School Categorisation Learner Performance

The Power of Ethos

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DECLARATION

I, Charmaine Prammoney declare that this dissertation is my own. All sources consulted has been acknowledged. It is submitted to the Faculty of Education in fulfillment of the requirements for the Philosophy of Education degree at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood). It has not been submitted before for examination in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

South African schools and, indeed, across the world, are categorised according to several dimensions. For example, schools within South Africa are categorised, amongst others, in terms of quintile rankings, geography, fee paying and non-fee paying, performing and non-performing schools. These categories are often used in reporting of the outcomes of schools within a country, but very little focus on how these categories influence teaching and learning with the school that accounts for its learner performance. This study takes this vantage point and explores the relationship between school categorisation, school ethos, teaching and learning and learner performance. Through a case study of two schools of different quintile rankings and working within the confines of an interpretivist paradigm, the study attempted to explore the school ethos as experienced by the school leadership and teachers. The examination was conducted by means of observations and interviews.

Through a process of purposive sampling the principal, one head of department (HOD) and three level one educators each from two primary schools were chosen. The data was generated with the use of semi- structured interviews and observation. The data gathered was reviewed, coded and organized into themes and sub-themes. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. The research finding emanating from the data showed that school ethos influences what happens within schools. The study also confirmed that poverty, impacts negatively on academic performance. In addressing the needs of the learners from impoverished communities, schools also pay attention to the socio-economic needs of the learners with a view to providing holistic education. The impact of such holistic education is on the ability to deliver the planned curriculum. The teachers are not able to deliver the curriculum as planned, rather they focus on the curriculum as lived within an inclusive ethos, and this focus on the curriculum influences how teaching and learning takes place which ultimately reflects on the learner performances. On the other hand, the study found that in a school where the focus was on teaching the curriculum as planned, the ethos of the school is defined by functionality. Adherence to the school curriculum influenced how the school functioned, how teaching and learning unfolded and how such management processes influenced learner performance in schools. The study,

therefore, revealed that school ethos influences teaching and learning within a school and can account for why the learners perform the way they do.

The findings of the study has implications for school leaders and the community to understand the nature and role of schools in their communities with a view to providing relevant education to their learners that takes into consideration the realities of their socio-economic situations and align their educational needs with the schools' focus, that which is guided by its ethos. The study introduced a school-community ecology conceptual model that can be used to guide what happens within schools in terms of teaching, learning, learner performance and school categorisations.

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Chapter One

1. Background and context

There are no known limits to the kinds of talent the human psyche can demonstrate and to the heights to which it can climb in any talent domain. But the mind is not motivated to achieve every possible form of excellence. The cultural milieu makes that decision in the broadest possible sense.

Tannenbaum (2000, p. 24)

1.1. Introduction

*If the children and youth of a nation are afforded opportunity to develop their capacities to the fullest, if they are given the knowledge to understand the world and the wisdom to change it, then the prospects for the future are bright***.**

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1981, p. 38)

This thesis reports on a study that examined the relationship between academic performances, school ethos and school categorisation. The aim was to develop better understanding of school ethos/cultures that promise to facilitate high-quality academic performance and, in the practice, extend enhanced understanding of control implications for the development of such school ethos/cultures (Danişman, Tosuntaş, & Karadağ, 2015). To achieve these outcomes, a study was conducted on two sampled schools of varying quintile ranking. The decision to study schools of varying quintile ranking was prompted by a passion that a comparison of the schools' ethos/cultures and associated leadership would help expose issues related to learner performance. It is important to point out at this stage that the focus resting on the relationships linking academic performance and school ethos and between school ethos and school leadership was not prompted by a cause and consequence postulation on the relationships. Instead, the view was that school ethos plays an important role in providing contexts that either enable or disable engagements in activities that may result in good academic performance for particular communities and that, in the same way, school leadership relates differently to particular contexts.

This chapter highlights the context within which this study was undertaken, the rationale, aims and objectives, key research questions, theoretical framework, value of the study and the configuration of the thesis.

1.2 Background

Prompting focus on academic performance in schools was, as already implied, not only the continued poor performance at the schools but also the implications of the poor performance for national reconstruction. Focus on school ethos and associated leadership itself was brought about by a conviction that the two hold the key to solving the problem of poor academic performance at the schools. Leading to this conviction were findings by numerous studies that healthy and sound school ethos correlates robustly with augmented learner accomplishment and incentive along with educator efficiency and fulfilment (Stolp & Smith, 1995; Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018; Bennis, 1991; Torrington & Weightman, 1993; Hargreaves, 2012; Christie, 2001; Prosser, 1999). What studies have also been finding is that critical to the development and maintenance of school ethos is school leadership (Schein, 1985; Russel, 2003; Stolp & Smith, 1995; Elmore, 2005; Lumby, 2003). A conclusion drawn from the findings is that by intensifying their comprehension of school ethos, school leaders will be better capable of shaping the principles, philosophy, and approach compulsory to endorse an unwavering and encouraging learning environment (Stolp & Smith, 1995).

Even though the priority of the post 1994 national Department of Education 'proved to be the issues surrounding the governance, organisation, and funding of schools' (Hartshome, 1999, p. 112), the department also displayed immediate awareness of the importance of school ethos for transforming education through improved academic performance. A substantial number of South Africa's schools have for some time been plagued by poor academic performance, as reflected by poor matriculation examination results at the secondary school level. Indicative of the poor performance at the primary school juncture exists pitiable scores in tests such as the TIMMS-R tests on Mathematics and Science; GTZ 3 tests on Numeric and Literacy; JET Grade 3 and Grade 6 tests on Numeric and Reading; MLA on Numeric, Literacy and Life Skills and JET (QLP) and Eric Scholar tests on Mathematics, Reading and Writing (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). These publicly acknowledged poor performances have been prompting post 1994 education ministries to initiate policies intended at improving the value of the educational experiences in schools and classrooms' (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003). One such policy was the so-called 'Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service' (COLTS) programme.

The position of formal education in a country is often seen as a barometer of the type of society that country is. 'Position' in this instance refers to whether education is free and compulsory and to what level it is free (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012). It also refers to how well schools are resourced, both in terms of teaching staff as well as physical resources. This 'position' also indicates the level of inequality in that society. South Africa is no exception in this regard (Mouton et al., 2012). Of immediate concern to the democratic government when it came to power in 1994 was a national reconstruction it hoped to achieve through education. As a result, the government's national education department immediately set about introducing policies intended at changing the schooling organisation towards meeting the challenges. Doubts about the appropriateness and effectiveness of ensuing policies proliferated. For Mouton et al. (2012) the inappropriateness began with the oft-cited 'improvement' concept. Mouton et al. (2012) view is that the term 'improvement' does not begin to do justice to governments' proposed education changes. Their view is that the term 'educational transformation' is a more appropriate description of the educational changes with which the government has been hoping to transform the education system so it could serve 'the interest of all South Africans in a democratic and equitable manner' (Mouton et al., 2012).

The 1994 elections also brought about transformation such as democratisation, egalitarianism, non-discrimination, justice and equalisation, as well as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Chapman & Harris, 2004). The latest education system, post-apartheid, demands that no unwarranted discrimination may come to pass against any person on the subsequent basis: age, sexual category, ethnicity, lingo, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases. Every learner, despite their impairments, ought to be housed in the conventional schools.

The South African Constitution stipulates that every person has the right to fundamental edification (Section 29 of the Constitution) and that therefore the government ought to make provision for basic education from grade 1-9. The government allocates funds to schools using the Norms and Standards formula for school funding. These allocations do not meet all the requirements for schools. For example, disadvantaged schools still need financial resources for basic learner support materials and for general improvement of the school infrastructure and other resources (Murillo & Roman, 2011). The government is mindful of the resource constraints and insists that, every parent is encouraged to make financial contribution to add quality to their children's education, but individuals must not be deprived of right of entry to edification because of their parents' inability to pay (Caldwell & Millikan, 2018).

Public schools charge school fees at their own discretion. There are no constraints regarding the fees amount, as long as the majority of parents approve of it at an annual budget meeting. Once this has been agreed upon, it becomes compulsory for every parent to pay regardless of their financial status. Since parents are the main source of income it is evident that there are wide inequalities between public schools as they compete for quality education, achievable through financial feasibility (South African Schools Act, 1996). Disadvantaged schools take many learners whose parents cannot afford school fees (Pretorius & Machet, 2004). The major problem facing the schools is that they must ensure that all children gain access to education while the majority of parents come from poor socio-economic backgrounds.

The school fees requirement discourages learner enrolment to some extent and evidence suggests a decrease in enrolment is associated with a sharp increase in school fees (Azuma, 2011). There is a need for schools to look for other avenues so that they do not depend solely on the state and parents as the only source of income.

1.3 Focus and purpose of study

Learner poor performance within the South African context seems to be a topical issue across the education sector and is a concern of everyone associated with education (Prammoney, 2012). At the point of matric results being released annually, there seems to be hype around learner performance with the state arguing that the matric pass rates are signalling an improvement in the quality of school education while others are questioning the authenticity and credibility of the pass rates (Bloch, 2009). Researchers Bloch (2009) and Jansen (2001), amongst others, have critiqued the status of education in South Africa and pointed in the direction of areas that need serious intervention within the provisioning of quality school education. While several attempts have been made to improve the quality of school education through policy formulation, curriculum changes, teacher development and infrastructural improvements, the issue of learner poor performance continue to destabilise the school education systems. This study acknowledges these interventions and attempts to contribute to the discourses on school learner performance by taking another lens to exploring this phenomenon.

Schools within South Africa are variously categorised. These categories include an infrastructural gaze through quintile rankings, geography gaze of school location (rural, urban, township), a

performance gaze of performing schools and underperforming schools, and many other systems of categorisations. These categorisations have largely been used for the purpose of identification, reporting, monitoring and intervention. What seems to be lacking is to understand how these categorisation influence the school operations and functioning, beyond just identification, reporting, monitoring and intervention. It is within this focus area that this study is conceptualised.

International studies in Ghana and Australia over the past two decades have highlighted the quick turn down in the educational performance of learners from lower quintile ranking public schools in rural hamlets. Government labours to alleviate the state of affairs have not capitulated any continuing constructive results (Atta-Quayson, 2007; Scadding, 1989). In the experience of South African education transformation, the fundamentals are unclear; required instructional exercises are neither elucidated plainly nor sufficiently. To thwart this transformation from deteriorating, a weathered and expanded representation of excellent instructional exercises founded on and firmly positioned in conjectural and pragmatic policies, needs to be provided. This study, therefore, aims to assess the representation of the power of school ethos and learner performance in unison and in accordance with superior teaching and quality teaching exercises in the different quintile ranking schools.

1.4 Problem statement

The aim of a problem statement in qualitative research is to propose a justification or prerequisite for studying a particular problem (Creswell, 2012). This research intended to identify, the power of ethos in schools through the lens of the educator practices (from different quintile ranking schools) to establish what endorses successful teaching and learning and the academic attainment of learners. Investigation in the field of leadership has largely centred on leadership styles and leadership problems. Despite these illuminations; little progress has been made with respect to learner performance through a school leadership perspective. Of note is the varying difference between school types and learner performance (Spaull, 2013). Is there a relationship between leadership, school performance, school ethos and school categorisation? (Spaull, 2013). This study will explore such relationships with a view to contributing to the discourse on how to resolve the issue of poor learner poor performance. Danişman, et al. (2015) argued that the best input of principals to the performance of their educators and learners is their capacity to construct significant, combined ethos in their schools. They stressed that when principals are proficient in remodelling and reshaping their school establishment through combined ethos and configuration inside and outside the school and

construct dynamic relations with parents and the neighbourhood, they fortify the efficacy and success of the establishment. Du Plessis and Conley (2007) postulate that when teachers are motivated they are, then, stimulated to encourage enhanced academic learner performance.

School categorisation within our school education system seems to be quite ingrained with categorisation in terms of, amongst others, infrastructure (quintile rankings), financial (fee paying); geography (rural, urban, townships); poverty (feeding scheme); performance (NSLA and non NSLA). How have these categorisations impacted on schools' ethos, their performance and their identity. There has been little studies related to school categorisation and its influence on schooling within the South African context. The school categorisations are largely used in reporting, intervening and monitoring of school performances. Spaull (2013) alludes to two schools' worlds existing within South African school systems, one being that of quintile 5 schools and the other being all other public schools, and he bases this claim on an analysis of literacy and numeracy performance of grade 6 learners world ranking tests (ANA). More recently, school performance has been used by the Department of Basic Education to refer to NSLA schools and non-NSLA schools to direct intervention strategies. Very few studies, as recorded within the South African context over the last two decades, have focused on the implications of school categorisation and its influence on how the school scrutinises itself (identity), its ethos and how these (identity and ethos) influences what ensues within that school environment. This study hopes to initiate such discourses within our school education systems, with the purpose of exploring how these categorisations influence school performance, both in learner achievements as well as in educator management of the classroom.

1.5 Objectives

1. To determine learner performance difference across quintile ranked schools as well as how the school quintile rankings influenced the school ethos.

2. To determine the nature of school ethos across quintile ranked schools and how has school ethos influenced learner performance.

1.6 Critical questions

1. What are the learner performance trends across quintile ranked school categorisation?

2. What is the nature of school ethos across quintile ranked schools?

3. How has the school quintile rankings influenced the school ethos?

4. How has school ethos influenced learner performance?

1.7 Method of research - Research design and methodology

In line with the above framework, the methodology by means of which this study was conducted was relativist and underpinned by a pragmatism that sought to generate a theory grounded on collected data rather than on advanced hypotheses. Resulting from this conception was a decision to study two sample schools of varying quintile ranking by means of observation and semi-structured interviews.

The study adopted the qualitative approach, as the most appropriate move towards to this study. The aspects of this research was largely descriptive in nature as it sought to establish trends and patterns of observances, and then relied on qualitative enquiry that sought to establish interpretations and reasons for such observances. The qualitative aspect of this research is largely informed by a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2012).

A phenomenological advancement was used to emphasise the specific phenomena and to recognise phenomena through how they were professed by the performers in the site. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are founded in a concept of private understanding and partisanship, and emphasised the significance of individual standpoint and elucidation. In isolation they are influential for accepting prejudiced experiences and acquiring insights into people's drive and behaviours (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). One of the rewards of this approach was that it allowed the researcher to achieve an understanding of societal phenomena from participants' viewpoints in their normal surroundings (McMillan & Schumacher 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The main aim of the study was evocative and investigative.

This study adopted an interpretivist, case study research comprising of two schools. This research made an attempt to position the researcher in the place of the participants in a bid to comprehend the realism of the participants from their own standpoint. Thus, its idealistic deportment or theoretical standpoint was interpretivism, which incorporated phenomenology (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), hermeneutics (Wiersma, 2000; Patton, 2002) and symbolic interactionism (Wiersma,

2000; Patton, 2002). While phenomenology has a spotlight on attaining a profound appreciation or connotation of daily occurrences, hermeneutics stressed on the significance of understanding the environment, the way of life, the planned connotations, the situations and backdrop of the participants in construing occurrences and communications (Patton, 2002). Likewise, figurative or communal interactionism emphasised the noteworthy power of verbal communication, interrelationships and society on our insight, our stance and ethics (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012). This study is positioned on this theoretical perspective. Qualitative research aims to produce rounded and contextual understandings on the basis of rich, fine distinction and thorough data (Mason, 2017) thus providing an auxiliary rationale for choosing this approach.

Interpretive research designs permit the researcher to work together closely with the participants in order to achieve insights and structure comprehensible understandings (Wiersma, 2000). Interpretivism does not have to rely on entire engagement in a situation and can contentedly sustain a study which employs interview methods and other methods. Epistemologically, interpretivism is anti-positivist in nature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Epistemology may also be founded on the basis that dissimilar kinds of settings, circumstances and communications disclose data in multidimensional ways, and it is likely for a researcher to be an exponent or 'knower' in these state of affairs specifically because of shared understanding and involvement. Positivist paradigm assumes that there is just one reality and that it is stable (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The results of qualitative research will be descriptive and analytic rather than predictive (Flick, 2006). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) refer to qualitative researchers as visitors in the concealed places of the globe.

1.8 Chapter demarcation

This research study is divided into six chapters.

Chapter One provides a general background and overview of the key aspects of this study. The focus and purpose of this study; the problem statement; the rationale for pursuing this study, the critical questions, method of research which includes a brief description of the research design and methodology, chapter demarcation and finally the conclusion is presented.

Chapter Two focuses on the literature reviewed which provides perspectives on this study with regard to international and national literature, on the key focus of this study. A review of studies on ethos, categorisation and its impact on learner performance in other countries as well as in South Africa is elucidated. This provides the theoretical location of this study.

Chapter Three discusses the theoretical framework. It outlines Bronfenbrenner's systems theory, an ecological framework. This framework is used to support the exploration of issues related to school categorisation, poor learner performance and ethos and the associated elements that is possibly present in different contexts.

Chapter Four discusses the methodological orientation that includes the major components which is the research design and methodology of this study. It focuses on methodology, providing motivation for and justification of the qualitative approach. It also examines case study as a research tool and its limitations. The research instrument, sampling techniques and ethical issues significant to this study are then presented, a brief narrative on the sampling procedures used to select participants for interviewing, and the procedure for data collection and analysis is also provided. Ethical considerations and a model for ensuring trustworthiness is also outlined. Detailed description of sampling, research instruments, data collection and data analysis is provided.

Chapter Five outlines the qualitative data gathered. It focuses on the presentation, analysis, findings and discussion of the data gathered from the interviews and observations. The data is first presented. Thereafter, the emerging patterns from the data are discussed. The findings in this study have been outlined, interpreted and discussed.

Chapter Six discusses theorising the findings in relation to the theoretical framework. Thereafter, some recommendations are presented. It provides a general overview of the findings. It presents the conclusions of the research by presenting a cohesive whole of the entire process.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has focused on setting the scene for this research in discussing the background and problem statement regarding school categorisation, learner performance and school ethos. This research aims to develop an understanding of the role of the school leaders in the management of learner problems and their contribution to the alleviation of these problems. This chapter has outlined

the: background of the study and overview of the key aspects of this study; statement of problem, focus of study, critical questions, method of research and finally an overall exposition of the study. The next chapter outlines the literature reviewed with regard to this study.

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review section forms the basis for understanding the problem being researched; it also builds a logical framework within the context of related studies. This chapter unfolds from an exploration of what constitutes categorisation, school ethos and academic performance and how it affects learner performance. The focus of this chapter is also on national legislation and policies related to categorisation and the interconnection with education. The discussion on education policies highlights specific aspects like the national minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure and school status, funding and nutrition. A focus on the demographics, contributes to a more detailed view of the geographical area. The final part of the literature review will concentrate on the impact of poor academic performance. It proceeds to investigate how policies in a country play a facilitative or restrictive role in promoting academic performance for education. The review offers a perspective of the South African context in terms of categorisation policy and implementation. The focus then narrows down to school ethos/culture and academic performance. Here, specifically the impact of ethos will be brought under close scrutiny in term of what impact it has on the academic performance of learners. In order to understand school ethos from a broad perspective this chapter reviews literature pertaining to national and international literature.

Patton (2015) while acknowledging that the strength of qualitative methods is its inductive inquisition strategy, which entails liberalism, argues for an organising representation of the phenomena to be explored, called a conceptual framework (Patton, 2015). It is proposed that the set of ideas may be vague or clearly formulated ideas or theories or frameworks about the nature of the phenomena (Patton, 2015). It is thus against this background and from a phenomenological viewpoint that this study explores concepts such as ethos, categorisation, academic performance, factors affecting academic performance, inclusivity, language as a barrier, home-school link and care and finally managing the classroom.

2.2 Local and international literature that surrounds and supports the study

The dawn of the democratic dispensation in South Africa in 1994 brought along inventiveness to redress the imbalances created by the apartheid regime in education. Since 1994, the government's efforts to redress historical imbalances and achieve equity were fundamental policy mechanisms to restructure South African education (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012). For forty eight years, under the leadership of the Nationalist Party, the South African education system was marked by disparities in the allocation of resources in public schools. The allocations of resources in schools were influenced by racial lines (Mtshali, 2014).

In late 1980s political change began to challenge segregation and schools began to amalgamate, allowing Black learners to enroll in previously White, Coloured and Indian schools. In 1994 the new Government of National Unity brought the different education sections together. This did not however, guarantee the equalisation of the former white and black schools (Mtshali, 2014). Impartiality restructurings in post-apartheid South Africa anticipated to equalise funding among provinces, schools and socio-economic groups. These objectives are demonstrated in numerous education policies, such as no-fee schools, post-provisioning norms, rationalisation and redistribution of educators, exclusions on school fees, monetary responsibilities allocated to principals and governing bodies, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) (South Africa, 1998a) and other practical intrusions.

This was commenced through national policies that would direct state financial support to public schools. The most noteworthy legislation was the National Education Policy Act (South Africa, 1996b), the South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996a) and the Employment of Educators Act (South Africa, 1998b). The main themes of the White Paper on Education and Training (South Africa, 1995) also articulated the basic principles for transformation, namely open admission to quality education and restoring of educational inequalities. Most Black schools still suffer from gross shortfalls ranging from inadequate resources and infrastructure, to a lack of school counsellors (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012). Therefore, poverty within black education has to be understood against this background. In South Africa, the absence or dearth of a policy relating to the relationship between poverty and education has meant that many struggles that relate to or are a direct result of social stratification are still in the closet and not discussed. Poverty remains a universal feature of Black schools that has brutal effects on the educational ambitions and career prospects of learners (Prammoney, 2012).

South Africa's smooth evolution to democracy established worldwide endorsement and recognition, which to this day, serves as a model for other countries undergoing difficult and prolonged political transitions. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2008) assert that education transformation in South Africa has been characterised by principles of social justice and impartiality, non-racism and non-sexism, Ubuntu and reconciliation. Many years after the dawn of democracy and the post-apartheid era in South Africa, teachers, learners and the government all agree that there is still a long way to go in terms of determining the disparities in education (Mtshali, 2014). Due to financial constraints, government policy was changed during the final years of apartheid to permit schools to set their own fees (Mtshali, 2014). The separate education ministries with their separate budgets for different racial groups vanished more than two decades ago. The greatest struggle, since the early-post-apartheid days, has been the attempt to undo the economic legacy of the system of racial exclusivity (Prammoney, 2012). The National Constitution, which is a product of multi-party negotiations, was finalised in 1996. The National Constitution sought to address two principles, which are equality and equity.

Equity and redress have been recognised as the prepared building blocks for the realisation of social justice in education. In 2005 the Department of Education (DOE) broadcast plans to excuse parents suffering intense poverty from school fees in an endeavor to make certain that no child is barred from the right to education (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012). Mtshali (2014) observed that ushering in the new democracy brought with it not only the restructuring and reshaping of education, but also the development and implementation of a policy framework which aims to provide for the redress of past inequalities and the stipulation of equitable, high quality and relevant education. The Department of Education also introduced legislation to declare certain public schools in poor provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape "no fee" schools (Mtshali, 2014).

As posited by GroundUp (2015), a school allocation for public schools was established through the 1998 publication of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding. These norms and standards for school funding were put into operation in 2001 by all Provincial Education Departments. This was a major innovation in South African schools in terms of financing systems and pro-poor resourcing.

Many schools experience a lack of funding which resulted in some poor schools becoming even poorer with learners paying no school fees, which schools used for basic running costs. Although these schools are perhaps impoverished, in many cases the education offered is good, even though

educators lack adequate resources such as textbooks, chalkboards and writing materials (Mestry, 2004). Prammoney (2012) observed that schools in indigent communities often cannot afford even basic facilities like clean water, toilets, electricity and telephones. Furthermore, the physical structure and environment of the school is often in a bad state of disrepair. The classroom setting in numerous instances is not favourable to effective teaching and learning. According to GroundUp (2015), several exceptionally impoverished schools have just one brick classroom and several with mud walls; after hard rains, the mud-walled classrooms need reconstruction. These schools have only a handful of desks and when winter rain falls, the cement floors become cold and wet; learners have to do their written tasks and even their examinations standing. Normal days see most of the learners sitting on plastic containers and old, plastic mealie bags (GroundUp, 2015).

South African society consists of diverse racial groups, which were historically ranked according to a power hierarchy. Until recently, black people occupied inferior positions at the base of the hierarchy. The apartheid regime segregated education and prescribed what was to be taught in Black schools through the Bantu Education system. The aim of apartheid education was to ensure that Black people remained in inferior positions (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012). Little research has been conducted in South Africa on how school categorisation affects school ethos. Proof of this is the fact that the South African Department of Education has done away with feeding schemes in secondary schools. Secondary school children are in need as with primary school children and they belong to the same impoverished socio-economic class (Khanare & De Lange, 2017). The situation in other countries is somewhat different from the South African experience (Pryor, Akyeampong, Westbrook & Lussier, 2012).

Policymakers and school system authorities are keenly interested in the issue of school learner performance and school efficiency. Much of this interest stems from the view that some higher quintile ranking schools are doing a much better job than others in promoting high achievement levels and producing better learner outcomes (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012). However, it is not feasible to reach this conclusion by looking at simple raw comparisons of learner differences in outcomes. There are many dynamics that influence performance in schools including learner background characteristics that are related to the families and communities in which learners live. These influences need to be considered in comparing schools in order to identify particular school ethos/culture, school features and school policies that may be delivering better outcomes for young people (Pryor, Akyeampong, Westbrook & Lussier, 2012). This study seeks to examine some of the

problems of how the schools quintile ranking affects the learner performance, ethos and the reasons why learners perform poor academically and how school managers are managing these problems.

2.3 School categorisation: What is school categorisation and quintile ranking?

The National Department of Education conducted two major assessments in 2001 and 2003 with a focus on school allocations. The assessments carried out by the National Department of Education led to the 2003 Plan of Action. This plan of action sought to advance admission to free and quality basic education for all. These were the documents that the state used to build a post-apartheid schooling system that advocates the principles of equality and equity in education provisioning in our country. In honouring its constitutional obligation to arrive at equality and equity, the National Government of South Africa introduced a distributional approach of resources in public schools in 2003. Many schools in poor rural and urban working-class hamlets still experience the legacy of large classes, appalling physical conditions and the absence of learning resources, despite a major Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the National School Building Programme and many other projects paid for directly from provincial budgets (Mtshali, 2014). Yet, educators and learners in poor schools are expected to achieve the same levels of teaching and learning as their compatriots in wealthier areas (Prammoney, 2012). Such inconsistency within the similar public school system probably reflect past prejudiced investment in schooling and vast disparity in personal income of parents (Khanare & De Lange, 2017).

It is upon this approach that the former National Minister of Education, Mrs. Naledi Pandor, introduced the system of categorising public schools into five quintiles. The poorest schools were ranked quintile one schools while the least poor schools were ranked quintile five schools. In terms of Section 34 of the South African Schools Act, the state is mandated to fund public schools from public revenue on an impartial basis in order to ensure proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and remedy of past inequalities in educational provision. The Act also makes provision for school governing bodies (SGBs) to supplement state funding by way of school fees and fundraising initiatives.

The system of quintiles then gave birth to the declaration of certain public schools into no-fee schools in 2006. To address impartiality in funding school education, the South African government introduced the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) policy (South Africa, 1998a). In 2009, a review of the system of quintiles was implemented by the government. The

NNSSF policy provides a statutory basis for school funding in that schools are now classified into wealth quintiles and subsidised accordingly. In this review it was gazetted that quintile one to three schools were declared into "no fee" schools. Schools serving poorer communities must obtain more state funding than schools serving better-off communities. According to Myende and Chikoko (2014), declaring schools into "no fee" schools was aimed at combating poverty through an increased access to quality education and to make sure that resources are distributed on an equitable basis in all public schools. This then meant that the school governing body of a public school that was declared a "no fee" school should not levy a compulsory school fee to households. The scale of changes in policies such as the NNSSF policy has inevitably placed great stress on SGBs, school management teams (SMTs), teachers and district officials, resulting in a significant disjuncture between policy intention and practice, and a growing divide between what the government expect schools to do and what schools are in fact able to do.

The state declared quintile one to three schools into "no fee" schools in order to put the section 29(1) of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution (South Africa, 1996c) into effect which reads:

Everyone has the right
(a) to basic education, including adult basic education and
(b) to further education , which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible

As stated above, the government commenced with these reform initiatives in the post-democratic era in education in an effort to move towards equity and equality. In the past Apartheid regime, a big slice of educational resources were channelled towards white schools with the remaining portion to black schools.

The quintilling of schools were done to ensure that households suffering the effects of poverty benefit from schooling that is adequately funded by the state. This is in line with the provisions of the Freedom Charter (1955, p. 4) which clearly spelt out that: "Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal to all." The declaration of certain public schools into "no-fee" schools came with a number of pitfalls and flaws which continue to plague the education system of our country. On the other hand, the declaration of some public schools as no-fee schools, also brought along a sigh of economic relief to households suffering the effects of poverty so that they enjoy free education. The

implementation of the policy on no fee schools brought along some implications for the general management of public schools in our country.

The implications according to CREATE (The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity) is a programme of research, subsidised by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) (CREATE, 2009) research suggest that there are two distinct systems of education quality in South Africa: one is that of fee-charging schools, most of which were formerly reserved for white learners, and the other is that of no-fee schools, almost all former black African schools, located in the poorer communities. The persistence of fee-charging schools alongside no-fee schools also helps to maintain a class-differentiated education system, and the recent extension of no-fee schooling to approximately 60% of schools has arguably reduced the five-quintile system to a two-tier system. The no-fee schools policy may encompass important encouraging effects in terms of creating greater access by poorer learners to schools, but such improved access has not necessarily been access of better quality (Sayed & Motala, 2012). It is along this demarcation of schools (two tier schools) that have influenced my choice of the sampled schools for the study. Thus, while the objectives of the state to attend to impartiality and social justice are commendable, there is a long way to go in accomplishing high-quality education, predominantly for underprivileged and disadvantaged schools (Prammoney, 2012).

According to the Myende and Chikoko (2014) the announcement of certain public schools as no fee schools has been marked with a massive decline of the general performance of a number of public schools. Some parents no longer feel responsible for the education of their children as they did before the declaration of certain schools into no-fee schools came into effect. On the other hand certain communities have applauded the Government for introducing free education (Mtshali, 2014). The performance of schools is prejudiced by a number of factors, one being the adequate provisioning of financial resources. Another influential factor to the general performance of public schools is how best to use these allocations for curriculum improvement.

The researcher has compared the systems of school funding between South Africa, the United States of America and India in order to establish the link between the schools' performances and the socio-economic status where the school is located. According to Sadker and Sadker (1997, p 369), poor families in America, who live in marginalised economic existences, are particularly hurt by a high sales tax, a fraction which is used to fund schools. As positioned by Mackey, Al-Khalil, Atanassova, Hama, Logan-Terry and Nakatsukasa (2007) many states in the United States of America use federal

funds to support the provisioning of services to eligible children, which includes children who are physically and mentally challenged. The declaration of certain schools, into no-fee schools, brought along tough economic pressures on the federal states. This is a factor that affected the delivery of quality education in terms of resource allocation.

The Indian government which also introduced free education is also suffering the effects of the policy on no-fee schools. According to Tilak (1996, p. 362), the inter-state variations and an unequal distribution of resources in the Indian education system have an impact on the quality of education in primary schools. The author argues against variations in the allocation of physical infrastructure like laboratories and libraries. As indicated by Myende and Chikoko (2014), geographical differences and inequalities are in some sense inequitable, unfair and unjust and that programmes should seek to eliminate these imbalances. This is also true of the South African education system even in the post-apartheid era. In some cases, schools in the same geographical location, with the same socio-economic status are still categorised differently in terms of quintiles.

The paper budget allocations, which are a governmental grant, are still marked with inequalities. As indicated by GroundUp (2015), the poor rural and working class communities still experience the legacy of large classes, deplorable physical conditions and the absence of learning resources. It is however commendable that the government of South Africa carries the plight of the poor at heart and embrace equality and equity as the cornerstones of our democratic constitution. In order to foster better quality education the state had established the Primary School Nutrition Programme in 1994, which was later, renamed the National School Nutrition Programme to address malnutrition and hunger of children from poorer communities (South Africa, 1996c). This also added some value to the notion of free education.

All South African public ordinary schools are categorised into five groups, called quintiles, largely for intent of the distribution of financial resources.. These poverty rankings are determined nationally according to the poverty of the community around the school, as well as, certain infrastructural factors. Each quintile, nationally, contains 20% of all learners, but not 20% from each province (Naong, 2013).

The quintile ranking establishes the amount of money that a school receives. The poorest schools obtain the greatest per-learner allocation, based on the supposition that schools in wealthier communities require less support from government (Mtshali, 2014).

Subsidies are allocated to all schools. Control over the subsidy is dependent on whether the school is designated a Section 21 or Non-Section 21 school. Since the schools selected for this study was awarded the status of a Section 20 and 21 respectively school, it is worth discussing briefly what this means in terms of its functioning. All schools should adhere to section 20 functions. Schools have the option of applying for section 21 functions. Hence section 21 or non-section 21 schools.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 caters for public schools with different levels of functions, Section 20 and Section 21 schools. The key difference between the two categories of schools is that the Section 21 schools manage their own finances while with the Section 20 schools, the state controls the finances on behalf of the school (supplies for the school is handled through the DoE procurement processes). Two of the added functions amongst others, for Section 21 schools, are to maintain school property and buildings and to pay for services at the school. The school can negotiate directly with service providers. The allocation of Section 21 status is dependent on the managerial capacity of the school which includes School Governing Body, Principal and Senior Management Team. With the Section 20 schools there is little or no leverage for incidental expenditure unless the school has funding from other sources. It seems that this arrangement could place the school administration in a position of dependency which may perhaps impact on the level of efficiency with which the school operates (Mtshali, 2014).

Table 1: The National and Provincial breakdown of the quintiles: National Poverty Table for 2014

The National and Provincial breakdown of the quintiles is as follows:

National Poverty Table 2014					
	National Quintiles				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
EC	27.3%	24.7%	19.6%	17.0%	11.4%
FC	20.5%	20.9%	22.4%	20.8%	15.4%
GP	14.1%	14.7%	17.9%	21.9%	31.4
KN	22.1%	23.2%	20.2%	18.7%	15.8%
LP	28.2%	24.6%	24.2%	14.9%	8.0%

MP	23.1%	24.1%	21.5%	17.7%	13.5%
NC	21.5%	19.3%	20.7%	21.4%	17.1%
NW	25.6%	22.3%	20.8%	17.6%	13.7%
WC	8.6%	13.3%	18.4%	28.0%	31.7%
SA	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%

(Minister Donald Grant, Minister of Education, Western Cape, 14 October, 2013 in Naong, 2013).

The above table represents the percentage of schools in each province according to their quintiles. A schools quintile ranking is significant as it determines the amount of funding that it receives each year and whether or not the school can charge fees. Hence, in order to reimburse these schools for their loss in fee income, the state grants them a larger Norms and Standards allocation than schools classified as "fee-paying" schools in quintiles 4 and 5. Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools obtain the same amount per learner. The recommended per learner allocation for each quintile is determined by the National Department of Basic Education (Naong, 2013).

In the 2009 budget speech, the former Minister of Finance, Trevor Manual, indicated that principles like protecting the poor, generating employment and investing in infrastructure amongst others had informed the budget planning (Manuel, 2012). He said that the greatest adjustment to spending plans is towards poverty reduction as well as education and healthcare, school nutrition programme and provision of basic services. He asserted that relief does not come from the money spent on the programmes; satisfaction is knowing that we are reducing poverty when the "quality of life of the poor are improving, that children are being properly educated and when learners have access to food in schools…" (Manuel, 2012, p. 8).

It is evident that government has measures in place like designating schools from some of the poorest communities as "no-fee schools" and the establishment of a nutrition programme, to supplement the care of children from poorer communities. These measures are designed to ensure that children are properly educated but they are rendered meaningless if the education of children is thwarted by other extenuating factors (GroundUp, 2015).

The resource allocation to schools is then utilised by schools to finance various school items and disbursements such as:

- Municipal services - such as water and electricity.
- Stationery and learning support materials – such as textbooks and readers.
- Equipment - such as a fax, photo copiers and duplicating machines for administrative purposes.
- Repairs and Maintenance.

The education legislation and policies weigh heavily in favour of addressing access to schooling and improving quality of the educational experience of children. It is noteworthy that several great strides have been made by the state to improve access to education like designating some schools as "no-fee schools" and the introduction of the National School Nutrition Programme to schools serving poorer communities. The different funding arrangements regarding the management of the school subsidies are also another way that the state has attempted to assist schools. This study will pay careful attention to the quality of the educational experience, the conditions and situations (ethos) that prevail, taking into account the attempts by the state to improve access to schooling and the (academic achievement of learners) quality of education (GroundUp, 2015).

The allocations differ considerably between quintile 4 and 5 and quintiles 1 to 3. Quintile 4 and 5 schools charge school fees, which make up for the additional funding needed to run the school (Naong, 2013). This is premeditated during the budget and fee setting processes by the School Governing Body (SGB) and accessible at a meeting of parents. However, given the state of affairs of some schools, their quintile ranking of 4 and 5, does not work in their favour (Ndou, 2012).

For instance, the national data that has been used to ascertain their poverty status does not take into account the demographics of specific schools. There are schools which do not draw their predominant enrolments from the local area (there may not be children of school going age in the area). Some of these schools then educate considerable number of children from families which cannot meet the fee arrangements at their children's schools. This is a significant source of financial pressure for these schools (Naong, 2013).

2.4 What is school ethos?

School ethos and school culture are often used synonymously in literature. Maslowski (2006) postulates school culture or ethos can be defined as "the basic assumptions, norms and values, and

cultural artefacts that are shared by school members, which influence their functioning at school" (cited in Gün & Çağlayan, p. 6, 2013). Its roots can be traced back to Waller's (1932) The Sociology of Teaching. As early as 1932, Waller noted that schools "have a culture that is definitely their own. There are, in the school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, amoral code based upon them" (p. 103). Although the interest in school culture among educational scholars lay dormant for several decades after Waller's (1932) treatise, it gained renewed attention in the 1970s since it was seen as a barrier for educational change (Goodlad, 1977; Sarason, Zitnay & Grossman, 1971; Tye, 1974). During the 1980s, school culture became a significant theme in school administration for both practitioners and academics (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018; Kottkamp, 1984; Ortiz, 1986; Owens, Steinhoff & Rosenbaum, 1989; Papalewis, 1988; Rossman, Corbett & Firestone, 1988; Willower & Smith, 1986). In these studies the notion of school culture was further explored and related to educational leadership and educational change, both of which were subject to continued research in the 1990s (Prosser, 1999; Sashkin & Walberg, 1993).

However, despite the growing number of publications on school cultures over the last three decades, our knowledge of cultural types of schools is still rather limited. This limited insight is primarily due to the fact that most empirical research into the culture of schools has been qualitative and interpretative in nature, collecting data from a small sample of schools.

The formation of culture, according to Schein (1995), is related to cluster development. It can be argued, for instance, from a practical standpoint, that values associated with the human relations orientation will be more apparent in relatively small organisations, as staff members are more thrown onto each other's company. Similarly, big organisations will have a more elaborate structure, as well as more regulations and procedures to coordinate the performance of individual staff members. In these organisations, set of laws will be an important prerequisite for the smooth functioning of the school. Staff members, therefore, are likely to be more inclined to value these rules and procedures (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018).

In order to explore these practical imperatives, the relationship between school culture and school magnitude was examined. Naidoo and Petersen (2015) found that large schools tend to be more change oriented. A justification for this may be that educators in large schools are likely to have less independence than their colleagues in smaller schools, and are thus used to implementing regulations or ideas from others (Naidoo & Petersen, 2015). On the other hand, a contradictory argument might

be that school-wide transformation is more complicated to put into practice in large schools. As a result, teachers and school administrators are likely to have unenthusiastic experiences with implementing innovations. For the school to achieve a positive or harmonious ethos it is crucial that all affiliates of the school community work well alongside each other and develop positive working relationships (this includes all staff, learners and parents) in putting the principles of the school community into practice (Maslowski, 2001). Culture symbolises the emblematic nature of schools and it has a noteworthy impact on the excellence of education provided in the school. An optimistic school culture is needed to facilitate quality teaching and learning so it advances learner performance. Naidoo and Petersen (2015) indicate that school culture that supports learners in their education should be encouraged both within each classroom and in the school as a whole. Schools ought to work collectively to endorse a culture that supports the learning of all the learners (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018).

Presumption refers to taken-for granted viewpoints which staff members recognise to be proper (Mbulaheni, 2015). Because of their taken-for-granted disposition, educators are often not responsive to the conjectures that underlie their daily interpretation of their duties. These conjectures are likely to remain cataleptic until an additional staff member; pupil or parent challenges them (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018). Then, educators reflect on their behaviour and become cognisant of the fundamental conjectures that underpin their interpretation of what they do.

Schein (1995) postulates that basic assumption shared by teachers, comprise the heart of school culture or ethos. Schein's (1995) basic assumption are well-designed into five groups: the institutes relationship to its surroundings, the nature of realism and legitimacy, the nature of human qualities, the nature of human action and the nature of human communication. These proportions mirror the fundamental enquiries that people face. For instance, the nature of human nature refers to whether humans are in essence 'bad' or 'good', and whether humans are fundamentally "fixed at birth", or whether they are "mutable and perfectible" (Schein, 1995, p. 132).

The subsequent level of ethos or culture consists of values and norms (Schein, 1995; Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018). Values refer to what teachers consider is 'good', 'right' or 'desirable'. Values, therefore, are to be considered as standards of attraction; they echo what is envisaged to be significant to practise or worth striving for in school (Schein, 1995; Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018). Educators for example, may regard respect for others vital, or possibly will value teamwork with other staff members. Although educators are not constantly mindful of the principles that

channel their behaviour, most are able to communicate their core values (Naidoo & Petersen, 2015). Values like teamwork or respect are often construed into models for behaviour. Such behavioural customs, in fact, are tacit (unspoken) regulations according to which others are expected to perform. Norms echo what educators anticipate of other staff members. Norms include for example, what educators are expected to wear, or what activities educators are expected to acquire for their professional progress (Mbulaheni, 2015).

Moreover, in regards to behavioural characteristics, the third level of culture or ethos consists of traditions, rituals and measures (Schein, 1995). Traditions refer to the method we use to do things, which is frequently attributed to the set of educators within the school (Schein, 1995). Traditions are culturally stimulating. Educators and principals can foresee in advance how others in school will respond, what activities they will take and how they will execute their performance. Occasionally it is still possible to distinguish the philosophy or conjectures that led to the commonly established behaviour in these traditions. More frequently, nevertheless, these traditions are so worn that they can only be construed in terms of collective inferences, values and customs. In these traditions or performances, the fundamental conjectures, values and customs come to the surface. In every school definite behavioural prototypes become customary. These are not the consequence of any prescribed conformity or planning between educators, but develop from communally established or reinforced behaviour of the educators (Cravens & Hallinger, 2012). All members of staff should contribute through: promoting an atmosphere in which learners feel safe and secure, being sensitive and responsive to each learner's wellbeing. They should provide open, positive, supportive relationships where learners will sense that they are listened to, and represent behaviour which encourages successful learning and comfort within the school community (Mbulaheni, 2015). These school-exact measures reveal which behaviour has demonstrated to be helpful for the school in the past and, therefore, have become institutionalised (Cravens & Hallinger, 2012). From these actions it can easily be derived what is considered to be a high-quality move towards advancement in school.

Procedures, conversely, can often be deduced more easily. To some degree, these measures are prearranged by establishments outside the school, like the school district office or the Department of Education. These events are less significant from a culture or ethos perspective. Much more appropriate are the events that are developed inside the school itself.

According to Mbulaheni (2015), having a constructive and optimistic ethos aids in ensuring good behaviour from learners in school. Learners ought to be persuaded to contribute to the existence and

work of the school and from the earliest point, to apply their responsibilities as affiliates of a neighbourhood. This comprises of prospects to participate conscientiously in decision-making, to contribute as leaders and role models, to proffer support and service to others and to take an active part in putting the principles of the school neighbourhood into practice (Dumay & Galand, 2012). This research also highlighted that permitting staff to talk about behaviour and to have a clear understanding that there is an undeviating link between delivering high-quality lessons and having high behaviour expectations also add to improved behaviour and ethos. Research also clearly recognises that consistency is vital in preserving high standards of behaviour in conjunction with a culture that celebrates success and is not founded solely on sanctions (Cravens & Hallinger, 2012). The dedication of staff, learners and parents is crucial in order to develop a constructive whole school ethos (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018).

2.5 Key elements of school culture/ethos

The literature on school culture (ethos) suggests that there are three key elements core to this concept (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018; Deal & Peterson, 2016). These key elements are content, homogeneity and strength.

2.5.1   Content related to culture

The content of culture refers to the nature of fundamental conjectures, customs and principles as well as cultural artefacts that are shared by constituents of the school. It is that which constitutes the culture of the school. The content is often categorised by means of magnitude or typologies (Sergiovanni & Green 2014; Miron, 2014; Deal & Peterson, 2016). For example, a culture is classified as collaborative. Other terms used for the content of culture are the essence of culture, the direction of culture or cultural traits (Deal& Peterson, 2016; Sergiovanni & Green, 2014).

2.5.1.1 The homogeneity within culture

The homogeneity of culture refers to the point in which fundamental assumptions, customs and values as well as cultural artefacts are shared by the school staff. A culture is homogeneous if (practically) all staff members attribute to the same assumptions, norms and values (Miron, 2014). If they hold widely different assumptions, values and customs then the term cultural heterogeneity is used. In addition, as Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (2018) have argued, across subject departments

subcultures may materialise, which are comparatively homogeneous. The augmentation of subcultures is also referred to as cultural differentiation or cultural segmentation in organizations (Sergiovanni & Green, 2014). Deal & Peterson (2016) refers to moderately homogeneous subcultures of teachers as the balkanization of culture in schools. The homogeneity of cultures is, therefore, crucial to its identification as a cultural norm or ethos of a school, because cultural segmentation or cultural differentiation would potentially be confusing to its constituents and its underlying meaning would have to be contextually interpreted and would lose the basic assumptions, norms and values of an entity, like a whole school (Sergiovanni & Green, 2014; Miron, 2014).

2.5.1.2 Cultural strength

The third aspect of culture/ethos is concerned with the power of the basic assumptions, values and behavioural customs. As Finnan (2018) postulates, cultural strength has generally been defined in the literature as an amalgamation of the degree to which customs and values are clearly defined and the point to which they are scrupulously imposed. Stated otherwise, cultural strength refers to the degree to which educators' behaviour are actually influenced or determined by the conjectures, values and customs that are shared in school. This emphasis on the impact of values and customs on concrete behaviour is the characteristic element between the notions of homogeneity and power (Finnan, 2018).

Cultural power, consequently, is related to social control on conformity with the school's values and customs. On the contrary, when managerial culture is feeble, there is a reduced amount of direction and a lesser amount of approval when behaviours are inaccurate. Feeble cultures do not make compulsory school constituents to perform in a certain manner, but rather offer a guideline for their behaviour or as Finnan (2018) disputes, the culture only mildly implies that they behave in definite ways. This means, in feeble culture/ethos no utterances exist pertaining to the way in which school constituents ought to act, but rather how they might act (Sergiovanni & Green, 2014).

2.6 The importance of school culture or ethos for academic performance

Underachievement in schools is a global predicament and is principally common in developing countries. Educational results remain deplorable. The nonexistence of school feeding schemes, one of the principal basis of pedagogic underachievement, has not been given consideration (Singh, 2012).

In exploring the concerns with school effectiveness it was found that school culture or school ethos has a significant role (Mbulaheni, 2015). The claims are that the importance of organisational or school cultures for organisational or school effectiveness lies in the powerful and pervasive influence of cultures on people's perceptions and activities (Finnan, 2018). An explanation for such influence is that cultures or ethos are highly noticeable and opinionated and consequently impact readily on people's feelings and that this, in turn, determines individuals' performance as well as being susceptible and approachable to each child or adolescents welfare. Children and young folks ought to be encouraged to have a say in the administration of the school and, from the earliest stages, to exercise their responsibilities as components of a neighbourhood (Finnan, 2018). Examples of organisational or school cultural aspects that impact on people's feelings and related performance include: work methods and roles, dress codes, rules and regulations, interpersonal relationships, productivity and quality (Williams, Prestage, & Bedward, 2001). According to Deal and Peterson (2016) this makes traditions of vital significance for presentation in educational institutions, taking into consideration the institutions' 'populace-centeredness' in encouraging an atmosphere in which children and adolescents feel safe and protected and high confidence on the nature and efficacy of interpersonal relations.

2.7 The influence of hegemony on school ethos

Hegemony or domination refers to the ethical and intellectual leadership of a governing class over an inferior class attained not through oppression (threat of imprisonment or torture) or wilful construction of rules and regulations (as in fascist regime or authoritarianism), but rather through the general winning of permission of the subordinate class to the influence of the governing class (Mayo, 2015). Hegemony or domination is an effort in which the powerful win the consent of those exploited, with the exploited unsuspectingly participating in their own subjugation, while not questioning the values, stances and social customs of the dominant society, preserving the hegemony of the governing class and the disproportionate relations of power and opportunity remain concealed (Mayo, 2015).

Certain behaviours are maintained through hidden curriculum or null curriculum driven by hegemonic influences of school rules, practices and cultural artefacts. The dispute for educators is to be familiar with and endeavour to convert those dictatorial and domineering character of hegemonic

rule that repeatedly make-up daily classroom reality in ways not willingly perceptible (Mayo, 2015). Identifying and interrogating hegemonic forces that structure everyday schooling would bring attention to taken for granted ways of schooling that might influence teaching and learning that ultimately influence learner performance in respective schools. Hegemonic forces that shape the tacit content, homogeneity and strength that constitute a school ethos or culture, therefore, needs to be exposed, understood and engaged with if change in school learner performance is considered necessary(Mayo, 2015; Naidoo & Petersen, 2015).

In the section below I explore how finances influence schooling, both in terms of school finance and its relation to schooling and in terms of socio-economic status that learners come from and how these influence their schooling.

2.8 Finance and its influence of schooling

While much has been written about finance and socio-economic status of communities and their influence on schooling, I take a specific focus on finance as it relates to the way of life of schooling. School finance and its management thereof has an influence on what happens in school that impact on teaching and learning and ultimately on learner performance. Schools in South Africa are highly categorised, including schools that are categories by quintile ranking (poverty index), some in terms of geographic locations (rural, township, and urban schools) and some in terms of former apartheid school models. Financing of school education across these school categorisations have been known to influence learner performance and have, to some extent, been linked to school ethos (Brito & Noble, 2014). Further, there is much literature on how socio-economic issues of communities influence school education that ultimately is linked to learner performance (Prammoney, 2012). Literature has suggested that there are various dimensions to socio-economic status that impact on schooling and ultimately on learner performance (Maphoso & Mahlo, 2014). These dimensions include home resources, parental involvement and educational provisioning beyond schooling. These socio-economic issues are explored to understand schooling and learner performance tacitly (Maphoso & Mahlo, 2014).

2.9 Socio-economic status and its influence on schooling

Prammoney (2012) postulates that poverty has a significant effect on children's accomplishment in school. She argues that learners who live in poverty commonly attain at lower levels than learners from the middle and upper classes. Maphoso and Mahlo (2014) juxtaposes that this is so because parents from more affluent homes have the financial resources to support their children in learning. Their children are exposed to media, computers, the newspaper and television (Maphoso & Mahlo, 2014). Features such as the eminence of learners' learning behaviours, the home atmosphere in which poor children exist, and past occurrences of education are in the midst of the many influencing factors on learner achievement. According to Maphoso and Mahlo (2014) a child's home conduct, fondness, and traits must align with the world and, where they do not, learners are at a drawback in the school and most decisively the classroom. Prammoney (2012) further maintains, that the milieu deprived child, usually comes from inadequately skilled or illiterate homes. In his or her family environment he or she does not learn the value of learning activities and education. His or her parents are often apathetic and not involved. In the 1950's and 1960's the issue of access to educational opportunities and arguments about equality were paramount, especially in relation to social class.

Brito and Noble (2014) argues that discussion focused on why working class children did less in schools than children of similar measured abilities. During the 1960's and 1970's sociologists of education were in a world of their own with questions of accomplishment in the education system and rationalisations of failure in schools. Brito & Noble (2014) further argues that sociologists focused their argument on the social factors affecting educational failure of which 'poverty' was the main factor. Therefore, it is safe to declare that children who reside at or below the poverty level will achieve a reduced amount of educational success than children who live over the poverty line. In addition, the lack of financial capital influences their participating in school that would ultimately influence learner performance (Brito & Noble, 2014).

The majority of indigent children are born to underprivileged parents (Brito & Noble, 2014). These children commence with life at a disadvantage. Underprivileged parents frequently spend vast instances and energy dealing with the baggage that goes with being deprived and in many cases pay little attention to the child's educational needs. When parents withdraw from contributing support and attention in their child's education, the child performs poorly and does not value their education

sufficiently (Brito & Noble, 2014). Lack of parental involvement makes the learners' and teachers' burden even more arduous, as learners lose concentration in school and play truant more often.

Research has established that there is a threat of educational attainment among learners who are from indigent circumstances and who frequently display disorderly behaviour in school (Singh, 2012). This occurs because parents are too busy trying to put food on the table, working far out, coming late and leaving early thus leaving children unattended leaving children to their own devices (Prammoney, 2012). Discipline is one of the most difficult concerns educators face today. Disorderly conduct results in lost curriculum time as other learners are disadvantaged by their troublesome classmates. This constructs a classroom atmosphere that is not constantly contributory to learning (Singh, 2012).

2.10   Concluding comments of school ethos

Drawing on the key elements of school culture /ethos, it can be suggested that how the different types of schools' (school categorisations/quintiles) ethos are contextually bound and the contextual pressures of both in-school issues and out of school issues influences teaching and learning in these schools that ultimately impacts on learner performance, thereby necessitating the need to explore the content, homogeneity and strengths of school ethos with a view to illuminating and exploring its links to learner performance. Having presented literature on school ethos and its possible links to learner performance, I now turn my attention to exploring and understanding factors that have been known to influence learner performance. Hence, in the next section I present a review of literature that provides an analysis of the factors that influence learner performance.

2.11   Factors that affect/influence learner performance

While much has been written about learner performance and its influence on schooling, there are many factors that influence learner performance. However I take a specific focus on how the following factors affect learner performance, thus ultimately impacting on the ethos of the school.: home support and care, language as a barrier to learning, non-formal education, inclusivity, elements of inclusion and finally challenges facing teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in schools. These factors have an influence on what happens in school that impact on teaching and learning and ultimately on learner performance. These factors have been known to influence learner

performance and have, to some extent, been linked to school ethos. Hence, I explore some literature related to how these factors have influenced school education explicitly.

2.11.1 Home support and care

According to Epstein (2017), parental involvement has been defined as parenting, conversing, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and working in partnership with the community. Factors such as finances, education, time limitations and culture and socioeconomic status will determine the level of parental participation. Good quality school-family partnerships lead to superior scholastic attainment, confidence, school attendance and social conduct, which lead to positive transformation in the child (Epstein, 2017). According to Maluleke (2014), the parents are a child's primary teachers. They are a priceless resource. They uphold that before a child attends school he/she ought to have been aided by his/her parents to learn values. Parenthood can be described as a loving accomplishment and the chosen recognition of accountability towards a being, which God has brought into the existence of humankind (Epstein, 2017). Researchers Maluleke (2014) and Epstein (2017) further describe parenting in the educational circumstances as consisting of two instruments, that is, the parent and the child. They argue that, initially, parents show responsibility and a sense of duty towards their children by providing supervision, care and protection. The child, they argue, is the second instrument of the family, who learns the embodiment of good social conduct such as cooperation, orderliness, assiduousness, punctuality, selflessness and conformity, as emulated in the love and responsibility of constituents of the family unit for one another.

A great number of learners in South Africa have unique struggles which are frequently related to poverty and these occurrences get in the way of advancement towards achieving educational triumph (Prammoney, 2012). Poverty strikes a family for a whole host of reasons, but one of the noteworthy factors is the lack of education and training received by the parents for the duration of their own learning years (Luxomo & Motala, 2012). Some parents in poverty situations attach enormous significance to humanising their children in order that they can rise above poverty. Other parents who have not grappled with the value of education habitually fail to see value in their children attending school (Epstein, 2017). This hinders the progress of the child in school. In addition, the ethos of the school is affected negatively. The need to simply survive may override the need to secure the future. Even if they do see some importance in education, the wants of the moment can prevail over any hope for a positive outcome in the future (Maluleke, 2014). Home support for

learning mirrors the racially divided and class-stratified personality of South African society, with poorer parents lacking the occasion and attitude to support their children's education adequately, and middle class parents more likely than poorer parents to support learning and to send their children to superior performing schools (Luxomo & Motala, 2012).

Children in poverty stricken families are frequently obliged to stay at home to care for younger siblings while parents search urgently for some form of support or employment (Mtshali, 2014). Commonly, children from indigent homes only have one parent to rely on, placing even more strain on the parent and the child.

Greater parental involvement contributes to higher levels of learner achievement. Epstein (2017) maintains that parents play an essential role in both their children's academic accomplishment and their socio-emotional development. Impecunious children frequently do not receive the endorsement and support they need from family members to find value in achieving in school. Parents, who are struggling to survive, have no time or vigour to sustain their children's educational needs. Epstein (2017) further postulates that, a deprived child usually comes from an inadequately skilled or uneducated family. They may have been brought up by parents or grandparents whose educational background has not endowed them with the ability to augment their life with books and knowledge. The potential to read is the gateway to education and growing up in a family with parents who may only be to some extent literate further disadvantages the child the child (Luxomo and Motala, 2012). This thus further exacerbates the culture of no-readers in society. The educators have to adopt a culture of care when dealing with learners from these circumstances, in order to prevent a culture of frustration amongst educators. When learners cannot read, this makes an educator's task of educating, daunting. Schools that are categorised, quintile 1, 2 and 3 generally house many learners from these backgrounds consequently rendering them no fees school (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012).

Children raised in poverty are often forced to seek some form of employment almost immediately once they are of reasonable age. This cuts short their educational experience in a society that places elevated significance on advanced education and a noteworthy level of technical skills sets. Poverty is a vicious circle from which it can be difficult to break free. Once a child has left the school system to enter the work force it is less probable they will return to any important educational experience. According to Zotis (2011), life has a way of taking over and an impoverished teenager may become an impoverished parent themselves, setting in action that same cycle of poverty that leaves yet another generation struggling to find the resources it desires to survive.

Poverty also affects a learner's capability to prioritise and complete homework. This is termed the way of life of poverty, which is most often seen in families where poverty is generational (Hunter, 2009). These families have a stance on life that is dissimilar from that of a middle class family. Unlike middle class families who focus on the achievement of prosperity, ambitions, and comparable intentions; the family beneath the poverty line or indigent families often place a higher precedence on family, leisure and gratification of the social facets of life, because they have been habituated throughout life to deem that there is no expectation for them to escape their situation (Zotis, 2011). Luxomo and Motala, (2012) posits that a child existing in a culture of poverty will habitually be incapable of completing their homework because the home situation is not conducive to studying. Therefore, educators need to inculcate a culture of care when encountering learners emanating from these circumstances (Luxomo and Motala, 2012).

Mtshali, (2014) observed that, while some parents show no apprehension for their children's academic performance during the course of the year, they expect first-class grades at the end of year. Hinkle (2017) argues that, there is mounting substantiation that the eminence of parent-teacher relations influences children's school accomplishment in particular because elevated and superior links make it easier for parents and teachers to collaborate to promote a child's academic development, in so doing creating a positive school ethos. Hinkle (2017) notes, that, parents can support their children by supervising homework and financial dealings and by being present at school proceedings.

Many parents' and caregivers' voices are not adequately heard at school level; no matter whether they deem they 'own' their school or assume a more isolated view of the school their children attend. However, for every parent, care, obedience, and the quality of teaching are high on the list of educational concern. Despite their general lack of participation in school affairs and their low levels of involvement in their children's learning, parents highly value school-going, to the point of making the best of what they have, or keeping their child in a school they do not like but which is better than no school at all (Hinkle, 2017). Teamwork and participation are fundamental in most successful learning milieus. A lack of parental interest can lead to dissatisfaction on the part of teachers as well as learners (Diranian, 2014).

When parents do not show any importance in a child's schoolwork, and the child is left to fend for him or herself these children often struggle academically and feel discouraged. This poses a key

obstacle to the learner. The educators at school need to develop a culture of tolerance when dealing with learners stemming from this kind of home front. Hinkle (2017) further postulates that certain types of intrusions are compulsory to develop successful communication amid teachers, parents and learners. When parents take a dynamic interest in a learner's education, the learner's academic performance picks up and is sustained. There is a win, win culture on both sides. It also enhances the learner's self-esteem and persuades them to become more serious about their schoolwork because they are aware that their parents are continually monitoring their academic performance. Parental leadership and teamwork with teachers is essential for learners' accomplishment (Hinkle, 2017). An inclusive ethos consequently has to prevail when encountering learners from impoverished backgrounds. Educators have to consider the circumstances of the learners in their classes when planning their lessons in order to accommodate the disadvantaged child **(Mtshali, 2014).**

2.11.2 Language as a barrier to learning

Schools' official Languages of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) also limit parents' selection of schools, forcing some learners to trek long distances to schools that teach in their language. Insufficient mastery of the LOLT is a major feature in the appallingly low levels of learner attainment; yet numerous parents prefer (with their children's concurrence) to have their children taught in the second language of English by teachers who are themselves second-language speakers of English (Birdsong, 2016). The majority of poor parents are not able to exercise choice in schooling, having to send their children to schools in close proximity to their places of residence. However, for those parents who can afford higher fees and/or higher costs of transport, proximity is likely to be far less of an issue than it is for other parents, and schools' perceived quality much more of a factor (Maluleke, 2014).

In the South African context, language has been established to have a profound sway on learning results and is also an essential forecaster of learner achievement (Thomkins, 2011). South Africa is a society in transition with 11 official languages and a new public custom of human rights and solution which can create volatility in a context of poverty and a history of discrimination that affects interpersonal interactions (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). Multiplicity and multilingualism pose a great challenge to teachers. One of the greatest confrontations teachers face is teaching learners in their second language. Second language teaching is not an unusual phenomenon and is practiced across the world. Bilingualism and the attainment of a second language are extensively debated in educational literature (Green & Abutalebi, 2013). In numerous schools there is contestation over the

use of language, with English being the most familiar medium of instruction; however, proficiency in English is enormously different between first language speakers and second (or third) language speakers. Language aptitude repeatedly occurs along racialised lines. First language speakers are likely to insist on the use of English, while second language speakers often speak their own language (in the context of this study, isiZulu) (Makoelle, 2011).

According to Mulovhedzi, Ngobeli and Mudzielwana (2017) most children achieve language skills from birth by listening to their parents talk. South African schools are faced with the scenario where learners discover that the language of instruction is unlike their mother tongue. Schools in transition do not have clear language hierarchies, but English is often the favoured medium of instruction. Although the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 provides that the governing body of a school ought to determine the language of instruction for the school, this language policy may not eliminate learners from diverse language backdrops. Parents who have a preference for their children to be educated in English enrol their children in a school where the medium of teaching is English even despite the fact that they may have limited proficiency in the language. Schools are thus expected to provide for second language learners (Mulovhedzi, Ngobeli &Mudzielwana, 2017).

Many learners who come from indigent hamlets are either second or third English language speakers. However, they aspire to learn English (SA, 2008). According to Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel and Malinen (2012) learners' flexibility in knowledge may not be effectively developed owing to their impecunious environment and this has an effect on their contribution in classroom activities. Due to their impecunious state of affairs, learners do not have access to fundamental resources such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television which facilitate disclosure to the English language (Prammoney, 2012). This may possibly result in learners becoming discouraged and leaving school or not progressing to the next grade, as they obtain little support or management of their schoolwork from their underprivileged and uneducated parents who articulate only in their mother tongue language. Home school teamwork is a critical constituent of a successful two-way bilingual programme (Mulovhedzi, Ngobeli, & Mudzielwan, 2017).

Such children's only exposure or coverage to English is in schools and this hampers their academic advancement (Forlin, Loreman, Chambers, Sharma & Deppeler, 2014). Learners who study in a language which is not their mother tongue are confronted with a number of problems that may possibly impact negatively on their learning and academic performance as well as their capability to complete their learning productively (Cook, 2001). According to Mulovhedzi, et al. (2017) when

learners do not have fundamental interpersonal communication skills, this affects their cognitive academic language aptitude in English. Mulovhedzi, et al. (2017) further hypothesised that if children are to advance effectively through the grades it necessitates for them to acquire and apply the registers of language efficiently. Green and Abutalebi (2013) posited the language of teaching and learning as an academic language that should be used for cognitive development.

They further emphasise that there should be a correlation between the learner's mother tongue and the language of instruction. Using a second language as a medium of instruction may lead to a lack of understanding because the learner does not use the language as a form of fundamental communication. The language of instruction is consequently not meaningful for the learner. A lack of understanding and the elucidation of the language of instruction also place unnecessary pressure on the learner to make sense of the learning process. Green and Abutalebi (2013) expresses making sense of the learning process as metacognition. This is the ability to understand the aim and purpose of a task.

Forlin and Chambers (2011) note that in the South African context English is the most common medium of communication because it is extensively used in the media. They further highlight the fact that educators ought to recognise the differences among learners all through the teaching process. Teachers must therefore, also take into deliberation the language divergences their learners have. This poses a problem for educators because they are uninformed of their learners' experience of teaching and learning in a second or third language. According to Thompkins (2011), learners' needs have to take preference all through the teaching procedure and an ethos of inclusivity ought to reign in the classroom. He further points out, that learners who are not confident in the language of instruction are commonly identified as learners with learning disabilities. The prominence is thus placed on the learners' language aptitude rather than their learning potential.

2.11.3 Non-Formal education

Formal education has a well-defined set of characteristics. Whenever one or more of these is deficient, we may carefully declare that the educational process has obtained non-formal features. Non-formal education looks as if it is better to meet the individual requirements of learners. According to Ward, Sawyer, McKinney and Dettoni (1974) a systematic investigation of the key features of non-formal education, diversely from formal schooling, illustrates that participants are led to non-formal programmes because these put forward the proficiency that they hope to obtain and the

compulsory assistance for a better understanding of their own selves and of their world (Werquin, 2012).

To a certain extent, widespread literature presently emphasises how insufficient formal systems are to meet successfully and resourcefully, the requirements of individuals and of society. The need to put forward more and enhance education at every level, to a mounting number of people, predominantly in developing countries and, the scant accomplishment of existing formal education systems to meet such demands, has revealed to researchers the vital need to grant substitutes that get away from the formal standards, in order to solve these problems (Werquin, 2012). As Ward, et al. (1974) point out, Piaget, Freire, Havighurst, Colemam, Brookover and literally hundreds of other psychologists, educators, sociologists and philosophers have indicated clearly where education should be and where, instead it flounders in ineffectiveness, crust stringency and inflexibility. Most of those critics advocate transformation of the existing educational system and there is sufficient substantiation of the need for spectacular efforts in this area. (UNESCO (IIEP), 2006; UNESCO, 2014).

The matter originally relates with a credible divergence between formal and non-formal education. While the former has been powerfully recognised for quite a while and its conduct are acknowledged by society, non-formal systems in their most highly developed forms are only currently budding. According to Ward, et al.(1974) the question is, what to do about them: "Allow them to continue and develop as competitive, alternative systems; repress them; adopt the formal educational institutions for the non-formal model; or integrate the whole into a broader concept and plan for educational development?" (UNESCO, 2014).

Although formal education corresponds to a well-structured, systematised system governed by stringent norms and laws, it is possible to consider more and less formal education, according to the amount of rigidity detected in such features. If a formal instance provides a curriculum endowed with a certain degree of flexibility, in which "conforming with the program is not crucial and having a methodology that is receptive enough to meet the learners' features, we can practically say that this case in point is less formal than another where these features are set on an inflexible mould (IIEP, 2011).

It is not improbable to believe that whereas in formal structures the process focuses on the school system, in non-formal education the focal point is placed on the learner. Aims, plans, and

methodologies are developed with a starting point on their requirements and features. All actions are intended at the learners, from global approaches, to concern with creation of instructional resources. In going from formal to non-formal education, we are perforce relocate the "centre of gravity" from the progression of the school system, to the learner (Morpeth & Creed, 2012). As said by Ward et al. (1974, p. 38), "The legitimacy of schools is based upon their role as credentialing agencies while non-formal education will derive its legitimacy only from its ability to meet real social needs."

The unyielding structure of formal schools, principally founded on regulations and policy than on the real requirements of learners, offering a curriculum that slants away from individuals and from society, far more concerned with performing curriculum than with accomplishing useful objectives, complying with an unyielding set of clerical-administrative procedures, has long since fallen short of meeting individual and social needs. Non-formal education, starting from the fundamental needs of learners, is concerned with the establishment of approaches and tactics that are compatible with reality (Morpeth & Creed, 2012).

With the starting point on these preliminary deliberations we may without difficulty conclude that the non-formal label encompasses an extensive assortment of educational systems endowed with features that either guide them towards or away from the reputable formal systems. Thus, we might surmise the survival of a certain degree of continuity connecting the formal and the non-formal education. Given its capacity, non-formal education is comprised of an abundant diversity of educational circumstances many of which have played a noteworthy role in the rejuvenation of educational systems (Maruyama & Ohta, 2013).

It is likely if the education obtainable by schools is without value for a learner's life and fails to train him to deal with daily struggles, he will simply decline to participate in education that may finally fade away or, at best, have to be reformulated to achieve consequence for oneself. As non-formal education is fixed on the learner, it perforce presents bendable characteristics as regards the initially recognised and assumed measures, aims and contents. It is therefore quicker to respond in face of the transformation that may affect the needs of learners and of the community. It appears that there is no doubt that no opposition should exist between formal and non-formal systems, nor should they be considered contradictory systems. After all, one is not essentially the antithesis of the other and in the educational universe there is relatively more than enough room for both. The analysis above, advocates the presence of certain permanence in the evolution from formal to non-formal systems,

leads to the suggestion of a strategy to meet the requirements of individuals and of the society (Maruyama & Ohta, 2013).

2.11.4 Inclusivity / What is inclusion?

According to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2008, p. 3):
"Inclusion is both a process and a goal, where the educational institution should accommodate the individual's aptitudes and needs in the best possible manner. This requires diversity and adaptation in the educational program to enable each individual to participate more and receive more benefits from being an active member of community."

Inclusive education implies that everybody ought to play a part in society on an equivalent basis collectively, academically and ethnically. Inclusive education furthermore advocates that demands be placed on the education area and on each individual, who should be proficient in constructing laudable associations while making an allowance for individual disparities and ethics (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). Inclusion commences with the credence that learners belong in the common education classroom. If the requirements of the learner necessitate other placement, then additional provisional surroundings ought to be considered (Florian, Black-Hawkins, Rouse, 2016, Etherington, 2017).

Inclusion according to UNESCO and UNICEF (2011) is coupled with obligation to the phrase "Education for all" by recognising the necessity and exigency of granting education for every child, adult and youth with Special Needs Education. "Education for all" is a concept which means creating the environment in school where all learners are welcome despite their intellectual and physical abilities. Inclusion is a "philosophy that brings learners, families educators and community members together to create schools and other social institutions based on acceptance, belonging and community" (Whittaker, Salend & Duhaney, 2001, p. 5). The College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) has gathered proclamations of viewpoints on inclusive education, including a parent's "philosophy" which positions that school trains her son, who has a disability, and other children for the actual world of living and working. This parent stated that after her son left public school, he would be living and working with a diverse population of people (Subban & Sharma, 2006). She wanted her child with disabilities to be accepted as much when he is out of school as when he is in school, saying, "That's why inclusion is a key." In theory, inclusion is exercised in schools to create collaborative, compassionate, and developmental atmospheres for learners that are

based on giving all learners the facilities and adjustments that necessitates their learning, in addition to respecting and learning from each other's individual differences (Etherington, 2017).

The Salamanca Statement (1994) stipulates that all children have a definitive right to have education, and need to be given the option to achieve and sustain a reasonable intensity of education. All children have distinctive characteristics, interests, education requirements and capabilities. Inclusion is not essentially focussed on the learners with disabilities. When executed accurately it is also intended to be able to have room for and act in response to the requirements of normal schooling learners as well. Educational organisations should be created and programs need to be put into operation in consideration of an extensive assortment of these features and requirements.

Those with special educational requirements should have a right of entry to normal schools which ought to have room for them contained by child centred pedagogy proficient in meeting their needs (Etherington, 2017). Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2016) perceive inclusion as an educational situation that positions social skills over educational skills. They characterise inclusion as an educational viewpoint that puts an elevated importance on the attainment of societal proficiencies and embraces that isolating learners reduces this attainment. To eradicate any and all isolation, inclusion recommends normal classroom positions for all learners and respectively excludes, or eradicates, every preference for alternative placement (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). Normal schools with this inclusive direction are the generally valuable means of fighting against inequitable mind-sets, constructing good convivial hamlets, constructing an all-encompassing culture and attaining education for every single one. In addition, they offer resourceful education to the majority of children and advance the efficacy and finally the cost-effectiveness of the whole education system (Etherington, 2017).

Furthermore, UNESCO (2009, p. 8) defines inclusion as:

"*a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children"*.

This simply means that UNESCO (2009) elaborates on how an inclusive education system ought to be by stating that, an inclusive education system can only be created if regular schools turn out to be more inclusive. The UNESCO (2009) Conference declared that, normal schools with an all-encompassing trend are the most dynamic resources of combating prejudiced stances, constructing convivial societies, ascertaining an all-encompassing society and achieving education for all. Furthermore, they offer an effectual education to countless children and develop proficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. Inclusion entails a variety of customs that are exercises of good teaching. What good teachers do is to think selflessly about children and expand on ways to get in touch with all children (Etherington, 2017; Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). Therefore, inclusive education has the underpinning in education for all for an intention that all the children must attend school regardless of their disabilities (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2013).

In addition, Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2016) argue that, the word inclusion is being used in imminent plans for compulsory schooling, but this may be seen simply as substitution for the term integration. Like the concept integration, it advocates that someone does not belong from the beginning but has to be included. A school with place for each child who is born and grows up in the school locality; a school for all signifies the union of two positions of development which are all-inclusive school system and one society for all.

Beacham and Rouse, (2012), postulate that in modern argumentation education for all is perceived as a part of worldwide human rights as confirmed in UN Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, it is perceived as a resource for the person to accomplish other objectives in primary education regardless of their disability, gender and environment (Beacham & Rouse, 2012).

2.11.4.1   Elements of inclusion

Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale (2015) gives some of the rudiments of inclusive education. Engelbrecht et al. (2015) argues that inclusive education is required to be a component of the whole school equal prospect policy. In these instances children with learning problems, learners' educational needs would be integrated into the core curriculum and the school-learning milieu. Regular education was constantly being encouraged in the development of socialisation, child education, formal/ informal/ non-formal education aided by parents, siblings, peers, elders, community leaders, in such parts as verbal communication and oratory random and lawful issues, in

actuality by any grown-up. The practice was unbiased, practical and relegated in and was applicable to the local neighbourhood. At a social order stage inclusion taps on the subject of citizenship and political affairs of differentiation, that is, marginal groups, gender differences, ethnicity and linguistic. Each individual shall be able to yield from educational probabilities designed to meet their fundamental education requirements and how they ought to be met with individual countries and societies (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). These are also the current indicators of inclusive education (Etherington, 2017). Inclusive education and an inclusive school ought to have the following characteristics: the exercise of adjustment of teaching and learning resources, flexible syllabus, accommodating methodologies to learners with learning barricades, appropriate organisation of the curriculum, assessment system and pleasant physical surroundings and infrastructure (Etherington, 2017; Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). Furthermore, Beacham and Rouse, (2012) stress some features to be present in inclusive education that, education needs to be unbiased in terms of disability, customs and sexual category. It should engage all in the neighbourhood with no exclusions. Learners ought to have equal rights to penetrate the culturally treasured curriculum as full time suitable normal classroom and there should be an emphasis on multiplicity rather than integration (Beacham & Rouse, 2012).

2.12 Challenges facing teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in schools

There are numerous challenges teachers face in implementing inclusive education in primary schools. Inclusive education is a practice and consequently it cannot be conquered in a single day it takes a number of years to reach this target of educational for each and every one.

Challenges to inclusive education		
Poor inclusive knowledge		Teachers' attitudes
Poor quality training	Lack of teaching aids and equipment	Rigid methods
Inaccessible environments	Poor teacher collaboration	Rigid curriculum
Less sensitive policies	Lack of support by government	Lack of parental involvement

Figure 1: The Inclusive Education Model (Inclusive education adapted from (Lewis & Little, 2007, p. 10).

There are many challenges which are associated with its implementation and achievement. The inclusive education model above presents some of the disputes towards the execution of inclusive education. The challenges will be explained in relation to constructivist theory and system theory:

There is inadequate cooperation and communication among teachers, learners and parents. This turns out to be a challenge for teachers to implement inclusion. Teachers require parents' support in doing their work. In most cases teachers are unwilling to involve parents in school matters. In line with this Vigotsky (1978) emphasises that, learners have different Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and in the course of communication with their teachers or peers, underachievers get to understand the new concepts. He also stresses on cooperative dialogues between children and well-informed affiliates of their social order in demanding activities. Children learn to assume and conduct behaviour that imitates their community's traditions. For this matter it means that there should be superior interaction between learners and teachers, as learners learn from their teachers and they take them as their role model.

Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2016) assert that there are three ways an intellectual instrument can be conceded on from one individual to another. The first one is copied learning, the second way is by inculcated learning and the ultimate way is joint learning, which involves a collection of peers who attempt to know each other and work collectively to gain knowledge of an explicit skill (Etherington, 2017). In addition, parents are experts for their children, in the sense that they know their children better while teachers are experts in helping the learners in academic arena and provision of different skills to fulfil the needs of the child. Therefore, a parent needs to provide the teacher with necessary information concerning the child which can aid the teacher to plan teaching and reach the objectives of the child. Once more, teachers in collaboration with parents and counsellors need to design a way of assisting the child's social and emotional progress (Etherington, 2017). That means as far as inclusion is concerned parental involvement and cooperation is necessary.

There is no provision of inclusive education in universities and colleges that train teachers (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). There is a paucity of educators who have awareness of inclusive education (Etherington, 2017). Many teachers in primary schools do not have the understanding of inclusive education that makes it complicated for them to put into operation. This lack of adequate knowledge makes them fail to adapt inclusion. When the teacher lacks the inclusive knowledge he or she may face another problem of poor classroom management (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016).

Etherington, 2017 and Beacham and Rouse (2012) dispute that an educator's inability to construct an academically introspective, appealing classroom for knowledge is not merely mismanagement, it is dissolute, particularly for learners who do not have alternatives. There should be designed teaching strategies that ensure that every child is attended to individually (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). Beacham and Rouse, (2012), argue that teachers should be involved in creating and sustaining school wide change.

Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2016) put forward that negative attitudes of teachers can create barriers to learning for learners with disabilities. Categorisation of learners into groups based on their supposed familiar aptitude for learning remains regular exercise in numerous schools despite their colossal admonition attestation. This has to do with the attitudinal challenges in the direction of the execution of inclusive education in primary schools. Most of the educators tend to label the learners according to their disabilities which prevent the learners from being comfortable. Etherington (2017) affirms the unconstructive clout they are able to have upon the enthusiasm and accomplishment of learners. In labelling, the teachers often construct a certain understanding of the learners. This demonstrates that educators themselves did not accept the disabilities the learners have and this poses a challenge in implementing inclusive education. Sometimes parents have a preference to keep their children at home, they have an aversion to their children attending normal schools as a means of inclusion because they fear that they will be segregated. This makes it difficult for educators towards the implementation of inclusion. Beacham and Rouse, (2012) juxtapose this point by insinuating that the deportment of the educators to children from underprivileged households might append a resolution not to send or to drop out from schools.

Florian; Black-Hawkins; Rouse, (2016) insinuate that there is low expectation of educators from the learners with special needs education. They constantly take them as failures or low achievers, the majority of educators have given up on the success of learners with disabilities. Applying diverse ways can aid and accommodate learners with disabilities to achieve academic success (Etherington, 2017). This illustrates that inclusive education faces a serious challenge. The role of inclusion is to remove this view by putting children with different learning abilities and cultures together so they can learn from each other and develop socially. These cultural differences affect their learning processes. It is important that teachers find out the knowledge level of these learners which Vygotsky (1978) termed as The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) simply defined as the gap between what a learner can achieve autonomously and what he or she can achieve under teachers' supervision or in partnership with more proficient peers. In this regard instead of teachers

shouldering the burden entirely, an educated society could assist in the implementation of inclusion. In line with this, Beacham and Rouse (2012) and Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse (2016) advises that children should be provided learning opportunities after school hours. This will assist them more on the construction of new knowledge.

Socio constructivist theory advocates that environment should be manipulated in a desirable way so that a child acquires what will help them in the future (Vygotsky, 1978). Inadequate teaching and learning resources is another challenge in primary schools. The cost of buying teaching and learning materials is high. For example, projectors and textbooks are costly; hence, it becomes a problem to implement inclusive education (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). The use of technology can promote better educational systems as this might aid teachers in adapting first-rate ways of inclusive education (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). In addition, Etherington (2017) suggests that infrastructure and classrooms need to be adaptive for the needs of the learners. For example, some of the buildings in schools have stairs which limit mobility of learners with physical and visual impairment. Educators need to consider learners who are visually impaired when teaching a lesson. The educator needs to read in favour of those who cannot see.

Other features linked to inclusion and paucity that possibly will position a learner at risk of educational failure are very young, single parents, or parents with a low learning level; joblessness; mistreatment and neglect; substance abuse; hazardous neighbourhoods; destitute; mobility; and exposure to inadequate or inappropriate educational experiences. The ability to recognise and appreciate learners who are at-risk is crucial if we are to sustain their augmentation and expansion (Pretorius, 2004). In order to do this, warm and loving interactions need to be developed between educators and learners. This will permit educators to discover any warning signs that may place learners at risk of collapse, interfering with their probability for accomplishment in school and life.

Etherington (2017) emphasises that planning is one of the guiding principles in inclusive education development. Schools need to plan effectively for their development or else teachers would face problems in implementing and adapting to inclusion. Adaptation involves changing teaching methods, classroom organisation and physical environment. Teachers should make sure that each child benefits from the teaching regardless of his or her learning difficulties (Beacham & Rouse, 2012).

The examination system does not think about the explicit requirements of the learners. For example, visually prejudiced learners require more time when sitting for an exam and also there are other subjects which physically challenged learners cannot take such as physical education. That means all this is a barrier towards implementation of inclusive education.

2.13 Managing the classroom

Classroom management is the practice of leading a classroom through actions, rules and policies (Etherington, 2017). Although there are various ways to supervise a classroom, triumphant classroom management presents a sturdy framework for learning (Jansen, 2004). There are racial, ethnic and socio-economic differentiations amid learners in schools and ascertaining potential for suitable learner conduct permits one to construct an atmosphere favourable to learning (Savolainen, et al., 2012). The increasing numbers of children with special needs and those living in paucity have made South Africa's classrooms more different than ever before. This makes both teaching and learning more demanding. This problem can remain a dispute for educators, as opposed to becoming a quandary, if the spotlight is on learners learning as opposed to teaching learners (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). Teachers are required to be tuned in to the culture of diversity and poverty and be receptive to the enormous assortment of requirements that children with special needs and those living in poverty carry to the classroom. They may be deprived, special as well as being non-English speakers of various ethnic, racial and spiritual clusters (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). Social environments have a noteworthy impact on the progress of children. The social world of school functions according to diverse rules or norms from those of the public world in which these children live. The spotlight should be on structuring a pleasant relationship between the principles of the learners and the principles accentuated in school (Savolainen et al., 2012).

The learning content should be of high value and applicable to the learners' circumstances. A weak curriculum is intolerable. Educators are expected to be well-informed about the learners' home life so that they can prepare effectual and appealing lessons. Furthermore, teaching and classroom management practices that work well with a few children don't essentially work well with poor children or children with special needs. The perspectives and understanding of the children need to be considered (Birdsong, 2016). According to Savolainen et al. (2012) educators should make it their task to find ways to make and preserve learners' attention and participation on a constant basis by making the classroom a secure, compliant and appealing place. By generating lessons that have

significance to these learners, educators are reacting actively and constructively to the preceding information and understanding of their learners. The use of role playing through play and cluster activities can be constructive in recognising views that are repeatedly inaccurate and fruitless. This can also assist children to keep trying at exigent tasks as opposed to merely giving up, resulting in advanced levels of attainment (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). Academic collapse is an outcome of the beliefs that learners hold about themselves and their capability to manage their surroundings.

According to Singh (2012), frequently, learners at impecunious schools will not listen to influential figures, such as educators, because their peers' views mean everything to them. If a learner's peers display disorderly conduct, they may perhaps adopt the same conduct, as they assume this is acceptable behaviour (Singh, 2012). Singh (2012) further postulates that in order for educators to triumph over some of these misconduct, they can single out one or two learners in every class who are a model of proper behaviour and request to them to encourage their peers to adopt a similar attitude. Many learners from economically challenged families have only known unconstructive support, that is, retribution for bad behaviour. The educator ought to encourage classroom control by offering positive fortification, such as rewards for excellent behaviour (Singh, 2012). Educators should have learners set behaviour goals each week, and proffer items that serve as immediate fulfilment, such as erasers or stickers for younger learners. For older grades, extra credit can serve as an encouragement, while being mindful that some immature learners may find such a reward too nonfigurative to work towards. A constant approach to regulations is another solution in classroom organisation in impecunious disadvantaged schools. At home, learners of low socio-economic standing may have rules forced erratically due to the haphazard nature of their home life (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). School needs to be viewed as a safe place where the situation remains the same continually (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016).

Academic and behavioural problems can be gauges of looming failure (Banerjee, 2016). Among such conducts are: impediments in language improvement and reading progress, aggression, brutality, social withdrawal, substance abuse, irregular attendance, and depression. Educators may also discover that the learner does not complete assignments, learn for tests, or does not come to school geared up to learn because of poverty-related circumstances in the home surroundings (Banerjee, 2016). Educators may have obscurity in reaching a learner's parent or guardian with regards to supporting the learner to triumph over these problems (Maphoso and Mahlo, 2014). In the nonappearance of parental involvement and guidance, these learners may be incapable of

concentrating or focussing. They may be unwilling or unable to work together with peers or adults in school in an effective manner. These matters have a serious impact on indigent learners' learning (Maphoso & Mahlo, 2014).

As educators these characteristics of inclusivity and paucity make scheduling and groundwork extremely crucial. The learning content needs to be correlated in altering ways to meet the requirements of the various learners in the classroom (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). The cultural values of these children have to be considered as we arrange their learning (Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse, 2016). Banerjee (2016) argues that children who are culturally disadvantaged come from homes that are not only substantially deprived but also ethnically disadvantaged in terms of the mind-sets and principles that were conveyed to them. He adds that sociological verification drew consideration to accounts of child socialisation and to prototypes of child nurturing. The concept also refers to social groupings that are caught up in a twist of poverty and universal cultural deficiency, because they encounter environmental paucity and psychosocial disabilities. Pretorius (2000) argues, from an educational point of view, that the child who discovers him/herself in such an upbringing is situationally deprived. He goes on to argue that the child who encounters serious societal traditions and educational problems, is not equipped with the pre-school and extracurricular practices that are necessary for best possible scholastic accomplishment. What is important from an educational point of analysis is the reality that there is a close association between the cultural level of the socio-economic location and the scholastic achievement of the child (UNICEF & UNESCO Institute for Statistics(UIS), 2005).

This literature review, therefore, was conducted in a way that provides reasonable scope to manage this research project within the complexities that this phenomenon presents. Hence, the literature review is by no means exhaustive. It was selective and purposive and provided a framework that allowed entry into my research for this study. The next section of the literature review presents the selected theoretical framework that guides the research in attempting to both manage the research project, as well as frame the analysis and theorisation thereof.

2.14 High performing schools

Becoming a high-performing school takes years of unrelenting dedication (Lezotte, 2001). There is no single thing a school can execute to guarantee high learner performance. Researchers have established that high-performing schools have various familiar features (Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte,

1991, 2001). Research has acknowledged that there are various ways to improve school performance. Educational organisers and theorists contain expanded programs and procedures for supporting school specialists in constructing and preserving those circumstances to facilitate the augmentation of learner performance (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). In 2002, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) research staff acknowledged and re-evaluated more than 20 current studies that focused on schools in which learners were attaining at greater levels than would be envisaged derived from their demographic features. Several of the studies re-examined other research on the same subject matter, whereas others scrutinised high-performing schools in particular settings and localities with definite learner demographics. Performance was generally calculated in terms of elevated or significantly improving scores on standardised tests, frequently in the face of complex conditions for example high levels of poverty. In each case, there was no distinct feature that accounted for the achievement or enhancement. As an alternative, the research established that high-performing schools have a propensity to have an amalgamation of regular features (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). These schools have:

- A lucid and mutual focal point
- High principles and prospects for every single learner
- Efficient school management
- Focused professional improvement
- High levels of teamwork and communication
- Recurrent screening of learning and teaching
- An encouraging learning atmosphere
- High intensity of family and neighbourhood associations (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007).

The nine characteristics are not listed in any order of priority, although an internal logic materialises. Learners and their learning, with a stress on every single learner, are vital to the customs of school enhancement (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007).

Schools are committed to enhancing their performance and setting high standards and prospects for learners. Processes to achieve the aims of all learners learning to high standards consist of high levels of cooperation and communication; core curriculum, instruction, and appraisals aligned with state standards; and regular scrutinising of learning and teaching. Supports embrace the features focused

on professional improvement, an encouraging learning environment and high levels of family and community association (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007).

Successful school leadership, listed as one of the features, is influential in the execution of all other features. The local community, district, state, and finally national interests, grants the external perspective for school enhancement and persuades the work of educators. Some of the features contribute to accomplishing high performance (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). Successful cooperation and communication, for example, are essential in developing and sustaining a regimented, high-performing institution.

No single feature led to school success. There is no justification for the malfunction of most schools to educate children. High-performing, high-poverty schools have not accomplished success by chance. Their accomplishment is the consequence of hard work, common sense teaching philosophies, and triumphant leadership approaches that can be replicated (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). Majority of the studies identified five or more of the traits. Research established that accomplishing that level takes years of unrelenting school devotion, affecting values, approaches, viewpoints, and instructional practices (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). Successful practices that have made these schools triumphant are namely: parental accountability, teacher excellence, effectual diagnostic testing, stress on basic skills and the efficient distribution of funds (Carter, 2000).

2.15 Summary

The literature review suggests that factors that affect and influence learner performance, home support and care, language as a barrier to learning, inclusivity, elements of inclusion and challenges facing teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in schools and including teaching at diverse levels in the classroom are all features that compound the problems that educators face at school, thereby influencing the ethos of the school. As (Etherington, 2017) observes, teaching is an unattainable undertaking because what one is thought to be doing as an educator is indistinct, ambiguous and loaded with uncertainties.

Major concepts relevant to the study, with a brief outline of their mutual relationships were explained in this chapter. The relevant literature was reviewed with a view to providing a framework within which this phenomenon will be explored with the eight teachers and two principals selected for this study.

Chapter Three

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

Having presented a review of literature related to the focus of my study in the previous chapter, I now turn my attention to the theoretical framing that informed the focus, process and analysis of data leading to further theorising about learner performance from a situated perspective of the school and its environment. Taking this contextually situated perspective necessitated the search for an appropriate theoretical model that included spheres of influence, elements of influence and the relationships that influence the situation within which teaching and learning takes place in school. While there are several theoretical models that could be appropriate, including that of Vygotzky's Zones of Proximal Development, the most appropriate theoretical framing for my particular study requires more than spheres and elements of influence. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theoretical model, therefore, seemed most appropriate to guide my research process. This provided a consistent understanding of the multifaceted setting in which each individual is positioned. Even though it is premeditated to include an individual's complete life span, I use the framework to explicitly explore the world of learners from two primary schools of different quintile rankings. An underpinning postulation of this theory is that development cannot be explained through restricted deliberation of the individual child but must also investigate the intricacy of his or her surroundings. As Bronfenbrenner noted, "Development never takes place in a void, it is always entrenched and expressed through conduct in a scrupulous environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p 27). For that reason, the bioecological theory places the child at the heart of his/her world, envisaged as a series of nested systems: micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- (see figure 1). It is emphasised that the proximal and distal features operating in the child's multi-tiered environment interrelate in distinctive and vibrant ways with his/her selection of personal characteristics, determining the child's development.

A number of scholars (Goldhaber, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Richters, 1997; Tudge, 2008; Winegar, 1997) have argued persuasively that there should be a rigid connection between one's theory, the techniques that one uses, and one's diagnostic strategy. The meaning of theory in any scientific field is to offer a framework within which to elucidate connections among the phenomena under study and to supply insights leading to the breakthrough of new connections. Even though we (Goldhaber, 2000; Richters, 1997; Tudge, 2008; Winegar, 1997) distinguish that any theory is a

depiction of authenticity, among its rationales are those of providing researchers with a regular scientific language and guiding empirical studies in such a way as to permit findings from diverse studies to be assessed with a common rubric. The aim of much empirical work, on the other hand, in addition to obtaining new information, is to test the accurateness and goodness or fit of theories that intend to explain the phenomena under study. Some researchers (Goldhaber, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Tudge, 2008; Winegar, 1997) argue that their original work is intentionally theoretical (as in the application of grounded theory methods) or purely inductive (descriptive studies). Numerous empirical studies, on the other hand, are directed by some theoretical framework from which the researcher operates, consciously or not (Goldhaber, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Richters, 1997; Tudge, 2008). In the latter case, for the precision and reliability of scientific thought as well as for compatibility of findings, it is vital to make unambiguous the theoretical framework on which the research is based (Härkönen, 2007). Applied in unison, the theory offers an elucidation for learning on various levels: the wider conditions that surround learning, the complex mechanisms of the learning procedure itself and the position of the learner.

Another benefit of making a theory unambiguous while conducting or reporting a study is in enhancing the comprehension of a particular theory, either by providing opinionated or non-opinionated substantiation. An empirical study that does not appropriately characterise a theory, on which it is based, however, produces a twofold disservice. First, it misinforms fellow researchers about the contents and suggestions of the theory, thus providing a flawed heuristic tool. Second, it avoids a fair test of the theory, as a result not permitting useful adjustments to be made (Tudge, 2008). Hence, in this chapter I present Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, argue for its appropriateness, discuss its key concepts and show how these key concepts have influenced my study process and theorising.

After a brief synopsis of the genesis and developments in bioecological theory, I present the key elements and propositions of the theory in greater detail. Subsequently, I use a small sample of experiential studies, said to be overtly based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, to scrutinise the ways in which the theory was applied and to discuss the precision of its claim. Finally, I consider a number of possible explanations for the misapplications and critiques that I identified. My objective is thus to assess the ways in which Bronfenbrenner's theory has been used in recently published research. My intention is to represent the theory and link it accurately with the research methods and analyses. Initially, therefore, I will explain the theory as it developed into its mature form.

3.2 History of Bronfenbrenner

Urie Bronfenbrenner was an American psychologist. He was the son of Doctor Alexander Bronfenbrenner and Eugenia Kamenetskaja, born on April 29, 1917 in Moscow, Russia. He was 6 years old, when he arrived in the United States. He died on September 25, 2005.

3.3 Bronfenbrenner's theory

In this section the light is cast explicitly on the applicability of the Bronfenbrenner theory to diverse areas of research activity, its degree of social point of reference, its main attributes and the ways of its modelling (Härkönen, 2007).

3.4 Background of Bronfenbrenner and Ecological Systems Theory

In the following sections, I will discuss each of the theoretical perspectives noted above and consider how they inform our understanding of the learning process and how they may account for learners' performance in the school realm.

Why do we need to have an idea of the backdrop of theory makers and the origins of their social concepts and experiences? The reasoning is, because these things may have had an impact on their theories. For instance, Bronfenbrenner thought that the social order was the reason that predisposed children´s improvement and this is the explanation to his whole theory. In his understanding, the construction of the society manipulates everything down to the last detail. Bronfenbrenner is honored as one of the leading world authorities in the field of development psychology. His most significant conception was the ecological systems theory, where he describes the four concentric systems that are the micro-, the meso-, the exo- and the macrosystems. He later added a time-related fifth system, the chronosystem (Tudge, Odero Hogan & Etz, 2003).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework for human development was first established in the 1970s as a conceptual model and became a theoretical model in the 1980s. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) dwells on human progress and follows one's augmentation into a fully proficient member of the society. Hence, it is a developmental psychology theory. It has also been termed as the theory of socialisation (Saarinen, Ruoppila & Korkiakangas, 1994, p. 88). Bronfenbrenner (1981) has written a

book on socialisation (Bronfenbrenner 1989; 2002). This theory is not explicitly a theory for education of pedagogy, knowledge or civilisation, caring or teaching or more often than not a theory of psychological development (Härkönen, 2007). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is the human development theory. Concurrently it illustrates socialisation as the technique of becoming a component of the society. This theory also permits better understanding on education and the evils attached to it. Nevertheless what is this theory about?

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory highlights the child's own biology as the main microenvironment as its energy for improvement. The Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory lays stress on the significance and background of the child's surroundings. Bronfenbrenner upholds that since the child grows, the contact with the surroundings accomplishes a multifaceted nature. The probability for convolution becomes visible since the physical and cognitive compositions of a child develops and matures (Paquette & Ryan, 2001.)

Macrosystem

Exosystem

Mesosystem

**Microsystem
child/ learner**

The Microsystem embodies the child's direct social and physical surroundings contained by this circumstance, thoughtfulness would need to be given to the proximal relationships (with friends, parents, educators) and actions (playing, comprehending) in which the child connects.

The Mesosystem is the system of relationships amongst the microsystems in a child's life

The Exosystem embodies the larger community setting in which the child lives. It consists of contexts which encroach on a child's learning experiences although the child is not directly involved.

The Macrosystem embodies the societal blueprint and includes core cultural, legal, political, religious, fiscal and educational standards of a particular social order.

Figure 2: A topological illustration of the embedded contexts comprising the Bioecological Model (created by Prammoney, C information drawn from Bronfebrenner, 1989)

Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development is a theory that was, until Bronfenbrenner died in 2005, in a recurrent state of improvement. This is, of course, true of all theories; one cannot give an abundant account of Piaget's theory by recounting only his earliest books. This point does not simply pertain to theories that are developed over the course of a half century; Vygotsky, for example, was enthusiastically engaged in psychology for only a little more than a decade, but three distinctive phases can be acknowledged, and scholars need to make a distinction among them when describing his theory (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003). Bronfenbrenner, however, was a very self-reflective theorist and reasonably regularly noted the changing nature of his theory. For example, he wrote: "I have been chasing a hidden agenda: that of reviewing, revising, and expanding in addition to regretting and even relinquishing some of the conceptions set forth in my 1979 monograph" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p 187). He was most unambiguous about this re-evaluation in his Bronfenbrenner, 1999 chapter, where he stated that "it is useful to distinguish two periods: the first ending with the publication of the *Ecology of Human Development* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and the second differentiated by a series of papers that call the original model into question" (p. 4).

His earlier theorising gave pride of place to characteristics of the context (the famous concepts of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem), whereas he later engaged in self-criticism for reducing the role the person plays in his or her own improvement and for focusing too much on context (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Interesting notions such as molar activities, ecological experimentations, ecological validity, and ecological evolutions was given an important role in his earliest work (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979) and virtually vanished from his later writings. Nonetheless, although Bronfenbrenner (1989, 1999) argued that the 1977 and 1979 versions of the theory had been distorted, amended, and extended, his theory was always (and unambiguously) ecological, stressing person-context interrelatedness (Tudge, Gray & Hogan, 1997). In none of his theory-related writings, even the earliest, did he focus solely on contextual factors. The single most significant difference from his early writings is the later concern with *processes* of human development. In some of the chapters written in the 1980s (Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983), he referred to "process" as that which could elucidate the association between some characteristic of the context (ethnicity or social class, for example) or some characteristic of the individual (e.g., sexual category) and a result of significance. It was only in the 1990s, nevertheless, that *proximal processes* were defined as the key feature in development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1995, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). It was also from this time onward that he discussed the Process-Person-Context-Time model (PPCT for short) that has become the fundamental nature of his theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000;

Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Scholars may perhaps, of course, choose to use an earlier adaptation of the theory as the groundwork of their research; they may possibly also choose to base their study on merely some of the major conceptions of the developed adjustment. In whichever case, conversely, this needs to be stated explicitly; neither the field nor the theory is well supplied if the study's authors write that they are using "Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory" or "Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model" but instead use an earlier or fractional version of the theory. Conceptual incoherence is likely to result when studies, written in the first decade of this century, are all portrayed as being based on Bronfenbrenner's theory but some make use of ideas taken from the 1970s or 1980s and others from the 1990s. The full theory in its developed form deals with the interrelations among the following four PPCT concepts.

Bronfenbrenner proposed the most wide-ranging model of a contextual approach to child development described as the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1989). Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989), urges us to analyse child development from a systems - ecological perspective. He glances at the child's world as a naturalist glances at nature, as an ecosystem. Like ecosystems, children develop in the context of a process of mutual accommodation.

Bronfenbrenner did not construct his theory out of nothing. He has transformed Kurt Lewin's (1935) human behaviour blueprint to suit straight improvement description needs. The preliminary position in itself is exceedingly promising, but enforces certain limitations as well. The Kurt Lewin (1935) classical field theory behavior formula is as follows: $B = f(PE)$, where behavior (B) is the result (f) of interaction between person (P) and environment (E) (Bronfenbrenner 1989; 2002, p 223). In a book by Saarinen et al. (1994, p 90) the connotation of relations is emphasized and is based on an understanding that an individual's behaviour is a consequence of the relations between person and environment. It is the question of an influence that is effectual in both ways: person influences environment and environment influences person.

Bronfenbrenner (1989, pp. 189-193; 2002, pp. 223-224) remade Lewin's formula into the formula of development in the following way: $D = f(PE)$, where developing (D) is the result (f) of communication between person (P) and environment (E). But because development means change, a process, and it takes place in time, Bronfenbrenner wanted to go on perfecting the formula. The time factor is articulated by bottom indexes in the following way: $D_t = f(t-p)(PE)(t-p)$, where 't' is time under which the result of development (D) is observed and 't-p' is the period or periods in the course of which the powers that are related to person and environment perform simultaneously, leading in

the course of time to a consequence that is experiential at a definite moment of time. The way of writing the right hand 't-p' in the formula will also mean that the procedure that constructs the developmental change is not a temporary one but takes place in the course of time and can in a way similar to the other features of the formula change in time. For example, when the child grows older, the procedures that are now observed are not essentially alike as observed before (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

Perfecting a formula is a challenging task, regardless of it being embarked on by a student or a scientist, as is the case here. Bronfenbrenner (2002, pp. 223-225) has had to take a new look at the theory he once elaborated. He alleged that strictly speaking the formula does not characterise development but its result. He sustains that science, in the first place, is not engrossed in the phenomena but the procedures that construct the phenomena. So, the right hand side of the formula is in actuality interesting. The formula guides the following definition of development: Development is a progression of such processes that intermediate the relations of the qualities of person and environment in order to produce permanency and transformation in a person's qualities in the course of life. The researcher's task is to discover what, precisely are the personal and environmental behaviors that must be treated as the products and the producers of development.

It is so that when education is placed in the formula of development $Dt = f (t\text{-}p) (PE) (t\text{-}p)$, education looks like a feature of environment (E) that interrelates with person during a definite period of time in such a way that its functional result is personal development. In this way it turns out to be much clearer why there is a specific need for the theory of the phenomenon of education and its research (Puroila & Karila, 2001).

It is extremely significant to notice in Bronfenbrenner's theory that development in accordance with the formula is not a summary result but a functional result (f). Nevertheless, it has been pointed out that definite environmental conditions produce diverse developmental results depending on the personal qualities of the individuals, living under these circumstances. The application of such a person-environment-interaction model to human development is one of the most promising directions in the future, though highly exigent theoretically and methodologically (Bronfenbrenner 2002, pp. 225-226). Bronfenbrenner's theory is the very systems theory that allows tackling numerous environmental factors and numerous persons in diverse interaction relationships, roles, actions and processes.

With the aid of Bronfenbrenner's theory the process of education, as well as the processes of care and teaching, can be built-into the said development formula as the factors manipulating the result of development. The theory brings into the foreground the developing person and the education-designed surroundings and the people in this surroundings with all intertwining personal relationships, roles, actions and processes. But, like it has been alleged, this theory is not intended at the phenomenon of education itself, which is studied by the education science and pedagogics Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana (2010).

It is essential to carefully weigh the applicability of theories to the phenomena under study and their interrelated problems. Ecological theory is central to Bronfenbrenner's concern (Santrock, 2006) and his work is receiving increased consideration in terms of the social context in which children develop. He views a child as entrenched in a number of environmental systems and pressures. These include schools, educators, parents, siblings, the community and neighbours, peers and friends, the media, religion and culture. Santrock (2006) and Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) argue that the social circumstances can have controlling influences on a child's development. To Bronfenbrenner, "environmental systems range from close interpersonal communications to broad-based influences of culture" (Santrock, 2006, p 71). In other words, his theory has been influential in presenting how diverse circumstances of children's lives are interrelated. He identified four systems namely: microsystem, mini-ecosystem, meso-ecosystem, and macro-ecosystem and recognised the importance of the connection between these systems in the environment in which the child develops.

MACROSYSTEM
Attitudes and ideologies of the culture

EXOSYSTEM

MESOSYSTEM

Industry

Social services

MICROSYSTEM

Family

Peers

INDIVIDUAL
(sex, age, health, etc.)

School

Church

Mass media

Health services

Neighbors

Local politics
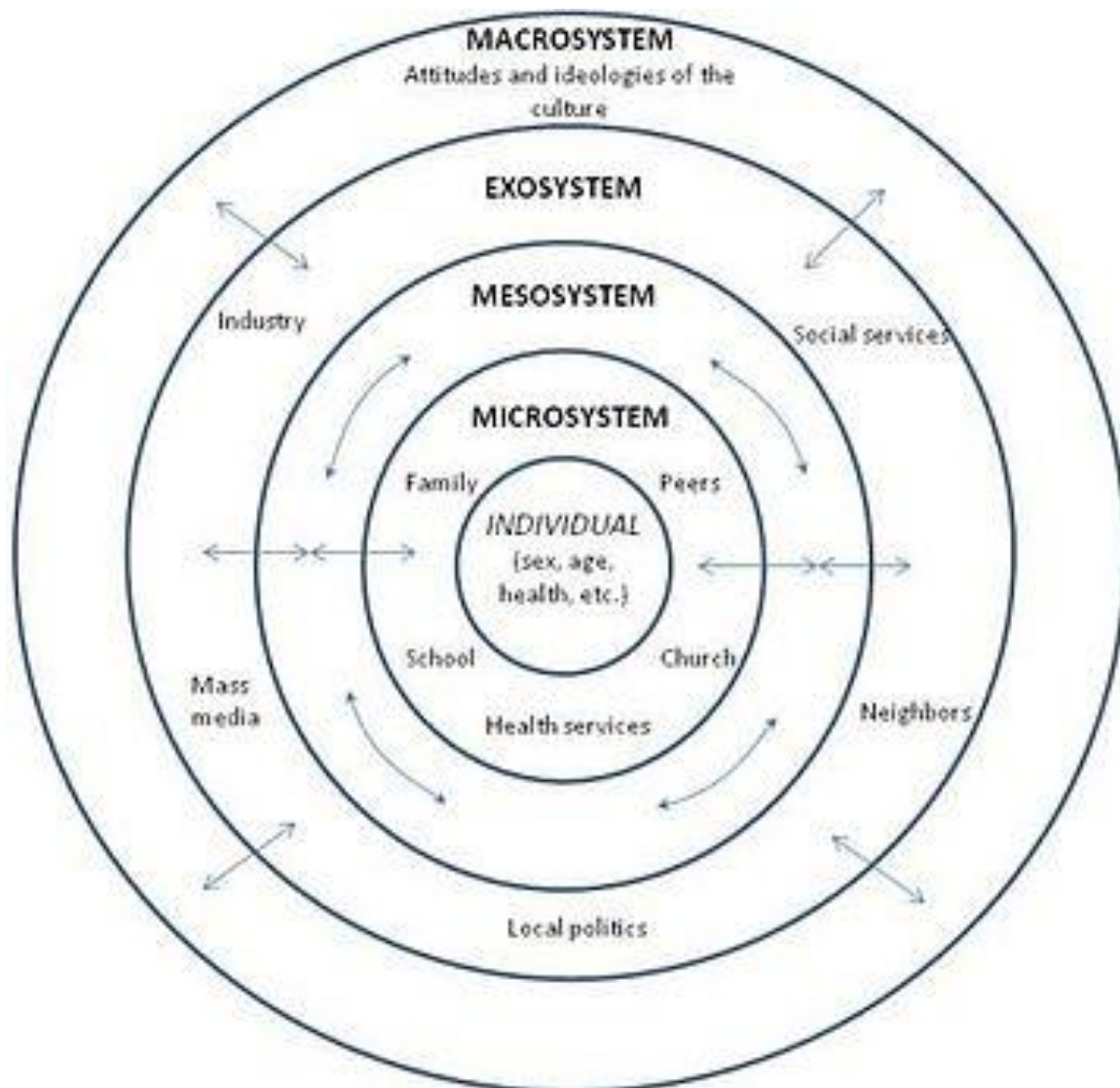
Figure 3: Levels of systems related to education (Donald, et al., 2010, p. 47).

In quintessence, this theory sees diverse altitudes and combinations of the social environment as 'Systems' where the performance of the whole is dependent on the communication between all parts (Donald et al., 2010, p. 47). A school, for example, is a system that has diverse parts, consisting of its staff, management (SGB and SMT), its learners, its curriculum, and its administration. The most instantaneous significance of this theory has been in increasing our perception of family, classrooms, and schools and the relationship within them, as well as between them and their social circumstance. Swartz, De La Rey and Duncan (2004) and Ebersohn and Eloff (2006) concur that a sturdy connection within the innate capabilities, skills and social resources recognised in each individual can be used for the promotion, survival and social performance of the entire school. Models that

focus on singular fundamental features are insufficient for either the study or manoeuvring outcomes. The advancement of living systems has presented a dogmatic model that integrates response systems between the individual and regulatory codes. By realising the workings of this regulatory system, we can acquire a better grasp of the procedure of development (Chili, 2006).

Systems theory gives emphasis to the need to recognise play in terms of the daily surroundings in which children grow up. Development therefore needs be studied not only in the home, but also in schools, neighbourhoods and communities. With regard to the present study, the emphasis is establishing the role of the school and educators in the supportive development of children whose environment already places them at risk. According to Bukatko and Daehler (1995), psychologists have long recognised that not only do children live in vastly different circumstances but also that each child experiences a number of overlapping contexts. The environment of the immediate family is subject to enormous variations; single parent families, extended families, orphaned families, and the state of 'normlessness' where children do as they please and not as they are expected to do. Disparities in the context of improvement expands far ahead of a child's immediate family however, political systems, and cultural dictates of the neighbourhood form and manipulate the manner in which children are nurtured. Several of these states of affairs will be more accommodating of social and cognitive improvement than others. The transformation from infant to child to adult takes place via multifaceted system of multidirectional levels of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The outcomes then, are the consequence of interplay between child and environment across time, in which the status of one affects the next status of the other in an unremitting active practice. In contextual models, sometimes called systems, views are concerned with the effects of this broad range of genetic, physical and socio-cultural settings on development. Bronfenbrenner (1986) and Sameroff (1987) have drawn our attention to development as an interactive process. This understanding has been transformed into research models that integrate both various biological and environmental practices.

Figure 4: A schematic plan of Systems structures in Bronfenbrenner's theory
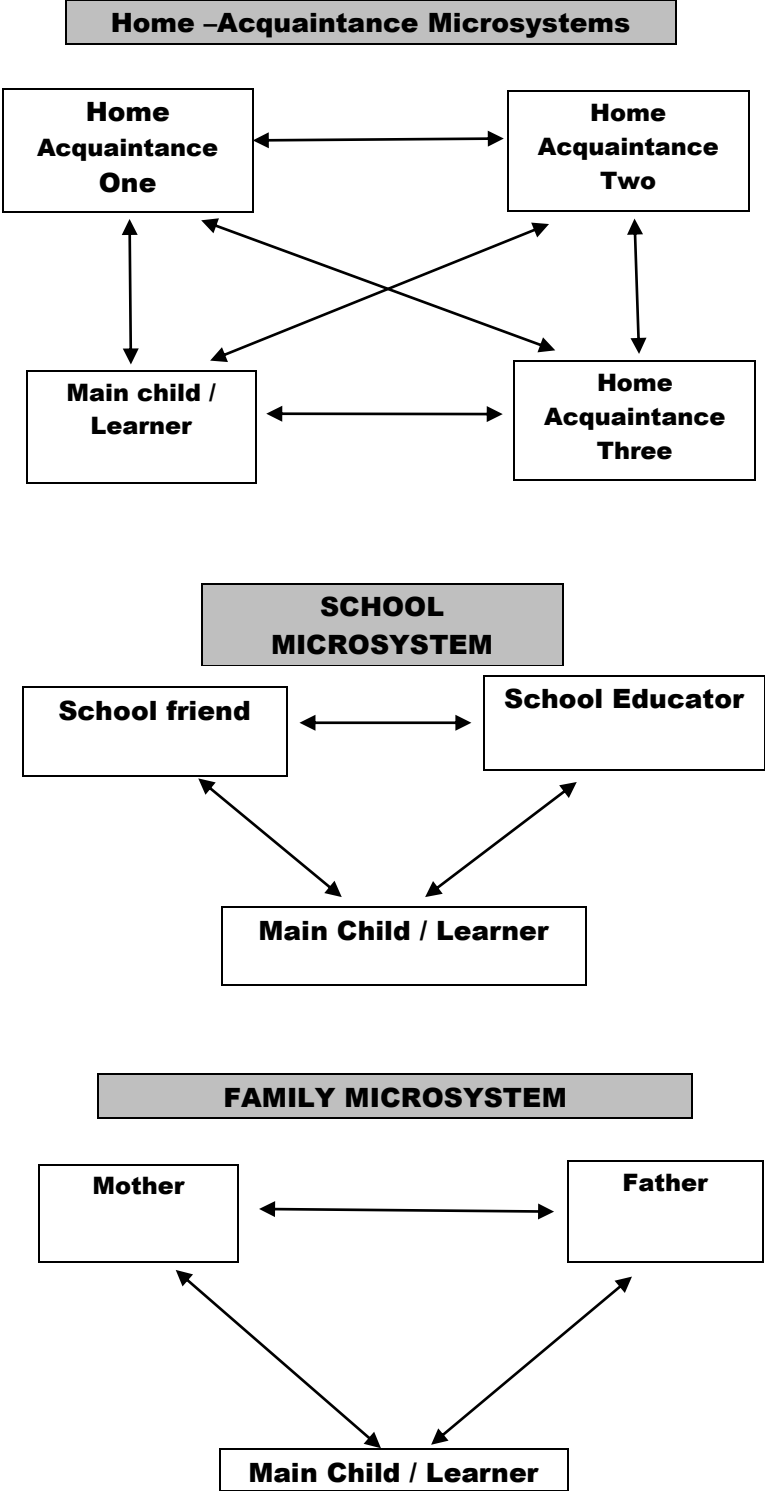
3.5 Systems structures in Bronfenbrenner's theory

According to Bronfenbrenner, improvement and socialisation are influenced by the diverse width, circles or rounds of the surroundings with which a person is in active inter-relation. This consists of three significant assumptions:

1) his/her environment is convincing person to adjust to its circumstances and limitations,

2) person is a lively player, exercising influence on his/her environment and

3) his/her surroundings is understood to consist of diverse amount of individuals that are placed one inside another, of their mutual relationships and of micro, macro, meso and exosystems (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Saarinen et.al., 1994, p. 88).

In order to give a divergent description of Bronfenbrenner's ecological development theory as possible, I will rely on the theory criticisms of his own. The description of the microsystem has been harmonised in comparison to the original, the images of the two following ones have remained unchanged, while that of the macrosystem has changed. In this demonstration the consequence of the microsystem is most important, as its understanding carries the clues for the understanding of other systems as well.

3.5.1 The Microsystem

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1989) gives emphasis to the many levels of a child's environment that directly and indirectly relate with the individual to manipulate improvement (Bukatko & Daehler, 1995). Thus, the eco-systemic standpoint has much significance for considering child and adolescent improvement more holistically and interactively of concentric circles. The heart of the ecological systems theory stems from the communication happening within the diverse layers of the structures and the relations happening between the diverse layers. The most central layer, the micro-system, incorporates all those surroundings where the child lives or spends considerable portions of his or her life. The microsystem consists of the surroundings that the person lives and this system consists of family members, neighbourhoods, religious neighbourhoods, peers, and other individuals that the person interrelates with directly on a regular basis. The individual usually comes into contact with the microsystem in most occurrences involving social communications (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the microsystem, the individual does not only observe things happen, but

also plays an instrumental role in the establishment and creation of the experience that they are likely to have (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The closest environment to be a person's microsystem such as home, close relatives, kids in the playground, classmates and day-care group along with others. In the perspective of the microsystem, bidirectional communications are exceptionally sturdy and have the most extensive sway on the individual. Nevertheless, the communications proceeding on the outer levels of surroundings can still have a consequence on the inner structures. At first, the way in which the child communicates with added individuals is dyadic; however, later, the child becomes proficient to handle simultaneous interactive relationships. Bronfenbrenner (1979) affirms that the natural world of relationships along with the people close to the child and their relevant systems has an impact on the development of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 56, p. 81; Puroila & Karila, 2001, pp. 210-211).

As an expansion of the sociological theory, ecological-transactional models take into account the altering effects of parents, children and environments on each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The child's ecosystem may perhaps be envisaged as a series of time: home, school, classroom, day-care setting and playground. The child manipulates and is prejudiced by the micro-system. Each of these settings is referred to as a sub-system. In the child's ecosystem, the major systems comprises of the family, school and peer group. Bronfenbrenner defined the microsystem as a prototype of interpersonal relationships, roles and behaviors that a budding individual experiences in an exacting head to head position with unambiguous material and physical entities including other individuals encompassing distinctive temperament, idiosyncratic features and systems of belief.

These are the systems with the most instantaneous and unswerving impact upon the individual. The microsystem encompasses the personal traits of others, the physical and material properties of daily settings, and the behaviors, roles and interpersonal associations experienced by the budding person (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Thus, what occurs at home or in the peer group can manipulate how the individual retorts, or responds, at school. In this study, the home conditions of some children living in paucity impinge on or influence the child's performance at school directly or circuitously. The example would be the impact of a parent becoming unemployed. Another example would be the impact of divorce, in this regard parents may have different views on child rearing and less time spent on communication or interaction with the child. This could produce strains within the family, leading to the child's exposure to increased domestic conflict. It might lead to certain political attitudes being expressed, which could influence the child's attitude formation, or it might lead to a change in

standard of living, which could affect the child's level of nutrition and potential survival (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). All of the mentioned factors can put the child in the position to be unstable, have a low self-esteem and therefore underperform at school. I will further describe all the levels of influence in the following section.

Apart from the home, the classroom can also be a microsystem for the child. An approach that only home is the microsystem and any system further away is either the meso or exosystem, particularly if they are away from home. Yet, the idea behind microsystems is not arrangement but the person's extent of involvement in any system at all. According to the microsystem definition, all surroundings, in which the budding person is an active participant, are his/her micro environments.

Each subsystem within the micro-system can be seen within itself as a system. The family system is comprised of subsystems that consist of a marital, parental, sibling and frequently a grandparent subsystem. The peer system embraces social alliances, academic camaraderie and sports and hobby acquaintances. The child's micro-system turns out to be a source of developmental hazard when it is socially impecunious. That is, the child's improvement suffers, whenever the micro-system is underdeveloped be it because of too few participants, too little mutual communication, psychologically negative patterns of communication or an amalgamation of all. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) a micro-system should be a gateway to the world, and not a locked room. All the above mentioned examples describe the child's microsystems. Quite often a learner, a developmental psychology or an education major, will run into a situation where there is a requirement to handle with a child or a learners point of view. It must be noted that a study may centre on any one budding person like mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, a teacher, a decision maker (any person).

3.5.2 The Mesosystem

The definition of the following system is unchanged, it has endured Bronfenbrenner´s own critique (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 227). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the mesosystem consist of the procedures and associations that transpire between a minimum of one setting including the developing person; examples comprise of the relations between schools and home, and workplace and school. Simply put, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems. This layer constructs the connections between the child's microsystems that is the association between the child's teacher and the parents or the child's church and the neighbourhood. Similarly to the microsystem, the person

does not only view things that take place but also participates significantly in the construction of their experiences. The viewpoint describing the concept of the mesosystem has been unchanged, and has not been altered since its original definition even by Bronfenbrenner.

The most significant associations consist of the relation between school communication and home, nursery school and home, and child health centre and home and mother. Saarinen et al. (1994, p. 89) further expands on the mesosystem by stating that it consists of the associations that the child's and a young person's microsystems have between themselves. The most important of all the relations, firstly, is between home and mother and child health centre, home and kindergarten, as well as home and school communication. It is imperative to assess if the aspects that influence socialisation encompasses diverging or converging guidelines, which entails assessing whether the various microsystems sustain every one, or the individual views them as conflicting demands. Are there unconcerned microsystems prospects or commitments for different ways of behaviour?

Bronfenbrenner, asserts that the scrutiny or study of inter-microsystems associations has been extremely biased. For example, there has been a scrutiny of studies on how daycare and school independently manipulate child development but it has been ignored to study the joint influence of them and home. In pointing out the meaning of the mesosystem, Penn (2005) cites that the academic development of a child does not only depend on the classroom atmosphere but also on the intensity of parental involvement with school activities. The case is simulated among adults whereby spousal relationships at home are also exaggerated by added relationships among peers and the workplace, and vice versa. This clearly points toward the role the mesosystem plays in lifespan improvement.

3.5.3   The Exosystem

The next layer of the system comprises of sub-system that the child does not explicitly experience but that have an effect on the child because of the control they exert on the micro-system. This layer is termed the exosystem. It may embrace the way parents were socialised, friends, the community and other groups. It examines the influence of events occurring in settings, which are occupied by other family members.

Bronfenbrenner (2002, pp. 263-266) made the system definitions more accurate and, along with other things, gave consideration to the belief systems of the people that surround the child since these can have a motivating consequence on development. Puroila and Karila (2001, p. 222) have drawn a table

where they have designed diverse educational phenomena for different system levels. They have positioned educational ideas and belief systems in a microsystem. This interpretation is barely flawless since an individual's belief system can be shaped cognitively as well as by their surrounding.

Bronfenbrenner (1989) as well as Paquette and Ryan (2001) recognises the exosystem as a system whereby the developing individual plays no considerable role in the creation of his/her own experiences. However, the actions in at least two settings have a consequence on the processes happening on other direct setting that do not contain the individual that is these occurrences inflict a direct consequence on the microsystems that the person is part of. For example, the association between the home and the parent's workplace when a person losses his job, the job loss has a direct consequence on the monetary situation of the family, which possibly will in turn have an effect on the daily lifestyle and domestic stress levels.

Third parties, who are other people in the microsystem, also have an authority on the value of relationship that the developing individual has with other people. According to Penn (2005), the social settings are devoid of the developing individual but shape the experiences in his/her direct surroundings have a propensity to affect lifespan development. Examples of social surroundings that the developing person may not be a component of consist of social networks of a child's parents and members of the extended family, which all have an impact on the child's advancement. For example, if they are encouraging, there is enhanced communication. An example is when parents tend to support each other through the child rearing process; they tend to build up a more successful parenting. On the contrary, cases of marital disagreements are always linked to conflicting discipline and hostilities towards children; as a consequence, children in such environments tend to show signs of aggression, anxiety and fear (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). Research studies confirm the negative outcome of a breakdown in the exosystem procedures and activities (Shaffer, 2008). For instance, families isolated socially and having few community-based or personal ties have a propensity to display high rates of child abuse and disagreement, which are damaging to lifespan development.

3.5.4   The Macrosystem

The definition of the macrosystem changed the most as a result of Bronfenbrenner's critique (1989, p. 228; 2002, p. 265) of his own theory. It was first influenced by Vygotski's theory about the psyche's socio historical advancement that led to see the macrosystem as a sociocultural context.

The macrosystem can be thought of as a societal design for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader societal context. Bronfenbrenner (2002, p. 266) reiterates that the behavioral and conceptual models that are attributes of the macrosystem are transmitted from one generation to another by the means of diverse cultural institutions like family, school, congregation, workplace and administration that intermediate the processes of socialisation.

The macrosystem is the outermost level of the ecological systems theory and consists of cultural ethics, assets, laws and customs. The approach in which the macrosystem prioritises the requirements of the developing individual usually has an impact on the support that the developing person obtains at the inner environment levels. For example, in nations having generous workplace benefits for employed parents or guardians and create high child care standards, children are highly likely to enjoy favorable practices as regards their immediate settings (Santrock, 2011). The case is the same for elderly citizens in countries where the government presents a generous pension plan for its retirees. Penn (2005) declares that society and culture has a noteworthy influence on the macrosystem. The ideologies and belief systems of the culture of the developing person directly affects the person; nevertheless, the developing person lacks adequate freedom in influencing his or her surroundings.

3.5.5 The Chronosystem

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory maintains that the environment is not stagnant and does not affect people uniformly; rather, it is vibrant and continuously evolving. The chronosystem is a description of the evolution, development or stream of development of the external systems in time. Whenever the developing person adds or yields some of his/her roles in his/her setting, the individual in the microsystems tend to change (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The contextual shifts, sometimes referred to as ecological evolutions, play an influential role during lifespan improvement; examples include starting education, working, retiring, and becoming a parent. Life transformations can either stem from within the developing individual because they choose, distinguish and create their own experiences and settings, or imposed externally. How they act in response to these ecological transitions depend on various factors such as their intellectual and physical capabilities, age, personality and environmental opportunities (Underdown, 2006).

3.5.6 Concluding comments on the ecological systems of Bronfenbrenner

The ecological systems theory, has been influential in understanding lifespan development and socialisation processes among people. As a result, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory concedes that lifespan development is neither driven mainly by inner dispositions nor subject to control by innate dispositions. Instead, the ecological systems theory perceives individuals as products and creators of their own environments whereby the person and the environment establish a network of mutually dependent impacts. In the following sections, I will discuss Bronfenbrenner's departure from his original theory. It is the inclusion of the processes of human development which is labelled the Process–Person–Context–Time model (PPCT).

3.6 Process Person Context Time Model

Bronfenbrenner's most important exit from his original theory is the inclusion of processes of human development. Processes, per Bronfenbrenner, explain the association between some components of the context or some characteristic of the individual and an outcome of significance. The theory deals with the relations among processes, person, context and time, and is labelled the Process–Person–Context–Time model (PPCT). Two mutually dependent propositions describe the properties of the model. Furthermore, contrary to the original model, the Process–Person–Context–Time model is more suitable for scientific investigation (Tudge, 2008).

3.6.1 Process

Processes play a decisive role in development. Proximal processes are fundamental to the theory. They represent the engines of improvement because it is by engaging in activities and communications that individuals come to formulate wisdom of their world, value their place in it, and both play their part in altering the existing order while appropriating into the existing one. The character of proximal processes varies according to features of the individual and of the environment both spatially and temporally. As elucidated in the second of the two central propositions, the social connections and transformations take place overtime through the life course and the historical period during which the person lives. Effects of proximal processes are thus more powerful than those of the environmental contexts in which they transpire (Tudge, 2008).

The first proximal process states:

Human development takes place through developments of increasingly more multifaceted reciprocal interaction between an active, developing bio psychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be successful, the communication must take place on a reasonably regular basis over extensive periods of time. These forms of communication in the immediate environment are referred to as proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The examples that he provided (playing with a young adolescent; child-child activities; group or solitary play, reading, learning new skills and so on) are the sort of things that repeatedly go on in the lives of developing individuals. They make up the engines of development because it is by connecting in these activities and communications that individuals come to create a logical understanding of their world and appreciate their place in it, and both play their part in altering the established order while fitting into the existing one. As Bronfenbrenner made progressively more explicit, conceivably responding to the statement that he continued to be cited as a theorist of context, on the basis of his 1979 book, proximal processes are fundamental to the theory. The character of proximal processes, however, varies according to aspects of the individual and of the environment both spatial and temporal (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

As he explained in the second of the two central propositions:

The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary methodically as a joint purpose of the characteristics of the *developing person*; of the surroundings both immediate and more remote in which the *processes* are taking place; the nature of the *developmental outcomes* under consideration; and the social connections and transformations happening over *time* through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996, italics in the original). Bronfenbrenner stated that these two propositions "are theoretically mutually dependent and subject to empirical test."

3.6.2   Person

Bronfenbrenner acknowledged the importance of biological and hereditary aspects of the person (Bronfenbrenner, 2001, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). However, he dedicated more consideration to the personal features that individuals carry with them into any social circumstances (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). He divided these characteristics into

three types, which he named *demand, resource*, and *force* characteristics. Demand characteristics are those that act as a personal stimulus, an immediate stimulus to another person, such as age, gender, skin colour, and physical appearance. These types of features may influence initial communications because of the expectations formed immediately. Resource features, by contrast, are not immediately apparent, though sometimes they are induced, with differing degrees of accuracy, from the demand characteristics that are seen. These are features that communicate partly to mental and emotional resources such as past occurrences, skills, and intelligence and also to community and material resources (access to good food, accommodation, caring parents and educational opportunities appropriate to the requirement of the particular society). Finally, force features are those that have to do with differentiation of temperament, motivation, persistence, and the like.

According to Bronfenbrenner, two children may have equal resource features, but their developmental route will be poles apart if one is stimulated to achieve something and persists in tasks and the other is not stimulated and does not persist. As such, Bronfenbrenner presented a clearer view of individuals' roles in altering their circumstances. The change can be reasonably passive (a person changes the environment simply by being in it, to the degree that others respond to him or her differently on the basis of demand characteristics such as age, sexual category, and skin colour), to more active (the ways in which the person transforms the environment are linked to his or her resource characteristics, whether physical, psychological, or emotional), to most active (the extent to which the person transforms the environment is correlated, in part, to the desire and drive to do so, or force characteristics (Tudge, 2008).

3.6.3   Context

The *context*, or environment, involves four of the five interconnected systems of the original theory: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. (The first is any environment, such as home, school, or peer group, in which the developing person spends loads of time engaging in activities and communications (the microsystem). As people spend time in more than one microsystem, Bronfenbrenner wrote about the interrelations among them (the mesosystem). There are also significant environments in which the individuals whose improvement is being considered are not actually situated but which have significant indirect pressures on their development (the exosystem). An example of an exosystem effect is the following: A father has been predominantly stressed at work and, as a result, conducts himself more irritably than usual with his son when he gets home. The father's work is an exosystem for the child because he spends no time

there, but it has an indirect influence on him. Finally, Bronfenbrenner defined the macrosystem as an environment encompassing any group ("culture, subculture, or other extended social structure") whose members share value or belief systems, "resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange" (1993, p 25). The macrosystem envelops the remaining systems, influencing (and being influenced by) all of them. A particular cultural group may share a set of principles, but for any particular value system to have any influence on a developing person it has to be experienced within one or more of the microsystems in which that person is situated (Tudge, 2008).

3.6.4   Time

The final element of the PPCT model is time. As befits any theory of human *development*, time plays a vital role in the theory. In the same way that both context and individual factors are divided into sub-factors, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) wrote about time as constituting micro-time (what is taking place during the course of some specific activity or interaction), meso-time (the extent to which activities and communications occur with some uniformity in the developing person's environment), and macro-time (the chronosystem). The latter term refers to the reality that developmental processes are likely to differ according to the specific historical events that are happening as the developing individuals are at one age or another. This latter sense is captured best in a research by Elder (1974, 1996), who was able to demonstrate significant variation in the developmental trajectories of people from two cohorts, born in the same geographical area but just 10 years apart. Each cohort experienced the effects of the Great Depression in the United States (and subsequent historical events) completely differently because they experienced each of these events at a different point in the life course. Time, as well as timing, is equally important because all aspects of the PPCT model can be thought of in terms of relative constancy and change.

3.6.5   Concluding comments on the PPCT model

In my study the PPTC model seemed to be the best fit to describe my phenomena under study. The learner, their circumstances surrounding their academic performance and the influence of their immediate environment (context) in school and their home (place) front shaped the way in which they perform academically. The influence of the people (person) around them e.g. teachers, friends and family comprise of the engines of development (process*) because it is by engaging in these activities and interactions that individuals come to make sense of their world and understand their*

place in it, and both play their part in changing the prevailing order while fitting into the existing one (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996).

3.7 Different perspectives of the theory

Many researchers have explored Bronfenbrenner's theoretical perspective on his theory. Adamsons, O'Brien, and Pasley (2007), Campbell, Pungelo, and Miller-Johnson (2002), Riggins-Caspers, Cadoret, Knutson and Langbehn (2003), and Tudge, Odero, Hogan and Etz (2003) presented the theory in its mature form and tested theoretical assumptions through apt research designs. Adamsons and her colleagues (2007) examined the differences in father participation and quality of father-child communications between biological father and stepfathers and did so by unambiguously linking them to the four elements of the PPCT model. The secondary data analysis and cross-sectional nature of the study placed certain limitations on the authors' ability to put into operation fully the PPCT model. Adamsons, O'Brien, and Pasley (2007), disagree with the authors' position that time was integrated by simply considering how long the stepfather had been a part of the family. This variable does not embody the element of time as Bronfenbrenner envisioned it. In the case of this study, it would have been adequate to concede that time was not measured because of the constraints of the research design and treat the lacuna as one of the limitations of the study. Fathers were considered as the developing persons of interest because father involvement and quality of father communications with his child were the outcomes being considered. Thus, the person element was considered through fathers' position in the family (biological or stepfather), age, race, parenting beliefs, and fathers' levels of marital satisfaction. The authors also included child gender as a personal characteristic of an individual (child) with whom the developing person of interest (the father) was interrelating.

Adamsons et al. (2007) stated that the cross-sectional nature of the analysis did not sanction the examination of development as process and that their conceptualisation of process may differ from that of Bronfenbrenner. It was found that their evaluation of quality of father child engagement had a logical representation of proximal process. Overall, it was felt that Adamsons and her colleagues (2007) effectively used the PPCT model in their research: The authors discussed all components of the theory, recognised the minor differences in conceptualisation or nonappearance of certain elements, considered their findings from Bronfenbrenner's theoretical perspective, and presented directions for future research that would enhance and more fully incorporate bio ecological theory in examining fathers' involvement with their children.

It was also felt that the paper by Riggins-Caspers and her colleagues (2003) outlined nicely the key propositions of bioecological theory, drawing on Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994). The study's purpose was to measure biology-environment communications through psychopathological contributions of biological and adoptive parents and their adopted adolescents' problem behaviour as a consequence of harsh discipline. The authors elucidated clearly the links between variables in their study and all of the fundamentals of Bronfenbrenner's model. Proximal processes were gauged through the children's adoptive parents' cruel disciplinary techniques, which were found to be predisposed both by person characteristics of the children (their predisposition to problem behavior, as assessed by their biological parents' degree of psychopathology) and by the environment (low or moderate level of adoptive parents' psychopathology). Unfortunately, this measure of environment was inferred from person-related characteristics (drug and alcohol problems, lawful difficulties, depression, nervousness, and other psychological problem) and not assessed directly as the theory requires. The outcome of interest was the children's current expression of problem behavior, which was found to be influenced both by childhood predispositions and by the level of their adoptive parents' psychopathology (Tudge, 2008).

In the research conducted by Tudge and his colleagues (2003), proximal processes were assessed via children's typically occurring communications with objects, materials, and people within their most common microsystems (home and child-care setting). This was accomplished by observing each child in the study for a total of 20 hours. Person characteristics, explicitly developmentally instigative characteristics, were also assessed in parents and children. For example, the authors measured parents' beliefs about child rearing and the children's motivation in choosing and sustaining activities. In terms of context, two macro systems were assessed, middle-class and working-class families from a single city in the south eastern United States. Finally, time was included in the study as the assessed child outcomes at three ages the observations of daily activities and communications were accomplished when the children were 3 years old, and their teachers' perception of their academic competence was assessed at the end of the children's first and second years of school. This study, it was felt, did a good job of applying Bronfenbrenner's theory in a systematic fashion (Tudge, 2008).

3.8 Criticism of Bronfenbrenner's models

Although generally well received, Urie Bronfenbrenner's models have encountered some criticism throughout the years. Most criticism centres on the difficulties to empirically test the theory and model and the broadness of the theory that makes it challenging to intervene at any given level. Some examples of critiques (Tudge, 2008) of the theory are:

- Challenging to evaluate all components empirically.
- Difficult explanatory model to apply because it requires extensive scope of ecological detail with which to build up meaning that everything in someone's environment needs to be taken into account.
- Tendency to view children as objects.
- Failure to acknowledge that children positively cross boundaries to develop complex identities.
- Inability to recognise that children's own constructions of family are more complex than traditional theories account for.
- The systems around children are not always linear.
- Preoccupation with achieving "normal" childhood without a common understanding of "normal".
- Fails to see that the variables of social life are in constant interplay and that small variables can change a system.
- Misses the tension between control and self-realisation in child-adult relationships; children can shape culture.
- Underestimates abilities, overlooks rights/ feelings/ complexity.
- Provides too little attention to biological and cognitive factors in children's development.
- Does not address developmental steps that are the focus of theories like Piaget's and Erikson's (Tudge, 2008, 2003).

3.9 Misuses of Bronfenbrenner's Theory

Theory has a significant role to play in developmental and family studies, it is surely essential to relate it correctly in research. Failure to do so means that it has not been tested appropriately; data actually supporting the theory do no such thing if the theory has been inaccurately described, and, by the same token, a misrepresented theory is resistant to attack from non-supportive data. One possible explanation is that some scholars simply want to present some general theoretical support for their

views that the environments in which developing individuals exist have an influence on their development or that both environments and the individuals themselves are prominent. This cliché hardly needs to be sustained theoretically, and these authors could have satisfied themselves simply by citing Bronfenbrenner; they stated, however, that their research was based on or informed by his theory, or model, or framework. Could it be the case that some scholars who state that they are drawing on his theory are unaware of the changes in Bronfenbrenner's theory?

The two main group authors stated explicitly that they were using "Bronfenbrenner's theory," "Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model," or something similar. Those in the first group, nevertheless, used primarily Bronfenbrenner's writings from the 1970s, those in the second group incorporated references from the 1980s, and the final group drew unambiguously on Bronfenbrenner's work from the 1990s but without paying attention to what lies at the heart of the established theory proximal processes.

Even in the 1970s the theory was not about contextual influences on development but on context-individual communications, and from 1994 the theory was quite clear that proximal processes were the instrument of improvement and that they were adapted by both the environment and the individuals engagedin those proximal processes. As distinguished above, authors aspiring to investigate an earlier version of the theory may, of course, do so, but in that case they must make unambiguous their intention. Failure to do that, and disregarding the key alterations to the theory, constitutes a falsification of the theory. In the first group, the authors treated the theory as though it either dealt exclusively with environmental influences on improvement or on environmental and individual features, but without any attention paid to proximal processes (Tudge, 2008).

Weigel, Martin and Bennett (2005), Ying and Han (2006), Yu and Stiffman (2007) focused interest exclusively on one or more of the contextual "systems" on which Bronfenbrenner concentrated in his 1979 book. Several of the other authors (Kulik & Rayyan, 2006; Schwebel & Brezausek, 2007) focused first and foremost on contextual influences on development, although they also examined individual influences. Two sets of authors (Atzaba-Poria & Pike, 2008; Stewart, 2007) took seriously the interactional nature of the theory as it existed in the late 1970s; an ecological position is one that centres on individual-environment interrelations. Stewart sought to "determine the ecological factors (features of the person and of the environment) that contribute to the academic achievement of African American adolescents" (p 17), and Atzaba-Poria and Pike (2008) proposed that 'parents' behavior is influenced by child characteristics... the proximal social context . . . and the more distal

social context" (p 18). In none of these cases, however, was there any talk of proximal processes, let alone an endeavour to measure them (Tudge, 2008).

The second group consists of seven papers (Chenoweth & Galliher, 2004; Grogan-Kaylor & Otis, 2007; Johnston, Swim, Saltsman, Deater-Deckard, & Petrill, 2007; Jones, Forehand, Brody, & Amistead, 2003; Singal, 2006; Voydanoff, 2005) whose authors relied principally on Bronfenbrenner's ideas from the 1980s. Each set of authors focused their most important attention on contextual factors, even though they all distinguished the value of individual factors. Chenoweth and Galliher (2004) stated that ecological systems theory served as the theoretical basis for their study of students' college aspirations, but cited two sources (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986), neither of which overtly referred to ecological systems theory (Tudge, 2008).

Nevertheless, none of these studies involved the type of systemic person-process-context analysis for which Bronfenbrenner had argued from 1983 to 1989, let alone any thought of the mature form of the theory. Jones et al. (2003) argued that they were "extrapolating" from Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) position that "multiple environments . . . in which families lives cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive but rather as 'systems' that jointly influence familial behaviour" (p. 437). To be fair, Jones and her colleagues included in their study of parental monitoring both "structural variables" (e.g., characteristics of the family and the neighbourhood) and "psychological variables" (maternal depression, child problem behaviour, and co-parenting conflict) that may manipulate parental monitoring. They failed, however, to recognise or examine the person-context interactional aspects of the 1970s and 1980s versions of Bronfenbrenner's theory. Grogan-Kaylor and Otis (2007) did better incidentally, although they relied on the 1979 book and one paper from the 1980s. In both papers improvement was assumed to be a joint function of the person and the environment, and person characteristics were included as an important component of improvement. Grogan-Kaylor and Otis (2007) also mentioned components of the chronosystem, building on Bronfenbrenner's position that historical events and situations impact improvement. Johnston et al. (2007) cited Bronfenbrenner (1986) as well as the 1979 book and argued that they were using a person–process–context design, first discussed in Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1983). Regrettably, from the viewpoint of application of the mature form of the theory, "process" at this time was not yet conceptualised as proximal processes and had yet to be placed at the forefront of the theory. Furthermore, there is little evidence, at least from this paper, that Johnston and her colleagues considered processes in the way that Bronfenbrenner, in the mature form of the theory, fixed, although they had data that could have been used for this purpose. For example, they were engrossed

in the degree to which mothers engaged in racial, ethnic, and cultural socialisation customs; and the relation between racial, ethnic, and cultural socialisation and "child adjustment" (p. 398). Their evaluation of cultural socialisation practices asked mothers the degree to which they engaged in an assortment of customs, with possible responses ranging from several times a week to never. Furthermore, the authors also took into account both the adopted children's age and their country of birth (Korea or China). In principle, therefore, it would have been realistic to analyse these data using the PPCT model.

3.10 Summary

The Ecological Systems Theory directly elucidates the circumstances under study and will consequently be used to underpin this study. To conclude the systems theory is appropriate to the study in that, it explains that the family or parents, educators and the school as well as learners cannot function independent of one another. If the family background of the learner is not sound, school performance is likely to be affected (Chili, 2006).

Chapter Four

4. Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methods and design that were utilised to produce data to address and generate answers to the research questions posed in this study. This chapter presents a comprehensive explanation of the research approach, the strategies utilised during data production and data analysis. This chapter also reports on the process of the study conducted on the relationship between academic performances, school ethos and school categorisation in different quintile ranking schools. As already indicated, the purpose of undertaking this study was to develop better understanding of school cultures that have the potential of enabling good academic performance and in the process develop better understanding of leadership associated with the formation of such cultures.

This study employs the qualitative paradigms. Various methods of data gathering, data sense making and data analysis were employed. Mason (2017) points to other critical issues that ought to be elucidated in the research process. These include defining and choosing a sample, ensuring the trustworthiness of data and findings, ethical considerations and the timeline for the project. I provide theoretical justification for the design and indicate how the methods were applied practically in the process of conducting the research. These will also be addressed hereunder.

It is imperative to firstly differentiate between the concepts, 'method' and 'methodology', as different authors and textbooks on research methodology uses these terms differently. In order to be consistent in the use of these terms in this study, a brief overview will be provided here under. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) expound that methods refer to measures used in the process of data gathering which, in turn, is used as a basis for, amongst others, assumptions, elucidations, rationalisation and prediction. Patton (2015) on the other hand, affirms that methodology is the postulations about the research, what is to be studied, and how it is to be studied and also entails theoretical principles and frameworks that provide a course of action about how research is to be undertaken in the context of a particular paradigm. These include the epistemological, rhetorical, ontological, and methodological aspects. The methodology employed in any research study is

governed by the paradigm (in this case an interpretive paradigm) in which the researcher views the world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Smith and Ashiabi (2007) suggest a framework wherein a particular world view yields ontological assumptions (that deal with the nature of being, reality and existence); these give rise to epistemological assumptions (a philosophy or theory of knowledge or what counts as valid knowledge). The interpretation of this underlying framework therefore sets out the methodological framework in order to invent an appropriate research design.

4.2 Underpinning conceptions

This segment begins with a brief interrogation of the conceptions that informed the selection of the methodology through which this study was conducted, and then proceeds with a more detailed discussion of the methodology.

The decision to interrogate my conceptions of research and humanity before selecting the methodology by means of which I was to conduct this study was informed by a view that unless I precede the selection by interrogating the conceptions, my research would lack coherence and integrity (Cohen, et al., 2007). Arising from the interrogation were diverse personal conceptions at all levels. Consequently, even though investigations conducted in this study were basically inclined towards qualitative and subjective research investigation guidelines, the investigations also incorporated quantitative and objective research directions.

4.3 The Ontology

What came to light from the cross-examinations was that my conception at this level was primarily nominal in nature but also tended to include practicality. Informing this point of reference was an argument that even though meanings attached to human behaviour are fundamentally determined by realisation and cognition, the behaviour itself is an actual reality around occurring autonomously of meanings resulting from consciousness and cognition. Emerging from this was that even though different people interpret the world differently, some behavioural aspects are bona fide things with a life of their own (Creswell & Poth, 2017). For example, even though the analogy is probably too unsophisticated, a particular child jumping over a stone will be seen as a child jumping over a stone by all who observe the event. The jump therefore can be measured objectively for variables such as height or length. This is even though the measurements themselves and, crucially, the interpretations of the jumper's intentions may mean different things to different observers. What this meant in

relation to this study was that even though ethos and leadership are social constructions bound to be construed differently by different participants and researchers, failure to recognise some realism about the concepts would reduce the study's reliability. The thinking was that such a failure would close the door against matters which, if accessed both subjectively and objectively, would provide better understanding of the concepts of focus in this study. This conceptualisation led to a conclusion that if full understanding of concerns being researched in this study was to be expanded, data collection would then need to be triangulated, as discussed in more detail in the section on triangulation below. It was felt, for example, that leadership is a real incidence, out there, which needed to be identified objectively while it's meaning to participants needed to be explored subjectively. As a consequence, the recognition of leaders at the sampled schools was accomplished by means of the objective interview schedule, while subjective perceptions of the leadership were explored by the subjective instrument of observations.

4.4 Research design

The research design reports on the design and process of the study conducted on the relationship between academic performances, school culture and school categorisation in different quintile ranking schools. As already indicated, the purpose of undertaking this study was to develop better understanding of school cultures that have the potential of enabling good academic performance and in the process build up enhanced understanding of leadership linked with the formation of such cultures.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), a research design is a plan of the way in which the researcher will methodically collect and analyse the appropriate data necessary to answer the research question. The underlying discussion will thus outline and justify the research design. The design presents the various elements comprising the process by which the data were produced, arguing for its significance, consistency and reliability. A rationale which integrates theoretical corroboration and practical application is provided for the research approach selected and the methods of data analysis engaged. Issues relating to the dependability of the research instrument and the credibility of the findings are also discussed.

Interpretive research designs allow the researcher to interrelate closely with the participants in order to gain insights and form unambiguous understandings (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Interpretivism does not have to rely on 'total immersion in a setting' and can happily support a study which uses

interview methods and other methods. Positivist paradigm assumes that there is just one reality and that it is stable (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Patton, 2015). The results of qualitative research are descriptive and analytic rather than predictive (Flick, 2015), as it is the case with positivist research. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) refer to qualitative researchers as guests in the private spaces of the world.

4.5 The interpretivist paradigm

It is essential to keep in mind that the adopted research paradigm manifests itself as an interpretive social science approach focusing on one school. Interpretive approaches view people and their elucidations, observations and understandings as primary data sources. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018); Patton (2015) paradigms are systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. A paradigm informs a researcher's assumptions about the structure of knowledge, the ways in which knowledge can be attained and communicated to others, who is the knower and what criteria should be used to establish the knowledge. The researcher must make certain that there is consistency, meaning that the research question and methods must fit logically within the paradigm in which the researcher is working. In order to guarantee this coherence, the interpretive paradigm frames this research.

The interpretive paradigm is useful in understanding a participant's conduct, feelings, viewpoints, beliefs, understanding and insights. These are things that cannot be easily measured. My intention was to examine and make sense of the situation from the viewpoint of the research participants (Patton, 2015). The data collection process spanned a period of three months. Case studies provide a thorough, holistic description of a single case (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) assert that an intrinsic case study takes place when a researcher wants to better understand a certain case. Rubin and Rubin (1995) claim that interpretative researchers begin with human beings and set out to recognise their understanding of the world around them. An interpretive research design allows a researcher to interrelate closely with the participants in order to gain insights and form clear understandings (Patton, 2015). Interpretivism does not rely on 'total immersion in a setting' and can happily support a study which uses interview methods and other methods such as observation.

Epistemologically, interpretivism is anti-positivist in nature. Simply put, epistemology is the philosophy or theory of knowledge, certainty and belief; it is also based on the premise that different kinds of settings, situations and interactions reveal data in multidimensional ways, and it is possible

for a researcher to be an interpreter or 'knower' in these circumstances precisely because of shared experience and participation. Given that the social ontology, that is, the natural world, environment and character of interpretivism is extremely subjective, the epistemology is likewise decidedly relativistic and restricted to the persons directly involved in the social activities. Knowledge and understanding can only be obtained by having the same frame of reference as the person; therefore, such knowledge is specifically subjective to the person's reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

In this study I accessed teachers' perspectives regarding school categorisation, their involvement in learners' academic performance and the ethos of the school. Working together with the participants, I created spaces that enabled participants to unreservedly voice and communicate their feelings and opinions with regard to learner problems. Corbin and Strauss (2008) endorses this approach, stating that qualitative data provide specific explanations of situations, actions, people's relations and practical behaviour, direct quotations from people about their experiences, beliefs and thoughts and excerpts or passages from documents and correspondence.

4.6 Research approach

4.6.1   Qualitative approach

In order to find out the challenges teachers face in education in primary schools, qualitative approach was used. Qualitative approach allows researchers to get at the inner experiences of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through culture and to discover rather than test variables (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 5). Creswell and Poth (2017) stress that qualitative research is in addressing a research problem which you do not know the variables and need to discover. In line with this, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) argue that qualitative methods are often regarded as providing rich information about real life people and circumstances and being more able to make sense of behaviour and understand it within its wider context. The natural setting of this study was in a classroom where the teaching process occurs. Teachers were observed and interviewed on how they teach in their classes. This helped me to find out how they teach the learners with special needs education. From this observation I was able to find out the challenges they face in the implementation of education and the reasons for learners poor academic performance. Qualitative research uses interviews, observation, document analysis and audio-visual materials in data collection among others (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Denzin and Lincoln, (2018) offer some characteristics of a good qualitative study that its observation and immediate interpretations are validated through the use of more than one method of data collection, its report assists readers to make their own interpretation. Another characteristic is that qualitative study is sensitive to the peril of human subjects' research and lastly, is its researchers are not just methodologically informed and experienced in some substantive discipline but proficient in the relevant disciplines. Furthermore, some of the characteristics of qualitative research as stressed by Patton (2015) is that it helps in exploring a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon. Another characteristic is stating the purpose and research questions in a general and broad way so as to fully understand the participants' experiences. An additional one is it allows collecting information based on words from a small group of individuals so that the participants view is obtained. Furthermore it helps in analysing the data for description and themes by text analysis and interpreting more meaning of the findings. The last characteristic is in writing the report using flexible, emerging structures and evaluative criteria, and including the researchers' subjective reflexivity and bias.

The reasons that I selected qualitative approach are; the characteristics above support the provision of detailed information from the research participants. Qualitative approach allowed me to get into participants' personal world and gain deeper and clear understanding of their experiences and feelings. The nature of the study and kind of data to be obtained demanded this approach for example personal interviews and observation.

4.6.2 Research methodology

This study has adopted an interpretivist, qualitative study research comprising of two schools.In my study I engaged case study design to be able to answer the research. Patton (2015) provides the definition of a case study that is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry. He also views case study as a research strategy with a strong descriptive purpose. Case study has an inclination of allowing flexibility of the instrument used in data collection and permits reasonable research of the study. Creswell and Poth (2017) explain that the case study is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a case or cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection. For example the sources of information can be observation, interview, audio-visual material and documents and reports. In my case I have used observation and interview. Choosing case study in my research design helped me to investigate deeply the challenges teachers face in

implementation of inclusive education. Case study is important because by using it I was able to collect sufficient data as the focus was on a small population.

According to Creswell and Poth (2017) there are several procedures one has to undergo when conducting a case study in qualitative research. They explained some of the procedures which are; firstly, researchers should determine if a case approach is appropriate to the research problem. Secondly, researchers need to identify their case or cases. Thirdly, data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on various sources of information, such as observation, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials. The next course of action is that the type of analysis of this information can be a holistic analysis of the whole case or an entrenched analysis of the specific feature of the case. In the last interpretative phase is that, the researcher should report the meaning of the case. This stage is also referred to as, the lesson learned. I have chosen the case of two primary schools because of a fit understanding of this specific study which elucidated the ethos of both the researched schools in relation to their categorisation and learner performance.

According to Cohen et al. (2007) a case study researcher, can bring a case to life, as well as, designing educational interventions, or taking some other actions. Furthermore a thick description assists readers to compare cases with their own situations. A good case study report will disclose the researcher's perspective and enable the readers to determine whether the investigator has the same perspective on the phenomenon as they do. Also case study is emergent quality in a sense that researchers can change the case on which the study will focus, adopt new data collection methods and frame new research questions. The disadvantages of a case study are; it is challenging to generalise the findings to other situations. Also ethical issues may rise if it shows difficulties in the report to cover the character of the society or those who were studied. Furthermore case studies are highly labour intensive and require extremely developed language skills in order to identify constructs, themes and patterns in verbal data and to write a report that brings the case alive for the reader.

As identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2018), intrinsic case study is carried out because one wants a good understanding of a particular case. Furthermore many case researchers rely on subjective data such as the declaration of participants but to make empirical data more objective there should be the use of replicative and triangulation methods. This is also emphasised by Patton (2015) that intrinsic case study is more significant to sufficiently represent the case than to draw generalisations. Therefore, in my research I used observation and interview as insisted in case study designs that the

use of more than two ways of data collection might help a case study researcher to avoid subjective data.

4.7 Background of the researched schools

Purposive and convenience selection was used to recognise the schools for participation in the study. It is purposive in the sense that I have chosen schools which complied with particular specific characteristics as it is in the context of different quintile rankings (Patton, 2015). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), purposive sampling is a characteristic of qualitative research, whereby researchers handpick cases to be part of the sample on the basis of their typicality or peculiar characteristic. Purposive sampling essentially starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest, those who have in-depth knowledge by merit of their professional role, power, expertise or understanding and eliminates those who do not suit the purpose (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

For the purposes of this study, two primary schools were chosen. The study sought to explore whether school categorisation and ethos has an influence on learner's academic performance. A quintile one school and a quintile five ranking school was a natural selection. The choice of a particular school type and school was guided by three criteria. These included knowledge of schools that are no-fees school and that of fee-paying school, a school that has a diverse learner and teacher population so that different perspectives from diverse cultures and backgrounds could be derived and access to the school.

A quintile one ranking primary school was purposively chosen as the case study school as it provided a case that is set within an impoverished community (no fees) and has a diverse learner and staff population. A social inventory of the researched school revealed that the school is positioned in the heart of a traditionally poor community with learners coming from mainly middle and working class families. The staff at the school consisted of a principal, a deputy principal, four heads of departments and 25 teachers. The learner population was 950, of which 501 were boys and 449 were girls. The school had 21 graded class units, each averaging approximately 43 learners, ranging from Grade RR to Grade seven. The majority of learners who seek admission at the school were from the settlements around the area and the surrounding community. There were also a large number of learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds that travelled long distances to attend this

school. Access to this school is by public roads that are untarred and dusty. The school is located within a public transportation route.

About three kilometres away a quintile five ranking primary school was also purposively chosen as the case study school. A social inventory of the researched school revealed that the school is situated in the heart of an affluent community with learners coming from mainly middle and working class families as well as traditionally poor surrounding communities. The staff at the school also consisted of a principal, a deputy principal, three heads of departments and 20 teachers. The learner population was 889, of which 440 were boys and 449 were girls. The school had 16 graded class units, each averaging approximately 40 learners, ranging from Grade RR to Grade seven. It was revealed that the majority of learners who seek admission at the school were from the settlements around the area and the surrounding community and very few were from the community itself. Here too there were also a large number of learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds that travelled long distances to attend this school. Access to this school is by public roads that are tarred and is located within a public transportation route.

4.8 Research participants

4.8.1   Selection of participants

This study was conducted using a relatively small sample size of initially two principals and 8 teachers which were drawn from two different quintile ranking schools. The principal and four teachers were selected from each of the purposively sampled schools. I adopted the concept of snowballing where the number of participants grew according to references made by the initial group in their interviews as well as from my continued observations. I was alert to the fact that one or more of the participants might withdraw from the project for various reasons. I used the reference technique to replace these participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The educators provided rich data that addressed the research questions, which focused on factors and situations that were relative to school categorisation, learner performance and school ethos. The results from case studies are, however, not meant to be generalised, but allow for generativity. This is due largely to the nature of the data; circumstances may be unique to different sample sets, hence leading to different results. The main aim of the research study was to capture the essence of

education within the different quintile ranking schools. The results may thus be generalised to any other areas which share similar characteristics.

4.9 Research instruments

4.9.1   Selection of data production methods

Methods refer to the rules and procedures that are followed to conduct empirical research consequently (Patton, 2015). The two main methods that I used in generating data for this study were observation and semi-structured interviews.

Qualitative data consisted of semi-structured interviews and field observations that were analyzed using coding to develop themes and categories. Observational research procedures solely involve the researcher making observations because observations are usually flexible and do not necessarily need to be prearranged around a hypothesis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Observations allowed the researcher to record a description of what happened in the research site. Cohen et al. (2007) maintains that observational data are attractive as they provide the researcher with the opportunity to gather live data from live situations. I documented multiple observations, starting before the school day commenced, and ending in the afternoon after school.

During my observation of the school day I took note of as many variables as possible which included learner dress (school uniform, hair and shoes), learner behaviour, educator's attitude to learners, learner's attitude to school and the procedures for the school day as well as the school infrastructure. All my observations were written into my journal in detail. I included as much detail as possible in order to generate enough data to render a substantial description during my analysis.

I chose observation because the data that I needed to answer some of the research questions may not readily be available in other forms of data collection. Retrospective accounts of interactions would be inadequate to fully achieve because the situational dynamics of the school setting can never be fully reported by people who have participated in them because they will only have a partial knowledge or understanding of them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In order to capture all or some of these aspects of people's lives, more than one method of data collection and analysis was needed (Patton, 2015). In similar manner, I recorded my observations of episodes at the school over the 3

month research period. These included observations on the part of learners (in and outside the classroom), issues that emerged in schools and how teachers handled these problems. These kinds of observations confirms Cohen et al.'s (2007) postulation that observations enable the researcher to gather data on the physical, human, interactional and programme setting. The observation was conducted overtly (where everyone knows they are being observed) and directly because of ethical problems related to concealing observations. Direct observation is when you watch interactions, processes, or behaviours as they occur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Hence, the observations provided an opportunity to use observed events, activities, and occurrences during the interviews with the selected teachers. These observations provided points of reference and stimulations on which educators were able to reflect and enabled them to expand on learner problems and the supervision thereof during the one-on-one interviews.

The construction and design of the interview schedule involved numerous drafts and modifications that were made until the final research instrument was created. In this regard, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) assert that a researcher uses a semi-structured interview to gain a detailed depiction of participants' perceptions of a particular topic. I prepared questions for respondents before the interviews and the interview was guided by an agenda. I believed that by posing open-ended questions to the selected respondents, they would be encouraged to articulate their opinions on the questions. Semi-structured interviews allow for a researcher to pursue certain interesting avenues that emerged in the interview and for the respondents to provide greater depth to the discussion.

Patton, (2015) asserts that the interviews are a decisive communication between two or more people who are in the process of conversation and negotiation for the specific purposes associated with some agreed subject matter. Through the interviews the participants had the opportunity to discuss and answer probing questions related to the phenomenon. In this study, the interview was used with the aim of providing the participant with the opportunity to speak and construct their reality with the purpose of obtaining deeper insight into issues relating to the research project. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) maintain that semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in answering questions. The semi-structured interview was utilised to create a frank, open and interactive mode which allowed more in-depth discussions since the researcher had the opportunity to probe and ask further questions that clarified the responses.

Interviewing as well as observations are effective methods of gaining in depth data from a small number of people. These methods are most appropriate for the study due to its flexibility and the fact that it allows participants to express themselves freely. These data generation methods bring different persons and personalities together. Cohen et al. (2007) commends semi-structured interviews and observations for providing much more scope for discussions. These views about semi-structured interviews and observations are shared by many qualitative research scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln (2018) and Patton (2015). Permission and prior arrangements were made with the selected school for the interviews with participants so that it did not affect the normal functioning of the school.

4.9.2   Process of data collection

Observed activities which provided data on the schools' cultures and leadership included morning assemblies; school yard, informal staff room and formal classroom conversations and interactions; meetings; extra-mural activities; and special occasions such as a teacher's farewell party, the whole school development workshop and the inter-house athletics competitions. The observations were scheduled to initially focus on the school's culture before focusing on the schools' leadership. However, as data collection progressed it soon became apparent that the two concepts were in reality inseparable and actually occurred side by side to inform one another. As a result, the two ended up being observed concurrently. The observations were mainly non-participant, except on five occasions when participant observations were undertaken in the form of tests and examination invigilation: twice at both schools. The latter provided opportunities for ascertaining the degree to which student behaviour observed in the presence of teachers was embedded in a normative way or depended on constant teacher control.

The reason non participant observations were opted for even though participant observation is generally considered first choice for grounded theory was linked to the broad focus of the study. Participant observations would have prevented observer spontaneity by restricting movement from one activity to another as prompted by insights from emerging data. This would have deprived the study of opportunities for observing a number of activities that stood to provide further enlightening data. Linked to the non-participant decision was time limitation in that data had to be gathered over a period of six weeks.

Also determining the nature of observations in this study was one other gap identified in preceding school effectiveness research regarding the tendency to focus on school level variables to the exclusion of classroom level variables. Findings from such studies present incomplete pictures which provide limited assistance to school improvement given that analyses show that most of the differences among schools is due to classroom distinction (Charmaz, 2014). The gap prompted a decision to conduct observations at both school and classroom levels in the hope that the combination would provide a more complete picture of the relationship between the schools' academic performance, cultures and leadership.

4.9.3   School level observations

Initial observations at this level were unstructured and focused on the most obvious manifestations of school culture - the visible and audible - for example, the state of buildings and grounds and patterns of behaviour, speech and interactions. Structuring was made as observations progressed and categories began emerging. For example, when it became apparent that behaviour at School A was consensual, it became necessary for observations to assess the degree of consensus and the 'cause' of the consensus. School A could then serve as a point of comparison. One other form of structuring came about as I had commented on the relaxed manner in which learners moved from one lesson to the other. The impression gained at this stage was of a lack of discipline.

The question on whether the relaxation involved 'dodging' classes led to a structuring aimed at assessing whether this was the case. The structuring proved to be quite useful in that it revealed that the tranquil manner pointed to a relaxed but purposeful culture. At no time did the relaxation point to a desire to avoid succeeding classes. Instead, it appeared to give learners a necessary recovery break of about five minutes when taking into consideration the robustness in their classes compared to the situation at School B where time was allegedly 'saved' by not having learners moving to different places at the end of periods.

4.9.4   Classroom level observations

The purpose of classroom observations was to compare ethos observed at classroom levels with those observed at school level. Although observations at this level were also mainly unstructured, the initial observations were semi-structured along the lines of an instrument developed by Moos for class culture observations (Charmaz, 2014). The instrument consists of the following categories:

(a) Stress on academic achievement,

(b) Importance on rules,

(c) Supportive/ participative behaviour,

(d) The extent of innovative performance.

Newer categories emerged as observations progressed including, for example, the degree of participative behaviour and the nature of interactions between teachers and learners, and amongst learners themselves.

4.9.5   Semi-structured interviewing

One other set of tools utilised for gathering information for the study included semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviewing involves direct interaction between the researcher and a participant or group. It differs from traditional structured interviewing in several important ways. First, although the researcher may have some initial guiding questions or core concepts to ask about, there is no formal structured instrument or protocol. Second, the interviewer is free to shift the conversation in any direction of interest that may come up. Consequently, unstructured interviewing is particularly useful for exploring a topic broadly. However, there is a price for this lack of structure. Because each interview tends to be unique with no predetermined set of questions asked of all participants, it is usually more difficult to analyse unstructured interview data, especially when synthesising across participants.

Semi-structured informal interviews were entered into with school community members whenever opportunity and need arose. The chats helped elicit information and explanations on observed cultural and leadership aspects needing clarification. An example of such chats was with the group of teachers that had been observed spending all of their tea breaks gathered under the shade of a particular tree next to the main gate. What was learned in this chat was that the practice began as a deterrent for intruders to the school.

Each interview began in an open-ended manner. These involved requesting participants to describe what the two concepts of main concern in this study, namely, school ethos and leadership, meant to them. This was followed with a brief exposition of meanings given to the concepts for this study. The purpose was to establish shared understanding between interviewer and interviewee on the

concepts. Once this had been established the interviewees were then requested to describe their schools' ethos and leadership. Such open enedness helped relax the interviewees. By getting interviewees to say whatever came first to their minds in relation to their schools' ethos and associated leadership, the interviewees were being afforded an opportunity to convey what was of major importance to them in relation to these concepts. More semi-structured questioning and probing succeeded the open ended questioning. The probing helped elicit additional information and obtain clarification on issues raised by participants.

One problem experienced regarding this form of data gathering related to interview scheduling. It had been easy to schedule interviews with individual staff. Some staff members who initially had been selected to constitute staff focus groups were later excluded because class commitments meant that not all of the proposed teacher interview participants were available at times. Noise during breaks also meant interviews could not be conducted at this time. As a result, interviews were ultimately determined by staff availability at the scheduled times.

4.10   Analysis of data

Data was analysed by means of a framework associated with grounded theory formulation, as described below. Emerging from conceptions and concerns discussed above was a view that if this study was to achieve the desired outcome, there was a need not only for a methodology that was qualitative but also one that generated theory grounded on gathered data rather than on advance hypotheses (Charmaz, 2014). An advantage of grounded theory for this study was that, being methodically derived from concrete data associated to the phenomenon under study, it stood to provide guidelines for practice related to the study phenomena and context (Engward, 2013). The approach facilitates this through a process in which "theories are inductively generated from robust data patterns, elaborated through the construction of plausible models, and explained in terms of their explanatory coherence" (Charmaz, 2014) as opposed to the "hypothetico - deductive practice of testing "great man" sociological theories" (Charmaz, 2014). The lure for grounded theory for this study therefore lay in the approach's 'problem-solving' capacity derived from the rigor of the methodology. Guiding the analysis, therefore, were processes designed to:
• produce rather than test theory;
• give the research process the rigor necessary to make the theory 'good' science;
• Help the research analyst break through the biases and assumptions brought to and which could be developed during the research process; and

• provide foundation, build the thickness, and develop the sensitivity and integration needed to generate a rich, tightly woven, explanatory theory that approximates the reality it presents (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Guiding the analysis of data collected by means of interviews and observations was Schein's (1997, cited by Lumby, 2003, p 163) observation that "culture is not easily decoded, embedded as it is in the thinking, actions and artefacts of a community". Taking a cue from this analysis meant focusing on identifying what people felt was important, and what they valued and allocated additional resources such as time. In this way it was hoped to move beyond the rhetoric which is the danger of self-reported data, to locate values as signalled by those activities which attracted both espoused commitment and commitment in action" (Flick, (2015). In response to this advice, the analysis of data from interviews and observation involved the:

• location of patterns and themes;

• checking of themes against observed actions; and

• articulation of assumptions underlying leadership actions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

4.10.1 The processing of the data

The responses to the semi-structured interviews, that is, the open-ended questions were addressed through content analysis. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The method of member check was adopted, whereby once the data was transcribed, the respondent was given the transcript to confirm, add or delete unnecessary information. This procedure also contributed to the validity and soundness of this study. The transcripts were then subjected to qualitative content analysis by identifying key significant points and then grouping them into themes, categories and sub-categories. The data was then coded for the purposes of acquiring information and significance, as well as reviewed repeatedly and decoded for the actual interpretation. Coding involves breaking up the data in ways that are systematically relevant (Flick, 2015). The authentic 'voices' from the interviews were also incorporated in the study so as to validate the explanations.

4.10.2 Process of analysis of recorded data

The true test of a competent researcher in qualitative research is the analysis of the data, which requires methodical craftsmanship and the ability to understand the data in writing (Denzin & Lincoln (2018). In this study, I analysed and interpreted the collected data with the purpose of

bringing direction and organisation to information (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The data analysis process ensured that the data generated allowed me to produce reliable, valid and trustworthy findings. Data analysis is the process of selecting, sorting, sharpening, focusing and discarding. Once the data was recorded, it was transcribed into written format for qualitative data analysis purposes. This comprised of reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to become familiar with the content of the interviews and also with a view to identifying codes of meaning. Once codes were created, they were grouped together to form themes. The entire analysis process was done manually; I did not make use of any qualitative data analysis software. This process is generally referred to as content analysis. Creswell and Poth (2017) assert that content analysis focuses on identifying themes that might emerge from the data.

Observational research techniques solely involve a researcher or researchers making observations. There are many positive aspects of the observational research approach. Observations are usually flexible and do not necessarily need to be structured around a hypothesis. For example, before undertaking more structured research a researcher may conduct observations in order to form a research question. This is called descriptive research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In terms of validity, observational research findings are considered to be strong. Flick (2015) states, that, validity is the best available approximation to the truth of a given proposition, inference, or conclusion. Observational research findings are considered strong in validity because the researcher is able to collect in-depth of information about a particular behaviour.

My observations of the school setting placed considerable emphasis on the claim that the data occurred naturally or situationally in a contextual setting rather than being artificially manufactured or reconstructed. I conceptualised myself as active and reflexive in the observation process in order to render a broad description. This description was not just an integrated set of facts transcribed from field notes but captured the everyday practices, rituals and actions that bound the group of people, the signs and symbols they used to present and represent themselves and the language or variations of language they used.

The analysing and writing stages of observed research also mark the point where researchers wed their stories with the stories of research participants. This marriage represents the ultimate goal of qualitative research: to produce a text that in the end provides a clearer understanding of the cluster or culture's behaviour, and by doing so helps us better understand our own individual or group behaviours (De Vos, Delport, Fouché, Strydom, 2011).

My observation culminated in synthesising and interpreting the observed data into an understandable and enlightening piece of writing. As I observed, I analysed data and wrote parts of the final report throughout the research process. In analysing descriptive data, I reviewed what was witnessed and recorded, and synthesised it with the observations and words of the participants themselves.

4.11   Triangulation

As already stated, emerging from the nature of the study, together with research conceptions determining the choice of the methodology for conducting the study, was a conviction that data gathering needed to be triangulated if it was to provide reliable data. The reliability was of crucial importance taking into consideration that the purpose was to provide findings that would contribute to understanding school improvement efforts aimed at improving academic performance. The instruments that constituted the triangulation included observations, mainly non-participant, but also occasionally participant and semi-structured interviews. The triangulation was to provide concurrent validity (Flick, 2015). This was seen to be of particular importance in a study that was qualitative in nature and which therefore exposed data to selective filtering through personal experience and bias and, as such, was susceptible to misrepresentation.

4.12   Validity and reliability issues

4.12.1 Trustworthiness

It is important for any research that its findings and the entire process is accepted in the research community as credible (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Different traditions have their own ways of ensuring that research conducted within that particular tradition is judged to be trustworthy. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) for instance have come up with a model for ensuring trustworthiness comprising the four criteria, namely credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Credibility was ensured by firstly observing ethical practice such as voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity. For example, I assured participants that their contribution would be anonymous. This resulted in them talking freely without any fear of identification and victimisation that might result (Flick, 2015). Secondly, credibility was ensured through using both different data gathering methods and different data sources (Patton, 2015). Dependability of the findings was ensured by the use of an inquiry audit in which reviewers examined both the process and the product of the research for consistency (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Simply

put, I ensured that all the research processes were carried out as planned in terms of the case study design requirements within the naturalistic inquiry traditions.

Confirmability was undertaken through the member-checking exercise. Mertens and McLaughlin (2004) assert that trustworthiness can be ensured by using member-checking technique to ascertain whether the participants agree with the recorded version of the interviews. Observing ethical conduct is one of the ways which I believe enhances credibility and dependability of the study.

A shortcoming of observations lies in their inability to consistently acquire deep understanding of cultures under observation (Schein, 1985). To overcome this shortcoming, data gathering was triangulated, as described above. Further increasing reliability in this study was the collection of data over a long period of time. This helped decrease the possibility of collecting unreliable data which sometimes occurs when data gathering takes place over a short time. In this case researchers end up with data resulting from participants having put on "a fabricated front". The length of time helped avoid this possibility by getting participants so used to my observations that they ended up carrying out their daily tasks and activities as they normally would do even when not being observed. That the latter was achieved became evident when I started getting responses indicating that I was being regarded as one of the school entities when requesting permission to undertake certain activities. To achieve validity, the study relied on continuous analysis interspersed with literature review. The insight that this provided helped identify further areas form observation and helped inform the construction of interview schedules.

4.12.2 Biases and how it was minimised

Qualitative researchers are concerned with how things work in a particular context on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), thus providing a further rationale for choosing this approach. Qualitative research is concerned about the way in which the world is known to us or can be known to us. In this scientific inquiry I interacted with the participants in a collective quest for answers to questions directed at the resistant character of the provided empirical world under study, that is, school categorisation, learner performance: the power of ethos.

In the rhetorical or oratorical (speaking) approach, participants are regarded as an element of the research paradigm (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In this regard, the participants and I made a practical

decision about the language that was utilised in the research paradigm. To promote quality data collection, participants must have freedom of choice in selecting language. All (IsiZulu) participants agreed on the medium of English as the language of communication, even though this was not their mother tongue. They were offered a choice of having a translator, but declined the offer. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) maintain that the choice of a common language will help to limit the possibilities of subjective bias in the interpretation and relativity of meaningful quality data collection. I approached data collection in an unorthodox rather than traditional way; that is, I tried to make the participants feel as comfortable as possible and went about the data collection process in a very casual way so as not to make the respondents nervous. Everything that was considered to be essential was noted. Creative reasoning was employed to obtain new thoughts about the teachers' role of learners' academic achievement in school (De Vos, Delport, Fouché, Strydom, 2011). The results of qualitative research are descriptive and analytic (Patton, 2015). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) refer to qualitative researchers as guests in the private spaces of the world.

Corbin and Strauss (2015) indicate that researchers, who observe a site without actual participation but are on the scene daily to explore issues, will gain more data than that obtained through interviews, documents or artefacts. Denzin & Lincoln (2018) recommends a classification of researcher roles in observation: as complete participant; participant observer; or observe as participant. My role in observation was that of a non-participant observer. This means that my role was non-intrusive; I simply recorded incidents of the factors being studied. The role of the non-participant observer was adopted to avoid interrupting the normal functionality of a school site and interactions and to ensure a natural setting. The data from the interviews were transcribed and given back to the participants to check for correctness of information. This was then used for the analysis and formed the basis for the findings of the study.

4.13   Ethical issues

As I developed the data elicitation techniques, I needed to take into cognisance the ethical issues and judge whether the research procedures were likely to cause any harm physically or emotionally. Some of the core ethical considerations taken into account in this study included informed consent, personal privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and preventing harm to respondents. Ethical issues that were attended to pertained to those that relate to research in general and those that pertained to the nature of this study in particular. The former was with reference to the right to dignity, knowledge and confidentiality. I needed to gain knowledge of the culture of the participants to ensure that it was

respected during the data collection process (Patton, 2015). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) assert that informed consent is a required clause, not a comfort or an obstacle. He further stresses that emphasis must be placed on precise and absolute information which will allow respondents to fully understand and comprehend the investigation and thereafter make a decision about their participation, which is voluntary and thoroughly informed. These involved taking extra effort with analysis in order to avoid inopportune implications should the analysis of the schools' ethos be incorrect. Included in the implications would be the hampering of intellectual and scientific progress in related fields and the obstruction of school improvement efforts should the schools decide to base their efforts on the findings of the study.

Letters seeking permission to conduct this study were forwarded to the District office and the chosen school advising them of the Department of Education's granting of permission to conduct the study and also to request permission and support from the school principals to undertake the study. After I obtained the necessary permission from the Department of Education to commence with the necessary interviews, I forwarded such approval to the UKZN Ethics Committee. I then met with the principals and discussed the aims and value of the study.

The Department of Education and the principals of the participating school were given the necessary assurance that teachers would not be disturbed while in the midst of their duties. Prior to the commencement of the semi-structured interviews and observation, the participants were briefed on the rationale for the study and were assured that any information provided by them would be used exclusively for the purposes of research, and that all information revealed would be treated with the strictest of confidence. Furthermore, they were assured that neither their names nor the name of their school would be quoted. All interviews were conducted at a place and time that was convenient to the participants. It was important that teaching and learning was not disturbed in any way due to the fact that teachers were participating in the study. I only started with the field work of interviews and observations after the UKZN Ethics Committee had granted ethical clearance to proceed with this study.

De Vos, Delport, Fouché and Strydom (2011) expound that anonymity refers to the principle that the identity of an individual is kept secret. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. This meant that their names were not disclosed to anyone, and therefore, they were not exposed to any harm. This is based on the principle of non-malfience (Cohen et al., 2007). The

consent form, signed by all participants (Patton, 2015), highlighted that the information shared with me would be kept strictly confidential; only my supervisor and I would receive the data provided and the identity of participants would not be disclosed in any reports on this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) assert that in most qualitative research, participants are known to the researchers and secrecy is virtually absent. Thus, it is imperative to provide participants with a great degree of confidentiality.

4.14 Limitations

This research study had certain limitations. De Vos, Delport, Fouché, Strydom (2011) mention that limitations empower the reader to appreciate what constraints were imposed on the study and to understand the context in which the research claims are set. A limitation to this study was that the interview and observation method was the only instrument used to gather information for this research. Explorations aimed at developing better understanding of the relationship between academic performances, school culture and school leadership were in this study conducted in only two schools of varying academic performance and categorisation. The size of the sample means that findings in this study are not generalisable with great confidence. To help overcome this limitation, analysis involved a reasoning that combined both inductivity and deductivity. While the strength of the former lay in findings emerging from gathered data, the latter helped draw conclusions from the findings on implications for the wider population. Also threatening limitation on the integrity of this study were time constraints. The constraints had data collection taking place over a protracted period (Glaser & Strauss, 1978). To help overcome this shortcoming, data gathering was as robust as it could be without appearing to be harassing. Clarification on observation data was, for example, sought as soon after the observations as possible.

Furthermore, the fact that data gathering was taking place concurrently at the two sample schools of varying academic performance helped sensitise data gathering and analysis to whatmight have otherwise taken longer to fit together or make sense of. Another limitation of this study is linked to its methodology. Even though the methodology suited the purpose of the study almost perfectly, the disadvantage of observation is that it occurs over a protracted period of time. This sometimes leaves observed participants feeling uncomfortable, tense, resentful or harassed. Observations created an unnatural situation that influenced the findings.

To reduce participant discomfort, observations were scheduled in such a way that they would not be confined to the same individuals or groups of individuals for long, continuous periods of time. For example, observations moved from one staffroom to another and from one classroom to another and at times focused solely on events occurring outside classrooms and staffrooms. One other means of reducing observer exhaustion related to note taking. Initially, field notes were taken continuously and concurrently with observations. This was discontinued when it became apparent that the practice was unsettling to some observees. Conveying the discomfort was a question by one of the teachers who jokingly cautioned her colleagues to refrain from a prank they were engaging in because: "She will record it". Following this comment, a decision was taken to take notes as discreetly as possible, for example, in classrooms that were not occupied during breaks, or by just jotting down key words I would then expand on later. This was particularly the case in relation to staffroom observations than it was regarding classroom observations. A limitation of this is the possibility that some important data was inevitably mislaid. It is, however, hoped that the length of time over which observations took place made up for data lost through the need to adopt measures that did not intimidate participant life (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

This study was conducted using a relatively small sample size of two principals and eight teachers drawn from two schools. It was restricted in terms of its transferability to other contexts or settings in different provinces and countries. I cannot make generalisations about a best fit approach to handling problems of different quintile ranking schools. While the specifics of the study cannot be generalised, the approach to the analysis of managing the problem of low academic achievement in different quintile ranking schools could well be applied fruitfully to other school and institutional settings.

4.15   Summary

This chapter highlighted how the research was planned and executed. A detailed account was provided of the methodological approach, methods of collecting data, and sampling procedures and a brief profile of the research was presented. The next chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, findings and discussion of the data.

Chapter Five

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study to produce the data. In this chapter I present aspects of the data produced through the chosen methodology. The focus of this study was on exploring the ethos of schools across quintile ranking and how these ethos influence learner performances across these schools. Hence, the data set for this chapter is on school ethos across two differently categorised quintile ranked schools as categorised by the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

Interviews with school managers and teachers and school observations across the two selected schools were the source of the data for the analysis. In addition, document analysis of relevant school documents were done to provide a school contextual analysis. Having presented the data thematically through a process of coding of data and as influenced by literature, the emerging analytics are then discussed. The significant findings that emerging through the data analysis are distilled and engaged within the latter section of this chapter.

Table 2: Contextual details of schools as obtained from documents analysed

Documents	Quintile One School	Quintile Five School
Admission policy	English is the medium of instruction for all learners attending the school. isiZulu and Afrikaans are offered to learners as a first additional language	English is the medium of instruction for all learners attending the school. Afrikaans is their first additional language (FAL). IsiZulu is not offered in the intermediate phase.
School improvement plans	To try and secure funds to open up a library and computer room.	To try and secure a feeding scheme from church organisations and business houses in order to sustain the learners who do not bring lunch to school
School allocations and budgets	R855 per learner from DBE.	R147 per learner from DBE.
Schedules of learner performance	90 percent pass rate over a period of five years	95 percent pass rate over a period of five years
Learner Population	950	889

The contents of each of the above documents were analysed and interpreted individually in order to establish areas of commonality with and divergence from each of the selected schools. Subsequently the findings from the documents were discussed and presented separately from data in the interviews**.** All participants and each of the selected schools were given pseudonyms.

Four level 1 teachers, one HOD (level 2) and the principal (level 4) from each school provided the qualitative data through the methods chosen for this study. The interviews were conducted with the use of a semi-structured interview schedule that allowed for probing questions to obtain clarity of information and further elaboration where needed.

5.2.   Differences between Sections 21 and 21 schools

The South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) dictates that Section 20 schools are those that are accorded the authority only to execute the general functions under Section 20 of the Act (Act No. 84 of 1996). Section 21 schools are those that have been approved the authority to execute the general functions under Section 20 as well as the additional functions of Section 21 as prescribed in the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996). The distinction between Sections 20 and 21 schools presents complications in the management of these public schools (Thwala, 2010).

5.2.1. Section 20 schools

Section 20 schools, unlike their Section 21 counterparts, procure their goods and services according to existing education departmental schedules. These Section 20 schools do not get lump sum allotments but are only informed of their budget and given a "paper budget" to prepare them to understand the actual costs of running the school (RSA, 1998, p. 28).

The funds for Section 20 schools remain with the respective provincial education department which controls the school's expenditure as follows:

- Maintenance of and upkeep to buildings: 12%
- Payments for services (municipal): 28%
- Learner support material, education material, equipment and curriculum needs: 60% (Mestry, 2004)

Funds that are not utilised and are allocated for Section 20 schools are returned to Treasury and are not rolled over for consumption in the next financial year. This disadvantages Section 20 schools and runs against the pro-poor provisions of the School Funding Norms (National Department of Education, 2003, p. 58). This arrangement could have the unintentional consequence of propagating discrimination among schools that the policy aims to remedy.

5.2.2. Section 21 schools

Section 21 functions are allocated by the Head of Department (HOD) of the Province"only if the school has the proven capacity. This is determined by considering that the school has managed its own funds efficiently and also that it is complying with all the regulations as stipulated in the Schools Act" (Mestry, 2004, p. 130).

According to Section 21(6) of the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), a Member of the Executive Council (MEC) may also, by notice in the *Provincial Gazette,* decide that some governing bodies may exercise one or more functions under Section 21 even if they have not applied for these functions, and on condition that:

- The MEC is satisfied that the governing bodies concerned have the capacity to perform such functions efficiently; and
- There is a logical and equitable basis for doing so.

Unreservedly, Section 21 schools exercise financial and decision-making authority. They receive lump sums per learner transfer in accordance with the Resource 40 Targeting Table and are allowed to save funds from one year to the next, and could perform the added functions such as: the maintenance of school property, purchasing learning and teaching materials (LTSM) and equipment, paying for services and determining the extramural curriculum. In addition, Section 21 schools are given the power to deal directly with suppliers and contractors for the relevant budgeted items (Naidu., et al 2008).

The primary implication of this financial management independence for Section 21 schools is that SGBs and school management teams (SMTs) will enjoy augmented managerial sovereignty (Kruger, 2007, p 235). Members of the SGB and SMT, therefore, are required to exercise considerable control and management (Naidu., et al 2008, p. 167).

5.3.   Biographies of participants and that of the selected schools

Drawing from Samuel's (1999) in Amin & Ramrathan (2009) force field model on teacher development, the biographical forces that influence teachers' work as professions are crucial to understand how they teach and manage their professional responsibilities. Hence, it is prudent to present a biographical account of the selected teachers with a view to understanding their accounts of their roles as teachers within the identified schools and how they understand and come to accept their school ethos in the way they do. Hence, in this sub-section, I present a biographical analysis of the teachers and principals with a view to contextualising their accounts of schooling in the quintile schools that they teach in and how they account for their learner performances.

Table 5.2 provides a representation of the participants' biography and background information. From the background information of the participants, it is evident that all the teachers had an affirmative viewpoint towards teaching, yet all did not have intentions to choose teaching as a career. In the case of Mr Jack, Mr Tom and Mrs Peg, the opportunity for teaching presented itself in the form of an

incentive that came from receiving a bursary from the Department of Education. In general, the participants all had a strong enthusiasm for their job and enjoy teaching.

Table 3. Biographical report of participants and their rationale for becoming a teacher.

Information on the Research Participants – School A – Aster Primary – Quintile One

Participant	Race	Age	No. of years of teaching experience	Why did you to become a teacher?	Qualifications	Relaxation strategies
MrJack **(principal)**	Indian	56	34	In my days the cheapest option was to become a teacher. I came from a poor home and my parents could not really afford to educate me. So I applied for a bursary and here I am today. I love my job. I have no regrets.	Honours in Education, Advanced Certificate in School Management and Leadership	Watching movies, reading, travelling.
Miss Martin	Black	28	10	I always wanted to be a teacher. I used to tell my teacher that I wanted to be just like her. It was always my dream. I love being a teacher.	B.Ed Degree	Sleeping, Surfing the net, looking for innovative ideas for job improvement.
Mr Shaun	Indian	38	18	I always wanted to be a teacher, it was always my dream. I love being a teacher.	B.Ed Degree	Playing cricket,
Mrs Smith	Indian	33	12	I love working with children. It gives me a great sense of fulfilment knowing that I can make a difference in their lives.	B.Ed Degree	Socialising, cooking and entertaining.
Mr Tom (HOD)	Indian	50	30	We had limited career options and the Department of Education had offered a bursary, which was a big incentive. Once I got stuck into teacher training, I found that it was something that I loved.	Honours in Education	Fishing and reading.
Mr Harry	Black	45	25	My parents were teachers, so I was inspired by them. I love teaching.	Teaching Diploma M+3	Playing sport with my sons. Visiting my family.

Table 4: Biographical report of participants and their rationale for becoming a teacher.
Information on the Research Participants – School B – Daisy Primary – Quintile Five

Participant	Race	Age	No. of years of teaching experience	Why did you to become a teacher?	Qualifications	Relaxation strategies
Mr Bill (**principal**)	Indian	55	32	It was a calling. I felt as though it was what I was meant to do in my life. I love my job.	Masters in Education	Horse racing, socialising, playing chess
Mr Ben	Black	31	10	I had no eagerness to become a teacher, but when I started I really enjoyed it. I realised I was cut out to be a teacher.	Teaching Diploma M+3	Going to the gym, playing soccer
Mr Peter	Indian	39	18	I always wanted to be a teacher, it was always my dream. I love being a teacher.	Masters in Education	Voluntary work for the different charitable organisations. Playing tennis.
Mrs Ndlovu (HOD)	Black	49	29	I love being around and working with children. So that accounts for my career choice.	Honours in Education	Playing with my grandchildren.
Miss Pam	Indian	30	9	I started off doing relief teaching. I never thought I would end up being a teacher, but I realised that it was what I was meant to do I couldn't picture myself doing anything else. I found that it was something that I loved.	B.Ed Degree	Reading, baking and taking long walks.
Mrs Peg	Black	45	24	I had no intentions of becoming a teacher, when I finished school. I had no other option because of my financial situation, so the opportunity arose and I became a teacher. But I love my job.	Teaching Diploma M+3	Spending quality time with my family.

a) The principal

The principal serves as head of the institution and is accountable to the school. The principal is the academic head and expected to ensure that outcomes are achieved and sustained as set out by the DBE. A further role played by the principal is that of administrative head. This has to do with effective management and sound leadership of the school. Data was collected from the principal of both schools through the use of an interview schedule. The interview schedule consisted of a one-on-

one semi-structured interview for the principal. The interview took place in the principal's office at the school. The principals were Indian males from Kwa-Zulu Natal in their mid-fifties.

b) The teachers

An encouraging observation was that every participant reported being content with their current roles at school and being very satisfied with their positions. Teachers spend the most time with learners at school and play a pivotal role in ensuring that learners are able to achieve success. They facilitate the learning process and, from a school perspective, have the greatest first-hand, understanding of learners and their conditions (Prammoney, 2012).

The participants differentiated between professional interactions and social interactions with their colleagues. This indicates that teachers understand their professional roles and responsibilities, as well as having an understanding of the need to be sociable and courteous in striving toward the core function of providing quality education, given their limited or inadequate access to resources.

As Mr Bill declared that:

"*We socialise when we have to, but we are aware of our role at school. Our priority is our learners and their education.*"

Mr Tom accentuated this sentiment:

"*We must not forget our core function of teaching and learning. There is a time and place for socialisation.*"

Many of the participants mentioned that the relationship with their learners was most enriching, with teachers often going beyond the call of duty when needed. When this issue was probed further, it was ascertained that all the participants were aware of their roles as teachers, and had a sound knowledge of the correct avenues to pursue in the management of learners. For example:

Mrs Peg pointed out that:

"We even go the extra mile for our learners by coming to school on a Saturday to provide chess lessons."

The teaching environment is changing constantly, with teachers having to evolve in their teaching methods and in reaction to external factors such as curriculum change, the use of new technologies, government interventions and other unique circumstances which may arise (Singh, 2012).

These factors are important to keep in mind as I explore the way the teachers manage learner issues and performance within communities. This may also be a limitation of the study as the profile of teachers within the public schooling sector suggests that these biographies are not representative of the overall body of teachers. The responses of these teachers may therefore be influenced by their personal biographies as reflected in studies of teacher identities, life histories of teachers and teacher narratives related to professionalism. However, the focus and methodological approach adopted in this study limits the impact of this limitation as the study takes an illuminative and contextually sensitive stance, rather than a generative and extrapolatory stance. A further limitation is that this study examines the phenomenon under study from the perspectives of teachers; learners' perspectives and experiences may be quite different. However, because the core focus of this study is teachers' management of learners' performance in the different quintile ranking schools, teachers are the most appropriate participants. A further study, which is not within the scope of this enquiry, could pursue learners' perspectives and experiences.

5.4 Context of the researched school

Two culturally diverse primary schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal were selected for this study on school ethos and learner performance. In this study I have undertaken my research where semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of six participants per schools. I have chosen to use the following pseudonyms for the schools, School A –Aster Primary School and School B – Daisy Primary School. During my data collection process and observations the followings findings have emerged from the background study of the two sampled schools. It is important to note that the reasoning behind this profile on these schools is to make the reader aware of the circumstances surrounding the ethos of the schools under study and why and how it (the ethos) is so or (the ethos) has come to be. Two themes have emerged from the data collection process

namely: school ethos and school rankings and learner performance. The school observation data has been engaged in term of out of class observations and in-class observation. Within each of these themes several sub-themes were identified to manage the data presentation and analysis framed by the focus of the study.

School A - Aster Primary School is a primary school located on the borders of the neighbouring informal settlements, such as Blackburn and Waterloo. The school is ranked as a quintile 1 school. This school has classes from grade R to grade 7. There are 23 teachers in total. It houses approximately 950 learners. The medium of instruction is English, with Afrikaans and isiZulu as the first additional language. This school provides an option as to what first additional language a learner would prefer. The demographics of this school indicate that 70 % of these learners originate from informal settlements or squatters and are mainly of black origin. The other 30% of the learners are from the lower economic Indian community that this school also serves. Irrespective of race, the majority of these learners emanate from homes where unemployment is omnipresent and extremely unbridled whereby one or both parents are unemployed, single parent homes, child headed homes and homes where only a grandparent or grandparents; are the only adult figure in these children's everyday lives. Poverty is blistering, propagating elements that fortify most of the lives of the learners.

Aster Primary School is located in the core of a historically Indian sub-urban area setting, with many learners coming from families with low incomes. With the advent of democracy in South Africa, over the past decade the school has seen an influx of learners from the neighbouring settlements of Blackburn and Waterloo and the border areas located in the periphery of Inanda and KwaMashu. The majority of these learners come from poor socio-economic home environments, with dysfunctional family backgrounds plagued by death, divorce and abandonment. High levels of unemployment and poverty and related social evils such as domestic violence, drug abuse and gangsterism all have a negative impact on the learners at this school. Landsberg, Krüger and Nel (2005, p. 28) maintain that the unfavourable circumstances that lead to a school being classified as 'disadvantaged' are schools serving communities that are characterised by poverty, dysfunctional families, deprivation, low income, unemployment, violence, crime, and low standards of hygiene and cleanliness. While Aster Primary may be a poor, disadvantaged school with problems, many parents in this community and its surrounding areas prefer sending their children to Aster Primary. Learners' parents believe that a superior and affordable education is delivered at Aster Primary and they want their children to be taught in English (the medium of instruction).

School B - Daisy Primary (Quintile 5) which is situated in a suburban very affluent area is a multi-cultural and multi-racial primary school housing learners' from different religions, cultures, languages and also different socio-economic backgrounds. Daisy Primary is well-resourced and boasts a well-equipped computer room and functional library. This school was previously attended by learners from affluent homes. Nowadays, the school finds majority of their learners coming from the very disadvantaged areas of Umdhloti and Temple Valley as well as far as Amouti.

Daisy Primary has approximately 889 learners, eighty percent of which are from historically disadvantaged homes.Very few children come from the suburb itself. Daisy Primary has a staff complement of 18 fulltime and five temporary teachers who are employed by the School Governing Body (S.G.B), four Heads of Departments (H.O.D), comprising a Foundation phase H.O.D and three senior primary H.O.Ds, and is headed by a Principal. Classes range from Grade R to Grade 7, with two units per grade, with approximately 40 to 45 learners per class. The medium of instruction is English, with Afrikaans as the first additional language. This school does not provide an option as to what first additional language a learner would prefer. All nine learning areas, including sport and extra-curricular activities like chess are taught in the junior and senior primary phase, and all three learning areas in the Foundation phase are also taught. This school prides itself on the delivery of what the community and other commentators believe to be a high standard of education.

Although Daisy Primary has very limited financial resources because of its quintile ranking (Quintile 5) at its disposal, and draws its learners from various communities where unemployment, poverty and violence are common, the school has historically enjoyed a reputation for producing many high flying learners who perform well enough in high school to gain university entrance and secure high profile jobs. A recent trend has been that learners who live outside the immediate community commute to this school. While they incur travelling costs, parents believe that by sending their children to a school with Daisy Primary's reputation will give them a superior education and increase their chances of employment and better jobs. Parents also believe that this school has a safer learning and teaching environment and are free from violence and disruptions, compared with schools in their immediate community.

In view of this reputation, a large number of learners apply to the school, but due to the large classes that already exist, many are refused admission. Many parents, teachers and ex-scholars agree that Daisy learners received high quality education and maintained good discipline.

Having described the school environment and the profile of learners and teachers in the selected schools, I explore the implications of this profile for promoting teaching and learning. There are several implications for promoting teaching and learning, the discussion of each will be preceded with some vignettes developed through the interviews with teachers. Each of these vignettes tells a story of the various experiences of teachers teaching in impoverished school communities and how they have come to deal with these issues that influence their teaching practices. A discussion of each vignette then unfolds leading to some research findings that are then engaged with more substantially in the chapters that follow.

5.5 School ethos across school rankings

Under this theme I attempt to answer my second research question which is ascertaining the nature of school ethos across quintile school rankings, that of a quintile one (Aster Primary), a non-fee paying school and that of a quintile five (Daisy Primary), a fee paying school. I will firstly attempt to explain Aster Primary's leadership perspective on ethos and then on the teachers' perspective. The same will be done with Daisy Primary.

School ethos is a complex concept and its complexity and broadness makes it difficult to ascertain or to articulate. Munn, Johnstone, Sharp and Brown (2007), for example, described school ethos as underpinning all practice, touching on all aspects of a school's operation and reflecting a collective understanding of how things are done. This description tends to point to an underlying driving force, established over time and which have come to be a taken way of life in a particular school. What this underlying force is in the researched schools, is difficult to extrapolate, largely because individuals of a school who attempt to explain their school ethos do so through different lens, activities and behaviour patterns, as can be seen through their interview extracts presented below. This varied and sometimes different ways of expressing the school ethos makes it a complex phenomenon to know, recognise and understand how it influences the way of life in that particular school. While Munn et al's (2007) description of a school ethos captures the essence of school ethos that I focus on, there are others who describe and explain school ethos differently (see chapter 3). For example, school ethos can also be defined as the context and setting of the school, its internal processes and the sense of core purpose by which staff members regulate and arrange their working environment.

Participants from the two selected schools have expressed their notion of their school ethos through different descriptors. These descriptors are engaged with below, for two purposes. The first is to try to ascertain their school ethos and secondly to show that knowing and articulating the school ethos is a difficult process, thus making this concept an elusive and organic one.

5.5.1 Aster Primary: Inclusivity as an expression of the school ethos

Taking the cue from literature that ethos defines the character of the school; an element of Aster primary school's ethos is comprehensiveness and includes the notion of inclusivity of learner engagement in that school. Mr Jack (principal) mentioned:

"To develop a comprehensive ethos, teachers should not only sympathize with the values which are promoted by our all-encompassing school but must also actively endorse the ethos of comprehensiveness when it relates to children who experience barriers to learning through their everyday work and through their own collegial relationships. My teachers work together collaboratively to look at other ways to help learners not learning the skills required to achieve their outcomes, in order to prevent a climate of frustration."

From this excerpt of the principal's interview, the school's ethos is comprehensive and all-encompassing suggesting that no one element of school constitutes the school ethos. Rather the school ethos is an inter-relationship of various aspects ranging from inclusivity, knowledge and skills of staff to collegiality.

The proactive endorsement of this element of the ethos by the teachers suggests that the inclusivity element of the school's ethos is conscious, deliberate and a lived one that sustains the schools character. On further probing, the principal elaborated with examples and explain what he meant by all-encompassing and comprehensiveness in order to get a deeper sense of the ethos that prevails at the school. He stated:

"I am going to relate to you a few case scenarios on our culture of inclusivity at my school. There are many similar as well as other different cases in many of our classrooms at our school. Too many to mention and each one is unique in its own way.

We have a learner, Sipho (not real name) in a grade 7 class, who has an illness called spina bifida but is not paralysed. He suffers a lot of back pain, walks with difficulty and often needs crutches. Also he struggles to sit comfortably, but he wants to live a 'normal' life. He occasionally loses bladder control, but he is cheerful, sociable and relates well and has lots of supportive friends and supportive parents who want him in a mainstream school.

Now this child needs special care in the classroom because of his health condition and my educators have informed me that they allow him his space and ensures that he is comfortable, and do not make him feel as though he has a disability. He, unknown to the other learners is given more time to hand in projects or even homework. This is because upon investigation on a few occasions, we were informed that he was unwell. So we do not pressurise him. They also mentioned that they reprimand any learners that mock him. He is allowed to leave the classroom at any time when he has to relieve himself. Also, his form teacher has informed me that she has asked his fellow classmates to assist him with carrying his schoolbag and books. To us educators he is a special child, but we try to treat him as a normal child as far as possible so as not to make him feel different."

From this excerpt, is seems that the learners and teachers are aware of issues of inclusivity and respond (*allow him space; given more time to hand in projects*) in their daily school lives to issues that promote inclusivity. The schools records suggest that the learner performance is on average low. This school may not reflect a high percentage of failing learners, but the quality of pass is low due, perhaps, to its inclusive ethos. The Salamanca Statement (1994) on inclusivity and human rights stresses that every child has an ultimate right to have education, and need to be given the chance to attain and maintain satisfactory level of learning. Every child has unique features, interests, learning needs and abilities. In this school, the Salamanca principles seem to be lived and which drives aspects of the school's character.

Inclusivity as an element of ethos also takes a different stance here with regards to the educator's behaviour towards the learner. The above exposition reflects their sympathetic nature (*do not pressurise him, to us educators he is a special child),* thereby including the element of sympathy in inclusivity. He continued:

"On the other hand we have a child in the grade 5 class Bongi (not real name) who comes to school hungry, catches cold easily and whose mother is very sick. She does the household work until late and therefore falls asleep in class. When her form teacher enquired as to why her homework is never

done, she discovered all of this. Now being so little and given all these responsibilities can be very overwhelming for a child of her age. Now how can we punish her for not doing homework, knowing all of this?"

The inclusivity aspect of the school is not limited to recognition of barriers as it presents itself in the classroom. Teachers observe learners (*therefore falls asleep in class*) and responds to their observations, not just technically, but through investigation (*When her form teacher enquired*) to find out deep rooted problems in the learners' lives that affect their schooling with the purpose of supporting the learner within an inclusive education framework. He further went on to say:

"It was also noticed that she can't concentrate before school meal time, so her teacher asked fellow learners from affluent homes (to volunteer) to bring an extra slice of lunch every day. So two learners volunteered to bring and so that problem of going hungry was resolved. The teacher herself informed me that she also brings in extra lunch just in case one forgets or gets absent. These sandwiches are given to Bongi in the morning as soon as she comes to school and, before the siren goes for assembly, so that she is full until the break. Her teacher noticed her improvement in her progress thereafter. So did other teachers as well. Bongi is just one case that I quoted here. There are many other educators that are doing the same in their classes."

"You must remember that we have a feeding scheme at this school, but learners are only fed during the allocated feeding times, that is during the break. This is done to avoid disruption in the school. Also meals are prepared in the mornings."

Co-opting others in the inclusivity culture of the school is a deliberate activity. In this example, the learners were co-opted into the support programme of school to promote inclusivity. The willingness of learner volunteers and the back-up strategy by the teacher suggests a deep commitment to this principle of inclusivity. The co-option and volunteerism of teachers and learners suggests that inclusivity, as an element of the school ethos, is pervasive and considered a norm within the school.

In one of my many classroom observations, a similar scenario played out aligning to what the principal had said. The educator was checking the learner's mathematics homework and found that this one particular boy constantly did not do his homework. She mentioned it to me, while I was there observing. Now frustrated, she questioned the boy and asked for a valid reason or else he would be sent to the principal's office. The child replied that he had to herd the cows. She then

asked, *"Is this done every day?"* And the child replied "*Yes*." She then walked away without saying anything further to the boy. The teacher just looked at me and then called me to her table and said softly that, there is no way she could punish that child because it is not his fault, that his homework was not done. Given that was a grade 4 class, the learner was a little boy, she understood that the learner would be tired by the time he had finished his daily chores.

She went on to mention that: *"We must remember that these are little children who come to school daily, they get tired by the time they get home and then they have their set of chores to do, so where's the time for homework. Given their impoverished background, they too have to help to put food on the table. We have to take cognisance of that fact and reality. I will inform the other educators about this boy so that they are aware of his circumstances and do not pressurise him. That's what we do around here. It helps to make our job easier as educators, when we know the history of our learners and also we know how to assess them."*

The data from this excerpt further augments compassion as an aspect of inclusivity. The fact that the teacher did not punish the child and considered his circumstances revealed this. Also by sharing this information with her colleagues would help take the pressure of this learner in the other learning areas. This excerpt would also support my argument of the link between school ethos and learner performance that the school focuses on the well-being of the learners that could compromise the general learner performance of the school. I enquired as to how she intended to resolve the problem of homework not being done and projects not being handed in. She stated that his case was not unique in her many classrooms and that she as well as her colleagues make contingency plans for learners like this, so as not to disadvantage them. She went on further to say that:

"I give classroom projects. I provide the material to the learners and get them to make their projects in the classroom. So no one has an excuse for not getting it done and as for homework, I get them to sit in the breaks and complete their tasks. They are also constantly reminded to utilise their 'extra time' as in when their class work in any learning area is completed and they have nothing to do, they must utilise it profitably by doing their homework."

Findings in this extract reveal that a culture of commitment to attaining learner achievement lends itself to the feature of inclusivity and is ubiquitous. The data here point to the fact that the educators at this school, given the learners' background, are willing to triumph under any circumstances in order to reach their goal of learner academic achievement.

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of fighting against discriminatory attitudes, creating good welcoming communities, building an inclusive culture and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (Thwala, 2010).

Mr Jack, as a final example, revealed Zubain's story:

"And then we have Zubain (not real name) in grade four who is always fiddling with things on his desk, enjoys talking and laughing with friends easily, often asks to go to toilet, disorganised and unstructured, can't focus on long reading passages and maths problems. He constantly whispers in class, borrows items, makes signs or funny faces and disrupts the lessons. He laughs nervously when teacher gets angry and his work is always unfinished and unsatisfactory. But he is quick in sports and a good tactical soccer player. He suffers from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). So the teachers that teach him, understand him better now and discussed his behaviour and found ways to assist him. They were, at first, very upset and angry because they had to constantly send him to the office to be reprimanded for his behaviour and parent notes were constantly being given to him. And as you know, this is all time consuming because a classroom is disrupted even when one child is out of order. His parents came twice but they also failed with him. We have now referred him to a psychologist for medical attention. His progress has been noted. The teachers are now calmer when it comes to dealing with him."

This citation reveals that an inclusive education system is designed here and programs are implemented in consideration for a wide variety of learners' characteristics and needs. It discloses that those learners with special educational needs are accommodated within child centred pedagogy. The educators took the responsibility *(found ways to assist him)* of creating and maintaining a classroom atmosphere, which nurtured the personal, cognitive and social development of the learner. Inclusion according to UNESCO (2009, p. 8) is defined as a: "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age and a conviction that it is the

responsibility of the regular system to educate all children." UNESCO (2009). Mr Tom (HOD) reinforced that:

"We must agree to disagree in order to promote a culture of diversity in all aspects be it policy making, decision making, etc. in order to move our school forward. When decisions with regards to language policy for the school, writing policy, determining a code of conduct for the learners or the times of the school day, teachers need to develop an ethos which supports tolerance and mutual understanding when they engage in frank discussion of discordant matters."

The head of department's notion of the school's ethos shows similarity to that of the school principal's notion in that he (HOD) speaks of the culture of diversity and the principal speaks of all-encompassing and comprehensive school ethos. The principal's conception of inclusivity and the HOD's conception of culture of diversity are inextricably linked and form one of the fabrics of the school ethos.

The extract has pointed out that there is an element of respect for divergent thinking (*must agree to disagree*) by the HOD. The inclusivity element here once again takes a different perspective, that of diverse views with regards to decision making. Sometimes, not everyone can be pleased with the outcomes of decision making. A culture of *tolerance* amongst colleagues in decision making encompasses *diversity* that helps in moving the *school forward to develop an ethos of mutual understanding.*

The language policy as a diversity element at this school (see school background above) includes offering both Afrikaans as well as IsiZulu as the first additional language. Learners are given a choice of first additional language and they are just not compelled to do a specific subject. In this way the school ethos includes a culture of inclusivity by recognition of language diversity.

In my observation during a staff meeting at this school, the issues of writing policy, code of conduct and the learners' time of day were on the agenda. Opposing views were voiced with regards to the writing policy of the junior primary phase. Diversity in opinions ensued regarding the code of conduct and learners' time of day and all inputs were received positively by the management team, namely the principal who stated that: "*This is a healthy discussion of diverse opinions."* The element of diversity of opinions as a constituent of inclusivity was once again manifested.

5.5.2   Aster Primary Teachers' Perspective on school ethos

Mr Shaun elucidated that:

"The ethos that prevails in the staffroom during our meetings is one of variety (wink, wink), I must say. Discussion can have a variety of aims and the aim with which it is undertaken can make a difference to how it is pursued. At one end of the continuum, what passes for discussion may be no more than an exchange of differing points of view. It can make one aware of the variety of views that exist among a group (like teachers, ha ha ha) that may be relatively orthodox. But each ones opinion is respected"

Variety of views also speaks to the aspect of inclusivity. From this extract, inclusivity here is ascertained by the *variety of views of educators who* agree to disagree (*differing points of view).* Opinionated and orthodox individuals possessing *differing points of view* are *respected* denote that the inclusivity element has once again taken a different perspective itself. Miss Martin stated:
"There are many factors that we have to take into consideration.......ethos can also include religious cultural tolerance. At my school given the multiracial context, we also have to deal with religion and cultural issues. Religion as we all know can be a very contentious issue, therefore religious tolerance is practiced here at our school. Children are taught to respect other forms of worship and not show disrespect. We strictly adhere to the policy on religion where we *don't promote any single religious forms."*

The above exposition indicates that religious tolerance is an attribute of inclusivity. The instilling of cultural awareness and religious tolerance in learners indicates that inclusivity is embedded in the ethos of the school. It encompasses educating the learners at a social level. According to Landsberg (2005) recognition of learners' value systems, experiences and cultural norms is to the learners' advantage and it is the school's responsibility to contribute to learners' growth.

Mr Harry declared:

"Our learners come from diverse backgrounds, namely poverty, which includes adverse conditions such as low wages, unemployment, malnutrition, violence, abuse and many other social problems. Given that majority of our learners come from impoverished homes, an ethos of acceptance has to prevail and we have to include all these factors when preparing our lessons and assessments. We

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have to learn about the context of each problematic learner in every class that we teach in, in order to understand why he/ she behaves in a certain manner, or why he/ she does not do their homework or come regularly to school. We also have to be accommodating and accepting. Because of this proliferating problem learners are also unable to participate in many school events as finance becomes an issue."

Findings in this extract disclose that poverty can be distinguished as another component of inclusivity. The positive support of this phenomenon by the educators suggests that the inclusivity element of the school's ethos is cognisant. This sense of ownership means that educators care about the outcome of their learners' academic success and contribute to their wellbeing. This extract also shows that the learner's home environment stifles meaningful participation and empowerment. One of the main concepts involved in creating efficiently empowering educators includes the access of information about the community as informed citizens to make better academic improvement decisions thus, encompassing inclusivity. This highlights the importance of participation and empowerment as a means to improve a skill base for school communities to ameliorate instances of poverty. Poverty here is more than just insufficient income. It also includes a lack of opportunities, lack of access to assets as well as social exclusion. Furthermore, the importance of acceptance and belonging was expressed, recognising that children are different from one another. Poverty is complex, multi-faceted and fluctuates in depth. Drawing on the work of Landsberg (2005), one is reminded that poverty in South Africa manifests in adverse factors such as ill health, a deprivation of privileges, backlogs in education, communication deficiencies, limited social status and a negative view of the future.

Mrs Smith affirmed:

"Ethos in a school is determined by the kind of staff or personnel that the school possesses. A school that has staff that is not committed and dedicated to the course of achieving the school's vision and mission can be seen as an under achieving or even dysfunctional school. A school, with a highly committed staff that is prepared to go the extra mile in order to push the school forward, is a highly successful school...like this school. This creates a positive ethos. And when this happens, the actions of the educators can be felt by the learners, parents and fellow colleagues. Considering that my school is situated in an impoverished community, we still do receive accolades with regards to achievements because of our dedication to our learners. Also having a strong leader (like ours) with

good values, commitment and determination, then any school can achieve under the most trying circumstances."

Findings in this extract divulge that educator commitment, dedication and powerful leadership lends itself to the building block of inclusivity. The performance and success of this school relates closely to the teachers' high commitment and dedication *"go the extra mile in order to push the school forward"* for without it, the schools' objective towards achieving the school's vision and mission will be difficult to achieve. Committed teachers are more motivated to work towards change. How effective a school is with regards to teaching and learning depends on the teachers' value. Highly committed teachers will *go the extra mile* to ensure that every task delegated to them is completed successfully. A teacher's commitment and attitude towards the school is related to work performance and the ability to create and combine new, innovative ideas in their teaching irrespective of the circumstances thus having a positive influence on their learners' achievement.

5.5.3   Concluding comments on school ethos within Aster Primary school

The schools records suggest that the learner performance is on average low. The gaze on inclusivity distracts the learning process through the several interruptions and catch up's and this compromises the coherence and flow of the learning process, hence compromising the academic learning outcomes of the learners. This school may not reflect a high percentage of failing learners, but the quality of pass is low due, perhaps, to its inclusive ethos.

The above engagement on the issue of inclusivity, culture of diversity and variety points to crucial elements related to the concept of ethos. This crucial element is not located in the terms and concepts used to describe the ethos, but rather, how an element of the school ethos filter through the thoughts, actions, responses and feelings of individuals operating within the school ethos. Individuals appropriate their own personal understanding and conceptualisation to their daily activities driven by an underlying force that come to characterise the school in a particular manner. Hence what the principal means by inclusivity is experienced by HOD as a culture of diversity and lived by teachers as the acceptance of a variety of perspectives. The complexities of a school ethos, therefore, may reside in the inability to pinpoint and name the elements that constitutes a school ethos.

 In the next sub-section, an exploration of the notion of Daisy Primary School's ethos.

5.5.4 Daisy Primary: Functionality as an expression of the school ethos

Drawing on the data presented from the school leadership and from teachers of Daisy Primary, the description of the school ethos that emerged is that of school functionality. In this section I highlight how elements of functionality underpin the activities within Daisy Primary school.

5.5.4.1 Leadership perspective

As Mr Bill (principal) posited:

"Teachers do not simply deliver the curriculum; they are the ultimate key to educational transformation and school improvement. Teacher expectations, perceptions, precedence and principles contribute to the quality of all pupils' learning experiences and subsequently teachers will influence what is taught, how it is taught and the evaluation of what has been taught. I make my teachers aware of this continuously and this ultimately creates a positive ethos to the culture of teaching and learning."

This excerpt discloses the perspective of ethos, whereby the leadership of the school recognises the value of teachers and suggests that they are the *ultimate key to educational transformation and school improvement*. Educational enhancement relates to the quality of teaching and learning *(Teacher expectations, perceptions, precedence and principles)*. The recognition that teachers are central in this process of quality teaching suggests that an underlying driving force in this school is the promotion of quality teaching and learning activities driven by the teachers. This excerpt further reveals that this principal believes that the school ethos is laid down by the way an educator *contribute to the quality of all pupils' learning experiences* carries himself or herself out in his/her teaching and learning activities.

Mrs Ndlovu (HOD) inferred that:

"Ethos for me, is the way in which a school is managed, it tells a lot about the functionality of the school. It also entails the policies that are put in place to ensure the smooth running of the school for example, the relief policy. It may seem trivial or unimportant but when an educator is absent, chaos prevails, when there is no educator in the class. So the relief roster is pulled out or the class is split,

ensuring stability in the block. Furthermore every educator is a manager because he/ she manages his/ her classroom. Once you've got basic functionality because in a classroom for quality teaching and learning to take place there must be order, there must be discipline, there must be predictability in a school."

This extract exposes that a much disciplined *(there must be order)* notion of ethos prevails at this school. Attention to detail *(It may seem trivial or unimportant)* is paid to ensure basic functionality and *to ensure the smooth running of the school*. Management at this school ensures that all stakeholders here understand their core function which is teaching by the teachers and learning by the learners. Policies (*functionality of the school*) ensure that correct practices are being carried out. For a school to function smoothly *(policies that are put in place)*, all supposedly "little things" are considered to prevent a culture of *chaos* reigning.

5.5.4.2 Daisy Primary– Educators' perspective on school ethos

Mr Ben stated:

"Given the social ills, abuse, etcetera, in the community, the learners come to school eager to learn. Most of the teachers at my school are aware of the learners' home environment so they try to make the most of a bad situation. We try to create a positive, conducive ethos and climate for our learners so that they can forget their pains while at school."

A focus on situation sensitivity *(the learners' home environment)* and positive acts of solicitude *(create a positive, conducive ethos and climate for our learners)* which is beneficial to the learners' overall experience of school is unveiled in this extract as an element of ethos. Deficient acts of solicitude *(social ills, abuse)* as experienced by learners' increase the risk of disengaging them from school whereas positive acts of solicitude *(learners come to school eager to learn)* promote learners' well-being *(forget their pains while at school)* and support an overall valuable experience of school.

Miss Pam affirmed:

"In my opinion ethos means having an orderly climate prevailing in school with regards to school rules, enforcing them on a regular basis, as well as practices such as having assembly every morning and reinforcing the school rules. This will set the tone for the school day and create a

positive ethos. When children are led off from the assembly point, they know that serious work begins.''

Ethos takes a different stance here with regards to an orderly school climate, bearing reference to the importance of stability, continuity and consistency *(school rules, enforcing them on a regular basis)*. Rules *(set the tone for the school day)* are an important prerequisite for the smooth functioning *(orderly climate)* of the school. According to Rutter (2008), an emphasis (*reinforcing*) on rules prevents disruptions in school processes from taking place, thereby satisfying the necessary prerequisites for an orderly learning *(serious work)* environment.

My observations at this school revealed that assembly was held daily and each day the first five rules were repeated thus ensuring that an ethos of seriousness was inculcated in the minds of the learners. The teacher conducting the assembly reinforced the following rules, namely: Firstly *litter is bitter* and he/ she elaborated about putting litter into the bins and living in a clean environment. Secondly, *best behaviour should be practiced at all times*...Thirdly, doing homework and handing in off projects, fourthly, the payment of school fees, which was a sore issue. Lastly, Reading, *take every opportunity to read, it promotes brilliance*. Subsequently the other announcements follow whatever needed to be mentioned for the current day or other temporary reminders.

Furthermore, I observed that some teachers as well as the principal led by example and also picked up paper as they walked along the corridors. In addition, I also witnessed learners adhering to the rules that they listened to at assembly. It was perceived by their actions. It was noted that high expectations of achievement and frequent monitoring of learner progress was permeated with values of performance and good organisation at this school.

Mr Peter stressed:

"A positive ethos should prevail not only amongst teachers but between teachers and pupils. A positive ethos must be manifested in all our action as educators and at all times for example: if a colleague needs a favour of some kind then we as buddies should assist or if they are absent due to illness and return, courtesy should prevail by asking how that person is. On the other hand with regards to learners, if a child constantly doesn't do his/ her homework, enquire as to the reason for non-compliance. You would be amazed at the answers you would get. 'I have to clean and wash and cook sir, therefore I cannot do homework,' So how can you punish a child for their circumstances.''

The acts of solicitude as a building block of ethos once again highlights the quality of relationships both in the classroom *(with regards to learners)* and in the informal social spaces where they have greatest meaning for the participants in this study. In school, ethos, valuing collegiality *(asking how that person is)* and collaboration, it is argued, teachers will engage in an exchange of ideas, thereby enhancing the diffusion of effective practices among other school members, and helping colleagues *(buddies should assist)* to solve the professional problems they face. According to Rutter (2008) a sense of hamlet is claimed to augment the effectiveness of schools. Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) affirm that the ethos of a school influences the collegial (*courtesy should prevail)* and collaborative activities, which foster better communication and problem-solving practices.

Miss Peg emphasised that:

"Encouraging participation and collaboration creates a positive ethos in a school organisation, but this must be maintained at all levels. Management in all schools should include a level one educator in the decision making processes as well as give them (level one) management tasks to be accountable for. Also the community at large, that is the parent component of our school, should be included in all major aspects of school functionality. The community should be allowed to collaborate and participate in decision making processes at school. Thus, promoting a culture of belonging and ownership. Furthermore the parents feel empowered when given opportunities like this. In this way it helps us as educators to get community involvement in fundraising projects, maintaining of school property and most importantly help to promote first-class learner performance. Here we use the parents as well to secure donations to supplement our dwindling funding. At my school a participatory and collegial ethos prevails. We are given management tasks for which we are accountable for.

The extract reveals that *participation and collaboration* amongst *management, level one educators and* the *community* lends itself to the ethos component. *The community* becoming involved in school matters has its merits in that the school may no longer need to rely on their own manpower to carry themselves out of laborious projects such as *fundraising projects.* It is important to note that collaboration and participation also increases self-esteem and confidence. A main advantage of employing participatory approaches is that it delivers demand driven services *(... maintaining of school property and most importantly...promote first-class learner performance).* The participation of the parent community in developmental projects at school level is a major aspect of an

empowering *(parents feel empowered)* approach. Parent organisations if trained correctly can manage and supervise school based maintenance and activities very effectively.

Participatory approaches are an attempt to stop the top down approach (*management tasks to be accountable for)* and promote a culture of collegiality. When management undermine contributions made by the educators or community in that they take over projects then they lose their sense of ownership. If managed correctly participation is a good way to empower and manage bureaucratic systems. Participatory approaches began due to the failure of traditional top down methods in the management of programs (Brett, 2003, p. 1).

5.5.4.3 Concluding comments on the notion of school ethos in Daisy Primary school

The above engagement on the issue of ethos, acts of solicitude, recognition of the value of teachers, functionality, situation sensitivity, orderly school climate points to crucial elements related to the concept of ethos. Individuals apposite their own personal perceptions and conceptualisation to their everyday actions determined by a fundamental force that appear to symbolise the school in a particular manner. Consequently, what the participants mean by ethos is experienced as the acceptance of an assortment of perspectives. The involvedness of a school ethos, therefore, may dwell in the inability to isolate and name the rudiments that constitutes a school ethos.

5.6 School ethos and its influence on learner performance

In this section of the analysis I explore the influence of the school ethos on the activities of the school with a view to understanding how these activities affect teaching and learning and ultimately on learner performances. The explication of the school ethos within each of the case study schools suggests that Daisy Primary School is underpinned by school functionality and that of Aster primary school is underpinned by inclusivity. Extending on these explications of the school ethos, this section of the analysis interrogates various aspects of schooling to explore how the school ethos manifests itself within these activities that account for the learner performance in these schools. Noting that both schools' pass rates are in the region of 85%, but that in Daisy Primary School the learner performance are in the higher individual learner achievement levels and that in Aster Primary school the individual learner performance levels are near the pass transition levels. The data for this

exploration is derived from my school observations, both in class and out of class observations in both schools as well as document analysis.

5.6.1   Classroom observation

5.6.1.1 Aster Primary

Drawing from my observation notes that I had made during my classroom visits, the resonance to paying more attention to the non-formal education was quite evident. For example, in the Mathematics lesson in a grade 4 class, observing from the back of the class I noticed that when the teacher began checking homework of learners, the learners complained of not understanding some of the tasks given as homework. *One learner in the front of the class indicated that she did not do her homework because she did not understand what was done in class to assist her in doing her homework tasks.* Further engagement between the learner and the teacher suggested that paying attention and asking for assistance when in doubt was the substance of this engagement. The teacher said that *if you did not understand you must speak up – don't ignore doubts. I can only assist you if I know what is troubling you, but I can only know this if you tell me.* Asking questions when in doubt is considered as being the non-formal education that goes beyond the mathematics classroom.

While paying attention is a crucial learning process, the disruptions noted earlier suggests that this may not be entirely possible for the learners in a class where the teachers report that half the time in a lesson is focused on discipline and other issues that disrupt the lesson. Expecting the learners to ask for clarification or to tell the teacher that s/he did not understand what was being taught suggests that the learner is mature and can make such interjections during the lesson. The reality, from my observations, is very different as learners are more inclined to join in or contribute to the disruptions, rather than to cooperate in getting the lesson back on track. Considering the background of the learners, it may also be that these learners are using the mantra of "I did not understand" to cover for their failure to do their homework and this mantra is a mask for revealing their living conditions outside of school.

Classroom A: [grade 4]

I walked to the back casually, reading the charts but paying careful attention to the educator's lesson. She greeted the class and began immediately with work. She requested for all Maths workbooks to

be taken out. Open to page 25 and the lesson continued. The children obliged and then listened intensively to the lesson. They responded to questions posed to them and seemed to enjoy the lesson on Time. During the lesson, one learner decides to get up and do a walkabout, for which he got a tongue lashing from his teacher. The educator used a clock (LTSM) to demonstrate the time. She stated that when the long hand is by twelve and the short hand is by one then the time is one o' clock. She continued to repeat herself for every hour on the clock and questioned the learners, for which they answered in the affirmative. They seemed to enjoy the lesson and also grasped the rule.

This lesson took about twenty minutes to explain. They were then asked to complete activities in their workbooks on Time. While the whole class was silent and occupied, the educator noticed a learner at the back of the class moving about trying to adjust himself. She went up to him to see what could be the problem. He began to cry. She summoned him to her table and spoke to him in a very loving manner. She asked him what was wrong and to her astonishment, the child lifted his shirt and showed the teacher the marks on his body and a cut from the whip. The teacher immediately hugged the learner and then proceeded to enquire who inflicted this upon him. The learner replied "*It was my mum, she was drunk, she drinks everyday and she doesn't do anything at home. She asked me to wash the dishes and I didn't do it as I was tired. I had swept the house and washed my clothes and I was too tired mam, and then she took the whip and started hitting me. I crawled under the kitchen table to hide. Lucky my neighbour came to save me.*"

The element of care as part of the character of this school was displayed by the educator who listened and hugged the learner. The educator immediately summoned a child to call the HOD and when she arrived she explained what had happened to the child and asked that the welfare take over this child's case. The Hod stated that the protocol is that the parent needs to be called in and reprimanded for her behaviour and also needs to be informed of the seriousness of her actions (the possibility of her child being taken away from her) if she does not mend her ways. The educator needs to monitor the child daily to see if the problem was not recurring and if it was, then it would be taken a step further (referral to welfare/police).

The HOD explained that, "*There were many cases of this nature in the school and of which they have dealt with in the past. We try to solve problems in house first before it escalates to the next level and when that fails, we feel a sense of satisfaction that we tried and then refer the matter to outside authorities (because no mother in her right state of mind would want her child taken away from her).*

Also these learners come from single parent homes and deep rooted poverty and for them to be separated from the only parent they have is unfair because they were not asked to be born."

The teacher then went back to her place where she commenced with the marking of the register, counting the number of pupils that were present and noting those who were absent. She then sent the register to the office to be kept away, stating that it was legal document that must not get lost. She then reprimanded the class as some of them began to talk and warned them of detention in the break if the work was not completed. They hated that, I gathered because the learners just quietened down and got on with their work. The educator seemed to have good classroom control over the children. She then proceeded to collect the returns for a notice that was given the day before. When that was done she walked around the class checking to see what the learners had done and tried to assist some of them that were struggling. At this point the double period was almost over. Here the non-formal curriculum seemed to dominate the scenario in the classroom much to the disruption of the formal curriculum and therefore of learning. Dealing with discipline issues, social problems and doing paperwork seem to take up a lot of the actual teaching time in the classroom.

The inadequacy and the incapacity of formal education to meet the needs of individuals and of society at large must lead to the search for alternatives that escape that mould. The rigid structure of the formal school curriculum, mainly based on laws and regulations than on the real needs of learners, offering a curriculum that leans away from learners and from society, far more concerned with curriculum delivery than with reaching useful objectives, obeying a rigid set of clerical-administrative procedures, has long since fallen short of meeting individual and social needs. Non-formal education, starting from the basic needs of learners, is concerned with the establishment of strategies that are compatible with reality.

Classroom B: [grade 1]

As I entered the class, all the learners quickly stood up to greet me. I introduced myself to them and then proceeded to the back of the class. This classroom was very colourful and vibrant with all the fancy charts and learning material. It showed that the educator took her work seriously. The educator greeted her class and then proceeded with her lesson in Literacy. Her teaching technique was unique from the many classroom observations that I observed. She began with the spelling words. Learners were asked to take out their spelling words and to my amazement; the educator broke into a song. It went like this, the word 'HOUSE' was spelt like this:

Give me H comrade, H, H, H [and the learners repeated after her]

Give me O comrade, O, OO [and the learners repeated after her]

Give me U comrade, U, U, U [and the learners repeated after her]

Give me S comrade, S, S, S [and the learners repeated after her]

Give me E comrade, E, E, E [and the learners repeated after her]

And the learners' really enjoyed the sing along. They were then asked to do it on their own, which they did and without any help from the educator. She then asked them to spell girl, mum, dad, love, dog, my, car, book and cow. They spelt it in exactly the same fashion.

Once that was done, they were asked to make sentences with the words, orally. Some of the learners used more than one word in their sentence, which was a good sign. They were then asked to write three sentences in their books on any three words that they chose. One very amusing incident that occurred during the lesson was when a learner used three words and made a sentence. He was very serious about this input. His sentence went like this: *"My dad calls my mum a cow".* The educator looked at me and then turned away to hide the amusement. The educator asked him to repeat the sentence to reaffirm what he was saying. She then with a firm tone proceeded to correct him and stated that it is wrong for his dad to liken his mum to an animal. Here, once again the non-formal aspect of curriculum manifests itself. The educator gave the child as well as the entire class a lesson on good mannerism and name calling although it was incidental.

The educator then went back to her table, to do the usual, collection of money for excursion and fun run. About fifteen learners had brought in their excursion money. This took the educator another twenty minutes to collect and then count and send to the office. She enquired, *who cannot afford to go on excursion* and about five very poor learners put up their hands. She then asked the learners if they could at least pay ten rands towards the amount. They agreed. She then went on to say that she would do a fundraising activity with the permission of the principal, like a cake sale as well as a jumble sale to raise funds for those learners who cannot afford to go and that it won't only be for her class but the other grade ones as well.

Consequently, I was there when this fundraising activity took place. The educator brought in all her old earrings, bangles, chains, bracelets and other items that she could find at home and was not in use. She also purchased lots of new items in bulk (toys, more earrings) that she knew would be of

interest to the learners. She sold it during the break over a period of three days. On enquiry she mentioned that she managed to raise an amount of five hundred and fifty rands. This could subsidise at least twenty seven poor learners across the grade one classes, if they brought in their ten rands and *we gave them twenty rands*. The learners that were subsidised were ecstatic at being given an opportunity to go on excursion.

Continuing on the observations in this class. By this time the learners slowly began to get disruptive. They began fidgeting and two learners got into a fist fight. The educator had to leave what she was doing and separate the two learners. She then gave them a talk on displaying good manners, tolerance and good behaviour at all times. Thereafter she continued with her literacy lesson, only to be stopped by a learner from the class with a message book on hand with a message from his mum. By this time the educator seemed very irritated and frustrated because she could not seem to move forward with her lesson. She read the message and subsequently told the child to see her before he left to go home. Later she explained to me what was written in the book. She stated that the child has no father and that the mother was unemployed and that her social grant had stopped suddenly. The mother is in the process of reinstating the grant but at this moment in time she needed some money to buy bread for themselves as she did not give her son lunch for two days because she did not have money to buy bread. She had consequently given the boy a hundred rands and told him to give it to his mum to buy food.

According to literature (Dib,1987), critics disparage formal education for its incapacity to fulfil the actual needs of students, whereas non-formal education is based on the notion that in order to obtain effective results it is necessary to identify and provide for the real needs of people. It is apparent that the character of the school portrays a notion of being one of caring through non-formal education. Inclusivity manifests itself in different forms at Aster Primary, much to the detriment of the delivery of the formal curriculum.

The educators at Aster Primary seem to be overwhelmed in the classroom with learners with social problems. The thrust of this discourse is on strategies within and outside the framework of formal education which offer, systematically or methodologically, alternative learning opportunities. The rationale for this approach, I think, is in the emerging consensus that formal and non-formal education can be seen as mutually dependent parts of a whole, and not as separate and often competing entities. The whole, which is an integrated system of education and learning, is greater than the sum of its constituent parts.

Alternative approaches to basic education refers in this discussion, to a system of learning which is characterised by flexibility, capacity to recognise and creatively utilise diversity, and transparency in terms of the degree of openness, open access, open learning, and limitless opportunities to release the creative potential of the learners. Alternative approaches are applicable to both formal and non-formal learning situations and in time could be the means to harmonise the two in an integrated system of education which brings both formal and non-formal together with parity of esteem, and with due regard to diversity in a life-long learning framework.

5.6.1.2 Routine at Aster Primary

Like most schools in the area, the school's daily routine began at 07.45 with a formal assembly in the school-yard. Assembly is held twice a week. On a Monday and a Friday. The assembly consisted of announcements for the coming week and highlights of the week gone by as well as reminders of littering and reading. Quite a large number of both learners and educators arrived only after assembly had ended.

The school day was divided into eleven periods of thirty minutes duration. Five periods were slotted in before the only break and six periods thereafter. Classes were scheduled to begin at 7:50 and end at 13.50 from Mondays to Fridays. In reality, classes began at about 08.15 on Mondays and Fridays depending on the duration of the assembly. This is because morning assembly regularly ended halfway through the first period time allocation.

During the breaks the educators go on duty at various points in the school. This is done on a rotational basis. Different educators go on duty daily. This was done strategically so that every educator only goes on duty only once a week. With the presence of the educators and prefects, the learners seemed more disciplined and incidents of bullying and fighting were minimal, accept for the odd one or two incidence. The school grounds are fairly clean. The educators rely on cleaners to deal with the problem of litter. When visitors arrive at school, they proceed directly to the educator that they want to see without reporting to the office and seeking permission.

One amazing revelation that I observed during the breaks and in the mornings while walking around the schoolyard was that there was a young educator who was employed by the governing body of the school. He did line dancing at an academy previously and was also a judge. So he decided to use this

skill to teach the learners. He took it upon himself to record music and load it on his USB so that he can use it for this routine. He took the portable sound system every day and went to the grounds. Over three hundred learners gathered on the grounds in their dance positions and waited for him to begin. And then the music was switched on. Not all knew the steps but they were getting there. There were many leaders from the grade seven class that were au fait with the steps, so they were placed in front and there to, they knew their place. The ground was abuzz. It was so entertaining. The learners were so serious about doing their steps correctly and others learning their steps, that they forgot about time. I observed that some of those learners that did not join in the dance sat quietly on the pavilion and watched the learners do the dance. I also noticed that there were some learners who stood behind and were trying to imitate the dancers and learn the steps but they were too shy to join the group. But ultimately I realised that this was one amazing way of maintaining discipline on the school grounds in the mornings and during the breaks. While this was a good way of maintaining discipline during breaks, the interest generated within the learners was overwhelming. Music and dance seems to have attracted learners to the point of wanting to learn. This suggests that if schooling were made interesting and resonates with the learners' interests and needs, then their learner would be more inclined to excel in their schooling.

5.6.1.3 Concluding Comments on observation at Aster Primary

Drawing from the in-class and out-of-class observations at Aster Primary, it seems to suggest that a lot of attention is given to non-formal education and disciplinary issues. The non-formal curriculum identified within the classroom observations are in keeping with the school ethos of inclusivity where learners' issues are immediately dealt with by the teachers and if not resolved, are referred to the school leadership. The teachers seem to be aware of the issues that learners face and identify them quite easily. They seem to make personal and meaningful connections to the learners and their lives which resonate with Aoki's (1999) notion of curriculum as lived and which fits in with Wallin's (2010) notion of currere related to the teachers pedagogical life in the classroom. Wallin's (2010) notion of currere extends on Pinar's (2011) reconceptualisation of the traditional notion of currere (running a course) to an autobiographic notion that privileges the individual teacher in informing what happens in the classroom. Using Wallin's (2010) notion of currere, it is quite evident from the observations that the pedagogical life of a teacher in a classroom cannot be predetermined. It is in this context that formal learning is compromised to allow for non-formal learning and learner centred issues to unfold within the classroom and that these interjections of the formal curriculum are unpredictable. This observation in the context of curriculum experience of the teachers suggests that

issues of inclusivity are ingrained into the life of a teacher in this school. Discipline issues are common across most schools, the extent of the nature of disciplinary problems vary across school contexts. The out-of-class observations suggest that the school has a process of managing discipline issues.

5.7 Classroom Observations at Daisy Primary

Classroom A: [grade 7]

The educator enters the classroom greets the learners and introduces me and gets on with the lesson. He proceeds to write on the board while instructing the learners to take out their books and commence with taking down the notes from the board. It was a Social Science lesson. The learners seemed to know the routine and obliged except for one or two of them. For which the educator called out their names without turning around. The perpetrators immediately stopped and continued with their task. When the educator was done with the notes, he walked around explaining what the lesson for today was all about. The learners listened while they were copying the notes. The educator then went back to his table and pulled out his mark sheet and then called out the names of the learners who did not hand in their projects. He stated that it was now long overdue and that they were given a lot of grace. He threatens to give them parent letters if their projects were not handed in by the end of the week. They were given a further extension. One learner was called and questioned as to why his project was not done and he replied: *"Sir I cannot afford to buy certain things for my project, nobody is working at home."* The angry teacher immediately calmed himself and told the child that he would help him to complete his project. He then asked the other learners who had not handed their projects in about their reasons and explained to them that they must not buy anything for their projects. They must use recycled material and if there are certain things that they don't have they must ask him. A learner put her hand up and said*: Sir I need newspaper to complete my project."* The teacher had taken it for granted that the learners would have newspaper at their homes, but through the responses of the learners, it became apparent that this was not the case. The educator then asked the entire class: "Who does not have paper at home." To both our amazement many learners put up their hand. Their replies were: *We don't buy paper, we can't afford it."* The educator immediately sent a learner to the staffroom where there was a lot of newspaper being kept and asked him to fetch the paper with the permission of the HOD (head of department).

He then handed it out to the learners who were in need of it and kept the remaining for his other classes. The element of care once again manifested itself in this classroom.

Classroom B: [grade 6]

The educator walks into the classroom, greets the learners in Afrikaans and starts his reading lesson. He reminds them of the rule of the Afrikaans class that no English words to be spoken during the lesson. The learners knew their routine, readers must be out and all must be reading aloud. Read from the reader where they stopped off at, the last lesson. The educator walks around the class, watching (observing) to see who is struggling to read. The learners are doing choral reading. After about ten minutes, he asks them to stop. He starts his lesson explaining what was read, but he uses English to explain for those second language (Isizulu) learners. They have to process it in English then in IsiZulu then in Afrikaans. The learners ask questions in Afrikaans and for some, who don't know how to phrase a question, they ask him in English, they process it and then ask again in Afrikaans. Here the practice of the language verbally has a positive impact on the learners. He gives the class a task to complete in their written books. While the learners were gainfully occupied the educator goes back to the learners that he noticed that were struggling and went to assist them individually and also got other learners to buddy teach them so that they were not left behind. Ensuring merit with regard to academic excellence seems to be ingrained with educators at this school.

5.7.1 Routine at Daisy Primary

The principal walks about within the school on a daily basis, monitoring and disciplining learners. He stops to talk to learners. Educators go directly to the classroom in the mornings. The character of the school seems to be intense. The educators greet one another and move on towards their classroom. They do not go to the staffroom in the mornings. They do not make idle chat. During the breaks the staffroom is empty accept for one educator who chooses to be different from the rest.

Assembly is held twice a week. On a Monday and Friday. Rules are enforced about bullying, littering and reading. Also the reminder of school fees to be paid as well as the handing in of projects. This is a quintile five school and the funding from department is very minimal so learners have to be constantly reminded to bring in their school fees in order to ensure the smooth running of the school.

A very unusual twist from the normal run of the mill assembly occurred. The HOD from the senior phase called up six prefects whom he had chosen in advance. They were introduced to the learners once again, but this time they were introduced as lunch prefects. They were each handed an orange jacket which they had to wear daily during the break so that learners could identify them. The learners were told that if anyone had extra lunch or did not want to eat all their sandwiches, they were to give it to the lunch prefects. Each prefect would have a box in which the lunch would be placed. The educator explained to the learners that it was found that many learners threw lunch on the floor and into the bins. So instead of wasting food these prefects would collect it and give it to needy learners, learners who don't bring lunch. He explained to the learners that there were many learners who did not bring lunch to school daily because they were very poor. One learner put up his hand and asked if he could bring in extra lunch and give it to the lunch prefects. The educator replied in the affirmative and thereby many other learners put up their hands stating that they too would bring in extra lunch. The educators were all pleased at the response that they got. It was overwhelming. Once again being a quintile five school, this school does not have a feeding scheme so educators took it upon themselves to try and make amends and contingency plans for the shortcomings because they witnessed the hunger directly and the effects of it in the classroom. He further went on to state that three prefects would be strategically positioned in the junior primary block and three in the senior primary block. Those learners that specifically bring extra lunch and want to deposit it in the mornings can go to their respective blocks while the others can deposit their leftovers during the break. Also he mentioned that if they could not get to the prefects due to time constraints they could give it to their educators. This was done so those learners who don't bring lunch can be given their lunch at the beginning of the break. Educators were also asked to remind and reinforce this plight to their learners in the class and also assist by collecting the extra lunches and sending it to the respective prefects in their phase so that it can be distributed timeously. I walked about in the breaks for my duration there to see if this endeavour was a success and to my astonishment, it was.

Visitors that enter the school report to the secretary's office, first for a permission granted card and also to sign a register. They are then referred to the principal or deputy principal to state their reason for their visit. Parents are prohibited from visiting educators during instruction time as this disrupts the class and takes up the teaching time of educators. Parents are only allowed to see educators after instruction time. In an emergency a management member accompanies the parent to the teacher in order to hold fort in the class while the educator attends to the parent. The learners are punctual in

school and prompt to the class. They are disciplined by the principal who administers detention to them. Therefore, the number of latecomers is minimal due to the stringent disciplinary action.

5.7.2   Concluding comments on the observation of both the researched schools

Drawing from the in-class and out-of-class observations it seems that the learning context at Daisy Primary school is focused on order and rules to enable and promote the formal learning that is envisaged to happen. The in-class observations suggest that the curriculum-as-planned (Aoki, 1999) takes central focus. The teachers' main goal is to engage the learners with the formal curriculum. For example, knowing that the learners attending the school are largely from impoverished schools, the one teacher assumed that all learners would have newspapers at home and planned that the learners' homework can be done on this assumption. On realisation that many of the learners in his class do not have access to newspaper, which he assumed is a normality, he made alternate arrangements to get newspapers to the class so that the learners can complete their assignment task. These assumptions are part of the planning phase of teaching, suggesting that the teachers have certain assumptions about who their learners are and how the lessons should unfold, based on these assumptions. The focus on support students that are struggling also suggest a focus on the formal curriculum rather than on why the learners are struggling to cope. The planning of the lesson allows for the teacher to provide academic support to the learners that are struggling. This was evident in the execution of the lesson where the majority of learners were left on their own to do their work while the teacher shifted his attention to the learners that were struggling with the task given. The focus on academic support at the exclusion of the learners' needs suggest that the formal curriculum-as-planned (Aoki, 1999) predominates. The out of class observations also suggest a focus on discipline, a key feature in keeping to the learning plan. Teachers are on time for their lessons, learners are monitored so that they move directly to their classes and rules for engagement within the school are maintained and reinforced so that it becomes a school norm. Noting that learners come to school hungry and that the learners' attention would diminish with the lack of appropriate nourishment, a successful effort was made to encourage learners to bring additional lunch or to give their un-used lunch to other learners. By doing this drive for collecting and distributing lunch for learners who need it, suggests both a social responsibility as well as creating a learning environment that can promote learning. Having a well-nourished learner contributes to enhancing learning (Singh, 2012). The in-class and out-of-class observations reinforces the school's ethos of functionality that promotes a focus on academic achievement through a formal curriculum as planned.

5.8   Conclusion

This chapter presented the data and analysis related to the school ethos and learner performance. While learner performance was not explored in terms of each learners' academic achievement, the intention was to explore how the school ethos would influence learner performance. Using two vehicles of data sources, interviews with school staff and observations within and outside of the classrooms, this chapter presented evidence to suggest that school ethos influences what happens in a school. In the case of Aster Primary, an inclusive ethos was noted and this ethos focused on the education and well beings a learner with less attention to how well they perform within the formal curriculum. While the pass rates of learners are similar to Daisy Primary school and features around the 85% pass rates, the quality of pass by individual learners are closer to the progression levels rather than on higher grades of pass. This performance level of learners in this school can be explained by an equal focus on the formal and non-formal education and on the needs of the learners. In Daisy Primary school, the ethos noted was one of school functionality that promoted a focus on academic achievements of learners with marginal focus on the needs of the learners. Learners in this school performed relatively higher in terms of grade level passes that in Aster Primary and the differences between the academic performances of learners in these schools could be related to how the school ethos drives what happens in the school. A further elaboration on these findings is presented in the next chapter which attempts to present some theoretical perspectives on the findings of the study.

Chapter Six

6. Theorising Chapter

6.1 Introduction

In the last chapter I presented the data, data analysis and discussions on the findings that emerged through the analysis. In this chapter I present the key findings for the study, engage in a discussion of these findings with the view to offering a theoretical perspective on the key findings. The theoretical perspective is grounded within the theoretical framework that guided this study. Noting that the focus of the study is on exploring school ethos across the different quintile schools that exist within South Africa and their influence of teaching and learning that accounts for the learner performance in the respective schools, this chapter therefore attempts to ground my theoretical perspective on the key findings of the study and the discussions about these findings. The chapter commences with a summary of the key findings, followed by an engagement with these key findings and concludes with a theoretical exposition that attempts to explain the key findings.

6.2 Summary of the key findings of the study

The analysis of the data produced through the various interviews and observations at the two case study schools alluded to several findings and these were discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter I draw on the substantial findings relating to school ethos, teaching and learning in the different school contexts and on learner performances at the schools. The key findings relate to two aspects of schooling. The first is that of the school ethos and its relation to teaching and learning and the second is that related to the school curriculum and learner performance.

6.2.1 Key findings related to school ethos and teaching and learning

The study found that school ethos influences the nature of teaching and learning that takes place in a school. Both schools, Aster Primary and Daisy Primary have demonstrated two kinds of school ethos that have influenced the teaching and learning processes in the respective schools. In Aster Primary school, a quintile 1 school located in an impoverished community, the school ethos that was found to influence teaching and learning was that of inclusivity. In Daisy Primary, a quintile 5 school, also

located on the outskirts of an impoverished community, the school ethos was found to be that of functionality. Both these kinds of school ethos were shown to have influenced what happens inside and outside of the classrooms within each of these schools. This finding suggests that there may be different kinds of school ethos that exists within schools and which influences teaching and learning that could account for the learner performances in the respective schools. For example, in Aster Primary school, the school ethos of inclusivity influenced teachers and management to act in ways that privileged the humanistic element of education, sensitive to the learners' contextual realities and their needs rather than just following the formal curriculum as prescribed. In Daisy Primary school, the school ethos of functionality influenced the way teachers, learners and managers went about their daily routines that privileged the learning of the formal curriculum and that of ensuring a conducive learning context which the principal of Daisy Primary school alluded to. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner's notion of process, person, context and time (Bronfenbrenner, 1999), contextual realities of communities influences the learner in terms of their worldviews as experienced through their relationships with significant persons in their micro-environments, their relationship to persons in their meso-environment and the nature of society as evolved over time, characterises their conditions of living in particular communities. The relationship that the learners have with their immediate environment then influences who they are and how they relate to school education. In the case of learners attending Aster Primary school, the impoverished state of their community influences how they respond to the community's realities and their living conditions as primary concerns and when they attend school these primary concerns becomes a focal concern of schooling in conjunction with the planned school curriculum.

In the case of Daisy Primary as well, the contextual realities of the communities and how learners relate to the community's realities, living conditions and relationships with significant others influence what is expected of school and is demanded of school by the community. In both cases, the realities of the communities that learners come from are developed through the material nature of the community's socio-economic status, the relationships developed and influenced by significant others and the demands expected of schooling. Communities are usually developed over long period of time. Hence the realities of communities become explicit over time. The explicit nature of the realities of a community is revealed in how we describe communities e.g. impoverished communities, affluent communities, etc. These labels of communities then allude to assumptions about the community. These assumptions become ingrained and sustained which then leads to a notion of reality that members of the respective community identify with. Hence time, as proposed

by Bronfenbrenner, becomes an ingraining factor to cement particular identities of communities and its membership.

This key finding of the study suggests that school ethos exists and are influenced by the communities within which it is located. Further, teachers, managers, learners and parents have tacit knowledge of the school ethos. None of the two schools claimed or named their school ethos. Rather, they alluded to their school ethos through various descriptors. In Aster Primary school descriptors like, amongst others, *all-encompassing school; comprehensiveness; compassion; child centred pedagogy and culture of acceptance of diversity*, gives indication that the teachers and school managers have a sense of the school ethos of inclusivity and which their actions within and outside of the classroom supports these notions of inclusivity. In Daisy Primary school descriptors like, amongst others, *quality of learning experiences; school being managed; core functioning of school; orderly climate, enforcing rules and culture of belonging and ownership*, gives indication that the teachers have a tacit awareness of school functionality as the ethos of their school. Hence, it was difficult to establish the nature of school ethos from any one individual or that all teachers and school managers were able to articulate a single descriptor of their school ethos. This inability to articulate their school ethos attest to the tacit knowledge of the school ethos that they live and experience in their everyday school activities. This tacit knowledge, therefore, explains why the school ethos was not described uniformly by the teachers and school managers in either of the schools. School ethos is, therefore, of a durable character of the school that is known to the teachers and school managers but cannot be expressed explicitly. Once again, the notion of time and process as suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1999) is material in developing this durable character of school ethos. Over time, people associated with the school, in this case the teachers and community (from which their children access the school), come to know what is expected of the school, what learners and parents are required to do to support teaching and learning in that school and contribute (process) to the character of the school in ways that support and sustain that character. Hence, establishing the school ethos.

A third aspect of school ethos is that it is valued by staff of the school, understood by the teachers and managers of the school and is evident in all aspects of schooling including the curriculum, the socialisations and the interactions with the community of the schools is consistent with the expression of the schools' ethos. In this respect, almost all activities in the school and the actions taken by members of the school community are consistent with the intentions of the school ethos and that these actions are not performed with a compulsion or burden. It is a way of life of the school that emerged through a process of enculturation (process) with all associated with the school, the

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teachers, the school managers, the learner and the communities. In Daisy Primary, functionality drives the activities within the school and the compliance by all members of the school community speaks to value that the ethos conveys and upholds. The same is true for Aster Primary where inclusivity is pervasive both within and outside of the classroom and internal to the school.

Another key finding related to school ethos is that the nature of the school ethos varies across school types, suggesting that the school ethos is situationally (Bronfenbrenner, 1999 - context) influenced. This means that inclusivity and functionality are not the only school ethos that may exist within schools. Inclusivity and functionality were given such descriptive titles of the school ethos that was identified in each of these two schools. Other descriptive titles of ethos may be given to different forms of inclusivity and functionality. For example, some schools may vary within a continuum formed by inclusivity on the one end and functionality on the other end. Depending upon where in the continuum a school ethos may locate itself, a different descriptor of the school ethos may be given. The continuum may be one way of demonstrating the needs of school education within a community, with inclusivity being more aligned to impoverished communities and functionality being more aligned to urban and middle to upper class communities. With this kind of alignment to the types of communities, one can then make assertions about education, schooling and learner academic performance, based on the needs of particular communities.

The implications of the relationship between school ethos and the needs of a community within which the school exists is that the kinds of schooling those learners achieve and what the school provides may vary across schools. Some schools may focus on education geared towards a more humanitarian perspective; in which case learner academic performance may receive a lesser imperative than paying attention to the basic human needs of the learner and the community. Aster Primary is a clear example of such emphasis. While the learners performed academically well in terms of pass rates, the quality of pass was relatively lower than that of Daisy Primary which privileged functionality of schooling to produce top performing learners. Hence school ethos influence what kinds of schooling the learners receive and the kinds of schooling that learners receive in a school depends upon the character of the communities that the learners come from. While there is no direct evidence through this study on the relationship between communities, the schooling that learners receive and school ethos, there is evidence to allude to this relationship and that further studies in this focus area would be useful to establish the nature of such a relationship, if such exists. The study further alludes to the relationship between the needs of the community and the nature of ethos that exists within schools. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of Aster Primary

school where the learners come from impoverished communities and the needs of the learners then informs what happens in schools. The inclusive ethos of the school responds to the needs of the learners and these needs are not of academic nature. Rather there are societal needs that impacts on teaching and learning and therefore have to be addressed in some way. The school then becomes the space for these societal needs to be fulfilled, resulting in a lesser focus on the formal school curriculum and paying attention to the holistic needs of the learner.

The study found that teachers and school managers in each of the schools were aware of the potential of their learners with regards to learner academic performances. In Aster Primary, the teachers were mindful of the need for learners to perform well academically, but because of their focus on the learner as a whole being, the academic focus of schooling was lessened. They paid attention to the needs of the learners and the community from which they come from and used this as a beacon to focus their attention to. For example, almost all of the participants from Aster Primary school were sympathetic to the value of promoting an all-encompassing solution to the learners needs. They all endorsed the comprehensiveness in overcoming barriers to learning and their activities to support and pay attention to the learners needs was a deliberate and conscious act which was a daily lived experience. In Daisy Primary school, while the teachers and school managers were mindful of the learners' home background, they adopted a transformatory stance through improving schooling to influence the quality of learners' academic experience and believed that they were the ultimate key to educational transformation through education. Hence, they paid attention to basic functionality of schooling, rules of engagement within school, a focus on the school curriculum as a core function of schooling and a shift away from impoverishment as an impediment to schooling for functionality in society. Hence, in both schools, learner performance was a core issue, but the extent to which they privileged learner performance was guided by what the school valued.

The study also found that activities within the school were commensurate with the attention to learner academic performance. For example, in Daisy Primary School a school climate of management was created and maintained to guide the attention to high learner academic performances. The school climate was noted to be orderly, rules were enforced. Stability, consistency and continuity reinforced and sustained the school climate so that all who were part of the school knew, accepted and abided by the climatic determinants of Daisy Primary school. In Aster Primary school, compassion, a culture of tolerance and commitment to learners, a child centred pedagogy and educators taking ownership were attributes that showed a balance between academic learner performance and the individual needs of the learners.

This study focused its attention to school categorisation and learner performance and explored how school ethos influenced teaching and learning in the respective schools. The study revealed that schools are categorised differently, in this case, based on quintile ranking. Aster Primary School was categorised as a quintile 1 school while Daisy Primary School was categorised as a quintile 5 school. The difference between these two schools, in terms of quintile ranking, is huge, with one having very poor teaching and learning contexts in terms of infrastructure, resources and facilities and the other having well established teaching and learning contexts, adequate resources and facilities for the teaching and learning of learners. Clearly, this study has shown that there are implications for schooling based on the quintile ranking of these schools. For example, in Daisy Primary School, the expectations of school managers, teachers, learners, parents and the community is that teaching and learning is of high quality and that learners attending this school would be expected to perform very well academically. The infrastructure in Daisy Primary allowed for good teaching and learning to take place and the adherence to functionality through rules and regulations supported through a well a managed school, would ultimately produce high achieving learners in terms of learner performances. In Aster Primary, the poor quality of teaching and learning infrastructure makes it difficult to focus on teaching and learning where the academic activities of teaching and learning is compromised by social and other issues that come to bear on families in impoverished communities. Hence, strict adherence to rules and regulations that privilege academic learner performance cannot be possible where compassion, care, tolerance and acceptance of diversity becomes that main driver for educating the learners that attend this kind of school. By categorising schools according to quintile rankings, the expectations on learner performance become commensurate with the quintile ranking that the school is given. The commensurate nature of learner performance with that of school quintile ranking, therefore, creates expectations from schools. These expectations become ingrained and, over time, mature into a school ethos that characterises a school. This ethos then becomes the tacit guide to teaching and learning in the respective schools which ultimately accounts for the learner performance in the respective schools.

Bronfenbrenner's theoretical constructs of person, process, context and time was, therefore, useful in understanding the ecology between school, the community, teaching and learning and learner performance. The next set of engagements with the school curriculum is located within Aoki's (1999) notion of curriculum as lived and curriculum as planned.

6.2.2   Key findings related to school curriculum and school ethos

Education within the public schools in South Africa is guided by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and this curriculum has been argued to be prescriptive and restrictive in terms of the content that is being taught, how the content is being taught, when it is being taught and how it is being assessed (Msibi & Mchunu, 2013). While the CAPS curriculum policy clearly spells out the teaching, learning and assessment for the various school subjects offered from grade 0 to grade 12, research (Singh, 2015) has shown that there are challenges in being able to teach according to the policy framework. Much of the reasons for not being able to teach according to the CAPS curriculum framework lies in contextual issues related to teaching and learning, the nature and diversity of learners and on the resources that support teaching and learning (Winter, 2015). This study also found that the teaching of the CAPS curriculum according to the curriculum policy framework is dependent upon the context of the schools. In Aster Primary School the teachers were not able to teach according to the CAPS curriculum policy guidelines as lessons were often disrupted by discipline and other non-academic issues. In some lessons the teaching of the expected content took a fraction of the teaching time allocated for the teaching of a lesson. The teachers of Aster Primary School indicated that much of the teaching time was spent on discipline issues and paying attention to the learners needs and challenges. The less time spent on teaching was also noted during the classroom observations. The curriculum that informed the school education at Aster Primary School was largely that of non-formal education that attempts to pay attention to the learners' individual needs rather than on delivering the formal CAPS curriculum.

The educators at Aster Primary seem to be overwhelmed in the classroom with learners presenting with social and other problems that it would become a useless exercise to pay attention to the formal curriculum without attending to the needs of the learners. In this school the formal and non-formal education were dependent upon each other and were not mutually exclusive. This integrated curriculum is what Aoki (1999) refers to as curriculum as lived. The school curriculum is therefore flexible, allows for inclusion of a diverse group of learners and opens up spaces for formal and non-formal learning. Hence, it would be expected that learner performance would be affected if learning is only measured by assessing the formal curriculum.

In Daisy Primary the school ethos was established as being that of functionality in terms of the maintenance of a level of order that will allow for little disruption to the formal education as guided by the CAPS curriculum. The in-class observations suggest that the curriculum-as-planned (Aoki,

1999) takes central focus. The teachers' main goal is to engage the learners with the formal curriculum. The out of class observations also suggest a focus on discipline, a key feature in keeping to the learning plan. Teachers are on time for their lessons, learners are monitored so that they move directly to their classes and rules for engagement within the school are maintained and reinforced so that it becomes a school norm.

The key finding drawing from the above engagement on curriculum in the two schools is that the school ethos influences the nature of the curriculum offered in the school. The school environment, its defining character and the daily activities that takes place within a school determines that extent to which the formal curriculum as planned or curriculum as lived (integration of formal and non-formal curriculum) is realised and this curriculum focus then influences learner performances accordingly.

6.2.3   Concluding comments on the key findings

The key findings of this study show that there is a relationship between school categorisation, school ethos, school curriculum, teaching and learning and learner performance. While the exact nature of this relationship has not been explicated in any definitive manners, a conceptual modelling of these five constructs that influence school education is presented in the next section as a way of demonstrating that there is a inextricable link between school categorisation, school ethos and how these two elements influence teaching and learning in a school that accounts for the learner performance of the learners that attend these schools in particular communities.
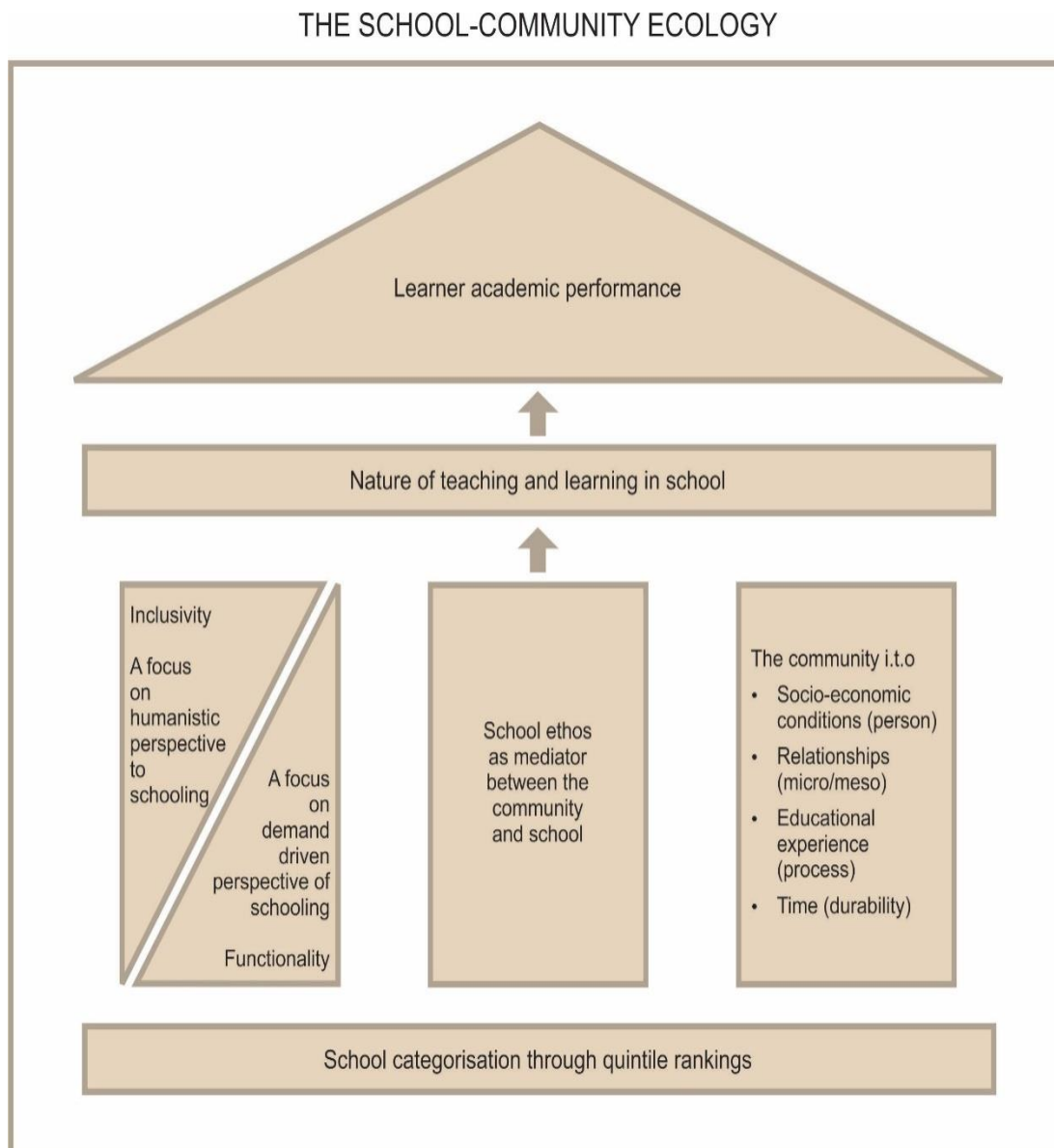
6.3 Introducing a conceptual model to the findings of the study

The schools are located within the ecology of the community. This means that there is a strong relationship between the school and the community within which it exists. The quintile ranking of the schools are therefore part of this ecology. For example, in impoverished communities, schools are largely categorised as quintile 1 to 3 schools. In more developed communities, the school quintile rankings are either quintile 4 or quintile 5. This ecology means that there is a very strong relationship between context and schooling, meaning that the type of education that learners receive in their respective schools are influenced by the challenges and opportunities available in the community in which the school exists. The relationship within this ecology is not uni-directional. Rather, there is

an integral relationship that is dialogical in nature, meaning that the community realities inform the nature of schooling and that the schooling possibilities inform what happens in the community.

In representing this conceptual model of the school ecology in terms of school ethos, teaching and learning and learner performance, I propose the following ecological model on school ethos and learner performance.

In this model the school ethos serves as the mediator between the school and community and that the learner performance within a particular school is influenced through the school ethos that accounts for how teaching and learning is actualised within a school and how the community within which the school exist, influences what is possible within the school. The conceptual model suggests that the material realities of the community, the relationships that influence participation within a school, the expectation of education, the outcome of education within a community and the identity of a community established over time influences the school ethos that accounts for the nature of teaching and learning that takes place in that school and ultimately accounts for why learners perform academically the way they do. For example, in the case of Daisy Primary School, the ethos of the school was described as inclusivity and this character influenced the nature of teaching and learning that was possible and what happened in that school. The issue of what is possible was the determining factor on how teaching and learning should unfold in the school ultimately explaining the nature of the learner performance in that school.

THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY ECOLOGY

Learner academic performance

Nature of teaching and learning in school

Inclusivity

A focus on humanistic perspective to schooling

A focus on demand driven perspective of schooling

Functionality

School ethos as mediator between the community and school

The community i.t.o
- Socio-economic conditions (person)
- Relationships (micro/meso)
- Educational experience (process)
- Time (durability)

School categorisation through quintile rankings

Figure 5: Ecological model on the relationship between school ethos and learner performance

The school ethos, as established and cemented over time, also presents a window to the community of what is possible within a school located in that community. Hence expectations of schooling are known to the community and to some extent (which this study did not specifically engage with – and perhaps is an agenda for further studies) contribute to and reinforces the community's status and identity. The data alludes to this assertion in that the teachers acknowledge the role of the community in supporting the learners (in some communities with a positive relationship of support and in others a marginal concern by parents on what happens in school and the expectations of school education). Hence, the school ethos is in dialogue with the community in which the school exist and represents community expectations.

The conceptual model then extends to highlight how the school ethos influences the teaching and learning that takes place within the school. The findings suggests that there are varying types of school ethos and that one conception of the varying types of school can be represented through a continuum, on the one end of which is inclusivity and the other is that of functionality. Schools can be located at either ends of the continuum or anywhere in-between with varying degrees of functionality and inclusivity. This continuum is represented by pairing two triangles showing the dominance of end point school ethos identities and the range of possibilities between the end points as determined by the heightened or diminished emphasis on functionality or inclusivity. There may be other labels for the continuum – in this instance I am using the functionality – inclusivity variable to define the continuum.

Depending upon the variability of functionality and inclusivity, the teaching and learning can take on a planned or experienced curriculum focus. Once again, depending upon where in the continuum the school is located, the emphasis of the planned and experienced curriculum (Akoi, 1999) becomes a variable related to how teaching and learning unfolds in that school. The data suggested that Aster Primary School's focus was on functionality and strict adherence to the CAPS curriculum which is the planned curriculum. In this instance, the focus is on achieving the aims of the CAPS curriculum and in doing this a strict adherence to a functional school that privileges academic performance in terms of the curriculum. Whereas in Daisy Primary, there is clear evidence that teaching according to the planned curriculum is not possible due to the nature of teaching and learning that takes place in this school. Teachers barely go through half of the planned curriculum as they have to pay attention to the needs of the learners, suggesting that teaching and learning leans more to curriculum as experienced (Akoi, 1999).

What is possible within the school context also influences the nature of teaching and learning in a school. Hence, over time, a school becomes known for the kind of teaching and learning that takes place in a school and progresses onto a defining character of the school. This defining character of a school contributes to the development of the school ethos. Hence, the dialogue between teaching and learning in a school and school ethos in influencing what the school ethos is. Ultimately, the ecology that is constituted by the community and its membership, the school and its teaching and learning process and the school ethos influences the nature of academic learner performance in schools. Hence a school's learner performance can be, almost, assumed based on where the school is located, its school ethos and its quintile ranking.

6.4 The research focus of the study

Even though this study may have contributed towards deeper understanding of issues relating to good academic learner performance and ethos in schools in general, gaps still exist in this understanding. This section provides a brief discussion on the perceived contributions of this study, identifies gaps still needing to be addressed, and offers recommendations on how this may be achieved.

The study focused on the exploration of the relationship between learner academic performance, school ethos and teaching and learning in a quintile one and quintile five school by examining the relationship in only two schools of varying academic performance, ethos and quintile ranking by means of interviews and observation. As already indicated, the advantage of the methodology is that it provided in-depth understanding and deep descriptions of the relationship, both of which stand to be of value in informing practice and policy directed at improving academic performance in similar schools. However, although the findings may be transferable to other schools of similar ranking that are in most respects similar to the sample schools (Ary, Razavieh and Sorensen, 2006) the small size of the sample means that the findings cannot be generalisable to all schools of similar disposition with confidence. The findings therefore cannot provide an exclusive basis for related nationwide policy and practice. It is therefore recommended that this study be regarded as an exploration only that lays a foundation for subsequent investigations on similar issues. To achieve the desired generalisations, it is recommended that subsequent investigations on the matter be conducted by means of surveys and/or multiple case studies.

The general aim of the study was to investigate the implications of school ethos on learner performance in a quintile one and quintile five school. In order to attain this general goal, the following served as specific objectives.

a) To initiate the purpose of exploring how categorisations influence school performance, both in learner achievements as well as in school leadership and management. This study examined some of the problems of how the schools quintile ranking affected the learner performance and the reasons why learners perform poor academically and how school managers are managed these problems.

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b) To assess the representation of the power of school ethos and learner performance in unison/accordance with quality teaching and quality teaching practices in the different quintile ranking schools.

An overview of the findings of the research is provided. Recommendations on each of the findings are also provided. In conclusion, this chapter establishes whether the research questions have been answered.

6.5 A response to the Research Questions

1. What are the learner performance trends across quintile school categorisation?

The study revealed that learner performance is related to the opportunities that the learning context (in this case, each of the schools as categorised by its quintile ranking) provide for in terms of teaching and learning of the formal curriculum. The study also revealed that assessment of learner performance is largely determined by the extent to which teachers are able to follow the CAPS curriculum as planned. Hence, if teaching and learning is disrupted by contextual, social and economic issues, learner performance in terms of the planned formal curriculum may be compromised. The study suggests that lower quintile ranked schools will experience lower levels of learner achievements than higher quintile ranked schools.

2. What is the nature of school ethos across quintile school rankings?

The engagement on school ethos in this study, as revealed in this study, is a complex issue, largely because of its innate nature and a lack of a clear descriptive term (naming of the school ethos) that the school community can identify, know and articulate. The study also found that school ethos across the two differently ranked quintile schools is different, suggesting that the nature of school ethos is not universal. The study also revealed that the school community knows what their school ethos is, but may not express it in similar way. Finally, the study revealed that the school ethos influences what happens within a school, including influencing how teaching and learning is facilitated in terms of the formal and non-formal curriculum.

3. How has the school rankings influenced the school ethos?

The study revealed that the location of the school within communities influences the nature of school ethos in that school. For schools located within impoverished communities, the school quintile rankings are low, suggesting that such schools have minimal to no resources, including poor

infrastructure to support teaching and learning. For schools in developed communities, their infrastructure and teaching and learning resources are adequate to support teaching and learning. Such schools are ranked higher in the quintile ranking system of schooling. School ethos, has been argued within this thesis, to be generated over a long period of time and is influenced by the communities within which the school exists. Hence school ethos, as argued, is linked to school rankings as categorised by the quintile ranking system within South African school system, but may not be uniform within and across the quintile rankings. Various descriptions may be given to the school ethos, depending upon how the character of the school is described by the school community.

4. How has school ethos influenced learner performance?

While the study makes not explicitly link school ethos and learner performance, the study reveals that school ethos influences teaching and learning and that the closer the link between teaching and learning and the formal CAPS curriculum, leaner performance would be higher than in schools where strict adherence to the formal CAPS curriculum is lacking.

6.6 Significance of the study and recommendations arising out of the study

In light of this, the research outlines recommendations for changes in the child's nested world. Given the bi-directional influence of relationships, decisions, events etc. it is hoped that these multiple factors will overtime, challenge societal values and attitudes towards education and academic performance. Underpinning all the recommendations outlined here is the highly complex and idiosyncratic nature of children's learning. Every child's developmental journey is unique; it is shaped by a constellation of particular forces (psychological, social, educational, cultural, economic and political) which mediate his/her developmental path. This highly intricate understanding of learning is powerfully elucidated in the data presented in chapter five. In these, we can see that learning is a process of social co-participation, rather than a separate activity located in the minds of individuals.

Unique learning journeys suggest that blanket initiatives have limited value. In that the same factor plays out differently for each child, this infers that interactions need to be tailored to the child's experiences. For example, policy may recommend the formation of positive home-school links to support child development. In interpretation of this, the school may encourage parental participation in the child's activities within his/her class. For self-employed parents this may be more feasible, as they can organise their work around their commitments to the school. For full-time working parents,

helping out at school is impossible. Work starts before and extends beyond the school day. In each scenario, the school and class teacher must tailor their commitment to making effective home school links, as a blanket approach would serve to include some parents and exclude others. In that a highly individual approach is necessary, this thesis does not seek to provide solutions for every eventuality. Rather, it draws attention to some of the multitude of factors operating in the child's world, in the hope that it will reinforce the awareness and stimulate action of all parties exerting an influence on a child's learning trajectory.

Drawing on the fund of real life examples available through the data, this chapter has provided an understanding of children's learning trajectories and academic attainment based on the bio-ecological model of Bronfenbrenner. With a focus on each of the constituent components of the PPCT model, the analysis has given consideration to some of the more pertinent factors operating within the child and the nested world in which s/he resides. In shining the spotlight on some factors, I have inevitably let others wane from the foreground. This is somewhat unavoidable, as no analysis could give consideration to the myriad factors in play and the idiosyncratic ways in which they act out in conjunction with the child's repertoire of characteristics and the other phenomena in his/her entrenched environment. Using this bioecological understanding of children's development as a platform, this chapter has also outlined a number of recommendations for the management of children's learning. In that the data collected in this research only provides a partial view of a much wider picture, it follows that the proposed recommendations are only suggestions. As I noted earlier, it is impossible to provide blanket solutions when each person's experience of life is so unique. Changing societal values and attitudes towards children's development and education is an impossible task of this research. In view of this, recommendations have been made that simultaneously target the remaining systems of the ecological model together with the development of the person. These changes will not sit easily in the current education system, as they do not fit with the psychological theories underpinning today's practices. Nonetheless, it is envisaged that multiple changes targeting each component of the PPCT model is the most effective way to initiate change at the macro-system level and produce a shift in societal values towards education and schooling practices.

6.7 Recommendations drawn out of the findings of the study

The recommendations drawn out from this study are included under each sub-heading. With the overarching goal to facilitate children's learning, this section outlines several recommendations which relate to factors operating within the school community.

6.7.1   Findings: Features influencing ethos of schools

Each school ethos is unique, but their ethos is influenced by external factors as well as common elements. To understand a group of people, one must understand the contextual elements that influence individual and institutional behaviour (Schein, 1992). This study found that the school ethos was influenced by community factors. It also examined school ethos and how it influenced a system that implemented inclusivity. School ethos develops slowly over time as a result of the way the members deal with internal and external issues. Thus, school culture is a factor worth examining, as it dictates what is of value for a particular group and how and when decisions are made. Schein (1992) described culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions the group learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that worked well enough to be considered valued" (p 12). Culture is a multifaceted phenomenon, which is not easily understood. The study recommends the following:

For communities, it is essential that communities become aware of the school character, its reputation and how they have contributed to this character and reputation with a view to either sustaining this character or reputation if such is beneficial to the upliftment of the education value of the community or to changing the character or reputation of the school if it is perceived to be detrimental to the educational value of the community.

For school leaders, it is recommended that the school leadership becomes consciously aware of what the school ethos is and how this ethos is influencing the teaching and learning that takes place at the school. Through this conscious awareness of the school ethos, the school leadership can either change this ethos/character of the school or sustain it depending upon how the school wishes to contribute to the upliftment, aspirations and educational needs of the community.

For the teachers, this study recommends that they become aware of the school ethos, collectively identify a common descriptor of the school ethos and contribute to sustaining or changing of the school ethos depending upon the educational needs of the school and the community.

6.7.2   Findings: Collaboration

One of the basic underlying assumptions was the staff's value of collaboration and teamwork. Collaborative and a proactive teaching staff was a common theme throughout the interviews within both the researched schools. The staff could be described as an interconnected group. Schools are collections of individuals and their relationships with others, each with their own perspective, beliefs, and values. It is through these relationships and shared understanding of their purpose that a school's culture is preserved. For example, the relationships among the staff at Aster Primary School contributed to the success of implementing inclusivity. Educators in inclusive classroom should work in collaboration with their fellow educators. This method is helpful to learners since educators differ in the way of presenting materials. Through observation this method has proved to be effective in inclusive classrooms. This sense of teamwork extended to issues outside of the classroom. The teachers' value of teamwork and collaboration was evident in their decision to come together as a group to assist and develop learners with problems in both the researched schools. From this finding it is recommended that teachers build strong collaborative networks amongst themselves so that they can support each other in providing quality education commensurate with the needs, aspirations and the ethos of the school, which ultimately will influence their teaching and learning strategies leading to acceptable learner performances.

6.7.3   Findings: Curriculum as influenced by the school ethos

The findings of the study suggest that curriculum offered in a school is dependent upon the school ethos. For example in Aster Primary, the highly prescriptive CAPS curriculum was difficult to follow due to its school ethos of inclusivity, while in Daisy Primary, the adherence to the CAPS curriculum required a deep commitment by the staff and school leadership to keep to the curriculum as planned. In both cases, adherence to the planned curriculum is a challenge for the school leadership and teachers. It is, therefore, recommended that the prescriptive CAPS curriculum to be reviewed by the curriculum policy makers so that some flexibility in the curriculum policy is allowed that takes into consideration the contextual realities of schools and that of the communities.

6.7.4   Findings: Learner performance across quintiles

The findings of the study suggest that learner performance is related to the school ethos. For example, in Aster Primary school, the learner performances in terms of pass grades were not very much different from Daisy Primary. The quality of pass rates across these two schools were different in that learners from Daisy Primary School performed at a much high level of achievement than the learners of Aster Primary School. Based on this finding it is recommended that the Department of Basic Education shift their focus from academic achievements as their focal point of assessing the quality of school education to other outcomes of school education; for example, on that value of inclusive classrooms that attends to the circumstantial needs of the learner whilst at the same time offering relevant education that is meaningful to the learners and their environmental circumstances.

6.8 Contribution to the literature

I believe this research contributes to the existing body of literature on children's school learning and performance in multiple ways. Firstly, in illuminating the fixed characteristics of schooling, this research has brought to the fore and challenged, many of the psychological tenets underpinning current instructional practices. Dissatisfied with the transmission model of learning which pervades present day education, one of the aims of this research was to generate a theoretical framework for understanding children's day-to-day learning experiences. This I feel has been achieved through Brofenbrenner's PPCT theoretical perspectives, which in unison provide an understanding of learning on multiple levels. To my knowledge, the combination of these theoretical lenses has not previously been conceptualised. The deconstruction of field data using this framework, thus offers original and unique insight. Together, the four perspectives permit the entirety of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model to be operationalised; in a review of the literature I have been unable to locate any other attempts to do so. Whilst the scope of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model means that it serves primarily as an analytical tool, the integration of additional perspectives enables it to be drawn upon as an interventionist framework to inform educational policy and practice. This proposed framework positions reciprocal relationships and participation as the cornerstone of development. And I have used this understanding to suggest ways that school leadership teachers, communities, policy makers and the Department of Basic Education can promote and enhance school education within an ecological frame influenced by its location within communities.

6.9 Further research

Stemming from this research, there are a number of potentially avenues for further study. The culture of the school affects the priorities of the school and how and when decisions are made. In one sense, schools are very conservative institutions resistant to change. Schools have little incentive to change, and Schein (1992) described this as equilibrium. Additionally, each school culture is unique, developing over time and based on the individuals within the system. During this study, a number of other factors emerged that with further investigation may provide a greater understanding of how school ethos and quintile rankings influences learner performance. To summarise, I suggest more research surrounding in the following focal areas:

a) Every school's culture/ethos is unique. It would be beneficial to identify differences and examine the role of school culture/ethos at other schools of similar rankings as the researched schools.

b) An exploration of classroom practices and relationships and how these are shaped and negotiated through the understandings and actions of educators and learners.

c) This study found that certain individuals played key roles in the development of school culture and support of the implementation of inclusivity. Further investigation into the roles individuals play could prove beneficial to educational leaders seeking to make changes within their schools.

d) This study examined the relationship between school ethos, learner performance and school categorisations in a district experiencing a high level of poverty. This study could be repeated in order to examine poverty as a factor.

e) The extent to which self-efficacy beliefs shape participation levels in surrounding communities of practice.

f) An audit of National Curriculum content in relation to the contextual realities of the communities, the educational needs of the communities and the aspirational needs of the learners.

6.10   Limitations

In this study, the greatest restriction was that only two schools was used and thoroughly investigated. The data reflected the unique context at both the researched schools; thus, the results of this study are not generalisable to other schools. This study was conducted in a relatively short period of time and

is further limited by this timeframe. The primary source of data in this study was interviews with staff as well as observations. While these interviews provided a rich source of data into the staff's perception of how school culture/ethos influenced the learner performance a variety of approaches were needed to ensure trustworthiness. Participation in the study was voluntary; participants did not receive any compensation and were observed in a variety of settings. Participants were not supervised by the researcher and the researcher had no reason to believe the responses were anything but accurate and truthful. Triangulation and other approaches were used to increase the validity of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012); however, even then there is the possibility there may be things that were not revealed.

The teachers at these schools provided a unique historical perspective on the community and school ethos. The analysis of the data, which reflects the expressed viewpoints of the staff, limits validity of the findings to the extent that these data are accurate and complete. While this unique perspective on the community cannot be discounted, changes to and within the community, including national political imperatives and interventions may not have been considered by the participants in their responses. Hence, a broader ethnographic study would be more appropriate to know and understand the community in all its complexity and that the school ethos, its teaching and learning processes and learner performance could be included in this ethnographic study to get a deeper sense of the ecological relationships between school and the community and an understanding of how these are considered when exploring learner performance in school education.

6.11   Concluding comments

This study explored the relationship between school ethos and learner performance across quintile ranked schools within a community. A qualitative approach was used to gather data, which included, observations, and interviews. These methods were chosen because an in-depth study and the relationships between staff would provide the opportunity to identify the basic underlying assumptions, which Schein (2012) described as the hidden level of culture. Data was collected from two schools namely a quintile one (Aster Primary) and a quintile five (Daisy Primary) school. Using theoretical frameworks of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory and Akoi's notion of curriculum, this study found that the school ethos do influence teaching and learning in schools and that the nature of the school ethos can account for the learner performance of the learners attending that school. The study has significance to school leaders, teachers, policy makers, Department of Basic Education and the community within which the school is located in that an analysis of the

school ethos in relation to the educational needs and aspirations of the community would contribute to a more nuanced notion of relevant quality education.

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Appendices
1. Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

02 October 2014

Mrs Charmaine Prammoney (204300071)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/1224/014D
Project title: School categorization and learner performance: The power of school ethos

Dear Mrs Prammoney,

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 23 September 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Labby Ramrathan
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Mr Theba Mthembu

2. Turn it in Report

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Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

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Assignment title:	PhD thesis Charmaine
Submission title:	PhD thesis Charmaine
File name:	Charmaine_PHD_f or_Turn_it_in.do…
File size:	463.19K
Page count:	176
Word count:	61,018
Character count:	335,099
Submission date:	25-May-2018 11:00AM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	968502508

School Categorisation Learner
Performance: The Power of
Ethos

By

CHARMAINE PRAMMONEY

Student no: 204300071

Supervisor: Professor Labby Ramrathan

Date submitted:

1

3. Letter: Language editor

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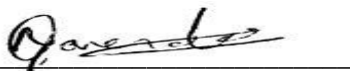|	
DR NERESHNEE GOVENDER (PhD)	32 Kharwa Road
WRITING PRACTITIONER EDITOR COPYWRITER TRAINER	Kharwastan
PhD-Marketing (Media, gender and identity)	Durban
M-Tech Public Relations Management	4092
B-Tech Public Relations Management *(Cum laude)*	Cell: 084 702 25 53
B-Tech Journalism *(Cum laude)*	e-mail: neresh@ngcommunications.co.za

02 July 2018

EDITING CERTIFICATE

Re: CHARMAINE PRAMMONEY - UKZN

Student Number 204300071

Topic: School Categorisation Learner Performance: The Power of Ethos

I confirm that I have edited this thesis for clarity, language and layout.

Kind regards,

_____

Nereshnee Govender (PhD)

4. Consent Forms

A) Gate keepers' informed consent form

School of Education,

College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus,

Chair of School Governing Body

GATE-KEEPER'S CONSENT LETTER

Academic research: Request for permission to conduct a research study in your school.

My proposed research title is:

School categorization and learner performance: The power of school ethos

My name is Mrs C. Prammoney from the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. You are being invited to participate in this research project that is aimed at exploring whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools.

I am an educator who is currently studying towards a Doctoral Degree in Education in the field of Teacher Development Studies at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. As it is mandatory according to UKZN, that in order for me to complete this degree and my thesis, it entails research work that needs to be conducted in a school. In view of the fact that learner academic performance poses as a major challenge for teachers, the focus of my study is to investigate the causes and nature thereof, as this a very relevant topic and of great concern to all in the educational field. The principle aim of this proposed research is to ascertain whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools and to explore, why learner poor performance persist despite knowledge about and interventions made to improve the quality of schools. I humbly seek permission to conduct the abovementioned research study in your school.

I would like to conduct this research from August to November. I intend to conduct interviews after school hours with you the head of the school and a sample of five post level one teachers of diversity to gain their perceptions on learner academic performance disparities and acquire information to complete this research study.

The school and teachers who partake in this study will do so, on a voluntarily basis and confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured. The participants have no obligation to participate in this research and may withdraw from it any point. All participants would be appraised of the research process, their participation and their rights in the research processes through informed consent forms. Their permission would be sought prior to their participation in the data collection process. I also hereby undertake that the name of your school or the teachers will not be mentioned in the subsequent thesis. I will ensure that normal learning and teaching is not disrupted in any way whatsoever whilst conducting this research study.

I will share my findings and feedback on this research with you and your staff members. The information acquired from this research study, will be accessible to the Department of Education, as well as school managers. I hope that the information gained from this research will be of great help to you and your staff and that together we might find solutions for our current learner academic performance disparities in schools.

Please note that:
- All confidentiality is guaranteed as inputs from participants will not be attributed individually to person. Should the need arise for participant attribution, these would be done with the express permission of the individual concerned, and that pseudonyms would be used to protect the participants' anonymity.
- Any information given by the participants cannot be used against any of the participants, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- The choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research is left on to the participant. No one will be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at obtaining information about schooling.
- Participants' involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

For further information regarding this study, feel free to contact my supervisor. My supervisor is Professor Labby Ramrathan who lecturers at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, who can be contacted on 031- 2608065. The reply could be sent to me by e-mail at:cv.dj@telkomsa.net

Thank you for your assistance in this matter

Yours faithfully

C. Prammoney (Mrs)   Student number: 204300071

I can be contacted at:
Email: cv.dj@telkomsa.net
Cell: 0837793327
Landline: 032 – 5331330

You may also contact the Research Office through:
Mr P. Mohun
HSSREC Research Office,
Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I…………………………………………………………………… (full name of the Chairman of the School Governing Body) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I give permission for my school to be participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw my school from participating in the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF CHAIRMAN OF SGB   DATE

………………………………………….   …………………………

B) LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal

Sir *I* Madam

Academic research: Request for permission to conduct a research study in your school.

My proposed research title is:

School categorization and learner performance: The power of school ethos

My name is Mrs C. Prammoney from the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. You are being invited to participate in this research project that is aimed at exploring whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools.

I am an educator who is currently studying towards a Doctoral Degree in Education in the field of Teacher Development Studies at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. As it is mandatory according to UKZN, that in order for me to complete this degree and my thesis, it entails research work that needs to be conducted in a school. In view of the fact that learner academic performance poses as a major challenge for teachers, the focus of my study is to investigate the causes and nature thereof, as this a very relevant topic and of great concern to all in the educational field. The principle aim of this proposed research is to ascertain whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools and to explore, why learner poor performance persist despite knowledge about and interventions made to improve the quality of schools. I humbly seek permission to conduct the above mentioned research study in your school.

I would like to conduct this research from August to November. I intend to conduct interviews after school hours with you the head of the school and a sample of five post level one teachers of diversity to gain their perceptions on learner academic performance disparities and acquire information to complete this research study.

The school and teachers who partake in this study will do so, on a voluntary basis and confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured. The participants have no obligation to participate in this research and may withdraw from it at any point. All participants would be apprised of the research process, their participation and their rights in the research processes through informed consent forms. Their permission would be sought prior to their participation in the data collection process. I also hereby undertake that the name of your school or the teachers will not be mentioned in the subsequent thesis. I will ensure that normal learning and teaching is not disrupted in any way whatsoever whilst conducting this research study.

I will share my findings and feedback on this research with you and your staff members. The information acquired from this research study, will be accessible to the Department of Education, as well as school managers. I hope that the information gained from this research will be of great help to you and your staff and that together we might find solutions for our current learner academic performance disparities in schools.

Please note that:

- All confidentiality is guaranteed as inputs from participants will not be attributed individually to person. Should the need arise for participant attribution, these would be done with the express permission of the individual concerned, and that pseudonyms would be used to protect the participants' anonymity.
- Any information given by the participants cannot be used against any of the participants, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- The choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research is left on to the participant. No one will be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at obtaining information about schooling.
- Participants' involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

For further information regarding this study, feel free to contact my supervisor. My supervisor is Professor Labby Ramrathan who lecturers at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, who can be contacted on 031- 2608065. The reply could be sent to me by e-mail at:cv.dj@telkomsa.net

Thank you for your assistance in this matter

Yours faithfully

C. Prammoney (Mrs)   Student number: 204300071

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You may also contact the Research Office through:

Mr P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I……………………………………………………………………… (full names of Principal)

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project,

and I consent to my participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent to the audio recording of my interviews: YES/NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

………………………………………..   …………………………

C) Informed consent letter for School Management Team participating in the research project

School of Education,

College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus,

Dear School Management team member participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Full Descriptive Title

School Categorization and Learner Performance: The Power of School Ethos

My name is Mrs C. Prammoney from the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. You are being invited to participate in this research project that is aimed at exploring whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools.

I am an educator who is currently studying towards a Doctoral Degree in Education in the field of Teacher Development Studies at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. My study involves research work that needs to be conducted in a school. In view of the fact that learner academic performance poses as a major challenge for teachers, the focus of my study is to investigate the causes and nature thereof, as this a very relevant topic and of great concern to all in the educational field. The principle aim of this proposed research is to ascertain whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools and to explore, why learner poor performance persist despite knowledge about and interventions made to improve the quality of schools. You have been identified through voluntary inclusion as a possible participant in an interview process to produce some data on learners' schooling and possible reasons that explain learner performance. Your contribution, perceptions and experiences at your school will form an integral part of this research study. There will be a formal interview session of one hour. The interview will be conducted at the time and place that is convenient with you.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview is iterative in nature.
- The interview is once off and would take approximately one hour.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at obtaining information of experience of schooling.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I can be contacted at:

Email: cv.dj@telkomsa.net

Cell: 0837793327

Landline: 032 – 5331330

You may also contact the Research Office through:

Mr P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I………………………………………………………………… (full names of School Management Team participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to my participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent to the audio recording of my interviews: YES/NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

………………………………….....................................   …………………………

D) Informed consent letter for teachers participating in the research project

School of Education,

College of Humanities,

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus,

Dear teacher participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Full Descriptive Title: School Categorization and Learner Performance: The Power of School Ethos

My name is Mrs C. Prammoney from the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. You are being invited to participate in this research project that is aimed at exploring whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools.

I am an educator who is currently studying towards a Doctoral Degree in Education in the field of Teacher Development Studies at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. My study involves research work that needs to be conducted in a school. In view of the fact that learner academic performance poses as a major challenge for teachers, the focus of my study is to investigate the causes and nature thereof, as this a very relevant topic and of great concern to all in the educational field. The principle aim of this proposed research is to ascertain whether quintile rankings or school categorisation influences the academic performance of learners in the primary schools and to explore, why learner poor performance persist despite knowledge about and interventions made to improve the quality of schools. You have been identified through voluntary inclusion as a possible participant in an interview process to produce some data on learners' schooling and possible reasons that explain learner performance. Your contribution, perceptions and experiences at your school will form an integral part of this research study. There will be a formal interview session of one hour. The interview will be conducted at the time and place that is convenient with you.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview is iterative in nature.
- The interview is once off and would take approximately one hour.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at obtaining information of experience of schooling.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I can be contacted at:

Email: cv.dj@telkomsa.net

Cell: 0837793327

Landline: 032 – 5331330

You may also contact the Research Office through:

Mr P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I…………………………………………………………………… (full names of teacher)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project,
and I consent to my participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent to the audio recording of my interviews: YES/NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

……………………………………….......................................   …………………………

5. Interview Schedule

Charmaine Prammoney - 204300071

Participants: Teachers   **Duration: 1 hour**

Please respond to the following information. It is required to gather data in determining the experience and expertise of the informant.

School categorization and learner performance: The power of school ethos

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have and have you taught at other schools before? Do you enjoy teaching at this school? Explain.

2. How would you rate the performance of the learners at this school and does the learner performance in this school vary from other school's that you have taught in or is it similar? Explain.

3. What is the ethos of this school and how does the ethos influence your teaching and that of the learners' learning?

4. How does the ethos (culture) and nature (environment) of the school and of learning affect learner academic performance?

5. How has the school categorization influenced (prejudiced) the ethos of the school?

6. How the identity (individuality) and ethos (culture) of the school under its categorization influences the leadership and management of the school.

7. How do the school teachers/school managers construct (create) their identity (uniqueness) of their school under its categorization and how has the constructed identity and ethos of   the school influences teaching and learning within the school?

8. What are some of the challenges that you encounter as an educator of this school and what do you think needs to be done to address these challenges?

9. What do you think are possible reasons for learners' performance disparities and what do you consider as factors contributing to poor academic performance by learners?

10. What role do the parents of your learners play in their schooling performance?

11. What characteristics (description or features) of financially poor learners contribute to their poor academic and what are some of the socio-economic factors which you think hamper the performance of these learners performance and what do you think should be done to address such socio-economic factors (if any)?

12. Does your school have any policies or practices in place to curb learners' poor academic performance and what do you think you as an educator can do to assist your learners in overcoming learner poor performance disparities?

13. What support does your S.M.T offer in curbing learners' poor academic performance?

14. In your opinion, do you think higher quintile ranking schools continue to perform better than lower quintile ranking?

15. What do you think needs to be done to improve the performance of learners in your school?