on school-related factors, such as retention policies, the qualification of educators, the length of the school year and day, homework policies, the availability of textbooks and other educational materials (Fiske, 2000). A research report by HSRC & EPC (2005) reveals that most schools in rural areas:

- Are poorly resourced. Many schools are without adequate buildings, water, sanitation and electricity, desks, chairs, libraries and computers.
- Lack infrastructure including transport, communications, shops and other services.
- Lack suitable housing that matches the urban standards.



The above mentioned conditions are not conducive for teaching and learning. Learners find it difficult to learn in the absence of desks, chairs and classrooms. Moreover, the rate of distraction is very high when learning has to take place outside; as a result learners react to such conditions in different ways. Some learners display disruptive behaviour as a way of voicing out their discomfort. Some learners frequently absent themselves from school. Disruptive behaviour coupled with learners' absenteeism from school negates the learners' academic performance because they miss lessons. In the essential publication by the Department of Education (2008), Pandor confirms that the poorest schools continue to perform badly and not enough impetus is given to the eradication of inequality.

According to Fiske (2000), school factors that are known to influence the learners' academic performance include educator characteristics and school resources. Educator characteristics are of paramount interest because the qualifications, experience and competencies of the educators play a critical role in shaping the process of teaching and learning, since the interaction between learners and the educators is the primary way of transmitting knowledge and skills. Therefore, when an educator lacks the necessary expertise to maintain discipline in the classroom situation, the academic performance of the learners is negatively affected.

Sugai and Horner (2001) cited in Warren (2007), however, argue that the effectiveness and efficacy of an educator diminishes when learners are defiant and disrespectful, when incidents of classroom disruptive behaviour occur frequently throughout the school day, and when there are recurring acts of violent learner behaviours. The National Department of Education therefore introduced the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) in schools as a development programme for educators to empower them with the necessary expertise to fully execute their duties in class.

### **2.3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

The National Department of Education (NDoE) has produced a number of initiatives to improve the academic performance of learners in all schools. One of such initiatives is the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) (Buthelezi, 2005).

The collective agreement number 8 (2003) reveals that IQMS is a school improvement instrument that integrates three related programmes;:

- the Development Appraisal System (DAS)
- the Whole School Evaluation (WSE)
- the Performance Measurement (PM).

The rationale for the implementation of IQMS is to establish self-reliant schools through organisational and educator professional development. IQMS is a national strategy developed to ensure quality public education for all and to constantly improve the quality of learning and teaching. Schools are thus challenged to implement IQMS (Collective agreement 8 of 2003).

According to Buthelezi (2005), research reveals that educators in some schools do not understand the IQMS instrument; hence its implementation causes stress for them. Convey (1996) cited in Buthelezi (2005) argues that when stress and pressure mount, people start yelling and overreact cynically, critically or silently about challenges encountered. Moreover, advocacy and training programmes in respect of IQMS were not effective in some schools. The research findings further indicate that educators were not trained to execute the duties of the Staff Development Teams (SDTs) and Development Support Groups (DSG). This implies that educators were not developed according to the expectations of the NDoE; hence the continued lack of discipline in secondary schools and the resultant poor academic performance of the learners persist (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000).

The South Africa Yearbook (2012/2013) emphasises, however, that educators are at the heart of curriculum delivery. Hence, continuous educator professional development and good teaching are the keys to unlocking excellence in learner performance. The Department of Basic Education has therefore, entered into a memorandum of understanding with educator unions to strengthen capacity in educator development.

Fiske (2000) argues, however, that a long-term capacity building requires quality training of assessment experts through new degree programmes in measurement, as well as the development of ongoing research enterprise aimed at updating and renewing the programme. Likewise, training educators to implement IQMS effectively

is a long term enterprise. The collective agreement 8 (2003), confirms that advocacy focuses on achieving a large scale buy-in to the process and answers the questions: what and why? Training focuses on capacitating all involved to ensure successful implementation and answer the question: how? Therefore, advocacy and training are the preliminary points of the implementation of IQMS. Advocacy and training lead to an ethos of trust where educators work together and address challenges.

Buthelezi's (2005) finding indicates that some educators feel that the implementation of IQMS is an additional burden to the already overloaded workload and that certain IQMS structures are not yet in place in some schools. Hlatshwayo (2003) cited in Buthelezi (2005) stresses that all schools are required to establish SDTs to initiate the appraisal process, facilitate appraisal training and ongoing support, prepare and monitor the management plan for appraisal. Open-ended questions in the research revealed that educators are dubious about the Grade and salary progression and consequently, morale is negatively impacted. Buthelezi (2005) concludes his argument by suggesting that the NDoE should organise retraining programmes for School Management Teams (SMTs) to empower them to conduct IQMS workshops with educators in their respective schools, since the majority of the participants expressed concern that workshop facilitators did not have confidence and did not reinforce the key IQMS messages. Again, the NDoE must counter the tendency to reduce the IQMS implementation to mere opportunity for salary and Grade progression and align it to development and the production of self-reliant schools. Follow-up programmes by the NDoE are essential to ensure that IQMS structures are in place and function effectively.

The main aim of the implementation of IQMS is to transform schools into self-reliant organisations that facilitate learner academic excellence enabled by persistent educator development (Educators' manual, 2005). Hence, both salary and Grade progression are reward systems based on material gain. Therefore, educators must realise that professional and personal development are more beneficial than the material gain of salary and Grade progression as it would assist them in addressing discipline challenges in their schools leading to the improvement of the academic performance of learners.

Thlapi (2011) stresses the importance of empowering educators by the SMT to ensure effectiveness in the school context. This could be done by allowing them to contribute towards the development of the school and by participating in decision-making processes. According to Thlapi (2011), the quality of teaching and learning can be improved drastically by organising regular workshops to discuss and plan for improvement.

Monthly subject meetings to discuss strengths and weaknesses in learning areas give educators the chance to express their views and to design strategies for improvement. In that way educators would be empowered. Empowered educators are highly motivated do their best at work and to produce quality results. As a consequence, they will commit themselves towards the improvement of quality teaching and learning.

## **2.4 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS**

Fiske (2000) argues that the primary contextual influence of learners' academic performance is the amount of support that they receive in their homes. The more support and help that the learners receive at home, the greater the likelihood they stand to attain high academic performance. Mwamwenda (2004) accentuated that if parents and siblings assist younger children with their homework and supplement what they have learnt in school, coupled with a home background which provides books and newspapers and learning gadgets, such as, a radio, television and computer, their academic performance is enhanced.

Thlapi (2011) argues that educators receive minimal support from parents and this contributes to lack of learner discipline and poor academic performance. Thlapi (2011) is of the view that parents fail to fully support their children when doing homework due to the recent curriculum change, which is unfamiliar to most parents. Moreover, some parents do not understand their role in the education of their children. Therefore, the policy implication is that convincing parents to ensure that learners complete assignments and attend school regularly is essential for academic success.

Wallace (2007) stresses that the failure rate in rural areas outweighs successes in urban areas and continuous improvement requires a commitment to learning. Mwamwenda (2004) adds that the home background of some learners is not encouraging at all in that they lack even the most basic requirements, such as paper. Moreover, many African parents do not support their children either because they are not interested in helping them, they are working or the child's level of education is beyond their own. Again Mwamwenda (2004) point out that the quality of primary schools attended by learners differs: some are well equipped and have qualified educators; others are not so fortunate.

Wallace (2007) argues further that the measures used in most rural schools to assess learners are incomplete since they focus on single measure of output and ignore learning that affects competitive variables, like quality, delivery or introduction of new products while telling little about the sources of learning or the levers of change. Wallace (2007) stresses that the processes that yield those results should be measured through the use of surveys, direct observation of behaviour within the organisation instead of measuring only the results.

Fiske (2000) consequently warns policy makers and managers to be aware of the fact that assessment can narrow the range of topics taught by classroom educators. Furthermore, the efficacy of assessment in improving learner academic performance depends to a large extent on the kind of information that is reported. However assessments that promote critical thinking or problem solving skills are more useful to educators and administrators than those that supply general information.

Fiske (2000) argues further that the managers of assessment programmes must understand that the usefulness of assessment programmes are undermined by overcrowded classrooms, poor quality teaching, inadequate resources, language problems and other factors beyond the control of assessment authorities. Dekker and Lemmer (1998) confirm that most tests in multicultural schools are culturally biased because of the language barrier or lack of familiarity with the learning content. Although the criteria used for testing in South African schools are claimed to be applicable to all learners regardless of race, the educational experiences of black learners place them at a great disadvantage.



Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) argues further that if a public examination is included at the end of year, the failure rate is very high. Furthermore, public examinations are designed to show how well learners do in relation to their peers, not whether they have mastered a particular body of knowledge (Fiske, 2000). Fiske (2000) warns policy makers that assessment does not stand alone; it must be developed concurrently with improvement in curriculum and educator training. The Department of Basic Education (2009) corroborates Fiske's ideas by confirming that it will deal with the underperformance by ensuring that the two most important duties of the Department of Basic Education are implemented. The duties are:

- to ensure the realisation of every child's potential, and
- to provide the educators with the correct environment to improve teaching and learning.

Du Plooy (2010) confirms that excellent academic achievement is possible if educators are well equipped and well developed for the task at hand. The SMT should thus take cognisance of the fact that they have to manage the IQMS programme in order to meet this end. Carter and Macdonald (2002) argue that successful leadership is invariably linked to school effectiveness. The SMT should thus focus on improving the academic performance of the learners through the development of educators which should include the improvement of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Implementing rewards and incentives for educators would also improve the team spirit and motivate the educators to achieve the objective of improving the academic performance of the learners. The SMTs should fulfill the task of improving the skills of the educators with the view to improving the academic performance of the learners.

## **2.5 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Hayward (2006), argues that schools are faced with enormous dropout of learners in all grades coupled with high failure rates. Wagstaff, Combs and Jarvis (2000) mention various studies which indicate that learners who exhibit poor attendance frequently display poor social skills and emotional functioning and therefore produce

poor academic performance. Again, truants are unable to become part of the school social structures, become bored and dislike school.

Wagstaff et al (2000) argue that educators do not feel empowered to deal with learners' absenteeism and tend to blame parents, cars, television, and learners' work schedule. The majority of learners point to the curriculum as unchallenging and the fact that they feel rejected by the schools as the main causes of their lack of interest in schooling. Rohman (1993) cited in Wagstaff et al (2000) argues that learners who do not fit in the school and are confused about where to turn to for help tend to exhibit poor attendance which eventually leads to poor academic achievement. Lara (1999) mentioned in Wagstaff et al (2000) stresses that learners who lack a sense of belonging at school yield poor achievement and are more likely to drop out.

Hayward (2006) emphasises that parents must be encouraged to guide their children to be positive at all times, while educators are persuaded to be dedicated and compassionate to their learners. This means that parents and educators must work collaboratively to make the school environment conducive for teaching and learning in order to reduce the rate of learners' absenteeism. Additionally, Hayward (2007) encourages educators to read publications issued by the South African Quality Institute (SAQI), which aim at exposing educators to strategies that will improve their teaching, guidance and management skills.

According to Hayward (2007) the SAQI and a team of educationists designed a model consisting of five pillars which could be used to improve the level of discipline in schools, in that way reducing the rate of learners' absenteeism and supporting quality schooling for the betterment of academic performance.

### **Pillar 1: Values**

Ethical values give the school both focus and direction. The educators and learners should be given an opportunity to determine values that define their school. For example, educators should involve learners when designing classroom rules. This will motivate the learners to own the rules and as a consequence become self-disciplined. When learners are self-disciplined, their academic performance improves due to uninterrupted teaching and learning.

### **Pillar 2: Leadership**

Leadership roles are not confined to the SMT alone. Different situations require different leaders; hence, the parent community through committees such as SGB and parent-educator association provides leadership in their areas of expertise. Learners can be taught leadership skills, such as being a class representative, a sport team captain and a counsellor. This may encourage learners who play truant to attend school regularly and also become self-disciplined.

### **Pillar 3: School improvement plan**

Improvement plans need to include all facets of the school and be continually reviewed. These plans should be living and vibrant documents that turn words into actions. Certain plans need to be addressed immediately and the improvements effected within a short time frame, such as the wearing of school uniform by all learners. Hence, special attention should be paid to areas such as educator development and transformation issues since they directly affect the academic achievement of the school. Guskey (1994) corroborates that if a performance based assessment programme is to evoke more stimulating intellectual challenging tasks for learners, extensive professional development opportunities for educators are essential. Such tasks will motivate learners to attend school regularly.

### **Pillar 4: Communication**

The stakeholders of the school must be encouraged to interact with each other in order to promote collaboration and teamwork leading to effective communication. This includes face-to-face meetings, traditional weekly newsletters and term report cards. The actual tone of the communication often reflects the organisational climate of the school. Communication should therefore reflect integrity and professionalism. For example, if educators liaise with the parents about the progress of their children at school, disciplinary problems such as learners' absenteeism would be minimized. Moreover, learners' academic achievement will improve because they will attend school regularly and parents will follow up the education of their children.

### **Pillar 5: Techniques and tools**

School should ensure that improvement plans are implemented by providing techniques and tools to be used. Frequently used strategies include action research, benchmarking, brainstorming, flowcharts and Deming's PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act)



cycle. Once the concepts of the different techniques are understood, it would be easy to apply them in a school situation. Carnegie cited in Hayward (2007) stresses that the secret of success lies in not doing your own work but in recognising the right person to do it.

## **2.6 THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SMT**

A School Management Team (SMT) comprises of senior educators, namely the principal, the deputy principal/s, heads of department, and in some cases, two post level 1 educators. The reason for having post level 1 educators serving on the SMT, according to Du Plooy, (2010), is to ensure transparency, along with the use of an “us” perspective instead of a “they” perspective. The principal is an important member of the SMT.

Apart from providing instructional leadership in the school, other responsibilities of the SMT include decision-making, delegating and coordinating work, solving problems and monitoring activities such as extra-curricular activities (Republic of South Africa Constitution 1998). The SMT is responsible for the management of the curriculum, and functions effectively with the help of the school committees, such as the learning area committees. The principal uses the SMT to ensure good academic results.

For a school to be effective there has to be a strong organisational culture. It is within this organisational culture that people work together under the umbrella of strong and effective leadership (Smith, 2002). According to the Employment of Educators Act (Act 76 of 1998), the duties of the SMT are as follows:

- to organise activities that support teaching and learning
- to administer teaching and learning
- to perform professional functions such as the development of educators through the implementation of IQMS
- to decide on extra- and intra-curricular activities
- to decide which learning and support material should be purchased.

The Department of Basic Education (2000a) affirms that an SMT has the day-to-day responsibility of the professional and operational management of the school. For the

school to effectively operate as a whole; the established policies of the SGB should be implemented and educators should work towards achieving the vision and mission of the school. Other duties of the SMT include decision-making, the coordination of work, the solving of problems and monitoring whether educators adhere to standards as prescribed in the subject policies (Republic of South Africa, Act 76 of 1998).

Algozzine and Jazzar (2007) accentuate that it is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that educators receive the necessary support to deliver quality teaching. To achieve this outcome the HODs should, for instance, know and understand the assessment standards as prescribed by their subject policies and execute the curriculum in their respective phases, and as such, be held accountable. To be able to address these issues, the SMT should be properly equipped to provide the necessary guidance. Staff development therefore is essential in achieving these outcomes.

## **2.7 SAFETY IN SCHOOLS**

The South African Constitution (Act No.24 (a) of 1998) stipulates that all educators and learners have the right to teach and learn in a safe environment. However, the South African Democratic Educators' Union (SADTU)'s report based on safety in schools dated 23 November, 2007, indicates that educators and learners from various areas in South Africa experience violent attacks on their way to and from schools. Besides, learners are enticed to alcohol and drug abuse. The abuse of drugs and alcohol hamper the learners' development and erodes the moral fibre of society. Moreover, such acts deprive the learners from reaching their full potential. SADTU (2007) argues further that such challenging environments cause stress to both educators and learners.

According to Black (1996), schools can be exemplary models of virtue and character when educators implement the curriculum in a sensitive and caring manner towards learners. Educators should teach learners to develop self-discipline which would improve their commitment to their schoolwork leading to improved academic attainment. Furthermore, schools should teach learners to commit to good behaviour and practice positive morals.

Tirri & Puolimatka (2000) illuminate Black (1996)'s view by arguing that increased educator autonomy, cultural diversity and changes in the national curriculum result in more dilemmas for schools. Challenges facing educators' empowerment include the creation of a new culture where educators and learners collaborate with each other to improve social justice and change society through better education.

Peters in Tirri & Puolimatka (2000) argues, however, that educators are unable to accomplish their task successfully unless social rules provide a framework in which their orders are obeyed and at least some of their pronouncements are regarded as binding. Tirri & Puolimatka (2000) concur that educators should have a strong content-based knowledge of their subjects. However, their training does not provide them with a theoretical understanding of the nature of legitimate authority. As a result, they feel hesitant to control the classroom situation based on explicit rules. Their training fails to prepare them to deal with concrete situations in which learners challenge their authority in the classroom.

Lake (2004) emphasises that schools are still controlling places for learners and do not include learners' voices in drawing up of classroom rules. For instance, educators decide rules, routines and procedures without involving learners. Lake (2004) warns therefore that controlling learners hinders the development of their self-esteem and self-identity and reinforces the powerlessness they feel in adult environments; this could limit their growth towards equality. Consequently, the act of controlling learners is the act of oppressing them. This act leads to increased antisocial and violent behaviours in schools with the consequence of poor academic performance of learners.

Harding (2000) argues that educators can be firm disciplinarians while minimising learners' hostility by being sympathetic and non-hostile and by clarifying the responsibilities of the learners. Additionally, educators must model the socially acceptable behaviour they expect from learners. Such behaviours include being on time for lessons and being respectful and fair. It is vital that educators demonstrate that they believe all learners can learn and behave appropriately and that they are committed to helping learners as required of them by the education policy.

## **2.8 SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS**

The HSRC and EPC (2005) contend that learners who live in single parent households tend to have lower achievement rates at school than do learners from traditional two-parent households. Lack of time of single parents to spend with children, coupled with the increased economic burden from a single source of income, produces less than desirable household conditions. For example; some learners do not do their homework and others absent themselves from school frequently because the parent is usually away from home and does not have time to check and find out if they have been to school and if homework is done. This negatively affects the academic performance of the learners.

Mwamwenda (2004) argues that a learners' behaviour may be affected by the economic status of the parent or guardian. For example, a learner may be absent from school in order to do a piece of job to supplement the family income. Kromberg (2005) advances the argument by deliberating that the current generation of young people is more sophisticated in their understanding of socio economic factors, health, and development than other previous generations. In many cases, they have no choice but to look after their siblings because their parents have succumbed to AIDS. Learners who have such responsibilities often perform poor academically because they are often absent from school, do not have enough time to do assignments and also to prepare for tests and examinations.

Fiske (2000) confirms Kromberg (2005)'s views by revealing that learners who help out in their homes for one hour or less achieve at a higher rate than those who work for two or more hours. The reason for the correlation between modest amount of chores and high achievement was due to the fact that learners from wealthy families were not required to do as much work around the house as less advantaged learners. Furthermore, the research revealed that the academic performance of learners correlates with the amount of time that learners spend along the way getting to and from school. Improvement in the school transport infrastructure therefore emerges as imperative for policy makers to curb late coming and also to improve the academic performance of the learners.

## 2.9 TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) argue that the fundamental principles and interventions of an effective Outcomes Based Education (OBE) process have not been effectively applied in South Africa. For instance, educators have become overburdened with the muddle of bureaucratic requirements that have been demanded of them, so the process of teaching has suffered. Furthermore, many educators have misinterpreted the principles of guided discovery and participative learning mostly around group work activities. In many cases, the process has not been adequately explained. As a result, there is often insufficient focus on both the cognitive goals of group work and the need for active participation by all learners in the group.

According to Donald et al (2010) the following principles of practice can improve the process of teaching and learning in a class together with the development of self-discipline and better learner achievement:

### 2.9.1 Process and content

Educators should help their learners improve their understanding of each topic by helping them to grasp the structure that underlies it since all learning areas are structured according to key concepts and relationships. For example a mathematics educator can encourage learners to grasp the basic relationship between whole numbers and fractions. It is through understanding of the underlying structure of the topic that the learners will be able to solve a range of different problems independently and enthusiastically.

### 2.9.2 Active learning

Craig (1996) in Donald et al (2010) argues that cognitive action enables seeking for that which will turn the unfamiliar familiar. Hence, learning and cognitive development are active processes. Educators therefore need to challenge learners to think while talking and further connect with them at the level of their understanding. Active learning involves a variety of activities such as whole class instruction and interaction, group activities and individual activities. Educators

therefore, are to ensure that all learners are actively engaged for as much time as possible until the end of the learning process. As a consequence, active learning has an effect of curbing disruptive behaviour and promoting self-discipline.

### 2.9.3 Connecting the familiar to the unfamiliar

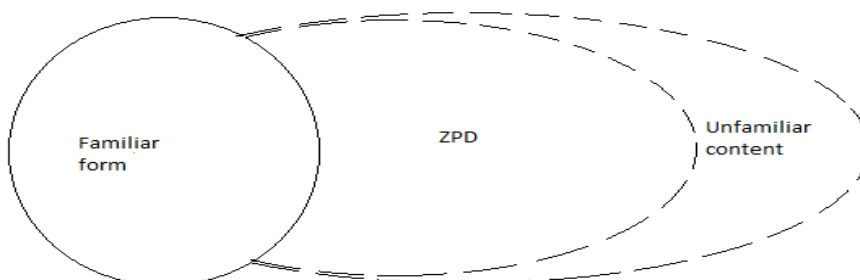
- Connecting individually

Productive learning occurs at critical points where learners are challenged and guided to take particular understanding to a more advanced level. Therefore, learners should be challenged to integrate the unfamiliar into their understanding. This promotes the learners' understanding of the learning content as well as the development of the desire to learn more, which is a characteristic of disciplined learners.

- Connecting form and content

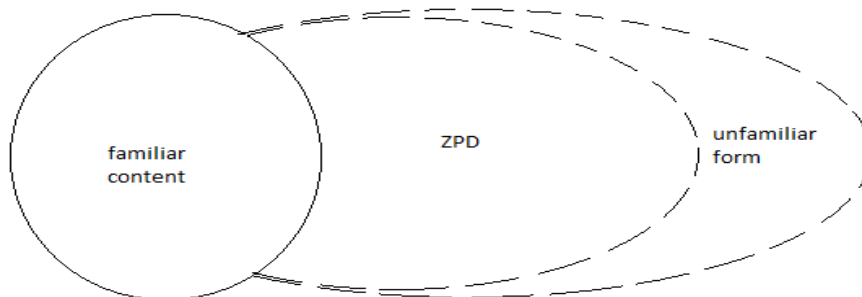
According to Cristicos, Long, Moletsane and Mthiyane (2002), one of Vygotsky's main contributions to our understanding of learning is his concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what a learner can do alone, unaided, and what the learner can achieve with the help of more knowledgeable others. Donald et al (2010) elucidate further by positing that educators can assist connection in the ZPD by challenging learners to think about something familiar using an unfamiliar more advanced form of thinking such as in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 Connecting familiar to unfamiliar content



They advance by pointing out that familiar form can be combined with unfamiliar content to facilitate the process of connecting as in the Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Connecting familiar content to unfamiliar content

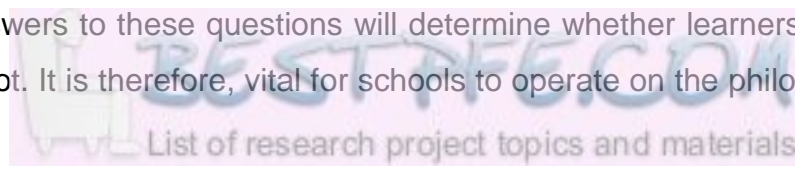


For example, learners who might be familiar with the form of science experiments at school could be challenged to think about a psychological experiment at the university (unfamiliar content). According to Donald et al (2010), if the connection has been adequately made, presenting learners with information that conflicts with what they presently understand can greatly stimulate their learning process.

## 2.10 THE PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION

Mwamwenda (2004) highlights numerous reasons why learners absent themselves from school and drop out of school. Some of the reasons are the kind of association that learners make between school and the effect it has on them. For instance, to some learners school is associated with hostility, cruelty and indifference. As a result, many learners would rather not go to school. However, if learners perceive school as a friendly place where they are treated with kindness, love and warmth, they are likely to be at school as long as it is necessary.

The same principle of association could be allied to the various subjects offered, some of which are hated whilst others are liked by learners. For every effect there is a cause; therefore learners' attitudes towards school subjects are not inexplicable. For example, how often do learners pass tests and examinations in a given subject? How does the educator relate to the learners in the process of teaching and learning? The answers to these questions will determine whether learners will like a given subject or not. It is therefore, vital for schools to operate on the philosophy that



every child seated in a classroom is a winner and hence capable of mastering what is being taught. Educators should therefore do everything to assist the learner to succeed since most learners would like to succeed. If the subject is associated with success and humane treatment, there should be no reason why learners should not find school and learning enjoyable (Mwamwenda, 2004).

### **Three laws of learning**

Thorndike (1932) cited in Mwamwenda (2004) formulated three laws that govern learning based:

- The law of effect

The role of punishment, or annoying state of affairs, in weakening behaviour does not carry the same weight and effect as the role of reinforcement, or a satisfying state of affairs, in strengthening behaviour. For example if a learner who disrupts teaching and learning, is not punished but gains attention and recognition of the other learners in the whole class, the learner will enjoy disrupting lessons repeatedly. However, if disrupting teaching and learning results in serious punishment, the learner is less likely to repeat such behaviour.

- The law of exercise

A connection between a stimulus and a response is strengthened by frequent use, whereas infrequent use of a connection between a stimulus and a response grows weaker and is likely to stamp out the connection. This means that frequent use maximises and enhances the recurrence of a given behaviour. Disuse maximises the probability of a given behaviour becoming extinct. For example if learners are not disciplined for plagiarism, they will keep on copying other learners' work and submit it to educators as if it is their own legitimate work. This will negate their academic performance because they would have not learnt and will therefore fail their tests and examinations.

- The law of readiness

When a person is ready to engage in certain behaviour and is provided with the opportunity to engage in such behaviour, the whole experience is satisfying. But if a



person is denied the opportunity to engage in behaviour for which he or she is prepared frustration and annoyance results. However, if a person is not ready to engage in certain behaviour yet is forced to do so; the result is frustrating and annoying. For instance, when learners are ready to learn, the learning process will be enjoyable. However, when they are not ready to learn, the whole process will be frustrating and annoying. The learners are therefore likely to display disruptive behavior, which has an effect of negating their academic performance. Again if for instance educators concentrate on a specific group of learners in a class and ignore another group, the ignored group will be frustrated and annoyed by the presence of those educators and are likely to display disruptive behaviour.

## **2.11 ACCOUNTABILITY**

Achieving learners' success is the point of departure for both principals and educators. Casas (2011) argues that educators should teach according to their own beliefs and reach out to their school principal for support since they share a common goal. Casas (2010) expands by arguing that most school principals are willing to support educators concerning what works best with learners including ideas on teaching provided the educators:

- have conducted extensive research on the new ideas or programmes that they intend to implement by searching the internet, retrieving information from journals on education or contacting schools that are currently implementing the ideas or programmes for information since school principals need facts to make decisions.
- work responsibly and effectively by arriving on time at work, rarely miss work, attend all departmental meetings, promote teamwork, keep contact with parents on a regular basis, demonstrate effective classroom management practices, maintain accurate records such as assessment tasks and teach effectively.

## **2.12 EDUCATOR REFLECTION**

Casas (2011) suggests educator reflection as an essential characteristic of academically disciplined educators which could improve the academic performance of learners. During the reflection process the educators could ask themselves the following questions:

- Are my learners learning?
- Am I doing my best to ensure that my learners are successful?

Educators may as well ask their learners' views about the efficiency of their lessons. Casas (:2011) believes that the feedback from the learners could help the educators to design better lessons and improve their instruction methods.

## **2.13 EDUCATION POLICIES FOR RAISING LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Sahlberg (2007) maintains that, since the 1980s, there are at least three common features in education development policies and reform strategies that intend to improve the quality of education and raise learner achievement. The features are discussed in the next sections.

### 2.13.1 Standardisation of education

OBE reform became popular in the 1980s, followed by standards based education policies in the 1990s. These reforms shifted the focus of attention to educational outcomes, specifically to learning and school performance. As a result, policy makers and education reformers believed that setting clear and sufficiently high performance standards will improve the quality of outcomes for schools, educators, and learners. Centrally prescribed curricula, with detailed performance targets, frequent testing of learners and educators and high stake accountability have defined a homogenisation of policies worldwide, promising standardised solutions at increasingly lower cost for those desiring to improve school quality and effectiveness.

### 2.13.2 Increased focus on literacy and numeracy

Increased focus on literacy and numeracy is the second common feature in global education policies and reform strategies. Basic learner knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and natural sciences are elevated to serve as prime targets and indices of education reforms. Literacy and numeracy have now become the main determinants of the perceived success or failure of learners, educators, schools and entire education systems. Consequently, curriculum and teaching in

schools in many countries place a strong emphasis on structural knowledge, technical skills and cognition. As a consequence of narrow focus upon literacy and numeracy, the importance of aesthetic and moral education as well as social sciences in many nations has been reduced due to the need to strengthen fundamental learning areas.

### 2.13.3 Consequential accountability systems

The introduction of consequential accountability systems for schools is the third global trend. School performance especially raising learner achievement is closely linked to processes of accrediting, promoting, inspecting and rewarding or punishing schools and educators. Success or failure of schools and their educators is often determined by standardised tests and evaluations that only devote attention to limited aspects of schooling, such as learner achievement in mathematical and reading literacy along with exit examination results.

Finland is an example of a nation that has developed from a remote industrial state in the 1950s to a model knowledge economy using education as a key to economic and social development. Its high achievement seem to be attributable to a network of interrelated factors in which learners' own areas of interest and leisure activities, the learning opportunities provided by school, parental support and involvement, social and cultural context of learning and of the entire education system combine with each other (Sahlberg, 2007).

Here are some characteristics of the Finish education system that contribute to the good academic performance of its schools and individuals.

- Same basic school for all

All basic school educators who are permanently employed in Finland hold a master's degree. The Finnish comprehensive school is a formal and fully publicly financed system. Finnish schools are all based on the principle of equity, on which Finnish education policy has been largely premised since the early 1970s. Well-equipped schools are typically small, with class sizes ranging from 20 to 30 learners. The fact that all learners enroll in identical comprehensive schools despite their socioeconomic background or personal abilities and characteristics, has resulted in a

system where schools and classrooms are heterogeneous in terms of learner profiles and diverse in terms of educational needs and expectations. The leading idea in implementing the basic values of equity in education also means that all learners receive a free two course warm meal daily, free health care, transportation, learning materials and counselling in their own schools (Sahlberg, 2007).

- Well trained educators

Unlike some of the South African schools which still have the duty of training their educators to enable them to implement the IQMS as cited by Buthelezi (2005), Finnish educator education programmes are distinguishable by their depth and scope. The balance in theory and practical teaching in school programmes assist young educators to master various teaching methods including the science of effective teaching and learning. Finnish educators are conscious, critical consumers of professional development and in-service training services. Most compulsory, traditional in-services are replaced with school or municipality based longer terms programmes and professional development opportunities. To these educators, continuous upgrading has become a right rather than an obligation.

- Intelligent accountability

The Department of Education in Finland did not follow the global accountability movement that assumes that making schools and educators more accountable for their performance is the key to raising learner achievement, but instead the education authorities and political leaders have been made accountable for their decisions and making the implementation of policies possible. The only standardised, high stakes assessment is the Matriculation Examination which is implemented at the end of general upper secondary school, before learners enter tertiary education. All assessment of learners is based on educator made tasks rather than standardised external tasks.

Primary schools in Finland are testing free zones reserved for learning rather than preparing learners for tests and examinations. Different teaching techniques are employed without fear of failure throughout the school system. Finnish parents, learners and educators prefer intelligent accountability that enables schools to focus on learning and allows more freedom in curriculum planning.

- Culture of trust

According to Sahlberg (2007) the culture of trust means that the education authorities and political leaders believe that educators, principals, parents and their communities know how to provide the best possible education for their children. The culture of trust only flourishes in an environment that is built upon good governance and close to zero corruption. Lewis (2005) cited in Sahlberg (2007) has observed that honesty and trust is often seen among the most basic values and building blocks of Finnish society. Hence, trusting schools and educators is a natural consequence of a generally well-functioning civil society in Finland. Buthelezi (2005) is of the view that advocacy and training leads to an ethos of trust where educators work together. Many South African schools lack the culture of trust because they claim that advocacy and training programmes in respect of the implementation of IQMS were not effective in their schools.

- Sustainable leadership

The Finnish government respects education as the main public service for all citizens, as well as an instrument for making the country successful in the world marketplace. Hence, the basic values and the main vision of education have remained unchanged since 1968. Educators in Finland have been given professional freedom to develop pedagogical knowledge and skills related to their individual needs. Sustainable political and educational leadership has enabled Finnish schools and educators to concentrate on developing teaching and learning as they best see it fit.

In response to the education development policies and reform strategies that intend to improve the quality of education and raise learner achievement by increasing focus on literacy and numeracy (as cited by Sahlberg, 2007), Sishuba (2005) and the Teacher (2011) contend that South African learners are not only failing their potential, but are failing in the area of mathematics and literacy. Moreover, the overall performance of South African learners is near the worst in the world.

Sishuba (2005) warns further that without drastic improvement in learners' discipline which influences their academic performance, most South Africans learners will not achieve their potential and will remain in a subordinate position in labour markets

resulting in greater pressure for interventions therein, while the economic growth of the country will continue to be constrained. Nzimande in SETA (2010) confirms the argument of Sishuba (2005) and the Teacher (2011) by divulging that the latest figures show that 40% of the country's youth do not complete high school and among those who do, a number cannot proceed with their studies because of the poor quality of their academic achievements.

According to the Teacher (2014), the Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan revealed in his budget speech that experts and analysts alike have warned that South Africa has no chance of increasing its growth target without an educated population and that the country was falling short on its mathematics and science performance despite the annual increases in funding. Casas (2011) suggests multicultural education as a way of meeting the needs and interests of learners including those learners who are on the verge of dropping out of school. According to Casas (2011), multicultural education will help the learners feel that their culture and values are appreciated and therefore continue with schooling.

Dewey in Casas (2010) urges educators to nurture the active side of learners by providing active learning. He further emphasises that learning activities should be meaningful and of practical use in order to solve real life problems. Active learning in this case refers to investigational activities like problem solving, group work and experiential learning. However, Dewey in Casas (2010) believes in the need to decrease the use of textbooks and lecturing in the classroom by allowing the learners to steer their own course for a better understanding of the world around them. Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) confirms the views of Dewey by arguing that learners may perceive schooling as less relevant when they see no connection between the curriculum of the school and the culture of their families and neighbourhoods, when the values mentioned and demanded by the school are inconsistent with those of their peer group, and when they cannot see a connection between their academic work in schools and their future economic prospects. Again, community problems like teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, delinquency, gang membership and socially disorganised communities with high rates of crime lead to poor academic performance of learners.

#### 2.13.4 Constructivist approach to teaching and learning

Casas (2011) authenticates and expands the views of Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) and Dewey in Casas (2010) in 2.8 (e) by presenting constructivist learning as a kind of learning that embraces the notion that teaching is the facilitation of learning and that educators are the facilitators of the learning process. According to Dewey, educators need to implement teaching practices that develop the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem and further ensure that they are learning the required content that is in line with the particular Grade level.

According to Casas (2011), constructivist educators believe that learners build their understanding of ideas and concepts instead of acquiring knowledge by way of recall and rote learning. Implementing the constructivist approach to teaching and learning therefore requires that educators encourage their learners to learn actively. According to Ormrod (2000), the following principles are common to all constructivist classrooms:

- Complex challenging learning environment and authentic tasks
- Social negotiation and shared responsibility as part of learning
- Multiple representations of content
- Understanding that knowledge is constructed
- Learner centred instruction.

The focus of constructivist instructional activities is for learners to learn primarily through interacting with each other, or with learning resources in their classroom. Instructional activities may include cooperative learning assignments, group discussions, process writing, role plays and hands-on experiments.

However, Casas (2011) contends that nowadays educators use both constructivist and direct instruction in their classrooms every day unaware of which theory they are implementing. For example, a Life Orientation educator may ask learners to read a series of pages on citizenship education in their textbook and then answer questions at the end of the chapter. In the next lesson, the educator begins teaching a thematic unit for two weeks. In such cases the educator is simultaneously implementing direct instruction by instructing the learners to read and answer questions in the textbook, and engaging in constructivist teaching by beginning a thematic unit.

Cristicos et al (2002) conversely warn that:

- Theme teaching is time consuming and difficult; for example, collecting materials for theme teaching can take a long time. Again, it takes time to adapt to the material that is collected.
- Theme teaching highlights social learning rather than deep academic understanding. The idea of integrating learning and of linking it to life is a good idea, but it needs to be done carefully and all educators should ensure that they teach learners about life in all learning areas.
- Lack of time is a common problem in schools and timetables make it difficult to construct a continuous, concentrated period of study.
- Educators need to re-organise classroom space and time since they are to teach in a problem-centred manner. This is necessary because:
  - a. Experiential learner-centred teaching takes more time than conventional teacher talk
  - b. Conventional classrooms do not contain the kinds of real-life resources that are needed to link school learning and life.

Cristicos et al (2002) conclude by suggesting that educators should address this challenge by using homework and by developing a rich extramural life in their schools.

According to Casas (2011) the constructivist approach to teaching and learning enables learners to realise that they learn many of the same concepts in various learning areas. Accountability has, however, encouraged some Departments of Education to seek a more prescribed curriculum. Furthermore, the pressure on educators to help their learners pass yearly standardised examinations is causing some Departments of Education across the country to adopt direct instruction as the primary medium of instruction; while other school districts across the country are responding to failing test scores by adopting packaged curriculum for the educators to follow in the classrooms.

#### 2.13.5 Behavioural approach to teaching and learning

In response to the criticism made by Cristicos et al (2002) and the Department of Education's need for a more prescribed curriculum, Casas (2011) suggests a



behavioural approach to teaching and learning specifically because it emphasises practice and review. According to Casas (2011), many educators who use this approach begin their lessons with prescribed goals and objectives, and then teach content and concepts sequentially, and provide an assessment activity at the end of each lesson. Casas (2011) argued further by presenting the four basic principles that are associated with classroom management that direct the behaviourist educator in the classroom:

- The educator identifies expected behaviours and ensures that learners have a clear understanding of all the expected behaviours before lessons begin.
- The educator provides classroom rules for governing the learners' behaviour.
- The educator observes the classroom activities and responds to inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively by using penalties and other consequences.
- The educator rewards appropriate behaviour, holds learners responsible for completing assignments and ensures that learning activities flow smoothly.

Behavioural objectives are essential in a behaviourist approach because they serve as standards for evaluating the teaching and learning processes. Proponents of behavioural objectives maintain that using behavioural objectives can be a successful method for measuring learners' performance if educators know exactly what learners should learn and how they want them to learn.

## **2.14 GUIDELINES TOWARDS OVERCOMING DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS AND REINSTATING A CLIMATE OF ORDERLINESS IN SCHOOLS**

Mwamwenda (2004) presents the following guidelines that could be used in overcoming discipline problems and reinstating a climate of orderliness in schools during the process of teaching and learning

### 2.14.1.1 Application of punishment for rule violation

Punishing the learner after school for disruptive behaviour is a more effective strategy than corporal punishment.

### 2.14.1.2 Teaching discipline as a subject in schools and in educator training programmes.



New and experienced educators often get into classrooms situations where they are confronted with lack of suitable strategies to handle behaviour problems. Hence, educator training programmes should include modules that are related to learner behaviour problems and discipline management.

Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) and HSRC and EPC (2005) point out that school budgets in rural areas are often insufficient to cover the considerable cost of the school operation. Consequently, lack of resources leads to limited implementation of curricular as well as extra-curricular programmes. Moreover, many rural schools are unable to provide the type of subjects needed to prepare learners for further studies due to the shortage of qualified educators. Similarly, low career aspirations may be a factor in indicating that fewer rural graduates prepare for and enrol in post-secondary education.

Special programmes and technological resources offered in rural schools are limited, and affect learners' opportunities to learn. Learners with limited proficiency in language of instruction are often at risk of educational failure due to the classroom challenges they face, particularly where bilingual curricula or English as a second language programmes are not readily available (HSRC & EPC, 2005).

Research by HSRC and EPC (2005) corroborated the views of Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) by arguing that a common strategy that is used by educators who stay in urban centres is to commute to rural schools. This implies that these educators pay high transport costs. Moreover, their commitment to the school and the wider community is reduced because of the limited time available. Furthermore, extra-curricular activities suffer. Again, long distances, poor roads, and inclement weather are likely to impact on attendance of these educators. Hence, teaching discipline as a subject in schools as a way of enforcing discipline among the learners is thus impracticable in such conditions, consequently the learners' academic performance suffer.

#### 2.14.1.3 Shared decision making versus imposing disciplinary measures

Educators, learners and parents should play an active role in the formulation of school disciplinary policies. Discipline policies and the consequences for violating

them should be decided collaboratively among educators, learners and parents to ensure that they all own them and therefore strive to abide to them.

#### 2.14.1.4 Learner welfare programmes and discussion groups

Welfare programmes and secondary school learner discussion groups could be instrumental in alleviating common problems that may lead to disruptive behaviour. Such discussion groups and programmes should address burning issues like health problems and diseases, early sexual activities, fertility rates, substance abuse, child abuse and other related issues. Opportunities for open discussion and specialised guidance may lead to greater emotional responsibility and stability and in turn, to the promotion of positive discipline.

#### 2.14.1.5. Greater rapport among parents, educators, learners and school related services

When greater rapport is forged among these stakeholders, communities will be brought to realise that the management of discipline in schools can never be a concern of the school alone. Programme services and technical assistance should be extended to families, social welfare, health, legal sectors and other community structures. School regulations related to discipline should be helpful to educators and principals regarding attendance requirements and punishment proceedings.

#### 2.14.2 Corrective disciplinary methods

Russo et al (2004) suggest the following corrective disciplinary methods that could be used in managing a class during teaching and learning:

- Learners should be encouraged to act responsibly in their relationships and school activities.
- Educators should avoid overreacting, because it can lead to unnecessary arguments with learners, and eventually result in secondary misbehaviour related to the original misconduct.
- Educators should accept that learners have a say in the drafting of a code of conduct as well as in the implementation of corrective disciplinary methods regarding fairness.

- Because of the tendency of some learners and parents to over-emphasise their rights, educators should demonstrate assertive but objective conduct to maintain a proper level of order in classrooms and schools.
- Educators should react promptly in cases of learner misconduct, and the type of reaction or punishment should match the seriousness of the transgression.

## **2.15 SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY POLICY**

The Human Impact Partners (HIP) (2012) highlight that a school disciplinary policy creates a safe, positive and healthy school. The HIP conducted a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in collaboration with Community Asset Development Re-Defining Education (CADRE) and Restorative Justice Partners (RJP) on school disciplinary policies in order to find out their potential impact on health and health disparities in schools. Health impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool that is used to evaluate the impacts of proposed disciplinary policies on the health of schools. School discipline policies that were evaluated in this HIA include:

- Exclusionary school discipline (ESD) policy also known as zero tolerance policy. This policy enforces suspension, expulsion or even arrest. The policy is also used to enforce mandatory sentencing for drugs, alcohol, threats, insubordination and other disciplinary behaviours that may trigger severe disciplinary actions.
- Positive Behavioural Interventions (PBIS) and Supports and Restorative Justice (RJ) are two well-known whole school climate programmes that are often used in schools as an alternative to zero tolerance policy. The two policies complement each other. With the goal of improving school climate and decreasing school disruption, PBIS teaches social skills and reinforces positive learner behaviours. RJ engages learners in taking responsibility for school improvement and focus on repairing the harm caused by challenging behaviour through stakeholder cooperation and dialogue. In this case, administrators, educators and peer groups help the offender to take responsibility for his or her actions and change disruptive behaviour.

Findings from the HIA reveal the following impacts:

### **2.15.1 Impact on educational matters**

- An exclusionary discipline approach leads to lower educational attainment including; lower academic performance, negative attitudes about school, feelings of alienation, less participation in extracurricular activities and lower attendance rates.
- A PBIS discipline approach leads to higher educational attainment including improvement in reading performances and learner academic performance along with reduction in out of school suspension.
- A RJ disciplinary approach leads to higher educational attainment including higher academic performance, higher attendance rates and the development and sustainability of positive relationships.

### **2.15.2 Impact on misbehaviour, recurring discipline events and incarceration**

- Suspension and expulsion are associated with: dropping out of school leading to high chances of unemployment and incarceration, engagement with juvenile justice and incarceration as an adult, stress related illness, psychiatric problems and suicide attempts.
- An exclusionary discipline approach leads to more misbehaviour and repeated suspension, increased violence and drug abuse as well as increased referrals to juvenile justice and greater likelihood of adult incarceration.
- A RJ discipline approach leads to fewer instances of harmful and disruptive behaviour, reduction in suspensions and expulsions and fewer referrals to law enforcement.

### **2.15.3 Impact on mental health**

- A PBIS discipline approach leads to a reduction in negative mental health outcomes of exclusionary discipline policies.
- A RJ disciplinary approach leads to increased levels of respect and empathy, improved conflict resolution skills and reduced antisocial behaviour among learners.

### **2.15.4 Impacts on community cohesion**

- Exclusionary discipline approach leads to financial hardships for parents who stay at home to supervise the suspended or expelled learners.

- A PBIS discipline approach would lead to increased respect for all members of the school community, improved relationship among staff members and supportive administrative leadership as well as improved academic performance.
- A RJ approach would lead to improved relationship throughout the school community, increased learner participation and performance as well as increased respect among learners.

## **2.16 STRESS MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION**

Tosi, Rizzo and Carrol (2004) define stress as a non-specifically induced psychological state of the individual that exceeds available resources. It is dynamic condition in which the person is confronted with: an opportunity, a constraint or demand for which resolution is both uncertain and important. According to Tosi et al (2004) some level of stress may lead to better performance. However, distress includes stress responses that weaken a person's physical and psychological capacity to cope with environmental stresses leading to a more serious physiological and psychological problem.

According to Tosi et al (2004) stress is associated with increased absenteeism and lateness at work. Exposure to environmental stressors is thus related to poor performance at work. Stressed individuals are therefore less interpersonally effective and more aggressive towards others.

Likewise, Loock, Grobler and Mestry (2006) argue that educators enter the teaching profession with high expectations, a vision for the future and a mission to educate the learners. However, the demands, pressures and conditions that they work under stifle their zeal and present obstacles to achieving their mission. This includes conditions like learner indiscipline and apathy, lack of professional support, insufficient financial support, pressures from lack of professional support, pressures from unions, Education Department and SGBs, lack of community support, the poor image of the profession and role ambiguity.

Shisana, Peltzer, Zungu, Dirwayi and Louw (2005) maintain that a large number of educators tend to leave the teaching profession due to the following reasons;

- lack of discipline and respect among learners

- work overload and long working hours
- low job satisfaction particularly, lack of career advancement and recognition
- job stress particularly, problems with teaching methods and administration problems with educational system
- school violence was identified as a continuing problem and had an impact on the morale and intention to leave the profession by educators. This corroborated the findings of (HSRC & EPC, 2005) in 1.1.

According to Shisana et al (2005) educators who perceived that they had more support from the Department of Education, SGB, learners' parents, unions and religious groups in their role as educators reported significantly less absenteeism and less unhealthy days as compared to those educators who had no support.

Tosi et al (2004) therefore recommend the following approaches to stress management:

- **Improving communication** with employees reduces uncertainty and lessens role ambiguity.
- **Effective performance appraisal and reward systems** reduce role conflict and role ambiguity. When rewards are clearly related to performance and educators know what they are accountable for, role conflict is reduced; when they know where they stand, role ambiguity is reduced.
- **An improved match of skills, personality and work** assist in managing stress. Therefore, schools should seek highly qualified and competent educators with personalities that help them cope effectively.

Loock et al (2006) argue further that a major reason why many educators gradually replace their idealism with cynicism, de-motivation and despair is that policy makers, analysts and top management of educational institutions have long placed the emotional welfare of learners first, and annulled the true needs and morale of the educator who teaches.

They substantiate their view by referring to a study which has proved that some of the most creative and talented educators who were once enthusiastic and excited about teaching left the profession due to burnout. The rewards, mainly personal, were there during their training and first few months of teaching. Before long, they

were faced with criticism, overcrowded classrooms, the effect of educator shortages, illness, lack of job mobility, lack of financial and emotional rewards, difficult teaching assignments, poor working conditions, disruptive learners, difficult administrators, lack of respect, little or no social support and other negative conditions. According to Lock et al (2006), burnout attacks career motivation and diminishes the effectiveness and job satisfaction of many educators.

Lock et al (2006) consequently recommend that the Department of Basic Education and school principals must be continually aware that it is not only the psychological well-being of learners that must be monitored, but also the job satisfaction and psychological well-being of each educator. However, the implication of failure of the School Management Team (SMT) to deal with stress is enormous. Nevertheless, effective SMTs hold the key to promoting the adoption of coping strategies.

## **2.17 TIME MANAGEMENT**

In response to the educators' challenge of inadequate time in schools as mentioned by Cristicos et al (2002) in 2.10.2, Pretorius and Lemmer (2004) maintain that educators should eliminate activities that are time consuming as much as possible and adhere to certain principles that will help them to manage time effectively. This implies that educators should be disciplined enough to replace time wasting activities with activities that will achieve the same purpose at a lesser time.

### **2.17.1 Principles of time management**

Pretorius and Lemmer (2004) present the following general principles of time management as proposed by Evans, Evans, Gable and Schmid (1991)

#### **2.17.1.1 Time analysis**

Educators should make an analysis of how they spend time. The analysis could be in the form of a detailed record or table for a week or a month. Each educator would be able to come out with a quick and rough hourly estimate of the total amount of minutes that were spent during a given hour on each of the activities concerned. Such analysis will raise the educators' awareness of cyclical periods regarding activities like written reports, work schedules and other responsibilities.



### 2.17.1.2 Time planning

Time planning is vital to ensure that things get done within the time limits set for them. This will assist the educators to use time effectively and adhere to deadlines. Evans et al (1991) further suggest that educators could use the following to manage time effectively:

- **A diary:** Appointments, important events and action lists can be compiled in the diary.
- **Action list:** A list of things to be done and its importance to getting work done on time.
- **Calendars and year planners:** These are necessary for noting activities that the educators want to have done by a specific period. They can also be used to check assignments, appointments, responsibilities, important events and deadlines on weekly, monthly and yearly basis.
- **Time tables:** A time table is necessary to serve as a duty sheet for each educator. It is an outline of all the responsibilities that are allocated to a specific educator, such as the learning areas that are allocated to that educator, extra-curricular activities and administrative duties.
- **Work checklists:** Checklists are a quick and easy way of determining whether work has been finalised or not. It may contain a rating scale indicating frequency of accomplishment.

### 2.17.2 Central essential tasks first

Time management entails increasing the quantity of work accomplished and ensuring that the most important tasks are done within the allocated time. The educators should therefore review their tasks and arrange them in order of importance.

## **2.18 PERSPECTIVES ON EMOTIONS AND TEACHING**

Vygotsky (2003) contends that proposals for tests of educators' knowledge and for linking of pay to indices of learners achievement reveals that popular attention to educators' professional lives has long been surrogated with competence and expertise. Such proposals are causing distress and are attracting new attention to the way that this affects the lives of educators. School change theorists are also turning their attention to the effective fallout of attempts to alter practice and policy and address troublesome emotions, such as grief and anxiety, as well as the need to promote hopefulness and trust.

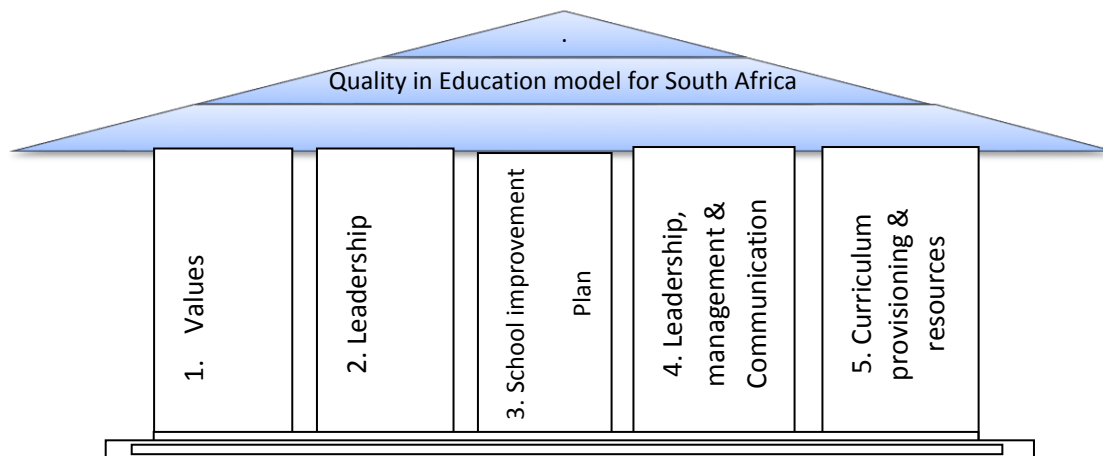
According to Vygotsky (2003), emotions play a key role in shaping motivation and thought, therefore close attention should be paid to the affective aspects of educators' workplace and to the ways that emotions inform the purely academic aspects of their efforts. Emotions are inevitably aroused in situations in which matters of importance slip beyond ease of control and are therefore markers of both vulnerability and deepest commitment.

- Allied to the emphasis on emotionality are heightened concerns around educators' stress estimated to prompt the departure of most educators within their first decade in the classroom. Linking the problem of intensification to a growing incidence of educator burnout, Woods (1999) in Vygotsky (2003) observes that educators have more to do, including proliferation of administrative and assessment tasks. They have insufficient time to do it all and less time for re-skilling, leisure and sociability. Vygotsky (2003) concludes by asserting that the work of educators is constructed in a manner that constrains affective freedom and the collective action, yet, strong emotions could inspire them to teach effectively.

## **2.19 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The literature mentioned above contributed to the development of "putting a plan into practice' as a conceptual framework for this study. This conceptual framework is based on the first three pillars of Quality in Education Model (Hayward, 2007) in Figure 2.1 below. The researcher added the last two pillars. These pillars are universal and applicable to every school and should be present in order to attain the status of a total quality school (Hayward, 2007).

Figure 2.3: Quality in education model for schools



### Values

According to Hayward (2007), if a school does not have values, true quality education cannot happen. Even if the leadership of that school is dynamic and exciting, it does not follow that it is a quality school. Core values such as honesty, integrity, respect, openness, teamwork and trust are essential for a school to produce quality education. A school imbued with values would, for example, not appoint staff on the basis of 'jobs for family, favourites and friends' or political and teacher union membership but on the needs of the school.

### Leadership

For a school to produce quality education, school leadership should not reside only in the principal's office. Authority and responsibility should be spread throughout the school. Leadership roles should be given to colleagues, parents and learners in different situations, since different situations require different leaders. Effective leadership involves a healthy balance between a life inside and outside the school. Sound leadership gives the school's stakeholders the space to use their initiatives with the vision of the school in mind. Ethical leadership is linked to the pillar of values in which all actions and decisions are guided by a moral code. Such a school reflects values such as compassion, equality, honesty, peace and respect.



### **School improvement plan**

Schools are required to have school improvement plans based within the Provincial Departments of Education. These plans need annual revision and update. The improvement plan covers the following areas:

- **Basic functionality of the school:** This is to ensure that the school functions effectively on a day-to-day basis, with high percentage attendance by both learners and educators, and that class and educator timetables are in place including a sound financial management plan.
- **Learner achievement:** The intention of this element is to ensure that learners achieve their full potential in all subjects including a high participation in extra-curricular activities.
- **School safety, security and discipline:** Ensuring that learners are safe and secure at school, as well as the availability of a disciplinary code which outlines the responsibilities and rights of everyone is essential for all schools.
- **School infrastructure:** Buildings should be well-maintained and sufficient for the needs of the learners.
- **Parents and community:** A good relationship between the parents and the school is indispensable for quality education. The school should therefore interact with the wider community and support partnerships with other organisations.

### **Leadership, management and communication:**

Harmony between the principal, staff and SGB should be created for the benefit of the school and all stakeholders (learners, parents and staff) should be well-informed about the progress of the school through a participative style of communication between and across the different stakeholders.

### **Curriculum, provisioning and resources:**

The intention of this aspect is to have Curriculum Policy Documents in place as well as sufficient human and physical resources to make sound teaching possible.

This conceptual framework served as a guide to the researcher when formulating research questions based on the objectives of the study. Through this conceptual framework, the researcher was able to determine if schools, particularly learners, value discipline as an important factor that has an effect on their academic

performance. This factor was clearly reflected in all questions under discipline and in most questions under academic performance of learners. It also highlighted the educators' perceptions of the level of discipline in their schools as well as its effect on academic performance of learners.

This study focuses on the behavioural patterns of learners and the effect this has on the end result of learner performance in class. It also captures the challenges that educators face on a day to day basis as they strive to balance imparting skills on learners with upholding discipline in classrooms. The researcher used this framework in order to extract and decipher the effect of the relationship between schools and society, and to establish what could be done better to eradicate the problem of poor performance by learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural Schools. Interviews such as "How does discipline affect the academic performance of learners?" were used to obtain information from participants.

## **2.20 SUMMARY**

It can be noted from the above that behaviour is an expression of emotions and feelings. When managed the outcome could be favourable, whereas when left uncontrolled the outcome could be detrimental. Whilst learners express their discontent with the circumstances around them through absenteeism, disrespect, violence and drug abuse and coming to school late, some educators decide to resign from their jobs as a direct consequence. This therefore spells out the need for a common yardstick against which behaviour should be measured and controlled. Hence, schools should acquire policies and procedures that promote discipline for the betterment of the learners' academic performance whilst minimising the risk of losing professional educators.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The literature review dealt with in Chapter two based on the stakeholder perceptions of effect of learner indiscipline on academic performance of learners in rural schools formed the theoretical context of this study which influenced the selection of research methods. This study employs the qualitative method of research. This methodology coupled with the rationale for this choice thereof, purposeful sampling was used in selecting the schools investigated in this research. Although the main data collection approach was qualitative, there were some quantitative strategies that were invoked as well. These include the collection of biographical data.

### **3.2 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

The researcher chose the qualitative study because it attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation.

McMillan and Schumacher (2005) assert that qualitative research is a naturalistic enquiry which uses non-interfering data collection strategies to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them. Moreover, most qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Marshall and Rossman (2006) confirm that qualitative research accepts the value of context and setting, searching for a deeper understanding of the participant's lived experiences of the particular phenomenon.

A qualitative approach allows for purposeful sampling (McMillan & Schumacher (2005). Hence, the selected participants were knowledgeable and information-rich concerning the stakeholder perceptions of effect of learner indiscipline on academic performance of learners in Bushbuckridge rural schools. Secondly, McMillan & Schumacher (2005) present that a qualitative approach ensures that the researcher remains the main data collector. Accordingly, the researcher assumed interactive social roles in which she recorded observations of participants in many situations. As a result the qualitative method was considered to be the best approach for the data collection process of the study.

### 3.2.1 Purposeful sampling

Purposeful sampling refers to the selection of information rich cases for an in-depth study, specifically, when the researcher wants to understand the phenomena without generalising the results (Leedy, 1993). Purposeful sampling was done on site selection. Four rural schools in Bushbuckridge area were selected. In each school the researcher selected four learners, three educators and one member of School Management Team (SMT) to participate in the investigation. In total, twelve educators and four SMT members participated in structured individual interviews, while sixteen learners participated in focus group interviews. The criterion for site selection was the school's geographical context and its accessibility to the researcher.

According to Creswell (1998), the search for data must be guided by processes that will provide rich details to maximise the range of specific information that can be obtained from the context. Therefore, the researcher selected:

- two schools that obtained the lowest percentage pass in Grade 12 in 2011,
- two schools that obtained the highest percentage pass in Grade 12 in 2011.

The researcher further selected institutions:

- that could be easily accessed,
- of which she had knowledge of their location.

### 3.2.2 Description of selected Schools

#### 3.2.2.1 School A

School A is a rural school, which is located at approximately 50 km away from the nearest town. It is built at the centre of a settlement. The school had two security guards who take turns to control entry into the school premises during the day and at night. It was not a fee paying school and had 1 520 learners, one principal, two deputy principals, eight heads of department and 42 educators. The educator learner ratio at this school was 1:29 however, classrooms were overcrowded especially Grade eight to Grade eleven classes.

The medium of instruction at this school was English, although educators and learners used xitsonga, siswati and sotho most of the time, as they were first language speakers of these languages. Educators at this school were committed to their work. They frequently arrived at school in time, fully prepared to teach. They used the educator-centred method of teaching most of the time. They had less interest in extracurricular activities. As a result, they did not support each other in supervising learners when performing extracurricular activities. For example, music was conducted by two educators who were assisted by learners. All the educators reflected a culture of respect for one another and they treated learners accordingly.

Few learners frequently came late for school since all learners in Grade 10 to Grade 12 were attending morning studies which usually commenced at 6h00. The majority of learners attended school regularly. There were few learners who did not do assignments, who dodged classes and hid in the toilet or in the nearest bush and then joined the other learners home after school hours as if they had been at school. This school was rated among the best performing schools in the circuit.

For example, the percentage pass rate for the Grade 12s from 2006 to 2011 was as follows

| Year           | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Percentage (%) | 71.9 | 84.2 | 36.2 | 36.8 | 75.7 | 66.4 |

The majority of the learners at this school, particularly Grade 8 and 9, did not have textbooks for mathematics and technology. Hence the general performance of the learners in these subjects was poor.

The number of learners in each classroom ranged between 40 and 73. Classrooms were insufficiently furnished. A hall and one classroom were only used for alternative subjects during specific periods. Grade 8 and 9 learners did not have tables at all, they used their laps to support books when writing and reading. There were two blocks of toilets for learners in this school. Each block consisted of eight pit latrines; boys used one block and the girls used the other block. Educators had their own toilets. The staffroom at this school was overcrowded hence some educators used a computer centre as their staffroom. The principal had a small office which was



crowded with furniture. The deputy principals had small offices which were also crowded with furniture. The heads of department (HODs) shared the same classroom as their office. Three educators were accommodated in one of the Deputy Principal's offices.

The school had four photocopiers. The HODs were assigned with the duty of photocopying for the educators whom they supervised. However, the photocopiers were old and often out of order. This hampered the educators' progress in teaching as they were to photocopy most information from books for the learners to speed up the process of teaching due to the shortage of books in the school. This retarded the assessment process since most chalkboards were small. The school had no library, landline or laboratory. The school used a cell phone as the school phone. Educators and learners were unable to perform experiments.

#### 3.2.2.2 School B

School B is a rural school, which is located approximately 60 km away from the nearest town. It is built on the periphery of a settlement. The school had two security guards who take turns to control access into the school premises during the day and at night. It was not a fee paying school. It had 1 150 learners, one principal, two deputy principals, eight heads of department and 40 educators. Therefore, the educator learner ratio in this school was 1:29.

The medium of instruction at this secondary school was English. However, educators and learners used xitsonga or siswati most of the time, as they are first language speakers of these languages. Educators were committed to teaching. In most cases, they used the educator centred method of teaching, but had less interest in extracurricular activities. For example, only two educators trained learners in netball and soccer. Educators in this school had a culture of respect for one another and cared for learners.

The majority of the learners arrived at school on time. Absenteeism from this secondary school was rare. The level of discipline during lessons was very high; as a result the majorities of the learners were always up to date with assignments and had special interest in learning. This led the school to obtain a high percentage pass

for the Grade 12 learners from 2006 to 2011. The pass percentages of this school was as follows

| Year           | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Percentage (%) | 97.7 | 100  | 72.3 | 56.1 | 61.5 | 62   |

This school obtained the highest percentage pass in the circuit from 2006 to 2008. From 2009 to 2011 the school obtained the second highest position in the circuit.

Five kitchen staff prepared meals for the learners during school days. The meals were served at 10h00. Both learners and educators enjoyed the meals. Hence, gates were locked during the school hours to ensure that learners do not dodge lessons, and also to control influx into the school premises.

Classrooms were insufficiently furnished. Few classrooms had broken windows. One classroom did not have a door. Grade 8 learners did not have tables at all, but all learners in the school had chairs. The number of learners in each classroom ranged from 40 to 72 learners. There were four blocks of bathrooms for learners at this school, each block had two bathrooms. The learners however used only two blocks: one for boys and one for girls. The other two blocks were used as storerooms for the school. Educators had their own bathrooms. The staffroom in this school did not accommodate all the educators; hence other educators were accommodated in the library and in the computer laboratory. The principal and deputy principals were accommodated in one classroom that was divided into three offices. The heads of departments shared the same classroom as an office.

The school had two photocopiers and two clerical staff whose duties included typing tests and examinations. There were three desktop computers and two laptops in the principal's office that were used by educators to type lesson content when required.

The school had a computer centre consisting of 30 computers that were used by both learners and educators during computer lessons. All the computers had internet access. A school laboratory was under construction; hence educators and learners performed experiments through the use of a mobile laboratory that was provided by a non-government organisation (NGO) called Panreach from Nelspruit. The NGO

further supported mathematics, technology and natural science educators with the view to improving the performance of learners in this school. The school had a telephone and a library. Most learners in this school were motivated to learn; hence the school was rated among the best performing secondary schools in the circuit.

### 3.2.2.3 School C

School C is a rural school, which is located at approximately 20km away from the nearest town. It is built at the periphery of the settlement and was not a fee paying school. The school did not have security guards to control entry into the school premises during the day due to insufficient funds; as a result the school gate was locked during lessons and opened during breaks. This assisted the school in preventing learners from dodging classes. The only available security guard worked at night.

The school had one security guard, 460 learners, one deputy principal, two HODs and 12 educators. There was no principal in this school. Therefore, the educator-learner ratio at this school was 1:31. The medium of instruction at this school was English. However, educators and learners used siswati and xitsonga most of the time as they were first language speakers of these languages. Educators were committed to teaching. In most cases, they used the educator centred method of teaching, but had less interest in extracurricular activities. Educators in this school respected one another and cared for the learners.

Few learners were often late to school since the school gates were usually closed at the beginning of lessons. The rate of absenteeism at this school was low due to the availability of food for all learners which was served at 11h00. However most learners at this school did not do assignments. As a result, there was a high failure rate. The pass rate for the Grade 12 learners from 2006 to 2011 was as follows

| Year                | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Percentage pass (%) | 37.3 | 59   | 64   | 18.3 | 21.2 | 29.3 |

The school was declared dysfunctional from 2009 to 2011 by the Department of Education because of the Grade 12 results that were below 40%. Learners at this school were not motivated to learn; hence most disrupt lessons daily. Nevertheless educators attended their classes regularly. mathematics and physical science educators went an extra mile by offering lessons in the afternoons and on Saturdays. But the pass rate of these subjects was extremely poor.

Classrooms were sufficient for all the learners and were well furnished. SMTs and educators were adequately accommodated. Each SMT member had his own office. There were two blocks of toilets for learners in this school. Each block consisted of four toilets; boys used one block and girls used the other block. Educators had their own bathrooms.

The school had two laptops for the two clerical staff, whose duty included making copies for educators, typing assignments, tests and examination. There were two photocopiers at this school which functioned throughout the year. The school had no library or laboratory. Educators and learners were unable to perform experiments due to the absence of the laboratory. This school had one general worker whose duty was to clean the school premises.

#### 3.2.2.4 School D

School D is a rural school, which is located approximately 80km away from the nearest town. This school was not easily accessed since there was scarcity of public transport in its area. Furthermore, the road that led to this school was gravel and pitted with ditches and potholes. It was built at the periphery of the settlement and was not a fee paying school. The school did not have security guards to control entry into the school premises during the day due to insufficient funds. The only available security guard worked at night.

The school had one security guard, 358 learners, one principal, two HODs and eleven educators. Therefore, the educator-learner ratio was 1:26. The medium of instruction in this school was English. However, educators and learners used siswati and xitsonga most of the time as they were first language speakers of these languages. Educators were committed to teaching. In most cases, they use the educator centred method of teaching, but had less interest for extracurricular

activities. Educators at this school respected one another and cared for the learners.

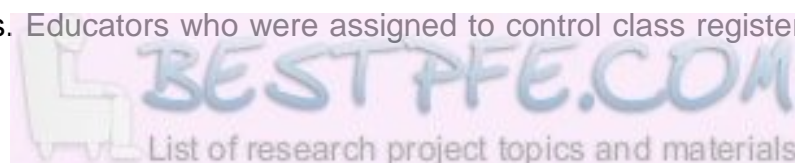
The majority of the learners arrived at school on time. Absenteeism from this school was minimal. The level of discipline during lessons was low despite the fact that learners were few in each classroom. What is more notable is that the majority of the learners did not do assignments and exhibited learning deficits such as attention deficit. This has led to low percentage pass of the Grade 12 learners for the past three years. The school obtained the following pass percentages

| Year               | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Percentage pass(%) | 57.5 | 54,4 | 57   | 44,7 | 49,3 | 38,5 |

Classrooms were well furnished. Few classrooms had broken windows. The number of learners in each classroom ranged between 25 and 39 learners. There were two blocks of toilets for learners at this school. Each block consisted of four pit latrines. One block was used by boys and the other block was used by girls. Educators had their own toilets. The staffroom at this school was furnished with four tables that were shared by the educators and HODs. The principal was accommodated in his own office. Seemingly, the administration block was built without a plan, since there was a narrow passage that led to the storeroom and a small sized office that accommodated only one average sized table and a chair. It was dark in the passage due to the absence of lights and a window. This small sized office was used by an acting HOD.

The school had two clerical staff members whose duties included typing tests and examinations for learners in the school. The school had a computer centre which consisted of seven computers and two photocopiers. Previously the school had ten computers; three of them were stolen.

Three kitchen staff prepared meals for the learners during the school days. The meals were served at 10h20 on every school day. Both learners and educators enjoyed the meals. Educators who were assigned to control class registers ensured



that learners in their classes shared their food as expected by the Department of Basic Education and cleaned their classrooms after every meal.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

Interviews and open ended questions were used to elicit the participants' views about the stakeholder perceptions of effect of learner indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

#### **3.3.1 Focus group interviews**

As affirmed by Krueger 1994, focus group interviews produce qualitative data that provide insight into perceptions and views of participants in a more natural environment than individual interviews, because participants influence each other like in a real life situation. I found these types of interviews useful as selected groups spoke more freely and expanded more on their ideas. This enabled a better understanding of the diversity of perceptions and experiences in view of behavioural patterns of learners in and outside of the classroom.

Morgan (1997) asserts that focus groups have shown that people are more likely to self-disclose or share personal experiences in groups, because they feel that they are relatively empowered and supported in a group situation. Besides, they are more likely to share personal experiences and feelings in the presence of people whom they perceive to be like themselves in some ways. This promoted the researcher to choose participants of the same age group who were in the same class. Nevertheless, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) warn researchers to guard against a situation where one participant dominates the interview.

#### **3.3.2 Individual interviews**

Purposeful sampling was done on site selection. Purposeful sampling refers to the selection of information rich cases for an in-depth study, specifically, when the researcher wants to understand the phenomena without needing to generalise the results (Leedy 1993).

According to Creswell (1998), the search for data must be guided by processes that will provide rich details to maximize the range of specific information that can be

obtained from the context. Therefore, the researcher selected participants from Bushbuckridge rural schools who either obtained the highest percentage pass or the lowest percentage pass in grade twelve final results in 2011. Three educators and one school management team member were randomly selected from each school.

The researcher used individual interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of the participants' perception of the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools because research has proved that most people are more willing to communicate orally than in writing (van Dalen, 1979). This enabled the researcher to encourage the participants to disclose more information by probing into the problem. This phenomenon resulted in data being provided more readily.

### **3.3.3 The interview**

Interview questions were used to collect data based on stakeholder perceptions of effect of learner indiscipline on their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit.

The interview questions that were asked during the interviews were a combination of open ended and closed forms. The combined form of the questions enabled the participants to freely express their views in their own words, but where objective and discrete data was solicited, a list of alternatives were provided.

The interview commenced with items dealing with the biographical details of each participant such as age, gender and the present post level. The remaining questions were based on the stakeholder perceptions of effect of learner indiscipline on their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools, Mkhuhlu circuit. An example of the questions that were used is attached as appendix 7.

#### **3.3.3.1 Piloting the interview questions**

Open ended questions and closed items were initially drafted based on the objectives of the research. The draft was then given to a person who is familiar with the contents of the study to check for typing or language errors. This was done to establish if the potential participants would understand instructions and questions

asked with relative ease. The draft was then edited and adjusted according to the recommendations of the first pilot person. Two participants were then drawn from the research population and interviewed.

After each interview, a short discussion was carried out with the participant to find out

- if the instructions were clear
- if the questions were clearly formulated
- if the length of the interview was suitable
- if the level of difficulty of the questions was appropriate.

Feedback from the two pilot participants was analysed and used to adjust the questions accordingly. The revised and consolidated questions were then used to interview 16 educators and 20 learners of the same target population as the final research instrument.

Two SMT members and two educators from each school were interviewed individually. An agreement upon venues, dates and time for the interviews were made. The interviews were conducted in English and recorded with an audiotape. Interview questions based on subsections of the literature study in chapter two were used as a guide to facilitate the thinking of the participants.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define data analysis as the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials accumulated to increase understanding and to enable the researcher to present what has been discovered. Patton (1990) sees the first task of analysis as description, in which one asks basic questions. Patton (1990) outlines the following strategies for analysis of data: the case analysis, in which a case study for each group being studied is described, and the cross study in which answers from different people to common questions are grouped together.

In this study, the researcher analysed discipline patterns of learners that differ from school to school, and grouped answers according to commonality of questions.



### 3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The research instruments that were used were validated and tested for reliability using expert opinion and pilot testing. According to McMillan & Schumacher (1997), qualitative researchers commonly use a combination of mechanisms to enhance reliability in collected data. So, the researcher used the following capturing mechanisms to ensure the reliability of the collected data:

- a) An audio recorder during interviews
- b) Precise descriptions from Interviews

McMillan & Schumacher (1997) regard the validity of a qualitative design as the degree to which interpretations and the concepts have mutual meaning between the participants and the researcher. Therefore, the researcher and the participants reached an agreement on the descriptions and the meanings of different occurrences. Consequently, the researcher used the following strategies to enhance validity:

- Participants' words were transcribed as spoken.
- Multi-data collection techniques were used.
- The collected data was compared to check its validity.
- Each participant was given a copy of the transcription of the interview to check for validity.

When testing for reliability, patterns and similarities were searched through the data, words and phrases were recorded to represent the patterns. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) argue that words and phrases are coding categories. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) maintain that the coding process involves synthesising and analysing all the data while bearing in mind the themes, ideas, concepts, interpretations and propositions. The data were finally grouped according to the subsections in chapter two.

## **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the findings from the results of the qualitative investigation into the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools. The general objective of the study was to understand manifestations of learner indiscipline in relation to their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Determine the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Establish the relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

The following research questions guided the investigation

- What is the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools?
- What is the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools?
- How does indiscipline influence the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools?

### **4.2 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL DATA**

The investigation was based on a literature review and an empirical study as discussed in chapter three. The sample for this investigation consisted of 16 learners, 12 educators and 4 school management teams (SMTs). The results from the structured interviews are preceded a short discussion of the biographical details of the research participants. The results of the structured interviews follow, described according to the subtopics in the interview schedule.

### 4.3 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The information mentioned in Table 4.1 provides the context for the comments made by the SMTs, educators and learners.

**Table 4.1 Biographical details of SMTs and educators (Question1.1; 1.2; 1.3)**

| Participant | Position held | Gender | Age | Teaching experience in years |
|-------------|---------------|--------|-----|------------------------------|
| A           | SMT           | Male   | 58  | 24                           |
| B           | SMT           | Male   | 48  | 23                           |
| C           | SMT           | Male   | 43  | 19                           |
| D           | SMT           | Female | 44  | 22                           |
| E           | Educator      | Female | 39  | 19                           |
| F           | Educator      | Female | 41  | 22                           |
| G           | Educator      | Female | 52  | 18                           |
| H           | Educator      | Female | 44  | 23                           |
| I           | Educator      | Female | 33  | 04                           |
| J           | Educator      | Male   | 44  | 21                           |
| K           | Educator      | Male   | 51  | 23                           |
| L           | Educator      | Male   | 41  | 18                           |
| M           | Educator      | Male   | 41  | 21                           |
| N           | Educator      | Male   | 43  | 10                           |
| O           | Educator      | Male   | 47  | 20                           |
| P           | Educator      | Male   | 41  | 18                           |

#### Key

SMT: (school management team)

School A: school with high pass rate

School B: school with high pass rate

School C: school with low pass rate

school D: school with low pass rate

**Table 4.2: Biographical details for learners (question 1.1; 1.2; 1.3)**

| Participant | Position | Gender | Age | Grade |
|-------------|----------|--------|-----|-------|
| A           | Learner  | Female | 17  | 12    |
| B           | Learner  | Female | 17  | 12    |
| C           | Learner  | Male   | 18  | 12    |
| D           | Learner  | Male   | 17  | 12    |
| E           | Learner  | Female | 18  | 12    |
| F           | Learner  | Female | 21  | 12    |
| G           | Learner  | Male   | 18  | 12    |
| H           | Learner  | Male   | 20  | 12    |
| I           | Learner  | Female | 17  | 11    |
| J           | Learner  | Female | 17  | 11    |
| K           | Learner  | Male   | 16  | 11    |
| L           | Learner  | Male   | 17  | 11    |
| M           | Learner  | Female | 15  | 10    |
| N           | Learner  | Female | 16  | 10    |
| O           | Learner  | Male   | 16  | 10    |
| P           | Learner  | Male   | 16  | 10    |

## 4.4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Question 2 sought information about the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools, with special reference to the Mkhuhlu Circuit.

### 4.4.1 DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

The researcher analysed indiscipline patterns of learners from each school and the following results were tabulated.

#### LEARNERS' RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS WITH HIGH PASS RATE

Table 4.3: School A

| Question A   | Girls responses  | Boys responses   |
|--|--|--|
| How does discipline in your school affect your academic performance? | <p>Participant A said, "It is easy to see when the principal is not around, because learners will be roaming outside their classrooms. This affects our performance negatively since we always fail tests and end of term examinations".</p> <p>Participant B said, "Seemingly, there is a tension between the educators and the principal, because every time when the principal gives instruction to educators, they oppose him. For example, if the principal tells them to teach learners in the morning, some educators purposely delay, this makes us fail the end of term examinations because they don't cover the whole syllabus"</p> | <p>Participant C said, "The discipline that we have is not enough, because we are disciplined when the principal is around. This lowers our academic performance because effective learning rarely takes place in the absence of the principal".</p> <p>Participant D said, "Some educators do not attend to their classes when the principal is away. For example the vice principal is teaching us English, but he is always away from school. Sometimes we do not learn English for the whole week. This makes us fail at the end. It is painful because we have voiced the problem to the SMT but they are failing to resolve it".</p> |

**Table 4.4: SCHOOL B**

| <b>Question A</b>   | <b>Girls responses</b>  | <b>Boys responses</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>How does discipline In your school affect your academic performance?</p> | <p>Participant E said, “The level of discipline depends on the educators’ ability to discipline us, because it is only the educators who can force us to be disciplined since this discipline is not something that we are born with, but it is a character that we find at school. So, we pass only the subjects that are taught by educators who can discipline us.</p> <p>Participant F said, “It is the educators who can teach us to read books and study because not all of us can do that, so educators need to enforce discipline in us to help us learn on our own”.</p> | <p>Participant G said, “We Grade 12s are disciplined. Most educators appreciate us for the discipline that we have. Our average pass percentage in March was 54%.it was only our class that obtained the best pass percentage out of the whole school”.</p> <p>Participant H said, “Discipline is important when it comes to academic performance, because the level of discipline determines the pass percentage of learners”.</p> |

## LEARNERS' RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS WITH LOW PASS RATE

**Table 4.5: SCHOOL C**

| Question A  | Girls  | Boys   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>How does discipline in your school affect your academic performance?</p> | <p>Participant I said, "The level of discipline in our school does not allow us to perform to our best ability because we sometimes read and send messages from our cell phones during lessons when we are bored".</p> <p>Participant J said, "We do not always do homework at home, but instead we copy other learners' work at school and then present it to the educators as if it is our own work. This makes us fail tests because the aim of homework is to help us revise what we learnt at school during the day in order to improve our understanding of the subject matter".</p> | <p>Participant K said, "We sometimes ask for permission from the educators to go to the toilet, but instead, we go to buy sweets from the market place to enjoy them in class. What makes it worse is that when we come back from the market place we usually pass some of the sweets to our friends in the class, in that way we disturb them and those who sit next to them, sometimes the educator also get disturbed".</p> <p>Participant L said, "We are not always obedient to educators who discipline us for our wrong deeds. Over again, we sometime make noise to disturb lessons and then pretend to be innocent. This disturbs both the whole class and the educators, and as a result our achievement is not good".</p> |

**Table 4.6: SCHOOL D**

| Question A  | Girls  | Boys   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>How does discipline in your school affect your academic performance?</p> | <p>Participant M said, “There are always disturbances when periods are changed because we change classrooms, so we make a lot of noise to such an extent that learners who are learning are disturbed.</p> <p>Again, some educators discipline us by expelling us from class, this causes disorder because other learners join me when expelled from class. This lowers my academic performance which eventually affects the academic performance of the school.</p> <p>Participant N said, “Over-aged learners who influence other learners to go to the toilet and smoke dagga, dodge classes, and mock educators who discipline them. end up failing at the end of every term.”</p> | <p>Participant O said, “Educators don’t listen to us when we talk to them, then; we end up clashing with them. They expect us to show respect when we talk to them while they themselves don’t show that respect to us. This leads us to ignore the educators even when they are teaching us; we then fail our tests and exams”.</p> <p>Participant P said, “ We always fail tests and examinations because most of us write home-work in the morning at school since our parents give us a lot of household chores, we then get tired and sleep before writing the school work. Again, some educators suspend learners who disturb lessons and those who don’t do school work by sending them home to call their parents for a disciplinary hearing. This makes us fail because we miss lessons.”</p> |



The dominant theme that emerged was that the level of discipline in schools did not enable learners to do their best academically in all the schools. In school A effective learning occurred only when the principal was present. The educators' ability to discipline learners determined the academic performance of learners; as a result learners performed better in some of the subjects.

In schools that performed poorly learners mocked and ignored educators even during lessons and also retaliated whenever a learner is expelled from class by joining him or her outside. Disruption of lessons by noise was the order of the day in schools C and D. Moreover, learners used to bunk lessons by hiding in the toilet where they smoked dagga. Most learners frequently practiced plagiarism which disadvantaged them from applying what was learnt in class. As a result, their academic performance suffered.

### **LEARNERS' RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS WITH HIGH PASS RATE**

Table 4.7: School A

| Question B   | Girls  | Boys  |
|--|--|---|
| i. How often do you come late in your school?        | Participant A said, "Some of us frequently arrive at school late because we stay far away from school, yet waking up in the morning is not nice, and we have to foot to school. Again, it is now winter, the night is long, when we wait for dawn, then we arrive at school late.  | Participant C said, "I always arrive at school and in class on time".   |
| ii. How does that affect your academic performance ? | But we are afraid of going to school while it is still dark because there are gangsters around who might attack us. This affects me because educators do not wait for late comers. They start teaching immediately they get into class. For instance, if a new topic is introduced in my absentia, then it becomes difficult for me to understand the whole chapter. Then I miss a lot.<br>Participant B said, "we who frequently come late to school are few, but it does not really affect me because I am always late by five minutes or so, as a result I am always in class before educators come in to teach." | Participant D said, "I attend morning studies that starts at 6h00, this enables me to be at school and in class on time." |

Table 4.8: School B

| Question B  | Girls  | Boys   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>i. How often do you come late in your school?</p> <p>ii. How does that affect your academic performance?</p> | <p>Participant E said, “we Grade 12 learners do not come late to school because we attend morning studies which starts at 6h20 and ends at 7h20 when the school starts”.</p> <p>Participant F said, “I frequently come to school late. This negatively affects me because the principal lock the gate exactly at 06h20 when the study period begins. Once the gate is locked, then, I miss the study period because even if I arrive after one minute, the principal does not open the gate. He usually likened the locking of the gate to catching a train that takes off exactly at 6h20; he would say ‘if it was a train, you could have missed it’.”</p> | <p>Participant G said, “I am not affected by late coming because I always arrive at school and in class on time”.</p> <p>Participant H said, “I personally do not come to school late. Many of the learners who come to school late are those who stay far away from the school, mostly in the neighbouring communities. This lowers their academic performance because they frequently miss lessons”.</p> |

## LEARNERS' RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS WITH LOW PASS RATE

Table 4.9: School C

| Question B  | Girls  | Boys  |
|---|--|---|
| <p>i. How often do you come late in your school?</p> <p>ii. How does that affect your academic performance?</p> | <p>Participant I said, "Most of us have a tendency of coming to school late, but this is worse on Mondays and Fridays because we first attend morning devotions, after that we go around and hunt for chairs in other classrooms. So we sometimes end up quarrelling for chairs both physically and emotionally because they are not enough for all of us and therefore develop grudges against each other. We sometimes end up being punished by educators or even suspended from school for seven days. As a result, most of us keep on failing out tests and exams".</p> <p>Participant J said, "We Sikhothane group of learners does not respect people at all. A word by the sikhothane group is final, instead we ignore educators. We formed this group this year. This affects our future because the failure rate is very high in this school."</p> | <p>Participant K said, "We Sikhothane group of learners always come late to school on purpose because we don't wear the school uniform in order to show off with our expensive clothes so that everybody can see that we are rich and have a lot of money to do whatever we want, we also disturb lessons and mock educators who discipline us. Sometimes we dodge classes and go to buy pizza in town and then come back to enjoy it in our classrooms during lessons. The effect of this is that I have never passed even a single test since the beginning of this year".</p> <p>Participant L said, "We Sikhothane group of learners always make noise and cause disorder when we enter the school gate which disturb lessons because all learners usually run out of their classrooms and watch us as we dramatise our act. When we get into our classrooms most girls don't even listen to educators when they try to teach, instead they keep on watching the group to see the next action that will be taken. Nobody wants to miss this drama."</p> |

Table 4.10: School D

| Question B   | Girls   | Boys   |
|--|---|--|
| i. How often do you come late in your school?<br>ii. How does that affect your academic performance? | Both participants M and N indicated that they never arrived late in school because they were using commercial transport that was always on time for school. | Participant O said, "I rarely come to school late, and this does not affect me because I get to class on time before the beginning of lessons".<br><br>Participant P said, "I am always on time for school because learners who are frequently late for school are punished by the principal, and I am scared of the principal". |

The empirical findings revealed that some learners were often late for school because they travelled long distances, and it was not safe for them to travel to school in the darkness. However, they were worried about late coming because they missed lessons since it affected their academic performance as it was difficult for them to cope on their own.

Other learners find it difficult to wake up in the morning, so they delayed waking up and therefore arrived at school late. The Sikhothane group of learners was frequently late for school purposely because they lacked the desire to learn. This was confirmed by Participant K when revealing that he has not passed a single subject and Learner J when indicating that they ignore educators. The learners revealed that late coming hampered their academic performance because they missed the lessons. For instance a learner said, "If I come late, teachers do not wait for me, but they start teaching immediately they come into class."

### **LEARNERS' RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS WITH HIGH PASS RATE**

Table 4.11: School A

| Question C  | Girls  | Boys   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>i. How often do you absent yourself from school?</p> <p>ii. What are the causes of your absenteeism?</p> | <p>Participant A said, “I absent myself from school only when I am sick. Then my parents would report here at school that I am sick, but this happens very rare.”</p> <p>Participant B said, “I sometimes absent myself from school when my homework is not done, because educators in this school punish learners who do not do their homework by letting them remain after school and do it. I then stay at home and pretend to be sick, and then feel better during the day and do it, because if I remain at school after school, then I will have a problem of a transport to take me home because our transport does not wait for learners who serve punishments.”</p> | <p>Participant C said, “I sometimes absent myself from school due to peer pressure, but we do this rare. For example we sometimes plan to go and visit our friends during the day. Then we would put on our casual clothes below the uniform when we dress up in the morning, and so leave home as if we are going to school. We would then divert along the way, take off our school uniform and go our way. In the afternoon, we would put on our school uniform and join other learners home while pretending to be coming from school.”</p> <p>Participant D said, “I often absent myself from school to take care for my siblings when they are sick since we are orphans and I am their elder brother, so they are fully dependent upon me because there is no one else who could take care of us. Sometimes I attend to family problems just like yesterday, I left school early because Eskom came to fix a problem of electricity at home, so I was to open the house for them and be there as they fix the problem.”</p> |

Table 4.12: School B

| Question C  | Girls  | Boys   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>i. How often do you absent yourself from school?</p> <p>ii. What are the causes of your absenteeism?</p> | <p>Participant E said, “I do absent myself from school but very rare. For example, it is now winter, and we are supposed to be in the classroom studying at 6h30, so we leave home early when it is still very cold, this make us catch cold along the way, like last week, I was absent from school for two days because of a flu.”</p> <p>Participant F said, “ I sometimes absent myself from school when for example my parents have sent me somewhere, like yesterday, my mother sent me to go and buy mealie meal at the shopping plaza because we used it all yesterday, and we could not stay without food for the whole day.”</p> | <p>Participant G said, “I do not absent myself from school, but there are few learners in our class who absent themselves on specific days, for example; Some learners go to collect their government grants once a month and stay away from school on that day. On Tuesdays parent learners take their children to the clinic for check-up. Pregnant learners also go for check-up on the same day. Hence on this day the rate of absenteeism is high, since most pregnant girls and those who have children don’t come to school.”</p> <p>Participant H said, “I frequent absent myself from school because I stay with my grandmother who is sick. I am supposed to prepare food for her daily; sometimes she would send me to go to the clinic to collect her medication. I only come to school when she feels better like today.”</p> |

## LEARNERS' RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS WITH LOW PASS RATE

Table 4.13: School C

| Question C                                       | Girls   | Boys   |
|--|---|--|
| i. How often do you absent yourself from school? | Participant I said, "I frequent absent myself from school because I stay alone at home since my parents work in Johannesburg. So  | Participant K said, "I frequent attend school, but the Sikhothane group of learners has a negative influence on other learners especially girls, in that some learners especially those who come from needy homes have dropped out of school because they do not have clothes or money to show off with because it lowers their self-esteem. Some girls are in love with rich people in order to have money so that they could belong to the Sikhothane group. This frequently keeps them away from school because they usually go out with their lovers during the school hours."   |
| ii. What are the causes of your absenteeism?     | <p>sometimes I oversleep and then stay at home when realising that I would be late for school because the school gate is locked when the school starts at 7h30 and is opened at 9h00, because it is uncomfortable to wait for the opening of the gate while other learners are learning.</p> <p>As a parent learner I sometimes absent myself from school and go to collect the government grant for my child once a month. From time to time I remain at home and care for my child when sick."</p> <p>Participant J said, "I always attend school, but the only problem I have is that I often dodge classes and hide in the toilet when homework is not done in order to avoid being punished by educators."</p> | <p>Participant L said, "educators often suspend me from school for disrupting lessons, and for not doing my school work. Moreover, when an educator expel from class a learner for disturbing lessons , then we Sikhothane group would pay a revenge to the educator concerned by joining the learner as he go out of the classroom, and go and hide in the toilet. I sometimes stay at home when educators have sent me to call my parents for a disciplinary hearing especially when I have disobeyed educators. My parents are not well informed about school, so they don't worry much when they see me at home. Even when I tell them to attend my disciplinary hearing, they don't even bother themselves to attend it."</p> |

Table 4.14: School D

| Question C  | Girls  | Boys   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>i. How often do you absent yourself from school?</p> <p>ii. What are the causes of your absenteeism?</p> | <p>Participant M said, “I frequently absent myself from school because for example, if there is no food at home and I do not have money, I do not come to school. Again, if there is no soap to bath with, then I stay at home because I cannot come to school dirty, since it is embarrassing, I cannot come to school if there is no colgate at home because other learners will laugh at me if I come to school while my mouth is stinking.”</p> <p>Participant N said, “The cause my frequent absenteeism from school is that educators do not honour their periods. So instead of waking up in the morning and coming to school to stay in the classroom for the whole day without being taught, I have deemed it necessary to stay at home and learn there.”</p> | <p>Participant O said, “I often absent myself from school if I want to catch up with my school work, just like yesterday I stayed at home to finish writing an assignment for physical science. Going to school is a waste of time because most educators do not honour their periods. So I frequently stay at home, and call my friend to come so that we could discuss past exam questions.”</p> <p>Participant P said, “I frequent absent myself from school because learners make a lot of noise and make it impossible for me to study in the classroom since most educators stay in the staffroom instead of teaching us.”</p> |

The empirical findings revealed that some learners were influenced by peer pressure to go and visit their friends during school hours, and then pretended to be coming



from school in the afternoon. Others pretended to be sick when homework was not done due to fear of being punished by remaining at school in the afternoon and therefore face transport problem particularly, those who used public transport to school. Learners who were heading their own families were frequently absent from school because they were to attend to family problems. Indisciplined learners sometimes remained at home because of being suspended from school due to disruption of lessons or not doing homework. Some girls miss school because they often go to collect the government grant for their children. Pregnant and some of the parent learners frequently took their children to the clinic for checkups.

#### 4.4.1 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

**A (i) How do you feel about your academic performance?**

**(ii) What led to this kind of situation?**

Learner responses to the above questions are tabulated below. Sub-question (i) is answered in the column labelled academic performance; sub-question (ii) is addressed by the factors stated as contributing to the resultant situation on academic performance, in the third column.

#### LEARNERS' RESPONSES FROM ALL SCHOOLS

Table 4.15: School A

| Learners | Academic performance              | Influencing factors  |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| A & B    | "It is not as good as should be." | "The level of noise during periods of changing classes is too much disturbing for those who would still be in lessons".  |
| C & D    | "It is not good."                 | "There is a communication mishap between us learners and educators. There is no respect for one another. There are clashes because educators don't listen to us and we end up ignoring them even when they teach". |

|             |                          |   |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| E & F       | “It is not good.”        | <p>“Most of the time overage learners disturb us during lessons. They influence others to dodge classes, go to the toilet and smoke dagga during lessons, and even go to the extent of mocking educators when they discipline us”.</p> <p>“We learners sometimes do not attend lessons. We pretend we are going to school when leaving home and just put on our uniform on-top of casual clothes. Once beyond parents’ views we take off the school uniform and go wherever we want. When it is time to go home we put on our uniform again and join those who are from school as if we also come from school too”.</p> |
| G& H        | “It is not good at all.” |   |
| J, K & L    | “It is not good.”        | <p>“When a learner is sent home to call parents for disciplinary hearing, a large number of learners will accompany the one to ensure that effective teaching does not take place”.</p>   |
| M,N,O & P   | “It is not good.”        | <p>“I am a member of the Sikhothane group of learners. We respect nobody. We do as we please. We do not respect educators; we clean our classrooms with cool drinks and even instruct educators to wash their hands in the cool drink. We do not even wear school uniform to school”.</p>   |
| I, J, K & L | “I am proud and happy.”  | <p>“In my school we attend early morning, afternoon and Saturday studies throughout the year. These are facilitated and supervised by educators and parents. This helps us a lot”.</p>  |

Whereas communication plays a vital role where two or more persons are involved in the same mission, it is evident from the above responses that a breach of the same regulation is a recipe for an unpleasant outcome. Whilst learners stated that educators do not listen to them, it still remains vital for learners to listen to educators for the sake of their academic performance. Tabulated responses indicate that lack of discipline remains predominantly the major impediment to good academic performance.

Some learners linked discipline to the presence of the schools' principals, whilst some attached discipline or lack of it to the support and dedication or negligence of their parents and educators. According to the interview, learner E disclosed that suspended peers due for disciplinary hearing are usually accompanied by a large number of other learners when sent to call parents, thus disrupting teaching. This learner also added that some parents do not support their children's education but are rather happy to have them home.

Learner G and H, in contrast, stated that the dedication and support for learners exhibited by educators and parents in their school coupled with learners' discipline resulted in the good academic performance of learners and for the school as a whole. This was observed in the 2011 results where one of the learners in this school obtained a 100% pass mark in physical science and mathematics.

Peer pressure was cited as having played a vital role in the ill-discipline of learners in underperforming schools. Group affiliations such as the Sikhothane Group as mentioned by learners E and F appeared to be the most ill-disciplined. Learners C, D, E and F disclosed contempt and disregard for school rules as learners do not wear uniform in order to show off or to do as they will. Such behaviour, as the learners stated, resulted in poor academic performance as described above. Learners C and D cited an age gap between learners as a contributing factor to poor academic performance. These learners stated that older learners engage in drug abuse, educator mockery, bunking classes and influence others to follow suit, which are all ingredients for academic failure.

Having dealt with the issues of academic performance and performance indicators the following question was raised and addressed by the learners:

## **B. How often do you write formal and non-formal assessment tasks in your school?**

All learners indicated that they wrote tests on a monthly basis at the end of each calendar month. Examinations were written at the end of each term. Learners stated that the frequency for informal assessment tasks depended upon the policy governing each subject. In subjects like mathematics, learners were required to attend to class activities and complete assignments and homework on a daily basis.

The following question was then raised to establish the schools' responses to underperformance by learners from the learners' perspectives:

## **C. How does your school deal with you when you under-perform?**

Learners unanimously agreed that the following were standard responses aimed at dealing with underperformance:

- i. Educators introduced morning and afternoon studies every week from Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings. In some instances educators offered Sunday morning lessons as well to Grade 12 learners.
- ii. Learners were helped to make corrections on all their written tasks and offered guidance on how to study effectively.
- iii. Remedial studies were offered by educators for slow learners and those needing to catch up on their work.
- iv. In some instances parents of learners would be invited to participate in discussing strategies that could be used to improve their children's academic performance.
- v. Grade 12 learners had the opportunity to attend night studies during the third and fourth terms in addition to the morning and afternoon classes.
- vi. Learners who were repeating the same grade for the third time were encouraged to opt for other institutions such as training colleges.
- vii. In some instances learners would be re-tested with the same test they would have failed before.

It is a general observation that behavioural patterns are accumulated and repetitive activities influenced by the habitat in which they occur. Hence, these are then referred to as culture when adopted and followed systematically. In an effort to elicit

and learn more from the learner audience and to establish the influence of discipline on academic performance, two questions were further raised. These were:

#### **D. Culture**

**(i) Do you have a culture of learning?**

**(ii) What led to this kind of situation?**

The responses to these questions have been grouped into two sections and tabulated below.

#### **LEARNER RESPONSES FROM HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL**

Table 4.16

| <b>Do you have a culture of learning?</b> | <b>What led to this situation?</b>  |
|---|---|
| Participants answered yes.                | <p>Positive attitude of learners in understanding that their parents sent them to school so that they could be transformed through learning. Learners adhered to school rules; for example, they wore school uniform, arrived to school on time, and completed their assignments and homework. Parents supported their children in conjunction with educators. They assisted their children in studying for exams and supervised homework. They supervised evening and weekend classes for their children.</p> <p>Learners participated in extracurricular activities such as debates, athletics, netball and soccer. The schools rewarded good performing learners by giving them pens, dictionaries and books during the morning assembly as an incentive to improve performance. Group performance charts per girls versus boys in some schools were put up to encourage and motivate learners to put more effort to outperform each other.</p> <p>There was a culture of mutual understanding and respect between educators and learners in these schools fostered by the direct interest and involvement of parents in their children's education.</p> |

Learners in these schools also disclosed that their parents excused them from doing most of the household chores, when they were to write tests and examinations, to give them more time to study. Other parents would wake up learners at night to study in a bid to improve performance. Highly educated parents were also a motivation for learners to work harder and hence succeed academically.

## LEARNER RESPONSES FROM POOR PERFORMING SCHOOLS

**Table 4.17**

| Do you have a culture of learning? | What led to this situation?   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| All participants answered no.      | <p>Peer pressure eroded the purpose for school wherein learners engaged in drug abuse and alcohol consumption and bunked classes.</p> <p>Learners did not have a culture of respect for educators; hence they mocked and disregarded their authority in the classroom.</p> <p>It was disclosed by the learners that they did not write home work or complete assignments, but copied from their peers instead. General school rules were disregarded by learners who came to school without school uniform, when lessons have already begun and thus disrupted learning (e.g. the Sikhothane Group as mentioned earlier).</p> |

In soliciting more information from these participants, it was revealed that there was a high level of absenteeism of learners in these schools. Learners attributed this to numerous reasons. Some learners were parents and they have to attend to their own children first before going to school. Others were guardians of their siblings due to

the death of parents wherein parental duties then became their burden. Tuesdays of every week were prime days on which absenteeism was high. The learners pointed to the fact that pregnant peers and those who are parents/guardians have to go to the clinics for check-ups and take their children/siblings respectively. Some learners stated that when they overslept, they would not bother going to school to avoid punishment. Some would be absent for the purpose of collecting government grants or because homework or assignments had not been completed. Learners also revealed that they would deceive their parents by wearing casual clothes under their school uniform and will leave home but never arrive at school.

Further, to the preceding views of the learner audiences, the researcher sought to establish the impact of parental support or lack thereof on the academic performance of the learners. The following question was advanced:

**E. Do your parents/guardians support you when you write assignments and when preparing for tests and exams?**

“Since I was born, I live with my grandma. Whether I am learning or writing an assignment or what so ever, she does not care. As long as I go to school and pass at the end of the year, that is all that matters to her. I do all the work by myself.” This was one of the responses by the participants in the poorly performing schools.

Learner E answered the first question as follows, “It is not all parents who support their children in their education. Some parents enjoy seeing us at home during school hours busy doing household chores. They don’t even bother to attend disciplinary hearings when called to”.

The above arguments were advanced by two of the participants in the low academically performing schools. Whereas the effects of negligence on learners by parents can be linked to the near defunct performance of these schools, some participants from the good performing schools had the following to say:

“I have all the support that I need from home. I just have to learn. My parents set an alarm to wake me up to ensure that I wake up and study in the night. When I switch it off to sleep again, sometimes, they would shout and ask if I didn’t hear the alarm and that I should wake up and learn. Then I would wake up and start reading”.

“In our school we attend morning, afternoon and Saturday studies from the first term until the end of the year. At the beginning of the third term, the afternoon studies are extended to night studies which are supervised by both parents and educators”.

To conclude the investigation from the learners’ point of view, learners agreed that if there was discipline in the schools, the academic performance of learners would improve.

## **4.5 EDUCATORS’ RESPONSES**

### **4.5.1 Discipline**

(A) i How do you view discipline in your school?

ii How does that enhance or hamper the effective academic performance of learners in your school?

An SMT member from school A said, “The academic performance of a school rest on its general discipline. There is no educator who can produce better result if that school is not disciplined. The discipline in our school can therefore be rated between 70-80% hence the outcome of teaching is in a higher level which is basically from the discipline part of the school”.

A SMTs member from school B said, “We managed to enforce discipline in our school by solving problems as they develop to avoid having multiple cases that might negatively affect our school. This is confirmed by the outcome of teaching and learning which is good.”

A SMT member from school C said, “Since the emphasis on age that learners at schools should be eighteen years of age or younger, we have started to see the trend in discipline beginning to change for the better. We no more find situations that are too hard to handle”

An SMT member from school D said, “Our learners are disciplined in terms of respect, and wearing the school uniform. Furthermore, they don’t disrupt lessons since we no-longer have over aged learners, but the discipline that they have does not enhance their academic performance because it is worse”.



Educators however revealed that they were faced with discipline challenges in their schools. They cited the following behaviours as disruptive and impeding the effective teaching and learning in their schools;

An educator from school A said, “Despite the fact that learners are barred from bringing cell phones into the school premises, learners’ cell phones ring during lessons. Some of the learners even go to the extent of answering and reading messages from their cell phones while we teach, hence their academic performance is not as good as it should be”.

An educator from school D said, “These learners don’t write class activities and assignments, yet they have to write a lot of work in which they will be practicing what they have learnt in their classes in order to write tests and examinations successfully”.

Four educators from school C and D indicated that most learners used to bunk their assignments, and therefore copy other learners work and presented it to the educators as if it their own work knowing very well that they would not be punished due to the absence of disciplinary policies in their schools.

An educator from school C said, “Always when it is my period to go to class, I always stress and think about a strategy that could be effective in making the learners sit down and remain quiet so that I could start teaching, because we use to spend about ten minutes trying to make them listen in order to start teaching.”

Two educators from school D revealed that the behaviour of learners in their school was not acceptable both in and outside the classroom because some used to eat nick-knacks and sweets during lessons. Moreover, they always wait for educators to tell them to go into their classrooms despite the bell that rings to mark the beginning of lessons.

Two educators from School C stated that most learners were always late for school and for classes after every break, despite having addressed this issue.

Three educators from school D mentioned that their school used to admit learners who had been expelled from other schools due to lack of discipline for the sake of improving the enrolment of their school. As a result they were faced with formidable discipline problems. The educators further revealed that most of these learners mentioned other learners' reports as their own when applying for admission into the school, at the end of June or July they changed their fake names to their own names. This contributed to the exacerbation of poor academic performance at their school. They further revealed that the Department of Basic Education had declared their school dysfunctional due to the Grade 12 pass rate which has been persistently less than 40% for the past three years.

An educator from school C stated, "Our learners sometimes use vulgar words when speaking to us educators. Parents have been called to come and intervene in disciplining their children, however, we discovered that some parents are scared of disciplining their own children; hence disciplining learners in the school is a major challenge. This challenge is worse in grades 11 and 12 since they are not scared of any disciplinary measure besides corporal punishment, which we are not allowed to use. However, our learners resemble the community where they come from. This area is rough, the rate of crime is very high, and most people excessively use drugs and alcohol".

In school D an educator said, "Ever since corporal punishment was abolished our learners have not been doing their school work. The school introduced morning and afternoon studies in attempt to improve their academic performance, but only few of them attend the studies. Most of our learners don't care about education. Some of them are over aged, so they simply come to school to spend their time and to disturb teaching and learning and then go home. Most of our learners come from families whereby most of the family members dropped out from school and are jobless, hence they resolve to crime to earn their living. This has extended to our school; most of our learners have been convicted for crime."

**(B) How do you deal with concrete situations where learners challenge your authority in the classroom?**

In school A an SMT member said, “I am assisted by my classroom rules as a subject educator. I and my learners drafted classroom rules based on the code of conduct for learners in which we indicated that any learner who makes noise and undermines my authority will leave my class with immediate effect. I therefore, expel from my class those who undermine my authority there and there”.

An SMT member from school B stated, “We do have learners who disrupt lessons here in my school; we have for instance suspended one learner in Grade 12 twice this year by using the code of conduct for learners. This boy was always bullying and arguing with all educators who went to teach in his class, he was making sure that the argument lasts for the whole period for each educator. The boy was given two warnings, after the two warnings his parent was invited to a disciplinary hearing, who also approved and signed documents that legitimate the suspension of his son from school. The boy was initially suspended for a week. The second suspension lasted for two weeks. The boy is bully; he has gone to the extent of intimidating certain educators and has proved that he is not afraid of anyone in the school”.

An SMT member from school C indicated, “Ever since we became very strict and involve parents to a greater extent in disciplining learners, we have seen a trend in the school where by learners dislike to have parents involved at school, so they change and behave better.”

In school D an SMT member said, “Realising that corporal punishment is abolished in schools, we then resorted to some measures that will be effective so that the learners could fear. Involving parents in some situations helps us a lot to improve the learners’ discipline and their academic performance as well”.

All educators in school A indicated that they involve parents in disciplining learners by inviting them to participate in the disciplinary hearing of their children as the main measure of maintaining discipline in the school. For example, an educator said, “I warn them for minor cases. If they persist, I then refer them to the head of department (HOD), if they don’t succumb, the HOD then refer them to the school disciplinary committee who will invite the parents of each learner to a disciplinary hearing. Learners who steal, smoke dagga, and victimise other learners are expelled from this school”.



All SMTs and eight educators confirmed that through the use of the school policy, some learners were expelled from their schools while others were suspended. Ten educators revealed that during the disciplinary hearing, parents were given a chance to view the work of their children so that they could get an idea of their academic performance. This improved both the behaviour and the academic performance of the learners.

Some educators revealed that prior to referring the learners to the HOD or principal they:

- Start by sending the learners who disrupt teaching and learning out of the class and then discuss with them a solution to the problem that they caused after the period. For instance in school B an educator said, “If the learners fail to admit their transgression and humble themselves, then, I normally don’t sign their books, until they decide to humble themselves and then come and apologise”.
- Judge each case by its own merit. For example, an educator from school C said, “There are some cases that I tackle for myself in class by talking to the learner trying to convey a meeting between the learner and myself as a loco parentis, if the problem is not resolved, I then include the SMT, this usually improve the behaviour as well as the academic performance of the learner concerned”.
- Reprimand the learners. Some of them respond positively while others do not. For example, an SMT member from school B said, “I personally tackle the learners who challenge my authority one on one and try to speak over with him, with the aim of making the learner understand how life operates, the origin of authority and the order in which it operates. I ensure that the learner admits that he has a problem and that his problem affects other learners including me as an educator. I always involve the learner on hold to deal with the problem that he has caused, to ensure that he is able to solve the problem that he caused for himself”.

An educator from school A confirmed that reprimanding learners who challenged her authority had improved the learners’ behaviour and their academic performance as well. For example she said, “I tell them that I am in authority of the class, hence they are to do what I instruct them to do academically though. None of them deviate from my instructions. I further tell them that if they don’t want to heed to my instructions,

then, they may excuse me; I even tell them that I am their loco parentis. They listen to me and do what I instruct them to do; this has improved their academic performance. The learners even enjoy learning my subject.”

Three educators from school D revealed that they had no disciplinary mechanism to deal with learners who challenge their authority in their classes; there was no code of conduct for learners in their school. Learners disrupted lessons and got away with it; hence there was a high failure rate in their schools. For instance, an educator said, “If there were school rules and classroom rules that would enable us to punish learners who challenge our authority in class as well as those who do not do their school work, may be that would scare and further motivate them to behave well and dedicate themselves to learning”.

### **(C) Late coming**

- i How often do learners come late to school?
- ii How do you deal with late coming?
- iii How does that affect their academic performance?

### **Educators’ responses**

Educators and SMTs from schools A and B revealed that late coming was minimal in their schools. They indicated that learners who came to school late were given extra work to do in the form of punishment, such as picking up papers in the yard, or cleaning a certain part of their schools. Such punishments enabled the learners to start on with the educators when the lessons begun. In that way the academic performance of the learners was not affected. For example an educator said, “The rate of late coming ranges between 1-10% out of the school enrolment”.

Educators and an SMT member from school D mentioned that the rate of late coming was high in their school and that the late comers usually missed the first period every day. For example an educator said, “A quarter of the school enrolment come to school late every day and miss the first period. Worse of it all, they sometimes bunk maths lessons when their homework or assignments is not done and are therefore not ready to make any submission”. An educator said, “When the principal is not around, some learners move around the classrooms disrupting

educators and learners during the learning processes. This persistently increases the failure rate in our school”.

In school C an educator said, “Learners come late to school daily. Addressing this issue is a challenge because some of them are parent learners, hence they tell us for example that *‘My child is sick, hence I had to take him to the clinic first before coming to school’*. Or *‘I had to take my child to a nearby relative that is why I am late’*. Late coming affects the learners’ academic performance directly because if the learner misses the first two out of six periods daily which is usually scheduled for mathematics, this means that the learner have lost ten out of thirty hours per week because each period is allocated one hour. Late coming therefore hampers the academic performance of the learners concerned”.

**The educators and SMTs listed the following measures as ways in which they dealt with the late comers**

Three educators and the SMT member from school A indicated that late comers were controlled by their SMTs. For example an educator said, “The SMTs record the names of late comers on a late comers’ register and involve them in projects in the school after school, these projects include watering of ornamental trees in the school premises and cleaning part of the school yard. The only disadvantage of these extracurricular activities on the side of the SMT is that they have to spend extra time after school supervising the learners. This is not a positive trait because it moves them away from their personal commitments. This method has reduced the rate of late coming in the school because learners do not want to remain at school after school”.

In school C three educators and one SMT member indicated that late comers were controlled by their SMTs in turns by assigning them to clean a portion of the school during the first period which is equivalent to one hour. For instance an educator said, “One day the principal punished late comers by instructing them to clean the school premises, one learner started crying, when I intervened, the learner said, *‘madam, so and so does not punish us when we come late, she keeps on writing our names, but the principal hates us, he has given us a lot of work to do just because we came to school late’*. This meant to me that the learners were purposely coming

to school late knowing very well that they will not be punished. The learner told me that her problem was that she could not wake up on time in the morning because it was cold. I then reprimanded her for disrespecting our principal”.

In School C and D the educators and the SMT members revealed that they used to punish the late comers in the morning during lessons. This disadvantaged the late comers who were unable to participate in morning activities including tests because they used to refuse serving their punishment after the afternoon studies. This affected their continuous assessment marks (CASS) and made their academic performance worst.

In school D an SMT member said, “Our learners were coming late in large numbers, I then decided to be in charge of controlling the learners. A learner who comes late three times a week is sent to go home and call his parents to attend a disciplinary hearing. This has assisted us in decreasing the rate of late coming”.

Three educators in school D revealed that their SMT members punished late comers by locking the gate, thus locking the late comers out, and opened it after thirty minutes. Then they gave them work to do before going to their classes. This hampered the academic performance of the learners because they would remain outside for approximately one and a half hours while the other learners were in the classroom. Some educators hailed this kind of a disciplinary measure for reducing the rate of late coming in their schools despite its negative effect on the academic performance of the learners.

Another educator emphasised the disadvantage of keeping learners outside the classroom during a learning session by saying, “The late comers do not bother themselves about finding out what was learnt by the other learners during their absence in class, hence the academic performance of learners who are persistently late for school is worst”.

Three educators and one SMT from the school D revealed that some learners enjoyed coming to school late. For example an SMT member said, “Late coming is still a very serious problem in this school, quite a number of learners come late. We

have resorted to many strategies like closing the gate, and close them out, and then allow them to come in during short break which is at 9h00. This did deter some learners from coming late. Again we then resorted to use a register for late comers, and then check for the recurrence of learners who have been coming to school late for three consecutive days and then invite their parents to attend their disciplinary hearings. To some extent this helped those learners who have a conscious to refrain from coming late. But there are those who have no conscious at all who persistently come late despite these efforts”.

- Three educators from school C revealed that their school was dominated by learners who came from far away, but the frequent late comers were the local learners, especially those who stayed close to the school. So it was difficult for them to tell whether it was the attitude of the community towards the school or because learners were controlling their own families. For example, an educator said, “We have a seventeen years of age learner whose parents have been invited to the school on several occasions to attend the disciplinary hearing of their child; they told us that they always wake him up on time to prepare for school, but he plays. Even today that learner came to school late. The learner will be late for school even tomorrow. Late coming hampers the learners’ academic performance because they miss lessons. Consequently most of the frequent late comers fail.”

Three educators from school D revealed that their school had introduced morning and afternoon studies, but most of the Grade 12 did not attend them because they used to arrive at school late in the morning and then dodge the afternoon studies. For example an educator said, “If a Grade 12 learner comes to school late and run away from the studies, that have got serious consequences at the end of the day. No matter how hard we try to bring this one to order, they still deviate; hence the academic performance of our school is worse, as a result the Department of Basic Education has declared our school dysfunctional because of the academic performance of the Grade 12 results for final examinations which has been constantly below 40% for three consecutive years”.

### **Learners’ absenteeism**

- i) How often do learners absent themselves from school?



ii) How does learners' absenteeism affect their academic performance?

Educators from schools A and B indicated that absenteeism was minimal in their school, and that most learners who were frequently absent from school were parent learners, especially girls and those who were unwell. They revealed further that they controlled absenteeism by requiring sick notes from learners who were sick. The SMT dealt with learners who were absent from school without valid reasons.

Educators from schools C and D stated that there was a high rate of absenteeism in their schools. For example an educator said, "Most learners dodge classes after having the day's meal. Their parents were frequently invited to attend the disciplinary hearing of their children but that did not deter them from absenting themselves from school and dodging lessons, a major challenge is that some of the learners used to bring along bogus parents. The problem with bogus parents is that they resolve the challenge only for a day and never make a follow up to ensure that the learners stick to the resolutions that were reached during the disciplinary session".

i. What are the causes of learners' absenteeism?

All the educators mentioned the following reasons for learner's absenteeism from school:

- a) Taking their children to the clinic because they were sick
- b) Going to collect their children's government grant
- c) Pregnant learners were frequently absent from schools due to check-ups or they were sometimes unwell.
- d) Some learners were orphans; they did not have proper parental supervision and therefore, they did as they wished.
- e) Other orphan learners were heading their own families, so they were sometimes absent from school because they were either taking care of their sick siblings or were attending to family issues.
- f) For example an educator said, learners sometimes said, "I washed my shirt yesterday afternoon, it did not dry out so I was bound to wait for it to get dry because I have only one shirt".
- g) Learners who were heading their own families sometimes absented themselves from school to raise funds to support their siblings.

## **ii How do you deal with late coming?**

Educators revealed that dealing with the issues of orphans was a challenge because the learners were discreet and did not reveal their status. They suggested that the issue of orphans could be addressed more effectively if the government could provide schools with school-based social workers who would directly deal with the learners' social problems. It was not easy for teachers to address such issues because they were not trained.

All the educators revealed that learners who absented themselves from school found themselves lagging behind because they never had time to help them catch up with the work that they had missed as they were overloaded with work and the curriculum was overcrowded. For instance an SMT member from school B said, "Although some educators give them extra time to write the activities that they missed, but that is not much effective and so they fail. The majority of the learners failed because they were not present during the presentation of certain lessons especially mathematics, physical science and English language since these subjects are challenging for learners. Moreover, passing mathematics is one of the preliminary requirements for passing a grade, so it is crucial for the learners to attend school regularly in order to get a chance of practicing mathematics under the supervision of their educators as it is a challenging subject".

### **4.5.2: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

- Question 2 was asked to determine the academic performance of learners, and also to find out if discipline influences the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

#### **.Question A**

- i. According to recent analysis of Grade 12 results, your school obtained low pass rate for the past three years, what led to this kind of a situation?
- ii. How do you intend to address it?

Educators cited the following challenges as causes of the academic performance of their learners

#### **Lack of learner discipline**

Both SMTs and educators from school C and D revealed that their schools had a problem of poor discipline. For example an educator from school C said, “Ever since the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools, we have not yet established a disciplinary measure that would be effective to all the learners. Moreover, most learners in our school are not motivated to learn; as a result, the majority of them used to bunk assignments because they are not scared of any disciplinary measure.” An educator from school D confirmed the above mentioned view by saying, “The learners’ desire to learn is consistently decreasing as years goes by ever since corporal punishment was abolished”.

Three educators and the SMT from school D cited the following scenario, “In 2010 learners in this school expelled the principal because he used to discipline them. The learners accompanied him up until the main road which is roughly 2 km away from the school while chanting slogans. Since that day the learners’ behaviour is really uncontrollable. We are also scared of disciplining them as educators because we know that they can expel us or even do something worse to us. Currently, the learners have challenged our deputy principal for disciplining them”.

In school C an educator said, “Some of the learners are criminals because some of them are attending court hearings, others were sued and bailed out. Most of the school properties were stolen by learners who are learning in this school. The community members know the culprits but have decided to conceal the information in attempt to save their lives”.

#### **h) Alcohol and drug abuse**

In school D some of the learners were addicted to alcohol and drug abuse. As a result they came to school drunk and unprepared for tests and examinations. For example, an SMT member said, “Our learners are not disciplined; some of them go to a tavern at night and then come to write examination on the following morning while they are still drunk”. Another educator from school D said, “When a person does not perform well in the class, that person perform well somewhere. Therefore most of our learners bunk classes and go to the toilet to smoke drugs and stay there for the whole day, after school they join other learners and go home as if they had learnt something”.

- **Dilapidated classrooms**

Two educators in school B expressed their concern about the condition of classrooms that were allocated to the Senior Phase which were dilapidated. The educators revealed that the conditions of the classrooms de-motivated the learners from learning as the ceiling was in a state of collapse and had holes.

**i) Language barriers**

In school C an SMT member said, “Most learners in this school have language barriers because they could not read a piece of writing with understanding and have poor memory retention which is caused by lack of understanding of the language used. This fails them from transferring information into their long term memory”.

An SMT member from school C said, “Most of our Grade 12 learners fail to understand questions during their examinations, therefore, they simply write what they think is the answer to the question”. An educator clarified the above view by saying, “Most of our learners have limited English vocabulary. For example, we have a few learners in Grade 12 who have serious learning barriers; they do not understand a single sentence in English”. An educator from school C said, “Our learners are not prepared to go all out to read books, newspapers and listen to English news on television in order to enrich their vocabulary”. Her view was corroborated by other educators from the same school and the SMT member.

An educator from school D stated, “Most of the learners that we receive from the primary schools cannot write legibly nor can they read well. As a language educator, I have discovered that these learners fail even to punctuate a simple short passage. For example, I have taught them how to punctuate sentences, but they will still have a difficulty of punctuating sentences even in Grade 12. They are actually performing badly in all languages. This calls us to restart teaching them the language basics to enable them to read and write correctly, however, time to do that is insufficient because we have a lot of work, hence they are failing hopelessly”.

**i. Educators' workload**

Three educators and the SMT member in school D revealed that they were overloaded with work; hence they were not able to pay individual attention to learners. For example an SMT member said, "We are having a lot of streams in this school which make educators to be overloaded with work. For instance we are offering three home languages plus English and Afrikaans. However, we are gradually phasing out Xitsonga and isiZulu to reduce the educator workload since most of our learners speak SiSwati as their mother language, so Grade 8 learners learn only SiSwati, English and Afrikaans".

**j) Condoning learners**

Educators and the SMT member from school D stated, "Learners who never deserved to be in Grade 12 were passed to proceed from Grade 11 to Grade 12 just to ensure a bigger class. Consequently, all the learners who were passed from Grade 11 failed in Grade 12 on the subsequent year. The SMT member said, "We discussed this issue in the management level, but we could not agree because some of us wanted to please the parents. So something was persistently done, and the learners consistently failed Grade 12 in large numbers because they expected to pass the grade without exerting any effort to learn and pass".

**k) Educator characteristics**

Hard-working educators who had special skills in teaching learners successfully were replaced by educators who were not motivated to teach learners. For example an SMT member from school D said, "Ever since the mathematics educator left, the pass percentage for mathematics has decreased alarmingly. We have ever since obtained 0% passes in geography. The educator who was teaching agriculture used to get more than 90%, but since then, agriculture is failed dismally. The school has introduced history as a new subject, learners are failing it hopelessly". An educator from school D added, "The geography educator is not prepared to try new teaching techniques, for example if she is requested to supervise studies, she simply state that she has no time to look after learners. She even refused to offer extra classes. She has only given six class activities to learners from January to June and that is not in line with the policy document".



## **Addressing the challenge of poor academic performance of learners**

The SMTs and educators in both school C and D indicated that they were already addressing the challenges and were using the following techniques

- i. Learners were attending afternoon's studies and morning studies which were scheduled for spring, summer and autumn. They were to attend only afternoon studies in winter.
- ii. Saturday lessons were arranged solely for all the subjects that the Grade 12 learners were failing in school C and D, such as mathematics, physical science, geography, history, agriculture and accounting, by outsourcing educators from other schools to teach these subjects at a special fee that was to be paid by the SGB.
- iii. All the schools arranged night studies that were to commence during the fourth term specifically for the Grade 12 learners.
- iv. Winter classes were scheduled for all schools in Bushbuckridge region during the winter vacation, whereby educators who had the necessary expertise were outsourced to teach the at risk subjects at a specific fee per hour. This arrangement was made by the Mpumalanga Department of Basic education. The centers for winter schools were therefore arranged by the Provincial Department of Basic Education together with school principals.

Educators and SMTs from schools A and B revealed the following techniques that assisted them to obtain the best pass rate in the region:

- a) Both school A and B were assisted by a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) called Panreach in teaching mathematics and physical science every afternoon on weekdays as well as on Saturdays and during the holidays.
- b) Learners in both schools were attending morning studies for one hour before the school started and afternoon studies for two hours when the day's lessons had ceased. Some educators offered remedial work to the learners during the afternoon studies to either catch up with their work or to assist learners who were lagging behind.

- c) The SGB of school A motivated educators who offered extra classes on Saturdays and Sundays by remunerating them with R300 for every two hours per day.
- d) The HODs supported all the educators in their departments by checking their work and assisting them where necessary and by further encouraging them to prepare their lessons on time in order to start on teaching when their periods commenced.
- e) Both schools had trained their Grade 12 learners to attend overnight studies and supervise themselves on weekends under the surveillance of the schools' security guards.
- f) Educators in school A were working together as a team; they shared certain sections of work and chapters of the same subject.
- g) Learners who failed to meet the minimum requirements of progressing to the next grades were made to repeat the grade in which they failed.
- h) Educators taught the same group of learners from Grade 8 and proceeded with them to the next grades up until they reached Grade 12. That motivated the educators to try and exceed the previous pass percentage of the educator who was teaching the same subject in the previous year throughout the grades. For example an educator said, "When you are in Grade 12, you try to excel by breaking the records which were set by the educator who was teaching the same subject in the same grade on the previous year, that intensifies the competition".
- i) The learning conditions for the Grade 12 in both schools were conducive because their classrooms had fans, were not overcrowded and had enough desks and stationary.

### **Assessment tasks**

How often do you give formal and informal assessment tasks to your learners?

All the educators and SMTs revealed that they used subject policies that determined the number of formal and informal activities that should be given to learners. Some indicated that they exceeded the minimum requirements of the subject policies. For example, an SMT member said, "When I check the records for the HODs, I have observed that educators go beyond the expected number of tasks per week and per

month. Some educators even double the number of tasks that should be given to learners.”

**How do you or your school deal with learners who underperform?**

The responses to this question are tabulated below per school.

Table 4.18

| School A and B  | School C and D  |
|---|---|
| <p>Three educators in school A indicated that they re-tested the learners with the same test that they failed before.</p> <p>In school B learners who were repeating a Grade for the third time were encouraged to opt for other institutions such as Further Education<sup>104</sup> and Training Colleges.</p> <p>Four educators and two SMT members in school A and B stated that they discussed the causes of the poor performance with the learners concerned and devised strategies for improvement. Under serious conditions when the learners show no interest for improvement, then the learners’ parents would be invited to join in assisting their children to improve their academic performance. An SMT member in school A emphasised the effectiveness of involving parents in addressing learners challenges by saying “It helps a lot because some parents have gone to the extent of exempting their children from doing some of the household chores so as</p> | <p>Three educators and the SMT from school C revealed that they outsource educators from other schools at a certain fee paid by the SGB to offer Saturday lessons.</p> <p>Three educators and one SMT member from school D indicated that their school used to motivate their learners to learn and improve their academic performance by announcing the names of the top ten learners in the morning assembly at the beginning of every quarter, and reprimanding all the Grade 12 learners who deserted their school work including those who under performed.</p> <p>An SMT member in school D</p> |



to give them enough time to concentrate on their school work”.

Three educators in school B revealed that they solely depended on encouraging learners to study hard in order to pass. For example an educator said, “I do nothing besides encouraging them verbally because my classes are <sup>1</sup> overcrowded, moreover, I have many classes for tuition. Re-testing therefore becomes impossible. Furthermore, if I re-test them, some learners will not do their best, in the first test. Others will even go to the extent of not writing the test and then write the second test. Therefore this leaves me with no choice but to leave them the way they are”.

One educator and an SMT member in school B used to give extra work to learners and check it to ensure that it is done. However two educators in the same school indicated that learners were not willing to make any effort to learn.

Three educators in school A stated that they motivated their learners to learn by actively involving them throughout their lessons and questioning them as much as possible to keep them focused during lesson presentations.

Three educators and the SMT member in school A stated that they had already organised afternoon and Saturday classes whereby each Grade was not taught by the subject educator who was assigned to teach that Grade, but by another educator to try and cap the possibility of

stated that he used to discuss the causes of the poor performance with the learners concerned and devised strategies for improvement.

Under serious conditions when the learners show no interest for improvement, then the learners’ parents would be invited to join in assisting their children to improve their achievement.

In both school C and D learners were attending morning studies for an hour before the commencement of lessons and afternoon studies when lessons have ceased for two hours.

Night studies were scheduled for spring for both schools. This means that learners spent five nights a school per week in order to study at night, morning before lessons and afternoon when lessons have ceased.

Both schools attended winter schools during the winter vacation that was organised by the Department of Basic Education and the principals.

learners failing because they do not understand the approach used by the subject educator.

Three educators in school B indicated that they did not have a mechanism to deal with learners who underperform. For example, an educator said, "To be fair, we don't have a way of dealing with this. Some of the learners who underperform are learners who promoted themselves to the grades in which they are".

School A and B were assisted by Panreach who used to offer lessons for mathematics and physical science in the afternoon during the week and on Saturday and during the holidays.

### **Culture of learning**

- i. Do learners in your school have a culture of learning?
- ii. What led to this kind of a situation?

Three educators and the SMT member from school A said, "Our school has become a brand within Bushbuckridge region. Parents sent their kids to this school so that they could be transformed and learn. The learners themselves understand that they are learning in a school that has a positive attitude to learning. We also try to develop the learners in totality. Hence, extra-curricular activities like debates and sports have become a culture of this school. Forming partnership with Kruger National Park is also playing a major role in promoting the culture of learning".

In School B an SMT member said, "We are cultivating a culture of learning in this school in this way; after every monthly test and quarterly examination the top ten learners are given incentives in the form of pens, dictionaries and books to motivate them to learn and study. Learners who have received awards felt appreciated. An educator added by saying "This has motivated the whole school to perform better; seemingly, all the learners want to find themselves among the top ten so that they

could stand in front of the whole school, receive an award and the whole school applauds for them”.

In School A three educators referred to a block of classrooms bearing the name of a learner who achieved 100% in physical science and mathematics in 2011 as a reminder to all the learners that they can also achieve 100% in all the challenging subjects, specifically mathematics and physical science provided they dedicate themselves to their school work. All the educators and SMT members in this school revealed that their learners were used to studying without any supervision during the study periods.

In School B two educators compared the academic performance of boys to that of girls in their classes. The educators revealed that the group that obtained a low pass rate felt undermined when the pass percentage of the other group is higher than theirs and then they strive to obtain the highest percentage pass in the next task. Such competition improved the academic performance of all classes that were involved.

- l) Some learners were motivated by their educated parents to learn. For instance an educator in school A said, “Most of the learners in this school have educated parents; this motivates their children to learn”.

In school D an SMT member said, “We have a group of learners who are so keen to learn to such an extent that they even call educators to go and teach them if they dishonour their periods. This is mostly done by the science group; these are the most workable learners in the school. But we always have a problem with the social science group of learners. They are the majority of learners in the school and are the most troublesome learners who even play truancy. These learners enjoy and find pleasure in doing things that are outside the classroom, hence, they join one another and go to the toilet, smoke and stay there for long hours. Therefore most learners who underperform in the school are in the social science classes”.

Three educators in school D disclosed that most learners do not appreciate a culture of learning; hence most neither study nor write assignments but persistently disrupt

teaching and learning. For example an educator said, “One has to force them to write a class activity”.

Educators and the SMT members cited the following reasons for the deterioration of the learners’ culture of learning:

In school C two educators said, “The learners’ current life style coupled with the abolition of corporal punishment contributes much to the deterioration of the culture of learning among learners”. An SMT member from the same school said, “Being educated and not being educated is the same to these learners, because they are all able to earn a living through the government grant”.

School C and D were paying much attention to the Grade 12 learners, and ignored the Grade 8 and 9 learners to such an extent that they would sometimes leave the Grade 8 and 9 classes unattended and concentrate on teaching the Grade 12 learners since the effectiveness of a school is measured against the Grade 12 final examination results. For example an SMT member from school D said, “The only wrong thing about us is that we are concentrating on the Grade 12 classes and we completely ignore the Grade 8 and 9 classes just because schools are judged according to the academic performance of the Grade 12 final examination, instead of instilling the culture of learning in our learners from Grade eight, but because our last academic performance was below 30%, the Provincial Department of Education informed us that our performance must be above 40%, so, we are paying much attention to the Grade 12 classes instead of laying the foundation in Grade 8”.

Educators and SMTs in school C revealed that most community members were not educated but were able to earn a living. That influenced their children to believe that even if they do not acquire education, they would still be able to earn a living. For instance an SMT member said, “We are in a community where illiteracy has been the order of the day in the past years. Most parents of our learners did not learn beyond Grade 9, hence most of our learners drop out of school in Grade ten and eleven, few of them proceed to Grade 12”.

## Parental support

Do parents or guardians support learners in completing assignments and preparing for tests and examinations?

Educators and SMT members from school A and B indicated that parents were supporting their children when writing assignments and preparing for tests and examinations. For instance an SMT member from school A said, “Generally, most parents are very supportive to their children. Sometimes when learners have been given assignments, they give responses that reveal that they either searched the internet or somebody assisted them, hence I assume that most parents in this school support their children in their education.” Three educators from school B confirmed by indicating that some parents have excused their children from doing household chores, such as going out to fetch water and cooking so as to give them enough time to do their school work and study. An educator from school B said, “Some parents have indicated that they have removed televisions in their sitting rooms to enable their children to study without obstructions”.

Three educators and one SMT member in school B revealed that some of the learners who had no parents and guardians were assisted at school. For example, an educator said, “Our school is built in a deep rural area in Bushbuckridge; where in 90% of the parents are illiterate. Other learners are not staying with their parents or guardians, so they are not assisted at home. The school has therefore scheduled the last thirty minutes of the school hours to cater for such learners by giving them the latitude to consult any of the educators for support”.

One educator from school A stated that most parents were supporting their children and cooperating with the school. She said, “Our school always arranges parents day called “book viewing” every term, whereby parents are invited to come to school and view the work of their children, and also get a chance of discussing the performance of their children with the educators so as to give support where necessary”.

Three educators and one SMT members in school D revealed that most parents believe that educators have to do everything that pertains to the education of the learners. Therefore learners fail because educators fail to teach them to understand the subject matter. Nonetheless, few parents support their children. For example an

SMT member in school D said, “We are in a community where illiteracy has been the order of the day in the past years. Most of the parents of our learners in this school did not learn beyond Grade 9. Hence, it is problematic for such parents to help their children in doing assignment and learning for tests and exams”.

In school C an SMT member said, “Some parents worked hard during the day and become tired, and then rest in the evenings instead of helping their children in doing their school work”.

An SMT member in School D said, “Most learners don’t do assignments and projects at home, instead they copy the work of other learners at school in the morning and also during period one and period two. For instance, Today is Friday, they will be given tasks to do at home and hand it in on Monday, but you will find them in class on Monday busy doing the work that they were to do at home. The majority of the learners will copy from the few learners who will do the assignment at home. Our learners do not have a problem of sharing their work with the rest of the class. Then the educators will be marking the same work from all the learners”.

#### **4.4.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF IQMS**

##### **QUESTION 3**

The purpose of this question was to determine the effect of educator development on the implementation of discipline for the betterment of the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

##### **Do you understand the purpose of IQMS?**

All the SMT members and educators posited that the purpose of the implementation of IQMS was to assess educators including the SMT by using the performance standards and then develop them where they were lacking to ensure productivity. Most revealed however, that they did not develop one another because time was not enough since the curriculum was lengthy. They only did summative assessment in order to be able to fill in the IQMS forms and submit them to the Department of Basic Education to get the 1% salary increment.

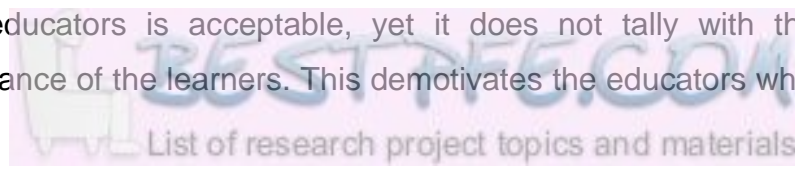
Most of the educators and SMT members expressed the following concerns about the implementation of IQMS

IQMS was not as helpful as it should because they were still faced with the challenge of learners' discipline in their schools; as a result most learners were not performing well academically. For instance an educator from school A said, "The issue of discipline needs to be revisited since it is a key to the academic performance of learners. The government is directly responsible for lack of discipline especially in public schools due to its abolishment of corporal punishment. If you check the schools that are performing well, you will find that they implement corporal punishment".

Some of the SMT members did not develop the educators that they supervised because they did not have the expertise in the subjects that they head. For instance, an educator from school D said, "I assess myself and indicate my weaknesses and strengths and then develop a personal growth plan and expect the HOD to develop me, but only to find that he does not understand even a single thing of the subject in which I need to be developed, because that person got the position out of nepotism which is currently existing in most departments".

All the SMT and educators revealed that the Department of Basic Education was not monitoring the implementation of IQMS; as a result educators scored for themselves points that enabled them to get 1% salary increment regardless of their commitment or non-commitment to their work. For example an educator from school C said, "The department wants schools to implement IQMS on their own and then give them feedback, we therefore focus on the 1% salary increment".

An SMT member from school D said, "According to my own understanding, the evaluation of educators was supposed to be done by the Department of Basic Education to ensure fairness, because my peer group will never give me scores that will discredit me from getting the 1% salary increment for the sake of peace. The disadvantage of this practice is that the educators' scores reveal that the performance of educators is acceptable, yet it does not tally with the general academic performance of the learners. This demotivates the educators who are hard



workers, because they get the same remuneration with those who rarely perform their duties”.

“The Department of Basic Education does not develop educators after they had indicated areas in which they need development, as a result, educators always mention the same contextual factors and are not addressed, such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of discipline” said an educator in School B.

In school D an educator said, “We expect to see the curriculum advisors to come to our schools and present certain topics in real situations as a way of developing us. Instead of that, the Department of Basic Education simply punches the 1% salary increment and that is amen”.

### **Observable benefits derived from the implementation of IQMS in schools**

Most educators and SMTs mentioned the following benefits:

- a) 1% salary increment partially motivated them to do their best in teaching.
- b) Some educators cleaned their classrooms and submitted formal preparations when they were to be assessed.
- c) All participants from schools A and B revealed that their learners were performing very well; educators were doing their best to ensure that the academic performance of learners improved continuously. But their major concern was that the Department of Basic Education did not acknowledge them for their excellent performance. For example an SMT member said, “Yes, they do recognise learners who perform very well by awarding them with bursaries, but that is not enough, educators too should be acknowledged”.
- d) An SMT member from school C said, “Educators have developed a positive attitude towards developing formal lesson plans as opposed to the negative attitude that was developed by their trade union in the previous years, whereby educators were encouraged to do away with formal preparation”.
- e) “Educators’ portfolios are well organised,” said an educator from school B. “I had a serious problem when it comes to recording my work, I had no learners’ portfolio, my work was totally disorganised, some of my essential documents



such as mark lists were constantly misplaced, but nowadays, I am well organised”.

- f) SMT members and eight educators indicated that IQMS promotes teamwork and collaboration among educators and SMT members. For example educators assisted each other in their work and sometimes exchanged subjects among those who were best qualified to teach them.
- g) Some educators and SMTs were managing their classes effectively and their learners were motivated to learn.
- h) The HODs were motivated to assess the work of educators that they were supervising by finding out if the educators were teaching and assessing the learners as indicated in their policy documents, as well as finding out if learners were tested with moderated tasks. However, some educators revealed that their HODs were not giving them feedback after assessing them due to work overload.

Few educators revealed that the implementation of IQMS demoralised them because:

Educators who rarely perform their duties were allocating points for themselves that enabled them to get 1% salary increment without taking into consideration the academic performance of the learners that they taught. For example, an SMT member said, “I am a head of department for mathematics and physical science. We are genuinely evaluating ourselves in my department, but other departments don’t even evaluate themselves, instead they sit in the staffroom and allocate scores for themselves while ensuring that they all meet the requirements for the 1% salary increment. But, we still continue with class visits and develop one another where necessary for our own benefit. Hence, my feeling is that IQMS must be nullified, the Department of Basic Education must include the 1% salary increment in our yearly increment”.

### **Contextual factors that hamper learners’ performance from the educators’ perspectives**

All the participants listed the following contextual factors:

### **Insufficient teaching and learning support materials**

Shortage of teaching and learning support materials such as a laboratory meant that learners were unable to perform experiments. All the schools were without recreation halls hence learners were unable to do some of the physical activities for life orientation (LO) such as push-ups. Textbooks were insufficient for most grades in most schools. Schools B, C and D were without laboratories which meant learners could not perform experiments.

### **Overcrowded classrooms**

In some of the schools classrooms were overcrowded, for example, there were 40 grade 8 learners in one classroom in school A, while school B had 80 learners in one classroom. Discipline was not practicable in such classes. As a result learners frequently absented themselves from school because they knew that educators would not be able to identify them unless they call the names of all the learners who should be in that class. Some learners ate snacks during lessons; other learners exchanged their homework books behind the educator's back and handed it to the educator as if it is their own work.

### **The learning environment in some schools was not conducive for teaching and learning because:**

- i. On rainy days the yard would be muddy and slippery resulting in muddy classrooms, a condition that is not conducive for learning.
- ii. Learners' toilets were foul-smelling. On windy and hot days the odour would spread to most of the nearby classes, and hence affect the health of the learners and the educators concerned. Some learners therefore frequently pretended to be sick when they wanted to escape these conditions.
- iii. The ceiling in some of the classrooms was in a state of collapse and had bats droppings and a bad smell. Consequently, some learners used to linger in the yard during lessons claiming that the smell in their classrooms was unbearable.
- iv. Some of the schools had insufficient general workers to clean and decorate their school premises by planting trees to make the school grounds green and attractive, thus promoting the culture of teaching and learning.

Since the beginning of the implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS), the Department of Basic Education did not supply schools with new books for the learners, instead they instructed educators to make a requisition to top up the books that they had. Consequently, learners were without textbooks and therefore relied on the summary notes that educators wrote on the board during lesson presentations, as well as hand-outs. This deprived the learners from extensive reading and developing literacy skills including research skills; instead it promoted plagiarism. Some of the textbooks had insufficient information but learners were bound to use the textbooks for a five-year period. Educators were therefore expected to supplement the information in the textbooks. However, some educators were unable to supplement the information from the books because they neither had a library nor internet in which to search for additional information.

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- v. All the schools had shortages of desks, hence learners used to support their exercise books on their laps when writing class activities, tests and examinations. As a result most learners were frequently tired before finishing writing their examination. An SMT member said, “The main cause of this is that the Department of Basic Education has prohibited us from buying desks with the school fund that is allocated to schools. We have submitted numerous application for desks to the department, but up to this far, we did not receive any response. Hence, our learners suffer when it is time to read and write because they have to support their books with their laps”.

### **Vandalism**

Most schools were vandalised and property was stolen. For example, an SMT member from school C said, “Our school community does not own the school because they vandalise it. For instance, they stole all the globes and plugs from all the eighteen classrooms, including some of the classroom doors, school television, a fridge and computers etc. The school keeps on replacing the globes and plugs and the community keeps on stealing them”.

### **Educator workload**

Most educators were overloaded with work. As a result they felt that they were unable to do their best when teaching the learners due to exhaustion. They mentioned that they sometimes abandon the Grade 8 and 9 classes and concentrate on teaching Grade 10 to 12 classes. For instance an educator said, “We have a lot of streams here in our school, hence we are overloaded with work and that affect our performance as educators. We end up overlooking the Grade 8 and 9 learners. This discredits us because if these learners are not taught well, then they will not perform well in Grade 12 because a proper foundation is not laid. For example, I am teaching English in Grade 11, isizulu in Grade 12, afrikaans in Grade nine, life orientation in Grade 9, art and culture in Grade 8 and siswati in Grade 9. This makes me ineffective”.

The participants indicated that overcrowded classrooms coupled with educators’ work overload made it difficult for them to:

- a) maintain discipline
- b) pay special attention to learners
- c) give remedial work
- d) control all the learners’ work and give them feedback on time; it caused educators’ stress and anxiety and increased bunking of classes which eventually led to learners’ underperformance.

### **Curriculum advisors**

Some curriculum advisors neither supported nor developed educators. For instance an educator said, “I have been assisted in some of the subjects that I teach especially in Further Education and Training (FET), but no help from General Education and Training (GET), I don’t even know the curriculum advisors who are responsible for the implementation of the subjects that I teach in GET because they have never been to our school. We only know the curriculum advisors who are responsible for the implementation of mathematics, natural science and technology in GET, the rest are not known”.

## **Departmental officials**

The departmental officials who visited schools kept educators away from their classes for long hours, thus disrupting teaching and learning. For instance an SMT member said, “You will find that three or four educators are seated in the office with an official from the Department of Basic Education for long hours. Our school has a low enrolment, our educators are overloaded with subjects to teach, and since each one of us teaches about four to five subjects. This causes the educators to be consistently called by the officials because you find that, today an official has called English educators and you are teaching English, so you go there, tomorrow, a geography official call educators, you also go there. This persistently keeps educators away from their classes for approximately half of the day, tomorrow someone else comes again. I think that this needs to be reviewed since they hamper the progress of teaching and learning. I don’t see the benefit of them paying us a visit because they visit us daily”. One of the learners in school A confirmed this by indicating that their English teacher was always away from school. “If he is there, he would be busy with something else. We sometimes spent a week without learning English.”

## **Assistance to improve the learners’ academic performance**

Most participants revealed that they were not getting assistance to improve the academic performance of learners. For example an educator said, “The Department of Basic Education does not come to our school, despite our poor academic performance. Even when schools reopen in the beginning of the year, no official comes to our school”.

Another educator said, “We received chairs but no stackable tables, no text books, toilets are still foul smelling, and we still experience the shortage of water which makes it difficult for me to work while I am thirsty. Again we don’t use the bathroom when there is no water. I therefore fail to teach when I am pressed. This hampers my performance as well as the academic performance of the learners”.

Other participants stated that they attended workshops for CAPS and cluster meetings where they discussed challenging topics. Their major concern was that their curriculum advisors never attended the cluster meetings. For example an

educator said, “The assistance that I should be getting was to come from the HOD, and the curriculum advisor, however, the curriculum advisors obtained their positions out of politics. Those people don’t take into consideration the level of knowledge that a person has, but they take any one who is a comrade and give him the position. Therefore most of our curriculum advisors do not have the knowhow of performing their duties”.

Some participants were assisted within their schools. For instance, an SMT member said, “In my department we discuss all the challenges that we come across as we teach. For example, if I have a problem with a certain section in my subject, I request other educators to help me. We sometimes go to the extent of teaching the learners challenging topics for a particular educator while the educator is observing”.

Learners from the two schools that obtained the highest percentage pass in Grade 12 in 2011 were getting assistance from a private school owner who used to teach to them mathematics, accounting and physical science at a fee of R600 per learner for ten days during the holidays.

### **Provision for staff developmental opportunities**

Eight educators and two SMT members revealed that they did not have developmental opportunities in their schools. For example an SMT member said, “No there is nothing. The Curriculum advisers only come to our school in search of mistakes. The worst part is that they don’t develop us when they find those mistakes. A few weeks ago, my curriculum advisor criticised my tests for being below the required standard. I requested him to set an exemplary test for me; he said, ‘no use previous exam question papers’. I was shocked because the question paper was a previous year’s examination question paper, I only changed the dates”.

An educator from school D said, “Our HODs are overloaded with work; they have many classes for tuition. So they rarely conduct class visits and don’t even give us feedback because of time”. Therefore participants from this school were developed in cluster meetings.

Participants in school A and B were developed by Panreach (an NGO company) by conducting computer lessons and counselling sessions after school and on Saturdays. This NGO also conducted workshops for strategic planning and the

development of leadership skills on Saturdays for SMTs. Participants who attended the sessions were compensated. Certificates were awarded to those who completed the courses.

Four participants indicated that they were given opportunities to attend workshops that were organised by the Department of Basic Education at the beginning of the year. They further revealed that they developed one another after every class visit. Moreover, few educators were granted scholarships by the Department of Basic Education. For example an educator said, “Even though we don’t know how the government give scholarship to educators, it looks like there is too much partiality on it, but it is there”.

### **Support from the Department of Basic Education**

While eight educators and two SMTs revealed that they were not getting any assistance from the Department of Basic Education, others had the following to say.

“The Department of Basic Education tops up books and conducts workshops for educators only when a new curriculum is to be implemented, however, the support that we received from the Department of Basic Education is minimal. For example ‘from 38% to 64% pass rate, they only gave us a trophy as a token of appreciation and a motivating letter, instead of may be building a science laboratory, or a computer centre or meeting any of our teaching and learning support needs. A congratulation letter and a trophy are not of assistance to our learners. We are still faced with the shortage of textbooks for the learners. If may be they congratulated us by giving us all the textbooks that we are running short of, then that would be something!” said an SMT member from school B.

Curriculum advisors designed pace setters for educators, set question papers for end of term examinations for the whole region, evaluated the learners’ tasks and counted the number of tasks that were given to learners, if the tasks were too few, they would recommend that more work be given to the learners. For example an SMT member said, “I think that the Department is not giving us enough support, but it only worries about monitoring and evaluation, which is not the foundation of any project. If we need their assistance, they are not there. They only come to our

schools for moderation. For example, they set tests and examination question papers for schools without discussing with the relevant educators the topics that will be covered in those question papers. Hence the issue of year programmes must be looked at.”

One participant in School C said, “The Department of Basic Education only intervene when the end of year result are worst by reprimanding us and then go away. We always compile the school improvement plan and send it to the circuit every year and make special requests that need their immediate attention, for example we sometimes request the curriculum advisors to come and assist us with certain sections in our subjects, but up to this day, there is no response from them, this disheartens us”.

An educator in school B said, “It is not only schools in Limpopo who have shortages of textbooks; our school too experiences the same challenge. The curriculum advisors are selling textbooks in the form of study guides to our learners to fill up their own pockets. Without textbooks, we cannot say that we have support from the Department of Basic Education, since textbooks assist us in improving the learners’ literacy skills and to speed up the process of teaching and learning so that we could have enough time to prepare for tests and exams”.

Some officials from the Department of Basic Education frequently met with the SMT in schools most commonly in January and checked the school policies, assessed the educators’ portfolios and issued past exam question papers and memoranda to the educators.

- The Department of Basic Education provided food for learners from Monday to Friday.
- Three educators and one SMT member from school A indicated that the Department of Basic Education had built enough classrooms for their learners.
- The circuit manager supported some of the schools. For example an educator in school D said, “The circuit manager usually encourage us to do our best. He sometimes motivates our Grade 11 and 12 learners to do their best”.
- Six educators and two SMT members from schools B and D mentioned that the Department of Basic Education used to conduct whole school evaluation. For instance an SMT member from school D said, “The whole school evaluation which



was conducted by the Department of Basic Education assisted us in revising our school curriculum and in reducing the workload for the educators”.

### **Role of external stakeholders in schools**

All participants indicated that they were fully supported by parents and the SGB in disciplining learners. For instance, an SMT member said, “Parents respond positively when called to intervene in disciplining their children as well as in attending meetings that had to do with the improvement of the academic performance of learners”.

Industrial Development Cooperation (IDC) built a laboratory for school A in 2010 because of a Grade 12 learner who obtained 100% in both mathematics and physical science after discovering that there was no laboratory in his school.

Both schools A and B were assisted by Panreach in remunerating educators who taught learners on weekends and on holidays, as well as in catering for the learners who attended the classes.

### **Ways of dealing with stress**

- In School A an educator said, “According to the Department of Basic Education, the educator-learner ratio is currently 1:29, however they did not provide us with enough educators to meet this ratio. For instance in this school there are 38 educators and 1200 learners, four of the educators are paid by Panreach, if one divides 1200 by 29 the answer is 41, therefore classrooms are overcrowded and this causes stress for us since it is difficult to control overcrowded classes”.
- Four participants from school A indicated that their school employed social workers to deal with stressors as well as traumatising situations for all of its stakeholders.
- Four participants in school C indicated that they dealt with stressors by paying a visit to sick educators, as well as those who suffered loss of their loved ones. Moreover, they rendered counseling sessions to educators who had challenges that were within their capabilities and referred those whose situation was beyond their capabilities to specialists.



- Participants in school B and D revealed that they were not assisted in dealing with stress. For instance an educator said, “The Department of Basic Education is not helping us to deal with stressors but instead they are stressors themselves, because they have instructed us to ensure that all learners are in class during lessons, yet they did not provide us with disciplinary measures. They always bring in new policies without providing the necessary resources for effective implementation of the policies.”

## **4.5 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **4.5.1. Discipline in schools**

The general analysis and interpretation of the situation in the selected Bushbuckridge rural schools indicated that the level of learners’ discipline did not enable learners to do their best academically. Findings from the empirical investigation revealed further that the educators’ ability to discipline learners correlated with the academic performance of learners. As a result, learners were doing well in the subjects of the educators who were able to discipline them.

Learners specifically from schools C and D tended to avoid lessons by remaining out of their classrooms. Sometimes they would deceive their educators by telling them that they were still busy with another educator’s activity just to ensure that they got permission to remain outside. It was not easy for the educators to discipline the learners because they retaliated when punished.

Tirri and Puolimatka (2000) in 2.8 highlighted the need of social rules for educators so as to provide a framework in which their orders and pronouncements could be binding. Tirri et al (2000) and Peters in Tirri et al (2000) concurred that educators had a strong content-based knowledge of their subjects, but their training did not provide them with a theoretical understanding of the nature of legitimate authority. As a result, they were hesitant to control their classroom situation based on explicit rules. Their training did not prepare them to deal with concrete situations in which learners challenged their authority in the classroom. As a result learners in schools C and D violated the educators’ rules and got away with it unpunished.

The main measure of disciplining learners in the schools that participated in this investigation was parent involvement. However, such measures did not work for school C and D as learners were still dodging lessons, retaliating when educators disciplined them, coming to school late, absenting themselves from school and practicing plagiarism. Moreover, findings from the empirical investigation revealed further that some parents were unable to discipline their own children; hence parent involvement did not work for schools C and D. Some parents did not honour the invitations to their children's disciplinary hearing. Other learners brought along bogus 'parents' who never followed up the resolutions reached during the disciplinary hearing; hence the problem was resolved only for a few days.

- Prior to parent involvement, most educators used an exclusionary discipline approach by expelling disruptive learners from their classes. The learners, however, revealed that the expulsion approach that was mostly used by educators led to more misbehaviour and repeated expulsion and increased violence. This was confirmed by The Human Impact Partners (2012) in 2.12.1. An example that was given by the educators was a learner who was suspended from school for two weeks due to disrupting teaching and learning. The learner was initially suspended for a week. The second suspension lasted for two weeks. That did not deter the learner from disrupting lessons, but it advanced his skill of disrupting teaching and learning to the extent of intimidating certain educators and proving that he was not afraid of anyone in the school.

The learners explained that they purposely made it difficult for the educators to teach them. For instance the learners stated that if an educator expels a learner from their class because of disrupting teaching and learning, other learners would join that particular learner and move out of the class as a sign of vengeance against the educator concerned. Fiske (2000) in 2.3.1 confirmed this finding when arguing that learners from socially disorganised communities with high rates of crime display discipline problems in school and yield poor academic performance. Both educators and learners confirmed that educators were frequently mocked, ignored and intimidated by the learners. Gage and Berliner (1984) in 1.1 confirmed that what happens at school is a mere reflection of what is going on in the society.

According to the South African School Act section 8(1) and 8(2) cited in 2.2 the SGB had the duty of adopting a code of conduct for learners through a consultative process with parents and the educators aiming at the establishment of a disciplined environment that would be conducive to effective teaching and learning resulting in high academic performance of the learners. The empirical findings revealed that school D relied solely on the parent involvement as their means of disciplining learners. Nonetheless, learners' behaviour was completely out of control, which resulted in the high failure rate of the Grade 12 learners. This led the Department of Basic Education to declare school D as dysfunctional due to its continuance of obtaining less than 40% in Grade 12 final examinations. This proved without doubt that the SGB was not capacitated to perform its duties thus confirming the findings of Russo et al (2005) in 2.2.

The empirical investigation revealed further that educators in school D were scared of disciplining their learners because they had expelled their principal in 2010 and had challenged their deputy principal for disciplining them. Moreover, some learners were criminals who were attending court hearings; others had been sued and bailed out. School property had been stolen by learners in the schools. The educators revealed further that community members knew who the criminals were, but they concealed the information because they were scared of the learners. This is confirmed by the HSRC and EPC (2005) in 1.1 when indicating that some of the learners who grow up in a violent society tend to perceive violence as a legitimate way for conflict resolution and that schools which have a reputation for defiance and rebellion among their learners yield poor academic performance.

The empirical findings revealed the following learner behaviours as disruptive and they impede effective teaching and learning in their schools:

- Learners were often making noise during lessons.
- Late comers frequently missed lessons and disrupted their classes as they entered their classrooms.
- Learners' cell phones rang during lessons. Some learners went to the extent of answering and reading messages from their cell phones irrespective of the fact that cell phones were prohibited.
- Some learners ate chips and sweets during lessons.

- Plagiarism was the order of the day to most learners in school D owing to the fact that educators did not have a proper mechanism to discipline them, hence learners knew that they would not be punished instead their work would be marked.
- Learners habitually dodged classes.
- They absented themselves from schools frequently.
- Mocking, intimidating and ignoring of educators by learners were common behaviors in school D.
- Cheating by exchanging homework books behind the educator's back and presenting it to the educators as if it is their own work was habitual.

The empirical findings revealed that schools did not have policies that determined disciplinary mechanisms to deter all learners from disrupting and impeding the effective teaching and learning since the abolishment of corporal punishment. As a result, serious offences were referred to the concerned HOD who would then involve the disciplinary committee and invite the learners' parents to intervene.

#### **4.5.2 Late coming**

The empirical investigation revealed that late coming in schools A and B was minimal when compared to the enrolment of the learners in each school as opposed to schools C and D. The empirical findings revealed that late comers usually missed the first period every day which was usually scheduled for mathematics. As a result most learners performed more poorly in mathematics than in all the other subjects. Moreover, learners sometimes bunked mathematics lessons or came to school late when assignments or homework were not done and were therefore not ready to make any submission.

Educators revealed however that addressing the issue of late coming was a challenge because among the late comers were parent learners including those learners who were heading their own families. Parent learners had to ensure that their children were properly cared for before going to school. Learners who were heading their own families were sometimes bound to resolve family issues before going to school; sometimes they would leave school early to address issues that

either concerned their siblings or entire family. This, however, negated their academic performance. Fiske (2000) in 2.3 confirmed the empirical findings with findings from research that revealed that the factors that impact on achievement are related to the context in which schools and individual learners function.

The empirical findings revealed further that among the late comers were learners who enjoyed going to school late. For example, a quarter of the school enrolment in school D was frequently late for school. Learners who were always late for school were those who stayed close to the school. In particular, the Sikhothane group of learners enjoyed arriving at school late because their main purpose of going to school was to show off their wealth. As a result they did not wear uniform, bunked lessons, went and bought pizza in town and ate it in their classes.

The empirical findings exposed further that late comers in all the schools that participated in this investigation were punished by SMTs. The process of punishing late comers always commenced with recording the names of the late comers in the late comers' register and then assigning them special tasks to do such as cleaning a portion of the school premises. Frequent late comers were summoned to attend a disciplinary hearing. The late comers' parents would also be invited to attend the disciplinary hearing of their children owing to the resolutions of all the schools to involve parents as a main measure of disciplining learners since corporal punishment was abolished. The high rate of late coming in schools C and D revealed that the kind of punishment that was used was not effective.

Educators and learners revealed that late coming had a negative effect on the academic performance of the late comers. If, for instance, a learner missed the first two out of six periods daily which was usually scheduled for mathematics, this meant that the learner lost ten out of thirty hours per week because each period was allocated one hour. Late coming therefore hampered the academic performance of the learners concerned. Frequent late comers persistently underperformed.

The empirical investigation revealed further that school A punished its late comers in the afternoon when lessons had ceased; such punishment did not affect the learners academically. School B punished its late comers in the morning before the other

learners dispersed from the morning assembly. Conversely, schools C and D punished their late comers in the morning during lessons because educators were afraid that learners would refuse to serve their punishment when lessons had ceased. This kind of punishment discredited the late comers from learning and writing assessment tasks that were written during the first periods. The effect of punishing the late comers in the morning resulted in poor academic performance of the learners, lower school attendance rates, learner aggressiveness and violence, as well as learners' hatred towards the SMT.

#### **4.5.3 Learners absenteeism**

The empirical findings revealed that the rate of absenteeism was low in schools A and B and high in school C and D. Wagstaff et al (2000) cited in 2.6 expounded that learners who exhibit poor attendance frequently exhibit poor social skills and emotional functioning and therefore perform poorly. Truants were found to be bored and had an aversion to school due to their inability to become part of the school's social structures.

##### **4.5.3.1 Causes of learners' absenteeism**

According to the empirical findings, participants revealed the following causes of learner absenteeism from school;

- The kind of disciplinary measures used to discipline late comers had an effect on the learners' attendance at school. For example learners mentioned that if they happen to oversleep they would remain at home rather than to arrive late at school because they would find the gate locked until 9h00 when it would be open for a short break. Van Wyk (2003) in 2.3 expounded this view when arguing that research has proved that lack of learners discipline coupled with overcrowded classrooms, irrelevant curriculum and poor instructional methods and inflexible school schedules are major causes of chronic absenteeism and truancy leading to the poor academic performance of learners.
- Parent learners collected the government grant for their children once a month.
- The rate of absenteeism was high on Tuesdays because parent learners and pregnant learners used to go to the clinic for checkups.

- Learners who headed their own families sometimes absented themselves from school to raise funds to support their siblings. Mwamwenda (2004) validated this view in 2.6 when deliberating that the current generation of young people are more sophisticated in their understanding of socio economic factors, health, and development than other previous generations in that they have no choice but to look after their siblings because their parents have succumbed to AIDS. This often negates their academic performance because they are often absent from school, do not have enough time to do assignments and also to prepare for tests and examinations.
- Some learners had only one uniform which was frequently washed during the week; if the uniform did not dry by the next morning, the learner concerned would stay at home. Wagstaff et al (2000) in 2.6 clarified the existence of persistent absenteeism in schools by arguing that educators do not feel empowered to deal with learners' absenteeism and tend to blame parents, cars, television, and learners' work schedule. The empirical findings confirmed this view when the participants indicated that they use parents as a main measure of disciplining learners.

Thlapi (2011) cited in 2.5 confirmed the empirical findings by arguing that research revealed that educators receive minimal support from parents. Researchers such as Rohman (1993) and Lara (1999) mentioned in Wagstaff et al (2000) in 2.6 and Hayward (2007) cited in 2.6 confirmed that learners who do not fit in the school and are confused about where to turn to for help exhibit poor attendance which ultimately leads them to yield poor academic performance. This was confirmed by the Sikhothane group of learners in the empirical findings who attend school when they feel like.

#### **4.7 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

The empirical investigation revealed that participants in schools A and B were happy with their academic performance because it was good, while those from school C and D were not happy since theirs was poor.



#### 4.7.1 Causes of poor academic performance

Findings from the empirical investigation highlighted that lack of learners' discipline led to the poor academic performance. Participants from the study validated their views by indicating the following:

Most learners were always late for school and missed the first periods which were mostly scheduled for mathematics, yet mathematics was a preliminary requirement for progressing to the next grade. This led the Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan, according to the Teacher (2011) in 2.10.3 to divulge in his budget speech that experts and analysts alike cautioned that South Africa had no chance of increasing its growth target without an educated population, and that the country was falling short on its mathematics and science performance despite the annual increases in funding.

Some learners frequently absented from school while other were habitually not doing their school work including their continuous assessment tasks. The empirical findings revealed further that despite the fact that educators extended the due dates of assessment tasks for learners who were absent from school, it did not help them because they underperformed. The main cause of their underperformance was that they failed to catch up with the work done in their absentia because educators could not help them as they were overloaded with work and the curriculum was overcrowded. The majority of learners failed because they were not present during the presentation of certain lessons especially mathematics, physical science and English language since these subjects were challenging for learners.

Most learners in these schools were indisciplined in that some frequently dodge classes including afternoon and Saturday studies that were scheduled for them by their school in order to develop their academic performance. Some were addicted to alcohol and drugs abuse to such an extent that they would go to school drunk and be unable to write their tests and examinations.

- Most learners disrupted and impeded teaching and learning by making noise and mocking educators who would reprimand them.

- The empirical findings mentioned further that the learners' desire to learn was continually decreasing since the abolishment of corporal punishment. Educators and SMTs had no mechanism to force the learners to learn. As a result, most learners disrupted teaching and learning because they were not scared of any disciplinary measure other than corporal punishment.
- **Overcrowded classrooms:** The empirical investigation in 4.2.2 indicated that classrooms in two schools were overcrowded. The number of learner in each classroom ranged between 40 and 72 learners, instead of 29 learners as approved by the Department of Basic Education. All the overcrowded classrooms faced problems of learners' discipline; as a result their academic performance was poor. Mwamwenda (2004) in 1.1 confirmed the findings by revealing that overcrowded classrooms erode the discipline of the class. Moreover, large enrolments undermine discipline in the entire school thus lowering the academic performance of learners. Van Wyk (2003) in 2.3 expounded by arguing that lack of infrastructure and resources, as well as the overcrowded classrooms typically found in rural schools, place a severe strain on discipline and as a result their academic performance suffered.

**The following factors were mentioned as other causes of poor academic performance**

- Certain learners who did not have parental guidance because their parents were absent. As a result, they did as they pleased, also at school.
- Other parents could not assist their children in writing assignments and preparing for tests and examinations because they were not educated and so did not know the study methods.
- **Language barriers:** The empirical findings revealed that some of the learners could not read a piece of writing with understanding and had poor memory retention due to limited English vocabulary. For example, a learner revealed that he had a challenge of understanding physical science since it was taught in English. The learner relied on his friend who used to interpret lessons for him. Educators confirmed that learners performed badly in all languages. The HSRC and EPC (2005) in 2.10.5

confirmed that learners with limited proficiency in language of instruction were often at risk of educational failure due to the classroom challenges that they faced, particularly where bilingual curricula or English as a second language programmes were not readily available.

This was again confirmed by Sahlberg (2007) in 2.14.2 when indicating that literacy and numeracy were areas in education development and reform strategies that needed to raise quality of education and learner achievement. They were the main determinants of success or failure of learners, educators, schools and entire education systems. Learners who failed literacy and numeracy were bound to repeat the grade that they failed. According to Wallace (2007) in 2.5 the measures used in most rural schools to assess learners were incomplete since they focused on a single measure of output and ignored learning that influenced competitive variables like quality and delivery. Moreover, little was explained about the sources of learning or the levers of change.

- **Educator characteristics:** According to Fiske (2000) in 2.3.1 school factors that were known to influence the learners, academic performance include educator characteristics. The empirical findings confirmed that hard-working educators who had special skills in teaching learners successfully were replaced by educators who were not motivated to teach learners. For example, an SMT member revealed that geography had a high failure rate in her school. The educator who was teaching geography was not prepared to try new teaching techniques, to supervise studies nor to offer extra classes to assist the learners to catch up. Moreover, the class activities that she gave to learners were insufficient when compared to the requirements of the subject policy. Loock et al (2006) in 2.17 interpret this as burnout, a condition that attacks career motivation and diminishes the effectiveness and job satisfaction of many educators.

Pearson and Moomaw, (2006) cited in 1.1 found educator autonomy is a condition that is associated with high educator professionalism and a critical factor for educators to remain committed to the teaching profession. The teaching autonomy factor is consistent with the need for educators to have control over their work



environment, to remain satisfied with their jobs and to stay committed to their profession.

Jacobs et al (2006) in 1.1 confirm the need for educator autonomy by arguing that many undermine the educators' authority by arguing that educators have no right of imposing their own standards on learners. Jacobs et al (2006) perceive this as affecting the classroom management. Grobler et al (2006), argue further that one of the major reasons why many educators gradually replace their idealism with cynicism, de-motivation and despair is that policy makers, analysts, and top management of educational institutions have long placed the emotional welfare of learners first, and annulled the true needs and morale of the educator who teaches.

- **Condoning learners:** The empirical findings indicated that learners who never deserved to be in Grade 12 were condoned to ensure a bigger class. As a result they failed at the end of the year because they expected to pass the grade without making any effort to pass.

#### **Addressing the learners' under-performance**

- a) Learners were already attending morning, afternoon and Saturday classes in which educators were assisting them to catch up with their work, although some of the learners dodged such classes.
- b) Winter classes were scheduled for all schools in Bushbuckridge region during the winter vacation, whereby educators who had the necessary expertise were outsourced to teach the subjects that were mostly failed by learners. This arrangement was made by the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education which remunerated the outsourced educators. The centres for winter schools were again arranged by the Provincial Department of Education concurrently with the principals of schools.
- c) Night studies were scheduled for the fourth quarter by each of the schools that participated in this investigation.

#### **Schools A and B used the following strategies to obtain their high pass rate**

- Both schools were assisted by Panreach in teaching mathematics and physical science every afternoon on weekdays as well as on Saturdays and during the school holidays.
- Learners attended morning studies for an hour and afternoon studies for two hours when the day's lessons had ceased. Some educators offered remedial work to learners during the afternoon studies to either catch up with their work or to assist learners who were lagging behind.
- The SGB of the school that obtained the highest pass rate remunerated its educators with R300 for offering extra classes for every two hours per Saturday. mathematics and physical science educators were also remunerated for offering lessons on Sundays for two hours.
- HODs supported all the educators in their departments by checking their work and assisting them where necessary and encouraged them to prepare their lessons on time in order to start on teaching when their periods commenced.
- Both schools had trained their Grade 12 learners to attend overnight studies and to supervise themselves on weekends under the surveillance of the schools' security guards.
- Educators in both schools worked as a team. For instance, they shared certain sections and chapters of the same subject among those educators who best understood them.
- Learners who failed to meet the minimum requirements of progressing to the next grades were made to repeat the grades that they failed.
- Educators taught the same group of learners from Grade 8 and proceeded with them to the next grades until they reached Grade 12. That motivated the educators to try and exceed the previous pass percentage of the educator who was teaching the same subject on the previous year in the same grade.
- The learning conditions for the Grade 12 learners were conducive because their classrooms had fans and were not overcrowded and the learners had enough desks and stationery.

#### **4.7.3 Assessment tasks**

The empirical findings indicated that educators gave tasks to learners in accordance to the prescription of their subject assessment policy. Fiske (2000) in 2.5 argued that

assessment could narrow the range of topics taught by classroom educators and that the efficacy of assessment in improving learner academic performance depended to a large extent upon the kind of information that is reported.

According to the empirical findings some educators doubled the number of tasks that were prescribed in their assessment policy. Class activities were given to learners as prescribed by the policy documents, tests were given to learners at the end of every month, and examinations at the end of every term. In subjects like mathematics, learners used to write class activities and assignments on daily basis.

The empirical findings revealed that learners from schools D obtained a low pass rate because they sometimes refuse to write class activities, assignments and tests due to complaints that they had too much work. Moreover, they made a lot of noise in the presence of the educators to avoid learning. They sometimes ran out of their classroom to the toilet just to avoid learning. Prefects were members of the Sikhothane group, and were therefore leading in mocking educators and disrupting teaching and learning.

The Teacher (2011) in 2.2 repudiated the effectiveness and efficiency of the current education policy due to the increase of violence in schools which led educationists to question the government policies and interventions. Fiske (2000) in 2.3.1 argued that the managers of assessment programmes should understand that the usefulness of assessment programmes are limited by overcrowded classrooms, poor quality teaching, inadequate resources, language problems and other factors beyond the control of assessment authorities. He then emphasised that assessment must be developed concurrently with improvement in curriculum and educator development.

The HSRC and EPC (2005) in 2.6 cautioned that learners who live in single parent households tend to have lower achievement rates at school than do learners from traditional two parent households. Lack of time of single parents to spend with children, coupled with increased economic burden from a single source of income, produced less than desirable household conditions. The empirical findings confirmed that some learners habitually neglected homework. Others frequently absented themselves from school because the parents were usually away from home and did

not have time to check and find out if they were to school and if homework was done. This negatively influenced the academic performance of the learners.

The empirical findings indicated further that learners who were heading their own families sometimes absented themselves from school in order to either take care of their sick siblings or to attend to family issues. Mwamwenda (2004) and Kromberg (2005) in 2.9 confirmed the empirical finding when arguing that the current generation of young people has no choice but to look after their siblings. Learners who had such responsibilities often underperform academically given that they were often absent from school and had insufficient time to do assignments and to prepare for tests and examinations.

#### **4.7.4 Learners' support**

The empirical findings revealed that:

- All educators supported learners by doing corrections of all written tasks and offered guidance on how to study.
- Educators extended invitations to the learners' parents to participate in discussing strategies that could be used to improve the academic performance of their children.
- Grade 12 learners could attend night studies during the third and fourth terms.
- Learners who were repeating a grade for the third time were encouraged to opt for other institutions such as Further Education and Training Colleges.
- Few educators re-tested the learners with the same test that they failed before.
- Several educators and SMTs discussed the factors that caused the learners' underachievement together with the learners concerned and then devised strategies for improvement. Under serious conditions when the learners showed no interest for improvement, the learners' parents would be invited to join in discussing strategies that could assist in improving the academic performance of their children.
- Some educators highlighted that they were not able to assist learners who underperformed because their classes were overcrowded. They had many classes and a lot of learners' work to mark. Moreover, learners would purposely avoid writing the test the first time but avail themselves of a re-test to ensure that they get a total mark after having memorised answers to the questions that were set for the tests that they could have missed.

- Various educators gave extra work to learners and checked it to ensure that the work was done. Some educators however expressed their concern that learners were not willing to make any effort to learn.
- Other educators stated that they motivated their learners to learn by actively involving them throughout their lessons and questioning them as much as possible to keep them focused during lesson presentations. This was confirmed by Craig (1996) in Donald et al (2010) cited in 2.7.4 when arguing that cognitive action enables seeking for that which will turn the unfamiliar into the familiar. According to Craig (1996), educators should challenge learners to think while talking and further connect with them at the level of their understanding. Cognitive action refers to active learning which involves a variety of activities such as whole class instruction and interaction, group activities and individual activities. Educators were therefore, encouraged to ensure that all learners were actively engaged for as much time as possible throughout the learning process.
- Some educators and SMTs stated that they had already organised afternoon and Saturday lessons whereby each grade was not taught by the subject educator who was assigned to teach that grade, but by another educator to try and cap the possibility of learners failing because they do not understand the approach used by their subject educator.
- School C outsourced educators from other schools who had the necessary expertise to teach learners on Saturdays at a certain fee paid by the SGB.
- Few educators indicated that they did not have a mechanism to deal with learners who underperformed because some learners who were underperforming promoted themselves to the grades in which they were.
- Some educators indicated that their schools used to motivate their learners to learn and improve their academic performance by announcing the names of the top ten learners in the morning assembly at the beginning of every quarter and by reprimanding all the Grade 12 learners who deserted their school work including those who were underperforming.

#### **4.7.5 Culture of learning**

The empirical investigation indicated that learners from schools A and B had a culture of learning. Participants from one of the schools confirmed that parents sent



their children to their school so that they could be transformed and learn. The learners themselves understood that they were learning in a school that had a positive attitude to learning. The educators revealed further that they were doing their utmost to develop the learners in totality; therefore, extra-curricular activities like debates formed part of the culture of their school.

The Grade 10 learners did not have a culture of learning because of peer pressure. Therefore, they frequently dodged lessons, absented themselves from school, did not write homework and some of the continuous assessment tasks including tests. They copied other learners' work and handed it to the educators as if it was their own work, and were frequently late for school and so missed the first periods. Consequently, they failed most tests and examinations.

Learners from schools C and D did not have a culture of learning due to peer pressure, and were frequently late for school and missed the first periods which were frequently scheduled for mathematics. Moreover, they avoided mathematics lessons because of assignments that were not done despite the fact that mathematics was a requirement for passing a grade.

#### **4.7.6 Deterioration of the culture of learning among the learners**

The participants revealed the following features that caused the deterioration of the culture of learning among learners.

- The learners' current life style coupled with the abolishment of corporal punishment affected the culture of learning among learners. According to them, being educated and not being educated was the same since they were also able to earn a living through the government grant.
- Most educators paid special attention to Grade 12 classes given that the effectiveness of a school is measured against the Grade 12 final examination results. Educators were aware that they were to instill a culture of learning in all learners from Grade 8, but they were pressured by the Department of Basic Education to ensure that they get an average pass percentage of 40% or above in Grade 12 final examinations in order to be considered as functional schools. That compelled the educators to pay special attention to the Grade 12 classes and then leave the other grades unattended instead of teaching them to lay a proper foundation.

- Most community members of school D did not learn beyond Grade 10, but were able to earn a living. Hence most learners believed that they did not have to acquire education in order to earn a living.

#### **4.7.7 Nurturing the culture of learning among learners**

- In school B after every monthly test and quarterly examination the top ten learners were given incentives in the form of pens, dictionaries and books during the morning assembly to motivate them to learn and study more. Learners who had received awards felt appreciated and tried their best to be always rated among the top ten learners.
- School A had a block of classrooms bearing the name of a learner who achieved 100% in physical science and mathematics in 2011. The message being conveyed by this inscription was that it is possible for all learners to get 100% in mathematics and physical science provided they dedicate themselves to their school work. This motivated most learners to study during the study periods without any supervision.
- Other educators compared the achievement of boys to the achievement of girls in their classes. The educators revealed that the group that obtained a low pass rate felt undermined when the pass percentage of the other group was higher than theirs, as a result, they would try their best to get the highest percentage pass in the next task. Such competitions improved the academic performance of all classes that were involved.
- Some of the learners were motivated by their educated parents to learn.
- **Parental support:** Fiske (2000) in 2.5 argued that the primary contextual influence of learners' academic performance is the amount of support that they receive in their homes. The more support and help that learners receive at home, the better are the chances of their academic performance.

The empirical findings in 4.5.2.4 stressed that parental support is a critical contextual influence on learners' academic performance. Participants from schools A and B confirmed that parents supported their children in doing their school work as well as in their preparation to write tests and examinations. Educators and SMTs confirmed that learners sometimes gave responses that revealed that they either searched the internet or somebody assisted them when writing assignments. Other parents excused their children from doing most of the household chores when they were to

write tests and examinations to give them more time to study. Other parents woke their children up to study at night in attempt to improve their academic performance.

Learners from schools C and D did not have parental support; as a result their academic performance suffered. The participants confirmed this view by pointing out that parents were not supporting their children, but they wanted to see them going to school and obtaining a pass percentage at the end of the year. Some learners confirmed that their guardians never bothered themselves to supervise learning or writing assignments, but they wanted to see them progressing to the next grade at the beginning of the upcoming year.

Educators and SMTs mentioned that parents believed that educators had to do everything because their children were at school for seven hours. To these parents, educators were to do everything that had to do with the education of the learners. Some parents could not assist their own children because they were not educated and did not understand study techniques.

The above mentioned views were confirmed by Mwamwenda (2004) in 2.5 when highlighting that many African parents did not support their children either because they were not interested in helping them, they were working, or their children's level of education was beyond their own. Moreover, the quality of primary schools that were attended by learners differs in that some were well equipped and have qualified educators, while others were not so fortunate. Thlapi (2011) mentioned in 2.5 confirmed that parents fail to support their children when doing homework owing to the recent curriculum change which is unfamiliar. Besides, some parents do not understand their role in the education of their children.

The empirical findings revealed further that most learners from schools C and D frequently leave their assignments and projects undone. When due, they copy other learners' work and submit it to the educators as if it was their own work, thus depriving their parents the chance of assisting them. Other parents though worked hard during the day and were too tired to help their children with school work.

- The empirical findings revealed that most parents, particularly in school C and D did not take heed when called to attend the disciplinary hearing of their children in their schools. Moreover some learners brought along bogus 'parents' instead of biological

parents or legitimate guardians. This invalidated the effectiveness of involving parents as a main measure in disciplining the learners because bogus 'parents' never followed the resolutions that were reached during the disciplinary hearing. Again, the empirical findings revealed that some parents were afraid of disciplining their own children.

Mwamwenda (2004) cited in 1.1 argued that parents sometimes foster misbehaviour of their children in the classroom by interfering with what the educators does and refuse to allow their children to be punished irrespective of what they had done. Moreover, some parents criticised educators in the presence of their children by telling the educators what they should do to their children. According to Mwamwenda (2004) such behaviour undermines the authority of the educators and as a consequence, lowers the academic performance of the learners concerned. Mwamwenda (2004) argued further that parents should trust educators in what they do and therefore abstain from interfering in their work but support them.

- The empirical findings confirmed the views of Mwamwenda (2004) by indicating that schools A and B had full support of the parents. As a result these schools had the highest pass rate in the region. Moreover, the last thirty minutes of the school hours was set aside for all learners who needed assistance from educators to interact with them. In that way, learners who were not staying with their parents were catered for.

#### **4.8. IMPLEMENTATION OF IQMS**

The analysis and interpretation of the implementation of IQMS led to a consensus that the purpose of the IQMS was to assess educators including the SMT by using performance standards. Thereafter, educators should be professionally developed to ensure productivity. This was confirmed by the Collective agreement 8 of (2003) in 2.4 which indicated that the rationale for the implementation of IQMS was to establish self-reliant schools through organisational and educator professional development. IQMS was a national strategy developed to ensure quality public education for all and to constantly improve the quality of learning and teaching. It was therefore compulsory for all schools to implement IQMS.

The empirical findings revealed however that most SMTs and educators did not develop one another due to time constraints and the lengthy curriculum. They did summative assessment in order to be able to fill in the IQMS forms and submit them to the Department of Basic Education to get the 1% salary increment. Carter and Macdonald (2002) quoted in 2.5 accentuated that SMTs should focus on improving the academic performance of the learners through the development of educators which should include the improvement of their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

On the contrary Convey (1996) cited in Buthelezi (2005) in 2.4 confirmed the empirical findings by arguing that advocacy and training programmes in respect of IQMS were ineffective in some schools. Moreover, research findings indicated that educators were not trained to execute the duties of the Staff Development Teams (SDTs) and the Development Support Group (DSG). The empirical findings indicated that both educators and SMT members expressed the following concerns about the implementation of IQMS:

Some schools encountered poor learner discipline; as a result the academic performance in those schools was poor. Buthelezi (2005) in 2.4 confirmed this view when arguing that research findings revealed that educators in some schools did not understand the IQMS instrument, as a result its implementation caused stress. According to the empirical findings, educators and SMTs felt that the issue of learners' discipline had to be revisited since it was a determining factor of the academic performance of learners.

According to Thlapi (2011) the quality of teaching and learning can be improved drastically by organising regular workshops to discuss and plan for improvement. Monthly subject meetings to discuss strengths and weaknesses in learning areas give educators the chance to express their views and to design strategies for improvement. Empowered educators are committed to the improvement of quality teaching and learning and therefore produce high quality results. Du Plooy (2010) cited in 2.5 stressed that high academic achievement is possible provided educators are well equipped and well developed for the task at hand. Thus, the SMT should take cognisance of the fact that they have to manage the IQMS programme in order to meet this end.



The empirical findings however revealed that some SMT members did not do the summative assessment of the educators whom they supervised because they did not have the expertise of the subjects that they managed. This was again confirmed by Buthelezi (2005) in 2.4 when emphasising that the National Department of Education should organise retraining programmes for SMTs to capacitate them to conduct the IQMS workshops with educators in their perspective schools. The majority of the participants expressed concern that workshop facilitators were not confident and did not reinforce the key IQMS messages.

The collective agreement 8 (2003) cited in 2.4 highlighted that the focal point of advocacy was achieving a large scale buy-in to the process and answered the questions: What and Why? Training was meant to focus on training all involved to ensure successful implementation and answer the question, how? Advocacy and training were the preliminary points of the implementation of IQMS and should lead to an ethos of trust where educators work together and address challenges.

Some participants however indicated that they used to assess themselves and indicate their weaknesses and strengths. Thereafter they developed personal growth plans and expected their HODs to develop them, only to find that nobody cares. Instead their HODs instructed them to fill in the IQMS forms in order to submit them to the Department of Basic Education to get the 1% salary increment.

Other HODs used to conduct class visits without giving feedback to the educators whom they supervised because they did not have time as they were overloaded with work. Buthelezi (2005) cited in 2.4 affirmed that some educators felt that the implementation of IQMS was an additional burden to the already overloaded workload and that certain IQMS structures were not yet in place in some schools.

The main concern of some SMTs and educators according to the empirical findings of this study was that the Department of Education Basic did not develop educators after they had indicated areas in which they needed development. As a result, educators indicated the same contextual factors that hamper their effectiveness in their classes yearly, such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of learners' discipline.

The fact that the Department of Basic Education did not monitor the implementation of IQMS in schools bothered most educators who participated in this empirical findings. As a result educators scored for themselves points that enabled them to get the 1% salary increment irrespective of whether they were committed to their work. Hard-working educators were demoralised by the manner in which IQMS was practiced in schools because they received the same remuneration that was received by educators who rarely performed their duties.

According to the Educators' Manual, (2005) referred to in 2.4, the main aim of the implementation of IQMS was to transform schools into self-reliant organisations that facilitate learner academic excellence enabled by continuous educator development. For this reason, both salary and grade progression were reward systems based on material gain. Educators were to be made to realise that professional and personal development were more beneficial than the material gain of salary and grade progression because it was to assist them in addressing challenges such as discipline in their schools leading to the improvement of the academic performance of their learners.

The concerns of the educators and SMTs signify that the purpose of the implementation of IQMS was not met. This meant that the educator developmental programme was not effective at the time of this study because it was not properly implemented. This was worse in schools C and D.

#### **4.5.3.1 Observable benefits derived from the implementation of IQMS in schools.**

Educators and SMTs mentioned the following benefits

- 1% salary increment partially motivated them to do their best in teaching.
- Educators cleaned the classrooms and submitted formal preparation when they were to be assessed.
- Educators developed a positive attitude towards developing formal lesson plans as opposed to the negative attitude that was developed by their trade union in the previous years whereby educators were encouraged to do away with formal preparation.

- Learners from schools A and B were performing academically well and educators were doing their best to ensure that the academic performance of learners improve continuously. But their major concern was that the Department of Basic Education did not acknowledge them for their excellent performance. They however acknowledged the 1% salary increment as a token of appreciation which partially motivated them to do their best in teaching, but they felt that it that was not enough.
- It promoted teamwork and collaboration in some schools. As a result educators in those schools used to develop one another. They sometimes exchanged subjects among educators who were best qualified to teach certain topics.
- Other HODs assessed the work of the educators whom they supervised and mentioned their findings and recommendations. However, some educators revealed that their HODs did not give them feedback after assessing their work because they did not have time as they were overloaded with work.
- It motivated some educators to participate in extracurricular activities, s something that they never did before.
- Some educators and SMTs from schools A and B managed their classes effectively and their learners were motivated to learn.
- Some HODs were motivated to assess the work of the educators that they supervised with the aim of finding out if the educators were teaching and assessing the learners as indicated in their policy documents and if learners were tested with moderated tasks.

#### **4.8.2 Contextual factors hampering the efficiency of educators.**

The empirical investigation revealed the following contextual factors

##### **4.8.2.1 Shortage of teaching and learning support materials**

- The empirical findings highlighted that schools B, C and D did not have laboratories; as a result learners were disadvantaged from performing experiments. All the schools were without recreation halls. For this reason, learners were unable to perform some of the physical activities that were prescribed for life orientation such as push-ups.
- Textbooks were insufficient for most grades in the four schools that participated in this investigation. Grade 8 and 9 learners were without textbooks and therefore



relied on the summary notes that educators wrote on the board during lesson presentations and hand-outs. This deprived the learners from extensive reading and developing literacy skills including research skills; as an alternative, it promoted plagiarism. Consequently, most learners used to copy assignments from their friends and handed it to the educators as if it were their own work.

- Some textbooks had insufficient information, but learners were bound to use those textbooks for a five year period. Educators were therefore expected to supplement the textbooks. However, they were unable to do this without a library or internet.
- Some learners had insufficient exercise books.
- Grade 8 and 9 learners in schools A, B and D had a shortage of desks; hence learners used to support their exercise books on their laps when writing class activities, tests and examinations. As a result learners frequently tire before finishing writing their examinations. This also delayed the progress of teaching and learning since educators had to wait for the learners to finish writing before erasing the chalkboard and writing more activities for the learners.

A research report by HSRC and EPC (2005) cited in 2.3.1 confirmed that most schools in rural areas were poorly resourced, and were without adequate buildings, water, sanitation and electricity, let alone desks, chairs, libraries and computers. Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) mentioned in 2.3.1 confirmed that school budgets in rural areas were often insufficient to cover the considerable cost of the school operation. Special programmes and technological resources offered in rural schools were limited and affected the learners' opportunities to learn. In the essential publication by the Department of Basic Education (2008) cited in 1.1, Pandor confirmed that the poorest schools continue to perform badly and not enough impetus was given to the eradication of inequality.

#### **4.8.2.3 Educators workload**

The empirical findings revealed that most educators were overloaded with work. As a result they felt that they were unable to do their best when teaching the learners due to exhaustion. They mentioned that they sometimes abandoned the Grade 8 and 9 classes and concentrated on teaching Grade 10 to 12 classes. One of the educators who participated in this study was offering five subjects for tuition; these subjects consisted of three languages and two content subjects. The educators knew that

abandoning the Grade 8 and 9 learners disadvantaged both learners and the school. However, they had no alternative since they were overloaded with work and time was insufficient to cater for all of their classes.

Cristicos et al (2002) referred to in 2.10.4 confirmed that lack of time is a common problem in schools. Pretorius and Lemmer (2004) quoted in 2.17 argued that educators should eliminate activities that are time consuming as much as possible and adhere to certain principles that will help them to manage time effectively. They suggested that educators should replace time wasting activities with activities that will achieve the same purpose in less time.

#### **4.8.2.4 Overcrowded classrooms**

- The empirical findings in 3.2.2 revealed that some schools that participated in this study had a learner-educator ratio ranging from 40:1 to 80:1 instead of 29:1 which was prescribed by the Department of Basic Education. Discipline was thus impracticable in such classes. Learners were frequently absent from school because they knew that educators would not be able to identify them unless a roll call of all the learners in that class is done. Some learners used to eat snacks during lessons; other learners used to exchange their homework books behind the educator's back and handed it to the educator as if it was their own workbook.

Findings from this empirical study highlighted that when classrooms are overcrowded, it becomes difficult for educators to:

- maintain discipline
- give remedial work
- control all the learners' work and give them feedback on time. This caused educators' stress and they left some classes unattended which eventually lead to learners' underperformance.
- One of the major obstacles to effective discipline, according to Mwamwenda (2004), is that educators find it difficult to pay individual attention to learners in overcrowded classrooms. The absence of effective discipline management in the classroom coupled with lack of individual attention lead to poor academic performance of learners.

#### **4.8.2.5 Learning environment**

The empirical findings revealed that the learning environment in some of the schools was not conducive for teaching and learning because:

- a) on rainy days the yard would be muddy and slippery resulting in muddy classrooms. Learners would therefore absent themselves from school due to the non-conducive classroom conditions.
- b) Learners' toilets were foul-smelling in one of the schools. On windy hot days the odour would spread to most nearby classes, thereby affecting the health of the learners and the educators in those classrooms. Some learners therefore frequently pretended to be asthmatic due these conditions and escaped from school.
- c) The ceiling in some classrooms was in a state of collapse, had bat droppings and felt foul. Consequently, some learners used to linger in the yard during lessons claiming that the smell in their classrooms was unbearable.

#### **4.8.2.6. Vandalism**

Findings from the empirical investigation revealed that most schools were vandalised and property was stolen. An SMT member stated that their school community did not feel ownership of schools because community members vandalised and stole the resources meant to enhance teaching and learning.

#### **4.8.2.7 Provision for staff development opportunities**

Findings from the empirical study revealed that most participants did not get any assistance to improve the academic performance of their learners. Participants from school C revealed that the Department of Basic Education had never been to their school despite their poor academic performance. Even when schools reopen in the beginning of the year, the departmental officials never visited their school.

School B indicated that the Department of Basic Education provided them with chairs but no stackable tables, no text books, toilets were foul-smelling and they experienced water shortages which made it difficult for them to work while thirsty and they could not use the bathrooms. This hampered their performance as educators.

Other educators and SMTs mentioned the following:

- They attended workshops for CAPS that were organised by the Department of Basic Education
- They developed one another in cluster meetings by discussing challenging topics.
- Some educators were assisted within their schools. For instance some educators used to meet according to their departments and discuss the challenges encountered in their various classes.
- Schools A and B received assistance from a Non-Government Organisation called Panreach. This organisation offered lessons to learners for mathematics, physical science and technology after school, on weekends and during the school holidays.
- Panreach conducted computer lessons and counselling sessions in school A after school and on Saturdays and compensated educators who attended the sessions. Educators who completed the course were awarded with certificates.
- Learners from schools A and B received assistance from a private school owner who used to teach to them mathematics, accounting and physical science at a fee of R600 per learner for ten days during the school holidays.

#### **4.9 Support from the Department of Basic Education**

Findings from the empirical investigation revealed that only a few participants indicated support from the Department of Basic Education. Most participants however mentioned the following assistance that they obtained from the Department of Education:

- The support that they received from the Department of Basic Education was minimal. For example an SMT member indicated when the school achieved a 38% to 64% pass rate, the department only gave to their school a trophy as a token of appreciation and a motivational letter, instead of building a science laboratory or a computer centre or meeting any of the school's needs for teaching and learning. According to the SMT member, a congratulatory letter and a trophy was not of assistance to their learners. He recommended that the Department of Basic Education should provide textbooks instead.
- An SMT member confirmed that the Department of Basic Education was not giving them enough support since it only concentrated on monitoring and evaluation.

Moreover, they set tests and examination question papers for schools without discussing the topics with the relevant educators that were to form part of questions.

- A few educators stated that the Department of Basic Education only intervened when the end of year results were released by reprimanding them. The educators indicated further that they compiled school improvement plans and forwarded them to the circuit on yearly basis and made special requests that needed the Department of Basic Education's immediate attention, but the Department did not respond.
- An educator indicated that the curriculum advisors were selling textbooks in the form of study guides to their own gain instead of supplying schools with enough textbooks for learners. Textbooks were fundamental in improving the learners' literacy skills and improving teaching and learning and test preparation.
- The Department of Basic Education topped up books and conducted workshops for educators; the book supply was insufficient for learners.
- The Department of Basic Education organised workshops for CAPS.
- Curriculum advisors designed pace setters for educators to guide them when teaching, set question papers for tests and examinations and evaluated the learners' tasks and made recommendations to the subject educators.
- The Department of Basic Education provided food for the learners throughout the year.
- The circuit manager encouraged educators and the Grade 11 and 12 learners in schools A and D.
- The Department of Basic Education conducted whole school evaluation in some schools and made recommendations that benefited the schools. For example, in one of the schools the Department of Basic Education recommended that it should phase out two languages and teach the languages that were mostly taught by other schools such as home language, first additional language and second additional language instead of the third and fourth additional languages.
- Some departmental officials met with the SMT in schools in January and checked the school policies, assessed the educators' portfolios and issued past exam question papers and memoranda to the subject educators.

#### **4.10 Role of external stakeholders**

- All schools were supported by parents and SGBs through meetings dealing with enforcing discipline to improve the academic performance of the learners.
- Industrial Development Cooperation (IDC) built a laboratory for the school in which a former Grade 12 learner had obtained 100% in both mathematics and physical science.
- Panreach assisted schools A and B by:
  - a) offering computer classes and counselling sessions for educators on Saturdays, and in the afternoons during the week.
  - b) remunerating educators who taught learners on weekends and during the school holidays
  - c) catering for learners who attended classes on holidays and on Saturdays
  - d) offering mathematics lessons to Grade 12 learners in the afternoons when lessons had ceased on weekdays

#### **4.11 Ways of dealing with stress**

According to Looek et al (2006) cited in 2.13, stress and burnout attacks career motivation and diminishes the effectiveness and job satisfaction of many educators. They warn therefore that the Department of Basic Education and school principals must be continually aware that the psychological well-being of learners along with the job satisfaction and psychological well-being of educators be equally monitored.

The empirical findings revealed that:

- Most educators supported one another by visiting their sick colleagues including those who had lost their loved ones.
- Educators in school C used to counsel educators who had challenges that fell within their capabilities and referred those that were beyond their capabilities to specialists.
- School A had social workers who supported both educators and learners in dealing with stressors as well as trauma.
- Schools B and D were not assisted.

#### **4.12 The strengths of the study**

Information was obtained from participants who were involved in the teaching and learning in Bushbuckridge secondary schools. Hence the collected data identified

key areas that contributed to a better understanding of the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools. Though limited to four schools, some aspects of the research are useful in solving disciplinary problems in other schools resulting in improved academic achievement.

#### **4.13 The weakness of the study**

A qualitative research involves a small sample that is limited to the topic for investigation. Hence the study was designed to be explorative and descriptive in nature; as a result, the findings cannot be generalised to other schools but are restricted to the four schools that were involved in the study.

#### **4.14 CONCLUSION**

According to the theoretical framework of this study “putting a plan into practice”, if a school does not have values, true quality education cannot happen. This was proved by the high academic performance of the grade twelve learners in school A and School B where most parents, learners and educators valued education, as a result disruptions during lessons were few, again, the rate of late coming and absenteeism was low. One of the participants (educators) from these schools revealed that they managed to enforce discipline in their school by solving problems as they develop to avoid having multiple cases that might negatively affect their school. Core values such as respect, teamwork and trust were promoted in both schools since they are crucial for a school to produce quality education.

In school A and B parents were well-informed about the progress of their children through a participative style of communication. This included book viewing wherein parents were invited to school to discuss the progress of their children and also to view their work books as a way of confirming the discussion. This had a positive influence on the discipline of the learners as well as on their academic performance since learners worked hard to avoid being disciplined by their parents. However, in school C and D parents involvement was less effective. Only few learners heeded to parents discipline. Hence the academic performance of most learners in these schools suffered.



The theoretical framework of this study indicates further that sound leadership gives the school's stakeholders a space to use their initiatives with the vision of the school in mind. Seemingly, most parents in schools C and D were not informed about the visions of the schools because most of them never responded when called to participate in the disciplinary action of their children.

Ethical leadership is linked to the pillar of values in which all actions and decisions are guided by a moral code. However, the empirical findings revealed that School C and school D had no moral code hence; learner indiscipline in these schools was due to lack of disciplinary mechanisms. The resultant effect was the poor academic performance of learners in both schools. It is therefore imperative for both schools to revise their school improvement plan focusing on the basic functionality of the schools, learner achievement as well as the availability of a disciplinary code which outlines the responsibilities and rights of everyone in both schools.



## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives a summary of the main findings arrived at from empirical investigation. The findings are followed by conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter one dealt with the orientation of the study, which covered the background, the problem statement, research questions, and purpose of the research, research methodology as well as the significance of the study.

The general objective of the study was to understand manifestations of indiscipline in relation to learner performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

. This main objective was addressed using the following specific objectives:

- a) Determine the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- b) Determine the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- c) Establish the relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools. Findings from the investigation revealed that the above mentioned objectives were met.

In chapter two a literature review was undertaken to gain in-depth understanding of the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools. Chapter three afforded details of the methodology used in the investigation. A rationale for the choice of a qualitative method used in the investigation was included. The research design was clearly stated, described and discussed. Chapter four mentioned the analysis and discussion of the collected data.

Findings from the empirical data in chapter four revealed that the purpose of the study was achieved.

### **5.3 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

#### **5.3.1 Discipline in schools**

According to Russo, Beckmann and Jansen (2005) in 1.1 the conduct of learners is one of the most prominent factors that hamper the academic performance of learners in South African schools. The empirical findings in 4.5.1 confirmed the views of Russo et al (2006) by presenting the manifestations of learner indisciplined behaviour that led to learner underachievement in Grade 12 final examinations in 2011, these include; frequent class disruptions by learners, lack of respect for educators which was also perpetuated by absence of code of conduct for learners, late coming, absenteeism and truancy. Most learners were not motivated to learn as a result they resorted to plagiarism whenever a task was given to them to finish at home.

Myers, Milne, Barker and Gingseng (1987) in Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000) in 1.1 argued that research has proved that discipline problems predict a decline in the academic performance of learners which in turn leads to greater discipline problems thus confirming the empirical findings in 4.5.1 in which learners from schools that had poor pass rate clearly stated that they retaliated when educators discipline them. Mloi (2002) in 1.1 validated the findings of the empirical study by arguing that a South African study related to school academic discipline found that most learners no longer nurture a culture of respect for and trust in their educators. As a result some educators were threatened, sworn at, ignored and abused on a daily basis. Russo et al (2005) in 1.1 accentuated that learners who misbehave tend to perform poorly in school and frequently absent themselves from school.

The Human Impact Partners (HIP) in 2.12 highlighted that a school disciplinary policy creates a safe, positive and healthy school. The empirical findings in 4.5.1 revealed that all the schools that participated in this study were using parents as the main measure of disciplining learners. However, prior to parent involvement, most educators used an exclusionary discipline approach by expelling disruptive learners from their classes. According to the Health impact Assessment (HIA) in 2.12.1,

research findings indicated that the consequence of an exclusionary discipline approach is lower educational attainment including lower academic performance, negative attitudes about school, feelings of alienation, less participation in extracurricular activities and lower attendance rates.

Learners in 4.5.1 confirmed the findings of HIA in 2.12.2 when divulging that the expulsion approach that was mostly used by educators led to increased misbehavior, repeated expulsion and increased violence. An example given by the educators in the empirical findings in 4.5.1 was of a learner who was suspended from school due to disrupting teaching and learning. Initially, the learner was suspended for a week. The second suspension lasted for two weeks. Suspension did not deter the learner from disrupting lessons, but exacerbated his misbehavior to the extent of intimidating certain educators and flaunting his lack of fear for anyone in authority in the school.

In 2.12.2 HIA warns that suspension and expulsion are associated with dropping out of school leading to high chances of unemployment and incarceration, engagement with juvenile justice and incarceration as an adult, stress related illness, psychiatric problems and suicide attempts. In 2.12.5 HIA warns further that an exclusionary discipline approach leads to financial hardships for parents who stay at home to supervise the suspended or expelled learners.

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) in 2.2 maintain that a policy is designed to steer actions and behaviour, guide institutions and professionals in a certain direction and to ensure that power is exercised legitimately through various institutional norms and practices. Policies are therefore normative and either articulate or presuppose certain values, and direct people towards actions authoritatively. Moreover, public policies in education are designed to deliver educational provision in a most effective, efficient and equitable manner. The empirical findings in 4.5.1 revealed however that schools especially those who obtained a low percentage pass in Grade 12 in 2011 did not have policies that determined disciplinary mechanisms that would deter all learners from disrupting and impeding the effective teaching and learning. As a result, serious offences were referred to HODs who would then involve the disciplinary committee and invite the learners' parents to intervene in disciplining the learners.

The disadvantage of relying on parents as a main measure of disciplining learners instead of using a disciplinary policy according to the empirical findings in 4.5.1 was that parents did not always honour the invitation to the disciplinary hearing of their children. Other parents were unable to discipline their own children; some learners extended the invitation from school to bogus 'parents' who never followed up on the resolutions reached during the disciplinary hearing. Thus, some learners habitually disrupted and got away with this misconduct.

The empirical findings emphasised that addressing the issue of late coming in schools that participated in this study was a challenge because among the late comers were parent learners including learners who were heading their own families. Moreover, certain learners enjoyed getting to schools late. Nkabinde (2000) in 1.1 highlighted that lack of discipline in secondary schools throughout the country has long been a matter of great concern for educators. In 2.10 Pretorius and Lemmer (2004) confirmed that classrooms were frequently characterised by disruptive behaviour that had an adverse effect on the teaching and learning environment. Luiselli, Putman, Handler and Feinberg (2005) indicate that lack of discipline in secondary schools results in academic underachievement. Hence problems such as violence, vandalism, bullying and similar behaviours create unsafe learning environment, undermine instruction and pose a threat to the school population.

The empirical findings revealed further that learners' absenteeism in schools with low pass rates was also a challenge. Findings from the empirical investigation revealed that the kind of disciplinary measures used to discipline late comers had an adverse effect on the learners' attendance to school. This was confirmed by learners who explained that learners who overslept tend to remain at home when realising that they would be late for school since they would find the school gate locked and would therefore be bound to wait outside the school premises for the gate to be opened during a short break at 9h00.

The government grant contributed to learners' absenteeism since parent learners used to absent themselves from school on the day of the government grant claiming that they were out to collect the government funding for their children; this occurred monthly. Jacobs et al (2006) cited in 1.1 depicted the principles of democracy in the classroom as complicated since there is a tendency to undermine the educators'

authority by arguing that educators had no right of imposing their own standards on learners. Moreover, parent learners and pregnant learners go to the clinic for checkups on Tuesdays. Therefore, the higher the number of parenting and pregnant learners, the higher the rate of absenteeism from classes. According to Jacobs et al (2006) the principles of democracy in a classroom situation had a negative effect on the classroom management and upon the culture of learning. Jacobs et al (2006) emphasise that the culture of learning would not be restored in schools unless educators are given the authority to maintain a classroom climate that is conducive to learning.

The empirical findings revealed that despite the fact that educators extended the due dates of assessment tasks for learners who were absent from school, it did not help them because they underperformed. The main cause of their underperformance was that they failed to catch up the work that was done in their absence; educators could not help them catch up with the missed work as they were overloaded with their own work and the time was insufficient. The majority of learners failed because they were not present during the presentation of certain lessons especially mathematics, physical science and English language since the subjects were challenging for learners.

### **5.3.2 Guidelines towards overcoming discipline problems and reinstating a climate of orderliness in schools**

Mwamwenda (2004) mentioned in 2.11.1 presents the following guidelines to be used in overcoming discipline problems and reinstating a climate of order in schools during the processes of teaching and learning

#### **Application of punishment for rule violation**

According to Mwamwenda (2004) punishing the learner after school for disruptive behaviour is an effective strategy than corporal punishment. The empirical findings confirmed that this kind of corrective measure worked well for schools that obtained a high percentage pass in Grade 12 final examinations in 2011 because it reduced the rate of transgressors in their schools. However, schools that obtained a low pass rate punished their transgressors in the morning because of fear that the transgressors would refuse to serve their punishment in the afternoon after lessons.

This deprived the transgressors from attending certain lessons and writing certain assessment tasks, thus negating their academic performance.

### **Teaching discipline as a subject in schools and in educator training programmes**

Mwamwenda (2004) in 1.1 argued that new and experienced educators are often confronted with situations where they lack suitable strategies to handle behaviour problems. In order to address this issue, Mwamwenda (2004) suggested that educator training programmes should consist of modules related to learner behaviour problems and discipline management. The empirical findings in 4.5.1 confirmed the need of educator development programmes to address the issue of discipline in schools because educators in some of the schools did not have disciplinary mechanisms apart from parent involvement which seemed to be ineffective. According to the empirical study, parent involvement was ineffective in schools that obtained a poor percentage pass. What is more was that the empirical findings revealed that both SMTs and educators did not develop one another because of a lack of time due to curriculum overload.

Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) cited in 2.11.2 repudiated the idea of teaching discipline as a subject in schools by confirming that time was not enough since the curriculum was overcrowded. She validated this argument by highlighting that a common strategy that was used by educators whose residence was in urban centres was to commute to rural schools and that their commitment to their schools and the wider community was reduced because of the limited time available. The empirical study however revealed that the SGB of the school that obtained the highest percentage pass remunerated its educators with R300 for the two extra hours that they spent in school assisting learners, particularly on Saturday and Sunday. The aim of the remuneration was to motivate the educators to support the learners as much as they could. Indeed, the educators felt compensated and appreciated for their efforts and therefore supported the learners as much as they could. Consequently, their school obtained the highest percentage pass in Bushbuckridge region.

### **Greater rapport among parents, educators, learners and school related services**

Mwamwenda (2004) believes that when greater rapport is forged among parents, educators, learners and school related services, communities will be brought to realise that the management of discipline in schools can never be a concern of the schools alone. According to Mwamwenda (2004) programme services and technical assistance should be extended to families, social welfare, health, legal sectors and other community structures. The empirical findings in 4.5.1 confirmed that the participating schools tried to forge a greater rapport among parents, educators and learners by involving parents as a key measure of disciplining learners. However, this was ineffective particularly in schools with a poor pass rate, because some parents did not honour the invitation to attend the disciplinary hearing of their children. Hence, disciplining learners in schools specifically those schools whose academic performance was poor remained a major challenge.

Again the two schools which obtained a high percentage pass involved Panreach, a Non- Government Organisation in teaching mathematics and physical science. The school which obtained the highest percentage pass obtained further help from social workers who were employed by the school to deal with social problems of all the stakeholders of the school.

### **Shared decision making versus imposing disciplinary measures**

The empirical findings in 4.5.1 highlighted that most educators used an exclusionary discipline approach by expelling disruptive learners from their classes which eventually resulted in more misbehavior, repeated expulsion and increased violence. However Mwamwenda (2004) is of the view that educators, learners and parents should play an active role in the formulation of school disciplinary policies which stipulate the consequences for violations to ensure that they all own the policies and therefore strive to adhere to them.

### **5.3.3 Classroom management**

The empirical study revealed that some educators punished the transgressors in the morning during the first and second periods because of fear that the learners would refuse to serve their punishment after the afternoon studies. This hampered the academic performance of the transgressors because they sometimes missed tests and continuous assessment tasks while serving their punishment. What made it

worse was that the late comers never bothered themselves to determine what work they had missed while they were serving their punishment.

As already mentioned, Jacobs et al (2006) suggest that there is a tendency to undermine the educators' authority by arguing that they had no right to impose their own standards on learners. This view was corroborated by Pearson and Moomaw (2006) in 2.8 when highlighting educators' autonomy as one of the working conditions associated with high educator professionalism which is also a critical factor for educators to remain committed to the teaching profession. The empirical study in 4.5.2.1 validated Pearson and Moormaw's (2006) views by revealing that hard-working educators who were motivated to teach learners successfully were replaced by educators who were de-motivated. As a result learners were failing hopelessly. Casas (2011) in 2.3 emphasised that educators should be allowed to teach learners according to their own beliefs and reach out to their school principals for support since they share a common goal. Pearson and Moormaw (2006) in 2.8 stressed that bureaucratic governance models need to change to enable educators to have authority over the substance of school.

#### **5.3.4 Management of time and instruction**

Van Wyk (2003) argued in 2.3 that research proved that irrelevant curriculum and poor instructional methods, inflexible school schedules and poor academic performance were major causes of chronic absenteeism and truancy leading to poor academic performance of learners. The empirical findings confirmed the argument of Van Wyk (2003) by revealing that the rate of learners' absenteeism was high in schools that obtained low percentage pass in Grade 12 examinations in 2011, and that most learners dodged classes after the day's meal.

According to the empirical findings, learners who were frequent absent from school lagged behind because educators did not have time to help them catch up with the work that they missed due to work overload and overcrowded curriculum. Although some educators gave learners who absented themselves from school extra time to do the activities that they missed, this was not very effective and they failed.

#### **5.3.5 Discipline mechanisms**



Findings in 4.5.1 indicated that schools engaged parents as a main measure of disciplining learners. This was in accordance with the South African School Act section 8(1) and 8(2) in 2.5, which revealed that the Department of Basic Education entrusted the School Governing Body (SGB) with the duty of adopting a code of conduct for learners through a consultative process with parents and the educators. The aim of the code of conduct for learners was to establish a disciplined environment that was conducive to effective teaching and learning. The main focus was on positive discipline, self-discipline and establishing a standard of behaviour that was recognised and accepted by civil society.

In 2.5 Russo et al (2002) cite a study conducted in Gauteng which established that SGBs were insufficiently trained to execute their duties despite the promise by the Department of Basic Education to provide them with an introductory training. The only training conducted by the Department of Basic Education focused mainly on explaining the basic functions of SGBs. The research revealed very little evidence concerning any form of continuous development that took place since the introduction of SGBs in schools.

Russo et al (2002) cited a conflict which occurred between the SGB of Vryburg High School and the Education Department: the SGB suspended a Grade 9 learner on a charge of assault with the intention to do a bodily harm, because the learner stabbed another learner with a pair of scissors during a class break. The High Court declared the proceedings of the disciplinary hearing null and void due to lack of fairness since the parents of the learners were not invited to the hearing and that the disciplinary committee did not apply the rules of natural justice. The case was subsequently transferred to a criminal court where the learner was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. This confirmed that SGBs were not trained to perform their duties in accordance with the South African Schools Act; as a result schools were plagued with discipline problems and the academic performance of learners was negatively affected.

Prior to learners' disciplinary hearing, most educators use an exclusionary discipline approach. HIA (2012) criticised the exclusionary disciplinary approach because its outcomes were lower educational attainment including lower academic performance,

negative attitudes about school, feelings of alienation, less participation in extracurricular activities and lower attendance rates.

According to HIA (2012) suspension and expulsion are associated with dropping out of school which eventually leads to high chances of unemployment and incarceration, engagement with juvenile justice and incarceration as an adult, stress related illness, psychiatric problems and suicide attempts. Again, suspension and expulsion lead to more misbehaviour and repeated suspension, increased violence and drug abuse as well as increased referrals to juvenile justice and greater likelihood of adult incarceration.

HIA (2012) in 2.12.2 recommended PBIS and RJ policies as policies that could assist in addressing the challenge of learners' discipline. Educators, particularly, those from schools that obtained a low percentage pass, explained (see 4.5.1) that their schools did not have school policies which determined disciplinary measures to be administered to learners who violated the school rules.

The PBIS Discipline approach leads to higher educational attainment including improvement in reading performances and learner academic performance along with reduction in out of school suspension. A RJ discipline approach leads to higher educational attainment including higher academic performance, higher attendance rates and the development and sustainability of positive relationships. Moreover, a RJ discipline approach leads to fewer instances of harmful and disruptive behaviour, reduction in suspensions and expulsions and fewer referrals to law enforcement.

Moreover, HIA (2012) in 2.12.1 is of the view that Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports discipline approach leads to a reduction in negative mental health outcomes created by exclusionary discipline policies; the RJ discipline increases the level of respect and empathy, improves conflict resolution skills and reduces antisocial behaviour among learners.

The impact on community cohesion of a PBIS discipline approach is that it leads to increased respect for all members of the school community, improved relationships among staff members and supportive administrative leadership as well as improved academic performance. A RJ approach leads to an improved relationship throughout

the school community, increased learner participation and performance as well as increased respect among learners.

### **5.3.6 Learners' academic performance**

In 3.2.2 Fiske (2000) argued that school factors that were known to influence the learners' academic performance comprised educator characteristics and school resources. Educator characteristics were of prime interest because the qualifications, experience and competencies of the educators had a critical role in shaping the process of teaching and learning. The interaction between learners and the educators were the primary way of transmitting knowledge and skills.

The empirical findings revealed that educators gave enough work to the learners in attempt to improve their academic performance. However, Nzimande (2010) argued in 2.3 that the latest figures reflected that 40% of the country's youth did not complete high school and of those who did, many could not proceed with their studies because of the poor quality of their academic achievements. The empirical findings in 4.5.2.1 validated the argument of Nzimande (2010) by revealing that the learners' desire to learn had been persistently decreasing due to absence of mechanism to motivate the learners to learn.

In 1.1 Van Wyk in Lemmer (2003) shed light on the poor quality of the learners academic achievements by stating that learners perceive schooling as less relevant when they see no connection between the curriculum of the school and the culture of their families and neighbourhoods, when the values mentioned and demanded by the school are inconsistent with those of their peer group, and they see no connection between their academic work in schools and their future economic prospects. This view was confirmed by the empirical findings in 4.5.2.3.2 when revealing that most community members did not learn beyond Grade 10 but left school to earn a living. Hence most learners believed that they do not need education to earn a living. Again, community problems like teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, delinquency, gang membership and socially disorganised communities with high rates of crime negate the academic performance of all learners involved.

The empirical findings revealed further that some learners from schools which obtained poor academic performance in Grade 12 final examination in 2011 had language barriers. As a result some learners could not read a piece of writing with understanding and had poor memory retention due to their limited English vocabulary. This failed them from transferring information from their short term memory to their long term memory since they had a difficult of comprehending sentences. For example a learner revealed that he struggled to understand physical science because the physical science educator was teaching them in English only. The learner relied on his friend who used to interpret lessons for him.

The empirical findings indicated that learners were not prepared to read more books and newspapers and listen to English programmes on the television in order to enrich their vocabulary. Moreover, some learners did not have a problem of sharing their work among other learners; hence they exchanged books among their friends behind the educator's back and submitted them as though it was their own work. This proved that most learners from the schools that obtained low pass rate in 2011 were not disciplined. Seemingly, the language barrier emanated as a result of their lack of commitment to their school work such as reading books in preparation to write tests and examination, as well as writing assignments with the help of parents or guardians.

### **5.3.7 School attendance**

According to the empirical findings, absenteeism was a major problem in most schools that obtained low pass rate. Findings from the empirical investigation cited the following reasons for learners' absenteeism from school

- a) Clinic visits because learners were ill
- b) Pregnant learners were frequent absent from schools due to medical checkups or periods when they were unwell.
- c) Some learners were orphans, and so they lacked proper parental guidance and absented themselves from school without valid reasons.
- d) Some orphan learners headed their own families and were sometimes absent from school because they were either taking care of their sick siblings, attending to family issues or were raising funds to support siblings.

- e) Some learners had only one uniform as a result they occasionally washed it during the week to keep it clean. Sometimes it would not dry out in time for school and therefore would go the next day.
- f) Some learners were affected by their parents' economic status. For example, they sometimes missed school in order to do a piece job to supplement the household income.

Kromberg (2005) in 2.6 argued that the current generation of young people is more sophisticated in their understanding of socio economic factors, health, and development than other previous generations. In many cases, they had no choice but to look after their siblings because their parents had succumbed to AIDS. Learners who had such responsibilities constantly performed poorly academically because they were regularly absent from school, did not have enough time to do their home-work and prepare for tests and examinations.

Fiske (2000) in 3.3 expantiated by arguing that research has proved that learners who help out in their homes for one hour or less achieve at a higher rate than those who work for two or more hours. The reason for the correlation between modest amount of chores and high achievement was due to the fact that learners from wealthy families were not required to do as much work around the house as less advantaged learners.

### **Methods used to improve the academic performance of learners**

The empirical study revealed that:

Learners were already attending morning, afternoon and Saturday classes to catch up with their work. Furthermore, winter classes were scheduled for all schools in Bushbuckridge region during the winter vacation, whereby educators with special expertise were outsourced to teach the at risk subjects. This arrangement was made by the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education together with school principals. The Department of Basic Education remunerated the outsourced educators. Centres for winter schools were arranged by the Department of Basic Education together with school principals. All the schools that participated in this study had already scheduled night studies for the fourth quarter.

## **Strategies that were implemented by schools that obtained high pass rates in Grade 12 final exams in 2011 to improve the achievement of their learners**

The empirical findings revealed that:

Both schools were supported by Panreach in teaching mathematics and physical science every afternoon during the week, on Saturdays and during the holidays. Again, learners attended morning studies for an hour and afternoon studies for two hours when the day's lessons had ceased. Other educators offered remedial work to learners during the afternoon studies to either catch up with their work or to assist learners who were lagging behind. Grade 12 learners in both schools were also trained to attend overnight studies in the absence of the supervision of their educators.

The SGB of the school that obtained the highest pass rate remunerated its educators with R300 for offering extra lessons for two hours per Saturday. mathematics and physical science educators were also remunerated for offering lessons on Sundays for at least two hours. HODs also supported all educators in their departments by checking their work and assisting them where necessary, and further encouraged them to prepare their lessons beforehand in order to start on teaching when periods commenced. Both schools promoted teamwork and collaboration. For instance, educators shared certain sections and chapters of the same subject among those who best understood them.

Educators taught the same group of learners from Grade 8 and proceeded with them to the next grades until they reached Grade 12. That motivated the educators to try their best in improving the academic performance of their learners with the aim of exceeding the previous pass rate of the same subject in the same grade. Learners who failed to meet the minimum requirements for grade profession were made to repeat the grade that they failed. Classrooms for Grade 12 learners served as motivators to learn because they were well furnished and had fans.

### **5.3.8 Assessment tasks**

The empirical findings highlighted that educators gave tasks to learners in accordance to the prescription of their subject assessment policies. Some of the educators even doubled the number of tasks that were prescribed in their assessment policy. Tests were given to learners at the end of every month and examinations at the end of every term. In subjects like mathematics, learners wrote class activities and assignments daily.

According to HSRC and EPC (2005) cited in 1.1, schools that had a reputation for defiance and rebellion among their learners yielded poor academic performance, which resulted in educator attrition due to discipline problems. This was corroborated by the empirical findings: learners from schools D sometimes refused to write class activities and assignments by telling the educators concerned that they had a lot of work. They related that they sometimes made a lot of noise in the presence of the educators to avoid learning and sometimes ran out of the classroom to the toilet to avoid instruction. Prefects were members of the sikhothane group and led the mockery of educators and disruption of teaching and learning.

Sugai and Horner (2001) cited in Warren (2007) in 1.1 validated the argument of HSRC and EPC (2005) that the effectiveness and efficacy of an educator diminishes when learners are defiant and disrespectful, when incidents of classroom disruptive behaviour occur frequently throughout the school day, and when there are re-occurring acts of violent learner behaviour.

### **Dealing with learners who underperformed**

The empirical findings revealed that:

All participants supported learners by correcting written tasks and giving study guidance. Four participants re-tested learners with the same test that they failed before. However, all the other participants stated that they discussed the causes of the poor attainment with the learners concerned and devised strategies for improvement. Under serious conditions when the learners showed no interest for improvement, the educators would invite the parents of the learners concerned to join in discussing strategies to improve the academic performance of their children.

Some educators conversely highlighted that they were unable to assist learners who underperformed because their classes were overcrowded and they had many classes for tuition. Moreover, their learners were not disciplined; so they feared that they would purposely avoid writing a test so that they could write the retest in order to obtain a total mark after having memorised answers to the questions set for the tests.

Five participants stated that they motivated their learners by actively involving them throughout their lessons and questioning them as much as possible to keep them focused during lesson presentations. Yet, others gave extra work to learners and monitored them to ensure that they do it.

Eight participants stated that they organised afternoon and Saturday lessons. These lessons were not taught by the subject educator but by another educator to try and cap the possibility of learners failing because they did not understand the approach used by the subject educator of that particular grade. Other educators and SMTs indicated that they outsourced educators from other schools who had the necessary expertise to offer Saturday lessons at a certain fee paid by the SGB.

Eight participants indicated that their schools motivated their learners to learn and improve their academic performance by announcing the names of the top ten learners in the morning assembly at the beginning of every quarter, and reprimanding all the Grade 12 learners who neglected their school work including those who were underperforming.

Three participants indicated however, that they lacked a mechanism to deal with learners who underperformed because they promoted themselves to the grades in which they were.

### **5.3.9 Purpose of the implementation IQMS**

According to the collective agreement number 8 (2003) in 2.4, IQMS is a school improvement instrument that integrated three related programmes: the Development Appraisal System (DAS), the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) and the Performance



measurement (PM). The underlying principle for the implementation of IQMS was to establish self-reliant schools through organisational and educator professional development. It was a national strategy developed to ensure quality public education for all and to constantly improve the quality of learning and teaching.

On the contrary, findings from the empirical study in 4.5.3.1 revealed that the process of educator development was not implemented in the secondary schools that participated in this study; instead both SMTs and educators concentrated on summative assessment in order to complete and submit the IQMS forms to the Department of Basic Education to get the 1% salary increment. Other schools did not even do the summative assessment, but they simply allocated scores for themselves that enabled them to get the 1% salary increment. As a result they merely repeated the same contextual factors as reasons for poor performance and did not conduct professional or self-development.

Buthelezi (2005) quoted in 2.4 mentioned that some educators felt that the implementation of IQMS added an additional burden to their already overloaded workload. This view was confirmed by the empirical findings in 4.4.3.1. Educators agreed that the evaluation of educators should have been done by the Department of Basic Education to ensure fairness. Instead educators evaluated themselves to secure the 1% salary increment irrespective of merit while claiming that they did not have time to implement IQMS according to the stipulations of the Department of Basic Education.

Another concern of the educators was that the Department of Basic Education did not develop educators after they had indicated areas in which they needed development. As a result educators repeated the same contextual factors that hampered their effective teaching in class, such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of discipline. However, few educators were offered bursaries by the Provincial Department of Education. Their concern was that they did not grasp the procedures for bursary application since their applications were consistently turned down. Educators felt that curriculum advisors should visit schools and present certain topics in real-life situations as a means of professional development. In this way the 1% salary increment would be given as remuneration for hard-working educators.

### **Establishing workplace health programme**

Prolonged illnesses associated with stress and other chronic diseases are likely to erode the gains in improving the quality of education. The health of educators is badly affected by stress and other chronic diseases caused by learners indiscipline. Thus, they do not work to their fullest potential and this affects academic performance of the learners. Moreover, healthy educators are often compelled to take additional teaching responsibilities and this creates more stress for them. Some educators revealed that they supported one another in dealing with stress; others claimed to have received no support at all.

It is therefore recommended that the Department of Basic Education work together with the Department of Health and Social Welfare to establish and manage a workplace programme specifically to provide a comprehensive prevention and treatment programme for all illnesses while ensuring confidentiality for educators. Such a programme could include stress reduction, counselling, assessment of workload and adjustment thereof, blood pressure and diabetes screening and treatment.

#### **5.4 Recommendation for further research**

- The empirical findings revealed that schools limited the implementation of IQMS to the 1% salary increment which aimed at developing the educators. It is therefore imperative that a study of educator development be conducted to establish an educator developmental programme that would be effective in equipping educators with disciplinary skills and techniques to ensure effective teaching and learning in schools for the betterment of the learners' academic performance. According to the conceptual framework of this study, a school improvement plan has to be drawn in order for effective teaching and learning to take place, which will result in learners achieving their full potential in all subjects including a high participation in extra-curricular activities. When the plan is drawn up, it must then be put into practice. This implies that a better plan of empowering educators must be researched, and when found put into practice. This is in line with the argument made by Tihapi (2011) in 2.5 who recommended that educators should be empowered to ensure effectiveness in the school context; empowered educators are highly motivated do their best at work

and are committed towards the improvement of quality teaching and learning to produce quality results.

## **5.5 SUMMARY**

In this study the stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools was investigated. The empirical findings revealed that schools C and D did not have a discipline mechanism to enforce discipline in their schools since corporal punishment was abolished. They relied on involving parents as a main measure of disciplining learners despite the fact that it was ineffective since learner indiscipline continued in schools that yielded low pass rate in 2011. According to the conceptual framework of this study, school improvement plans need annual revision and updating within the Provincial Departments of Basic Education and implementation. Both schools have a serious need to revise and update their improvement plans and put them into practice in order to attain the status of total quality schools.

It was also established that educator development was not effective in most schools as educators and SMTs did not implement IQMS as expected. Instead they focused mostly on ensuring that they get the 1% salary increment irrespective of whether the educators were devoted to their work or not. Hence educators were not developed. The lack of learners' discipline in schools is a call for an educator development that would address the problem of ill-discipline in schools, and as a consequence improve the learners' academic performance. This confirms the need of putting into practice the five pillars of the conceptual framework for this study.

It is hoped that the conceptual framework of this study – 'putting a plan into practice' - is a contribution of knowledge by virtue of what has been highlighted. The five pillars of Quality in Education Model are universal and applicable to every school. It is suggested as an alternative to the exclusionary discipline approach used by some schools in Bushbuckridge.

This study also provided alternative discipline approaches which may lead to higher academic performance, improving school climate and decreasing school disruption. PBIS teach social skills and reinforce positive learner behaviors. RJ engages learners in taking responsibility for school improvement, and focuses on repairing the



harm caused by challenging behavior through stakeholder cooperation and dialogue. In this case, administrators, educators and peer groups help the offender to take responsibility for his or her actions and change disruptive behavior.

It is evident from this study that involving learners in making classroom rules on how they would like their peers to behave and what kind of environment they would like to have in class would define a set of rules that meet both the learners and educator's criterion. This will motivate the learners to follow the rules and keep one another in check, freeing the educator to do other things.

Trading educators emerged as helpful in the educator's quest for a composed classroom, particularly when the learners have gotten used to the way the educator operate in class. Having a different educator for one or more periods of the day could spur the learners to act a little more restrained. Not only could the atmosphere of class change, but the learners will benefit from listening to another voice and another style of speech when another educator stands in front of them.

Disciplining learners in private proved to be the best way of dealing with learner indiscipline which is quick with as little disruption as possible. Educators should therefore choose to have conversations with transgressors in private. Learners are more likely to respect educators who respect them. Again, educators should remember to avoid letting their emotions get the better of them, instead they should remember to remain calm and make logical and intentional responses.

Learners revealed that they sometimes misbehaved in attempt to make educators listen to them. Therefore, it is essential for educators to think about the reason behind the rudeness, since learners may be acting up to make up for a self-perceived inadequacy in their language abilities. Should there be the slightest possibility for insecurity to be behind the classroom misbehavior, the educator should try to look past it and address the real issue. Questions like *does the learner need confidence? Does she need a feeling of success? Does he need to feel equal to his peer group?* could assist in addressing the issue rather than symptoms resulting in the formation of a healthier and better behaved learners.

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## Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

**SG Simelane [08524785]**

for a D Ed study entitled

**The effect of discipline on academic performance of learners in  
Bushbuckridge Secondary Schools**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa  
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two  
years from the date of issue.



Prof CS le Roux  
CEDU REC (Chairperson)  
[lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za)

12 June 2013

Reference number: 2013 JUNE/08524785/CSLR

Appendix 1

The Circuit Manager  
Enq: Simelane SG  
Cell No: 072 141 8408  
Email: [sgsimelane@yahoo.com](mailto:sgsimelane@yahoo.com)

P.O Box 85  
HAZYVIEW 1242  
10 April 2013

The Circuit Manager  
Mkhuhlu Circuit Office  
P/Bag x 3022  
Mkhuhlu 1246

Dear Sir

#### REQUEST FOR RESEARCH AUTHORITY

I kindly request you to grant me access to schools in your circuit to conduct individual and focus group interviews for the completion of my research. I am a student at the University of South Africa (UNISA), who is presently enrolled for the Doctorate Degree with specialisation in Curriculum Studies.


The topic for the research is: "*Stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools*". In each school, one SMT member and three educators will participate in individual interviews and four learners will participate in focus group interviews. The result of the research will be reported anonymously, neither the school nor the participant will be identified in the project. The results of the interviews will be kept confidential.

I believes that the results of this study will motivate both the principals, educators as well as the learners in secondary schools in Bushbuckridge to strive for excellence in terms of discipline and the quality of education for the betterment of the learners' academic performance.

Should you be interested, I will give you a summary of the research findings.

I thank you in advance for your willingness to assist me.

Yours sincerely

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Simelane Sisana Gladys

10/04/2013  
Date



Private Bag X 3022  
Mkhuhlu  
1246 Adjacent to B Bridge  
Municipality office  
Mkhuhlu Township  
Hazyview-Kruger gate Road  
Mkhuhlu  
1246



**education**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

**BOHLABELA DISTRICT  
MKHUHLU CIRCUIT**

*Litiko leTseafundvo*      *Dinyango weFundo*      *Department van Onderwys*      *Dinyango leTseafundvo*  
Enq: Mathebula C.T  
Date: 28/08/2012

**To: Simelane S.G  
P.O.Box 85  
Hazyview  
1246**

**Re: YOUR REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN OUR SCHOOLS.**

1. Your letter dated 10/07/2012 refers.
2. Your request is granted on condition that the Department of Education is exonerated from any financial implications that you may incur during your research.
3. Hope that the department will benefit from your findings.
4. Wishing good luck in your studies.

Thank you

  
DCES: CIRCUIT MANAGER  
MD MDLULI

28/08/2012  
DATE

## Appendix 2

The Principal  
UNISA Student No: 0852-478-5

Enq: Simelane SG  
Cell No: 072 141 8408  
Email: [sgsimelane@yahoo.com](mailto:sgsimelane@yahoo.com)

P.O. Box 85  
HAZYVIEW 1242  
10 April 2013

### REQUEST FOR RESEARCH AUTHORITY

TOPIC: " Stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

I kindly request your permission to conduct individual and focus group interviews in your school. I am a registered Doctorate of Education student at UNISA, who is conducting important interviews in connection with " *Stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools* This requires one SMT member and three educators to participate in individual interviews, as well as four learners to participate in focus group interviews.


I believe that the results of this study will motivate both the principals, educators as well as the learners in secondary schools in Bushbuckridge to strive for excellence in terms of discipline and the quality of education for the betterment of the academic performance of learners.

The result of the interviews will be reported anonymously, and kept confidential. The names of the participants will not be identified. Should you be interested, I will give you a summary of the research findings.

I have attached a copy of the interview guide for SMTs, educators and learners as well as the ethical measures that will be taken into consideration during the interviews.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Simelane Sisana Gladys

10/04/2013  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# GEZINGQONDO SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

ENQ: Mr. Nkuna B.A  
CELL: 0711916 964  
EMAIL: nkunaba@gmail.com

EMIS : 800035093  
PAY POINT 501023



Goromane Trust  
Stand No.  
Mkhuhlu,  
P O Box 1856  
MKHUHLU  
1246

Date:

15 July 2013

**UNISA STUDENT NUMBER NO: 0852-478-5**  
**SURNAME AND INITIALS: SIMELANE SG**

## **RESPONSE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Be informed that permission has been granted to conduct an interviews in connection with the effect of discipline on academically performance of learners in our school.

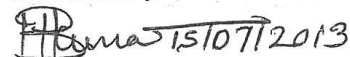
We sincerely believe as the school that interviews with educators and learners will not hamper or interfere with the school programme and daily activities of the school. We will be the happiest management team if you will do it as suggested :

- To be conducted within July 2013
- To be within professional work ethics
- To be within your interview schedule
- To be conducted during break time for learners
- Educators can be interviewed during their spare time

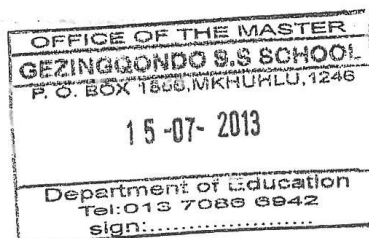
We hope as a school your research will help us to change our thought , to plant new ideas into our minds, to reprogramme our scripts , which will inspires us to embark on a new journey of self-actualization.

We hope you will find the above suggestion to be in order

Yours faithfully

 15/07/2013

Nkuna BA  
School principal



PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I the researcher (Simelane SG) contact number 072 141 8408 kindly request the parent of ABIGAIL  
TLADI to permit him / her to participate in my focus group interviews  
Name and surname of learners

The topic for the study says ““ Stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools”.

**Interviews will be conducted in English**

The research ethics that will be taken into consideration during the interview are as follows:

- 1) The estimated duration of the interview is 45 minutes.
- 2) Participation in the interview is voluntary, and your child has a right to withdraw from the interview at any time without any explanation, penalty or prejudice.
- 3) The identity of your child will be kept anonymous and confidential.
- 4) The information disclosed will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for the study purpose only.
- 5) All information disclosed will be equally treated and be used in the study.
- 6) Your child has a right to refuse answering certain questions which form part of the interview.
- 7) Your child may object the use of the audio recorder.
- 8) When the research is complete, the researcher will give to your child a summary of the findings from the study.

I have attached a copy of the interview guide that will be discussed with your child during the interview.

You will receive a copy of this signed form upon permitting your child to participate in the focus group interview, as well as a signed assent form of your child.

Kindly sign the attached parental consent form if you give permission to your child to participate in the research

I Mohlaleq Jean parent of TLADI ABIGAIL  
Surname and initials of parent / guardian surname and name of learner

Permit my child to participate in the focus group interview.

Mohlaleq J  
Signature of parent or guardian

08/05/2013  
Date

Stele

08/05/2013

Signature of researcher (Simelane SG)

Date

Appendix 4

#### YOUTH ASSENT FORM

I the learner in school D have read the following research ethics that will be taken into consideration during the focus group interview and I understand that

- 1) The estimated duration of the interview is forty five minutes.
- 2) My participation in this investigation is voluntary,
- 3) I have a right to withdraw from the interview at any time without any explanation, penalty or prejudice.
- 4) My identity will not be disclosed
- 5) The information disclosed will be kept as a secret and will be used for the study purpose only.
- 6) All information disclosed will be equally treated and be used in the study.
- 7) I have a right to refuse answering certain questions which form part of the interview.
- 8) I have a right to object the use of the audio recorder.
- 9) When the research is complete, the researcher will give to me a summary of the findings from the research.

I consent therefore to participate in the focus group interview.

[Signature]

Learner's signature

08/05/13

Date

[Signature]

Researcher's signature

(Simelane SG)

08/05/13


Date

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR EDUCATORS AND SMTs**


I the educator in school C understand that

- 1) I have a right to withdraw from the investigation at any time without any explanation, penalty or prejudice.
- 2) My identity will be kept anonymous and confidential
- 3) The information disclosed will be treated with strict confidentiality and be used only in this study.
- 4) All information disclosed will be equally treated and be used only in this study.
- 5) I have a right to refuse answering certain questions which form part of the interview.
- 6) I may object the use of the audio recorder.
- 7) The estimated duration of the interview is 1 hour.
- 8) When the research is complete, I will receive a summary of the findings from the research.

I assent therefore to participate in this research.

  
Participant's signature

08/05/2013  
Date

  
Researcher's signature  
(Simelane SG)

08/05/2013  
Date

Appendix 6

Enq: Simelane SG  
Cell No: 072 141 8408  
Email: [sgsimelane@yahoo.com](mailto:sgsimelane@yahoo.com)

P.O Box 85  
HAZYVIEW 1242  
10 July 2012

The Research Participant  
Sir / Madam

You are kindly invited to participate in an interview scheduled as follows:

Venue: Your school

Date: 19/07/13

Time: 14h00

The following ethical measures will be borne in mind during the interview

1. The information disclosed will be kept confidential and will be used for the study purpose only
2. Your name will not to be disclosed
3. All information disclosed will be equally treated and be used in the study
4. Your participation in this interview is voluntary
5. You have a right to withdraw from the interview at any time without any explanation, penalty or prejudice.
6. You have a right to refuse answering certain questions which form part of the interview.
7. You may object the use of the audio recorder.
8. When the research is complete, the researcher will give to you a summary the research findings.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly valued.

Yours faithfully

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Simelane SG (Researcher)

16/07/2013  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Appendix 7

SCHOOLS WITH LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE  
FOR EDUCATORS AND SMTs

*TOPIC: STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECT OF INDISCIPLINE ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN SELECTED BUSHBUCKRIDGE RURAL SCHOOLS*

1. The information disclosed will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purpose only.
2. Your identity will be kept anonymous and confidential
3. All information disclosed will be equally treated and be used in the research.
4. Your participation in this investigation is voluntary, hence You have a right to withdraw from the investigation at any time without any explanation, penalty or prejudice
5. Support such as counselling and referral will be available after the investigation should you need to talk to someone.
6. You have a right to refuse answering certain questions which form part of the interview.
7. You may object the use of the audio recorder.
8. The estimated duration of the interview is 1 hour.
9. When the research is done, the researcher will give to you a summary of all the findings from the research.

The general objective of the study is to establish the relationship between discipline and the academic performance of learners in Secondary Schools in Bushbuckridge.

The specific objectives of the study are to

- Determine the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Determine the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Establish the relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.

This has led to the formulation of the following question:



## BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

- 1.1 Name your gender.
- 1.2 How old are you?
- 1.3. Which position do you hold in this school?

## 2. DISCIPLINE

- a.
  - i. How do you view discipline in this school?
  - ii. How does that enhance or hamper the effective academic performance of learners in the school?
- b.
  - i. How do you deal with concrete situations where learners challenge your authority in the classroom?
  - ii. How does that affect their academic performance?
- c.
  - i. How often do learners come late to school?
  - ii. How do you deal with late coming?
  - iii. How does that affect the learners' academic performance?
- d.
  - i. How often do learners' absent themselves in your school?
  - ii. What are the causes of learners' absenteeism?
  - iii. How do you deal with it?
- e. How does the learners' absenteeism affect their academic performance?

## 3. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- a.
  - i. According to recent analysis of grade 12 results, your school obtained low pass rate for the past 3 years. What led to this kind of a situation?
  - ii. How do you intend to address it?
- b. How often do you give formal and informal assessment tasks to your learners?
- c. How do you or your school deal with learners who underperform?
- d.
  - i. Do learners in your school have a culture of learning?
  - ii. What led to this kind of a situation?
- e. Do parents or guardians support learners in completing assignments and preparing for tests and examinations?

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION OF IQMS

- a. Do you understand the purpose of the implementation of IQMS in schools?
- b. Mention observable benefits derived from the implementation of IQMS in your school.

- c. Are there any contextual factors that still hamper your effective performance in your school?  
If there are, name them and state how they affect learners.
  - d. Are you receiving any assistance to improve learners performance?
  - e. Is there any provision for staff development opportunities in your school?  
If yes, what types of developmental opportunities are offered?
  - f. How does the Department of Education support your school?
  - g. What role do external stakeholders play towards improving the academic performance of learners in your school?
  - h. How does your school / Department of Education assist you in dealing with stress and anxiety to ensure that you are effective throughout the year?
5. Make any comment/s regarding the effect of discipline on academic performance of learners in secondary schools

SCHOOLS WITH HIGH ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE  
FOR EDUCATORS AND SMTs

*TOPIC: STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECT OF INDISCIPLINE ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN SELECTED BUSHBUCKRIDGE RURAL SCHOOLS*

1. The information disclosed will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purpose only.
2. Your identity will be kept anonymous and confidential.
3. All information disclosed will be equally treated and be used in the research.
4. Your participation in this investigation is voluntary, hence you have a right to withdraw from the investigation at any time without any explanation, penalty or prejudice
5. Support such as counselling and referral will be available after the investigation should you need to talk to someone.
6. You have a right to refuse answering certain questions which form part of the interview.
7. You may object the use of the audio recorder.
8. The estimated duration of the interview is 1 hour.
9. when the research is done, the researcher will give to you a summary of the research findings.

The general objective of the study is to establish the relationship between discipline and the academic performance of learners in Secondary Schools in Bushbuckridge.

The specific objectives of the study are to

- Determine the nature of learner indiscipline in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Determine the academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- Establish the relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools.
- .

This has led to the formulation of the following question:

Biographical details

- 1.1 Name your gender.
- 1.2 How old are you?
- 1.3 Which position do you hold in this school?

2. DISCIPLINE

- a. i. How do you view discipline in your school?  
ii. How does that enhance or hamper the effective academic performance of learners in your school?
- b. i. How do you deal with concrete situations where learners challenge your authority in the classroom?  
ii. How does that affect their academic performance?
- c. i. How often do learners come late to school?  
ii. How do you deal with late coming?  
iii. How does that affect the learners' academic performance?
- d. i. How often do learners absent themselves in your school?  
ii. What are the causes of learners' absenteeism?  
iii. How do you deal with it?
- e. How does the learners' absenteeism affect their academic performance?

3. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- a. According to recent analysis of grade 12 results, your school obtained high pass rate for the past 3 years. What led to this kind of a situation?
- b. How often do you give formal and informal assessment tasks to your learners?
- c. How do you or your school deal with learners who underperform?
- d. i. Do learners in your school have a culture of learning in your school?  
ii. What led to this kind of a situation?
- e. Do parents or guardians support learners in completing assignments and preparing for tests and examinations?

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF IQMS

- a. Do you understand the purpose of the implementation of IQMS in schools?
- b. Mention observable benefits derived from the implementation of IQMS in your school.
- c. Are there any contextual factors that affect performance in your school?  
If there are, name them and how do they affect learners?
- d. Are you receiving any assistance to improve performance of the school?
- e. Is there any provision for staff development opportunities in your school?  
If yes, what types of developmental opportunities are offered?
- f. How does the Department of Education support your school?

- g. What role do external stakeholders play towards improving the academic performance of learners in your school?
  - h. How does your school / Department of Education assist you in dealing with stress and anxiety to ensure that you are effective throughout the year?
5. Make any comment regarding the effect of discipline on academic performance of learners in your school

## Appendix 8

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS

**TITLE:** " *Stakeholder perceptions of effect of indiscipline on academic performance of learners in selected Bushbuckridge rural schools*

1. The estimated duration of the interview is 45 minutes
- 2 The information disclosed will be kept confidential and will be used for the study purpose only.
3. Your name will not be disclosed.
4. All information disclosed will be equally treated and be used in the study.
5. Your participation in this interview is voluntary.
6. You have a right to withdraw from the interview at any time without any explanation, penalty or prejudice.
7. You have a right to refuse answering certain questions which form part of the interview.
8. You may object the use of the audio recorder.
- 9 when the interview is complete, the researcher will give to you a summary of the research findings.

The general objective of the study is to establish the relationship between discipline and the academic performance of learners in Secondary Schools in Bushbuckridge.

The specific objectives of the study are to

- Determine the discipline of learners in Secondary Schools in Bushbuckridge.
- Determine the academic performance of learners in Secondary Schools in Bushbuckridge.
- Establish the relationship between the discipline and the academic performance of learners in Secondary Schools in Bushbuckridge.

This has led to the formulation of the following question

#### **1. BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS**

1.1 Name your gender.

1.2 How old are you?

1.3 In which grade are you?

**2. DISCIPLINE**

- a) How does discipline in your school affect your academic performance?
- b) How often do you come late in your school?
- c) How does that affect your academic performance?
- d) How often do you absent yourself from school?
- e) What are the causes of your absenteeism?

**3. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

- a) How do you feel about your academic performance?

What led to this kind of a situation?

- b) How often do you write formal and non formal assessment tasks in your school?
- c) How does your school deal with you when you underperform?
- d) Do you have a culture of learning? What led to this kind of a situation?
- e) Do your parents or guardians support you when you write assignments and when preparing for tests and examinations?

- 4. Make any comment/s concerning the effect of discipline on your academic performances