POOR URBAN LEARNERS' LONG WALKS TO SCHOOL AND THE INFLUENCE ON THEIR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

THAMSANQA HIPHAS DLADLA

Poor urban learners' long walks to school and the influence on their
school activities

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Abstract

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My study is about poor urban learners who walk long distances to school. I explore how their school trip affects their participation in school activities - co-curricular and extra curricula activities, and their understandings about the educational implications. The purpose of this study is two-fold: to understand poor urban learners' school trips through their own voices; and to reflect on the school management implications of the findings.

In a case study of one school located in the Cato Manor redevelopment area of Durban, I explore Grade 10 learners' accounts of their walks to and from school and how this affects their early morning and afternoon school activities and what they understand might be the reasons and consequences in their futures.

My findings are that poor urban learners encounter security risks daily on their way to school and they use various strategies to navigate those risks; learners experience unsympathetic and negative responses from some staff relating to their long walks to reach school; and the learners say that school regimes rather than the long distances they walk are jeopardising their educational aspirations.

At the outset my theoretical perspective was that the school trip is an obstacle to poor urban learners' education capabilities. However my conclusion is that some school regimes are unresponsive to poor urban learners' needs and may obstruct the educational opportunities for learners to better their futures more than does their walking long distances to school.

DECLARATION

I Thamsanqa Elphas Dladla declare that

(i)   The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

(ii)   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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Signed: _____

Supervisor's Declaration

As the candidate's Supervisor I agree/ ~~do not agree~~ to the submission of this dissertation.

SIGNED: _____   NAME: J. KARLSSON

DATE: 1 April 2012

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14 September 2010

Mr T E Dladla
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Dear Mr Dladla

**PROTOCOL: The Influence of learner mobility on their experiences of school activities
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0983/2010 M: Faculty of Education**

In response to your application dated 03 September 2010, Student Number: **204515669** the
Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned
application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL.**

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

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

Yours faithfully

**Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE**

SC/sn

cc: Dr. J Karisson (Supervisor)
cc: Mr. N Memela

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter One: Introduction to the study

1.1   Background to the problem

This study was conducted in a school serving poor urban learners, some of whom walk long distances to school; some take buses and others use minibus taxis to get to school. These learners have problems with morning lessons because they often arrive late at school and these results in them losing out on lessons in subjects like Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting; which are taught in the first period of the morning.These subjects are taught in the morning as the content is easier to grasp when the learners are more mentally alert, which is the case in the early morning. If such lessons are missed these learners do not perform well in their assessments.

The government has done a great deal to address the issue of poverty and economic imbalances among urban communities.For example, in the poorest communities, schools do not make the parents pay school fees. These schools are described as no-fee schools. No-fee schools were introduced in 2007 and are being expanded to include the poorest 60% of schools. The schools serving the poorest 40% of the population are prohibited from charging fees. In turn, the government funds the schools through money allocated from the Department of Education.The Department of Health provides free medical services for people who are unemployed and those who earn a low income. Thus learners get free medical treatment if they produce a letter from their school explaining their economic situation. Despite these measures, there is little that is being done concerningthe transport needs of poor learners. Most of the transport initiatives for the poor such as pedestrian bridges and bicycle projects are for learners from rural areas. Poor urban learners use the same public transport system as working class people, pensioners and other members of the community. Those urban learners who cannot afford such transport and who live far from the school have no alternative but to walk to and from school. There are several reasons why they might live a distance from their school. Firstly, the family may have been moved away from an informal settlement where the child was attending school when they were allocated a new house. Secondly, the family may have been looking for what they perceive to be a well-resourced school and this was far from their home. Lastly, the learners may be unable to attend the nearest school to the home because the school has no vacancies for applicant learners.

There is no or little accommodation made by public transport to cater for the routes learners use to reach school. Although the Department of Transport had issued a final draft of a

national scholar transport policy in February 2009, implementation has not taken place. Learners continue to experience difficulties when going to school. This becomes a barrier to their learning at school.

The Bill of Rights contained within the South AfricanConstitution, stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must progressively make available and accessible. (Republic of South Africa, 1996)

South African National Education Policy Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) states that schooling is compulsory up to the age of 15 years. This means that the state has an obligation to provide access to education in relation to learner transport (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2008). However, the transport needs of poor learners in urban areas do not appear to be recognised by the authorities beyond bus subsidies. In this study I will look atpoor urban learners' experiences of walking to school and how the distance between homes and school affects their participation in schooling activities.

As an educator and school manager, I have noticed that learners who walk long distances to school lose out on the first lessons of the morning and on extracurricular activities that take place in the afternoons. This is because they arrive late to school and they leave immediately after school ends. I seek to understand their experiences and perceptions in this matter of how arriving late at school and leaving immediately after the last bell affects their experience of education, and how this affects their future goals.

1.2 Focus and the purpose of the study

The study focuses on learners in a poor urban area and my purpose is to understand how walking to school influences their early morning lessons and after school extracurricular activities. The study concentrates on poor urban learners who walk long distances to school because this category of learners falls outside of the government transport provision. These learners are overlooked and there are no policies for schools to accommodate learners' needs, in terms of helping them overcome these barriers to their schooling. Such learners find themselves suffering because they have no transport to come to school or they cannot afford public transport.

My purpose is to collect data from poor urban learners about their experiences of walking long distances to school and how it affects them in their schooling activities. This will giveme

a picture of how poor urban learners view the importance of transport contributes to their learning and its role in them obtaining an education.

1.3 Context

My study was conducted in a school which is situated in Cato Manor. The school is in a Multi-Purpose Centre which was constructed to serve the poor urban community who live in informal settlements and low cost housing (Karlsson, 2003). The school is relevant to my study because it serves poor urban communities. Learners face a lot of challenges during their schooling which includes the difficulty of transport to and from school. I will first give thebackground of the area where the school is located.

Cato Manor has a long and significant history for the city of Durban and for the people who live in the area and their lifestyles. Cato Manor is in the heart of the Durban Metropolitan area and it is about 2000 hectares in size (Hindson&Pupuma, 1996). Cato Manor is named after George Cato who was the first mayor of Durban. Cato took legal possession of the land as a grant from the colonial government in 1844. Edwards (1994) states that George Cato sold part of the area to Whites and Indians at a later stage.

By the early 1930s, most of Cato Manor was owned by Indians who cultivated the land as market gardens to supply the Durban market with fresh vegetables (Hindson&Pupuma, 1996). At a later stage, the new landowners began to let to Indian, African and Coloured tenants; many of whom, in turn, sublet to other tenants (Butler-Adam & Venter 1984, p.14). This led to the area becoming over-crowded.

According to Davies (1991), the African population of Cato Manor grew from about 2500 in 1936 to about 58 000 in 1950. Robinson and Forster (2002) point out that the population of Cato Manor was estimated between 120 000 and 150 000 in 1960. Edwards (1994) says that there were of the 120 000 in Cato Manor, a third of that population was Indian. Although the racial structure was unevenly distributed, Cato Manor was one of the few areas that one could find different races residing side-by-side during this era. Thus the period between 1845 and 1989 saw the transition of Cato Manor from being agricultural land to a mixed form of dense informal urban development and market gardening.

Increasing numbers of people living in Cato Manor led to racial tension that erupted in conflict between Indians and Africans in 1949 (Robinson and Forster, 2002). Edwards (1989) describes the 1949 riots as having the character of a pogrom whereby there was organized

killing of a class of Indians who controlled land and trading facilities in Cato Manor. The riots led to the removal of Cato Manor residents into racially zoned areas on the outskirts of Durban, and the Cato Manor area was declared as a white group area (Edwards, 1994). Few individuals were left behind in the area. Butler, Adam and Venter (1984) mention that the area lay vacant until the housing redevelopment schemes of the mid-1980s brought people to the area again.

Employment opportunities increased after World War 2 in Durban and this led to the immigration of Africans to the city (Hindson 1987). During this period, South Africa's urbanisation laws were relaxed. Therefore, many migrants who came to Durban for employment opportunities ended up renting in the Umkhumbane section of Cato Manor (Edwards, 1989).

The speed of change was accelerated in the early 1990s with the unbanning of political organizations and in the run-up to the first democratic elections (Hindson&Pupuma, 1996). The development of houses in Cato Manor was fast-tracked by the Cato Manor Development Association working with the European Union. Although there were some houses, people continued to flock to the area, building shacks as their shelters.

Hindson andPupuma (1996) give the following reason for people coming to live in Cato Manor. Firstly, they left their previous places of residence to escape the outbreaks of violence in the black residential areas on the urban peripheries of Durban. Secondly, some sought less crowded accommodation and to establish their independence from family authority. Lastly, Cato Manor was attractive because of its proximity to the job market in the city centre, low transport costs to Durban, the absence of violence and crime, and the availability of vacant land.

Towards the end of the apartheid era, the state proclaimed the area suitable for Indian housing. In the mid-1980's, some Indian families returned to Cato Manor and purchased little bungalows. Freund (2007) points out that in 1992, impatient Africans living nearby in crowded circumstances were so upset at the new Indian arrivals that they invaded the last lot of apartheid housing, seizing these properties for their own. According to Freund (2007), after the invasion of houses by people living nearby, the Cato Manor Development Agency (CMDA) was established in 1992 to administer and further the development of the area. Karlsson (2003) notes that since 1994 Cato Manor has been earmarked for development by the post-apartheid government in collaboration with the local development association, to

become one of South Africa's largest urban renewal programmes. Freund (2007) points out that the formation of the CMDA led to four important positive improvements. These were:

- the building of houses took place, although slowly.

- many of the post -1990 shack settlements were replaced by permanent housing.

- the provision of health facilities, schools and community halls. For example, the school selected for this study is located in a multi-purpose centres comprising a primary school, secondary school, library and community hall.

- the construction of a major road running through Cato Manor, opening it up to easy access to key parts of the city, and commercial and industrial properties have begun to develop alongside.

Some residents were removed temporarily to allow new houses to be erected and then returned to a house on their site and others were sent to live at other places permanently. This movement had an impact on the life style of families especially the school-going children. For example, learners who may have walked short distances found themselves walking some kilometres to school. In this study, I have undertaken to find out from learners at one school in Cato Manor how these changes in their trips to school have had an influence on their schooling.The study was conducted in a high school which starts from grade eight to grade twelve. The school is in the middle of low-cost houses which were built by the municipality. It began to operate in year 1999. Presently it has an enrollment of 1347 learners, who areboys and girls. There are 44 educators, which includes the school management team. A large number of the learners walk to school i.e. some live near the school and others walk long distances before they come to school. Some of learners that attend this school are orphans; therefore, they live with relatives or guardians. Others live with single parents. There are also learners that live in child-headed households. A large portion of learners receive social grants from the Department of Social Welfare.

1.4 Key research questions

The above has led to the formation of the following research questions in order to gather information about experiences of learners towards travelling to school:

- ➢ How do learners' experiences of travelling to school affect their participation in school activities (i.e. co- and extra-curricular activities)?

> ➤ What are learners' understandings of the short and long-term consequences of not arriving at school on time each morning?

> ➤ What are learners' understandings about the drawbacks of not accessing extra-curricular school programmes?

1.5 Definition of key concepts

I will define the concepts that are fundamental to my study. These words form the basis of what is going to be researched and they also influence the connection in learners' experiences when walking to school.

1.5.1 School transport

School transport refers to the mode of transport that is used by learners when coming to school and going back home from school. Transport has different forms i.e. by walking to school, bicycles, escorted by parents, guardian or caregivers, by car for older learners. School transport may be organized collectively using buses or taxis. In many cases learners use public transport when travelling to school. According to Flugel (2009)public transport means the various modes of transport that schoollearners use to travel between their homes and the schools they attend and it includes mini-bus taxis, buses and trains.

1.5.2 School Activities

School activities include all the programmes that are performed in connection with teaching and learning. These activities are presented to learners in the form of co – curricular activities and extracurricular activities.Co-curricular activities include all the school activities that learners are engaged in, during class time, which involves academic work that is done in that particular school. This includes subjects that are learnt in class, educational tours that supplement what is taught in class and any other activities that are performed in relation to the teaching and learning that is performed.

On the other hand extra-curricular activities include all school activities which take place after school hours under supervision of teachers, which includes sports and cultural activities.It also includes all other activities that are done at a school to improve the potential of learners beyond academic activities. This includes sporting activities, leadership workshops and any other recreational performances. These activities are conducted after

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school hours. They contribute a lot in the development of a learner in terms of physical health and social skills. Some of these activities end up being the careers of the learners, for example sporting codes and music.

The learner transport has been ignored as a contributing factor in the success of the school activities yet schools are measured through their performance particularly in terms of co-curricular activities i.e. matric results at the end of the year. For learners to be able to perform well in these activities they should be in school on time and be ready to learn. For this reason learner transport becomes an important issue in the fulfilment of the school activities.

1.5.3 Poverty

Poverty is also another factor that can lead to the problems of transportation of learners to school. Learners find themselves walking long distances because their parents cannot afford transport fare. Haralambos and Holborn (2004) highlight that the concept of absolute poverty involves a judgement of basic human needs and is measured in terms of the resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency.

The United Nations (1995) defines absolute poverty as a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.

1.5.4 Unemployment

Sen (1999, 94) looks at the unemployment and capability deprivation. He explains that unemployment can be supplemented by government initiatives in the form of unemployment benefits i.e. in South Africa that can be in the form of UIF (unemployment insurance fund). These benefits will only satisfy the income loss to a certain extent. This will not be enough because unemployment has other effects on the lives of the individual which include psychological harm, loss of work motivation, skill and self-confidence, increase in ailments and morbidity, disruption of family relations and social life and hardening of social exclusion. Some activities will be cut because the money will not be enough to cover all the activities, for example learners will have to walk to school because there is no money to pay for the transport.

Another worrying factor can be the distribution of income within the family i.e. in some families children do not get any distribution of the income at all.

In the case of this study poverty may deprive learners of access to transport so that they walk long distances. Willis (2005) points out that poverty can lead to difficulties in assessing what is perceived to be the basic needs, such as education.

An important issue about access to education is the child being at school on time and coming back home safely. Transport becomes critical for the poor child who needs transport to attend school and to perform all school activities.

Chapter one was about introduction of the study. I presented the background of my study by explaining the nature of the school in research and where it is located. I had looked at the dynamics of the area and all other changes that had taken place in the area and how these changes have affected travelling of learners to and from school. I defined key concepts and also gave an outline of what each chapter entails.

Chapter two is about the reviewing of literature that is related to the study. I look at how other countries deals with travelling of learners to and from school, with more emphasis on European countries. I find out the challenges they have towards the travelling of learners and the concerns of parents and government pertaining toschool trips. I further review what is done by South African Government towards learner transport and challenges it is faced with in this regard. I look at the capability theory and how it was related to the travelling of learners to school and how the theory is related to the access of education.I look at capability theory and how it relates to the learners travel to school and how the theory relates to access of education

Chapter three is about my paradigmatic stance, methodology and the methods I used in conducting my research. I used a qualitative approach in a case study of one school. The case study was conducted using ten learners from the same school. Three methods to generate data were used in my study i.e. individual interviews, focus group interviews and transect walk. I then proceed to the reliability and validity of my study, ethical issues and limitations of my study.

Chapter four is about the findings of the study. The findings discover that there are learners that walk long distances in urban areas because of different reasons, not by choice. While these learners are walking to school they are exposed to different risks, which are sometimes

life threatening. Learners indicate that walking long distances have negative impacts towards their partaking in school activities. Arriving at school late will also have short and long term consequences in terms of their achievements i.e. presently their marks and future career path at the tertiary institution. Learners are also aware that failing to take part in extra-curricular activities will jeopardize their chances of pursuing sports as a career. Learners also highlight reasons for walking to school rather than taking public transport or being escorted by a parent with a family car. There was also evidence that walking long distances to school affects their capabilities in what is being performed in class and in other school activities. They also acknowledge walking because they benefit from it in terms of their fitness and losing weight and keep them healthy.

In chapter five I will conclude my study by answering my research questions. This will be followed by the limitations that I have come across during my research. I will also relate the findings to the theory that I have used and see whether there are similarities.

In the following chapter I review the literature relevant to learner transport.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

My study is about the travelling of urban learners to and from school and how this affects their school activities. This chapter is about two things: reviewing the literature related to my study and examining the theory that is appropriate to what I am researching. The issue of learner transport and the travelling of learners to and from school has been neglected and very little has been written on this subject. Different countries havevarious strategies to address travelling of learners to and from school. I have looked at howa few countries addressed the movement of learners from home to school and back, and the influence it has had on learners.

2.2 Public transport system

In addressing the issue of learner transport, the British Government formulated an act in 1944 which gave guidance in the support of learners travelling to school (Davis, 1998). The Act on transport stipulated that the government would provide free transport for eight- year- old learners who lived two miles away from the nearest suitable school and three miles for those learners who are above eight- years-old. The emphasis was that the provision of transport wouldonly be given to those learners who attend the nearest suitable school, therefore parents who decide to send learners to other schools would not be catered for. It should be noted that the 1944 Education Act on learner transport was formulated and implemented when most families did not own cars. The act did not help much when most families started to own cars and they started to choose the schools for their children according to their needs. Low-income groups did not have much choice in choosing schools for their children because of their economic status (Hillman, 1997). According to Davis (1998), in Britain, the mode of transportation of learners to school and back was determined by the socio-economic status of their family as well as whether or not the family owned a car. Parents that own cars are mostly likely to drive their children to school. On the other hand, the Departments of Environment and Transport in Britain encourage learners to walk and cycle to school and not to rely on cars as a mode of transportation.

The increase in car ownership and employment of parents had a big influence in the change of travelling patterns of learners to school. Bredshow (1995) sees a connection between the journey to school and the journey to work however these travelling patterns raised concerns.

The Minister for Schools at the Department of Education in Britain was worried that educational, health and social issues were being compromised and so decided to promote walking and cycling to school and reduce the use of cars (Morris, 1998).

Pooley et al (2005) mention that trips to and from school are part of the everyday routine for most children and many parents or guardians who escort their children to school in Britain. Pooley et al(2005) found that cars:

- Increase local traffic, pollution and accidents on the roads.

- Reduce the independence of children and deprive them of exercise that they would have gained by walking to school.

On the other hand, the reason for children not walking to school is that parents or guardians are concerned about the safety and the time learners take to get to school (Black et al, 2001).

Pooley et al (2005) identify factors that have affected trips to school since 1940s as follows:

- There are changes in patterns with more families owning their own cars.

- There has been an increase in parental choice within education, in line with broader changes in a society where the needs of consumer have become dominant. This has given parents and children a wider choice of schools, leading potentially to longer and more complicated daily journeys for education (Parsons et al, 2000).

- The pace of life has increased, and concepts of space and time altered, through the process of time-space compression. By the late twentieth century most people's travel behaviour had become much more complex in an attempt to cram more into a limited amount of time, and thus the journey to school has become part of a multifunctional trip.

- Perceptions of risk have changed significantly during the second half of the twentieth century. Such changes have affected the degree of parental control that is exercised over the journey to school, and the extent to which children are allowed to travel to school alone.

The above factors are also influenced by the socio-economic of a particular family; for example, even if the parent is concerned about the safety of his/her child, if a parent does not

have other means to transport the child other than walking, that child will continue walking to school in a possibly unsafe environment.

Pooley et al (2005) looked at space, time and journey to school. They reveal that most families want to minimize the distance over which a child travels to school. The distance travelled to school has increased over time while on the other hand, the transport has become faster and had allowed parents to have wider scope in selection of their child's school. Pooley et al (2005) point out that parents had the following reasons for choosing a particular school against another:

- Parents mention that they chose a school which is closer to their homes so that their children need not to cross the road when going to school.

- Some parents change to new schools because of relocation to a new place because they have bought a better house,

- They send their children to a school that has a reputation of good results in terms of academic work.

Parents and children had different reasons for using a particular mode of transport when going to school (Pooley et al, 2005). Some learners walk to school because it is closer to where they live. Some of the children are driven by their mothers to school because their mothers are not working therefore driving children to school becomes part of daily routine. Pooley et al (2005) mention that some children walk home because they enjoy the company of their friends and it is also safe; nobody bothered them even if it is dark. Trips to school also depend on the weather; parents drive children to school on cold, windy or rainy days and they will walk home on sunny days. Other children walk or cycle to school so that they would be able to claim back their bus fare money from local council. The main reason for choosing a particular mode of transport by parents in Britain was influenced by safety in terms of road accidents. Parents would prefer a school that would not expose their children to road accidents.

Engwicht (1993) came up with the following consequences of driving children to school: Firstly, it increases traffic and the amount of pollution around the school. Secondly, children would not have opportunities to develop road safety and personal safety skills. Thirdly, children do not have enough time to exercise and this leads to poor general health and well-being. Fourthly, it also takes away the children's independence of exploring and other social

development while they are growing. Lastly, travelling habits that children develop at an early stage will be difficult to change when they have grown up. Pontefract (2000) shares the same sentiments with Pooley (2005) and Black (2001) by saying that in Britain many parents prefer to drive their children to school, which has led to the decline of children walking and cycling to school, yet walking is cheap and it also has health benefits. This has led to school travel plan initiatives to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport when travelling to school. The school travel plan includes walking initiatives in the form of a walking bus. Engwicht (1993) defines a walking bus as an organised walking group led by adults, to a prescribed time table, whereby parents wait at identified bus stops for trained volunteers to escort their children to school. The walking bus has a conductor who is responsible for the supervision of children and a driver who has a trolley to carry the children's school bags. The walking bus would help parents who could not escort their children to school and increase the love of walking in children and save money. Pontefract(2000) further discusses the cycling initiatives and road safety training. Road safety training for pedestrians and cyclists has been shown to be a vital factor in persuading parents that their children are capable of travelling independently.

As part of the schools' travel plan, the local authorities in Britain introduced several new bus services with reduced fares. The Education Department helped in identifying areas over which a low fare scheme could operate. Schools can also play an important role by influencing the travel choices of their learners and staff members by establishing school policies or amending procedures to benefit pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Schools can influence parents by setting rules that are clear which put the needs of the children first.

Woodside et al (2002) also share the same sentiments with others by pointing out that the increase in the use of cars to travel to school against the option of walking and cycling has had negative results. Children are affected and suffer because of traffic congestion, noise and air pollution and a high rate of road traffic accidents and this has led to a reduction of physical activities with a result of long term health problems. Woodside (2002) mentions that travelling to school is influenced by socio-economic condition of families; for example in the North East of Britain ,which is regarded as a poor area, has the lowest car ownership rate in Great Britain and has the highest percentage of children walking to school. Woodside (2002) came up with another reason mentioned by parents for driving their children to school i.e. the unavailability of a direct bus service to school. Changes in travel and personal mobility are as

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a result of changes in society and economic prosperity i.e. rising car ownership and licence ownership, rising disposable income and decline of prices of motor cars. This led to a relationship being created in which car ownership is influenced by income earned and travel behaviour. Ewing and Green (2003) point out that there has been a great deterioration in walking and cycling to school in the United State of America since the year 1960, this includes short distances, and this has resulted in an increase in traffic. Although the use of cars to get to school is relatively modest in the Netherlands, there was an increase from 15% to 20% in a decade. On the other hand, Germany has enough public transport for primary school learners to get to school whereby there are lot of buses that wait outside school gates to take learners to where they live (De Boer, 2005)

De Boer (2005) mentions that school trips cover a great part of the development period of children and youngsters. This period starts when they cannot walk or ride a bicycle yet and it ends when nearly everyone has a driver's licence and can drive a car. Therefore travelling has become part of our daily activity that human beings perform, it begins with simple trips to primary schools and ends with complicated trips to universities and other tertiary institutions.

Broccolichi and Van Zanten (2000) point out that France follows a zoning system whereby children are required to attend schools near where they live. On the other hand, parents who can afford to are able to choose schools for their children. They further say that there are also schools that have a bad reputation because they are located in the area that is dominated by violence and they have also had bad results. Parents also consider the issue of their children getting to school safely and this includes transportation to and from school and bullying. Parents organise group trips to avoid the abovementioned challenges.

Mailer et al (2002) mention that the Association of Road and Transport came up with guidelines for the school environment in Austria. The aim of these guidelines was to make school trips safer. A big concern related to traffic safety of children is car traffic in the school environment. To overcome this concern, Jone and Bradshaw (2000) suggest the improvement of public transport will be an effective way of reducing many escorted trips of children to school. The Arrive Alive Campaign (2009) explains the usage of school transport and issues relate to the problems that learners are exposed to when using school buses in the United States. Although the United States has a highly organised transport system where most learners take school buses to school, learners still have problems. Firstly, many learners are injured and get killed in incidents that involve school buses. This is mainly related to

pedestrians. Secondly, there are dangers that learners are exposed to when they board the bus and when they get off the bus. These risks include the dangers of crossing roads. Arrive Alive(c2000) also points to the importance of parents teaching and reminding their children about road safety rules.

2.3 Learner transport in South Africa

There has not been given enough attention to learner transport in the past decade in South Africa. Prior to 1994, Apartheid laws ensured that there was a separation of learners and schools based on race. Karlsson (2007) explains that post 1994, there was an influx of learners to schools in the suburban areas (areas which were predominantly white residents) and to the schools which were perceived as well-resourced and offered better education. This movement led to learners using transport to get to these schools. The movement of learners was further permitted by the introduction of a new admissions policy in 1996, which allowed learners to learn in the school of their choice. While learners were travelling to and from school, they experienced things such as dangers of victimisation by other people. Although Karlsson researched experiences of learners on their way to school, those experiences were not related to learners' school activities. She found that learners' experiences involved knowing about their neighbourhood, their safety and other factors, including health and the infrastructure of the area.

Reddy, Sifunda and James (2002) have researched road-related injuries involving motor vehicles, drivers, passengers and pedestrians. They find that large proportions of learners are exposed to road safety hazards mainly as pedestrians or as passengers in other people's cars or in public transport. In terms of learners who walk, the dangers include pedestrian accidents and running away from hooligans. The South African government acknowledges that learner transport is a problem in the country. This emerges in a report entitled*Conditional Grants, School Nutrition, HIV/AIDS and Learner transport: Department briefing* (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2008). A senior government official was reported as proposing that having proper school transport would facilitate compliance with compulsory education because many learners walk long distances to and from their schools. The official acknowledged that there was inconsistency in supplying and dealing with transport in provinces and that the advantages of providing learner transport included access to education, promotion of safety and conservation of learner energy. The problems involved in the supply

of transport are the mismanagement of learner transport, inconsistency in transport rates, overloading of vehicles and non-payment of contractors.

Flugel (2009) found out that transport policy arrangements are both an enabling and a limiting factor for learners in South Africa. She did not point out, however, how learners are affected by transport in their school activities. This is the reason I decided to find out from learners what impact they feel this will have on their future. I will collect data, through interviews, from learners who walk long distances to school and back home.

Behrens (2004) reveals that the National Government has assigned responsibility for the formulation of learner transport strategies to the different provincial governments. Provinces should assess the needs of its learners and come up with suitable strategies to address challenges and these strategies should also include people with disabilities. The Department of transport (1996) has come up with a special category in defining passengers. This category includes people with disabilities, learners, tourists and pregnant women. According to the act the above mentioned people should be given first priority to transport, although this is not yet happening. Needs of learners in terms of transport are not yet met in some parts of South Africa, and it is not made a priority. Behrens emphasizesthat the Department of Transport should plan and provide transport infrastructure, facilities and services that will meet the needs of learners. This will include affordability, accessibility, punctuality and getting to school on time, proper and acceptable distance to school, be safe and secure and also be comfortable (Behrens, 2004). In terms of affordability buses and taxis have special rates for learners when they are wearing their school uniform. Bus services sell coupons to learners at a cheaper rate compared to an adult coupon. On the other hand taxis are not consistent in this regard because they sometimes demand the full price from learners. The issue of accessibility is still posing lot of challenges because there are learners who are walking long distances to school; therefore they do not have access to transport when going to school. The reason parents escort learners to school by car is that our public transport system is not safe, secure and comfortable. Sometimes learners are transported by cars that are not road worthy and they are also overloaded.

Prior to 1994 in South Africa, each department of education had its own arrangements in addressing learner transport. After formation of one education department, there was structured learner transport for all provinces and more consistent learner transport was created for all provinces (Mngaza et al, 2001). Although there are lot of systems in place in

different provinces there are some challenges in this regards. Some provinces have not yetgotten proper transport systems for learners. For example, in the Western Cape there were a lot of challenges in terms of getting proper contracts and permits for vehicles that will transport learners to school on a daily basis (Provincial administration of the Western Cape, 2003). Although the South African government is trying to address the issue of learner transport there are still many challenges. When Statistics South Africa (2010) was doing a household survey they found out that there are 28% of learners in schools who walk for more than thirty minutes to the nearest school. There is also only 0, 2% of learners in public schools that are benefiting from free scholar transport that is subsidised by the government. These figures show that the South African government needs to pay more attention to learner transport so that there will be improvement in this regard. Learners who use transport to school rely on public transport. They are affected by strikes and delayes of signing new contracts for bus service providers of public transport. Savides (2009) reported that Durban learners were left stranded when the city entered into the fourth week without bus service. This was because of the dispute about the appointment of a service provider in the Durban municipality.

When reviewing the literature of my study I realised that countries have different challenges when it comes to the traveling of learners to school. Other countries are having challenges in terms of learners that are being escorted to school by cars. These countries are encouraging learners to walk to school or use public transporting when going to school. On the other hand in South Africa there is a challenge in public transport and children walking long distances. Public transport does not meet the needs of learners that travel to school. Although walking to school is encouraged for health reasons there are learners that walk long distances which have an impact on what they do at school.

My findings when reviewing the international literature is that the main concern of the government is congestion during mornings which is caused by parents who escort learners to school. Government came up with the initiatives to decrease traffic not to assist learners with getting to school. There are also concerns about the rate of accidents during times of coming to school. The issue is not about how the learners are affected by the experiences that they have when coming to school. There is still a big gap in relating activities that are done at school with coming to school. This is being overlooked and the department of education has not yet addressed this phenomenon.

Department of education and department of transport in South Africa has many initiatives about learner transport but nothing is said or done about walking learners in urban poor areas. Another challenge in South Africa is that the country as a whole is divided into many sectors therefore when addressing any issue that relates to people the government had to consider different approaches for different sectors i.e. rural areas, urban areas and poor urban areas. Most of the time poor urban areas are overshadowed by urban areas therefore their challenges are not addressed immediately. This also the case with poor urban learners who walk long distances to school. Few people take note of these learners. This includes their teachers, departmental official and the government therefore little is being done to assist them in getting to school on time. Although I appreciate that literature has more information about what is happening while learners are coming to school but there is nothing on how these experiences affect learners in their school activities. Learners have not yet voiced how they feel about what is happening when they come to school late and how will this affects them presently and in the future.

In closing, the national department of education does not have direct control over learner transport in the country. This was revealed when Minister of Education Angie Motshekga(2010) was asked about which directorate of her department was responsible for the payment of service providers for learner transport. Her response to the question was that there is no directorate in her department that was responsible for payments of service providers and she refers the matter to the provincial education departments. As a national department of education they should be aware of what is going on in provincial education departments when it comes to learner transport.

2.4   Theoretical framework

In my review of literature, I found that in South Africa choices of school and how to get to school is based on the economic status of a learner's family and what they can afford.

Travelling of learners to school can be classified according to many attributes. People in the communities do not see themselves as the same. They divided themselves into classes. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2004), many studies that were conducted in Britain have revealed that the majority of population believes that society is divided into classes. There is a working class and middle class. Haralambos and Holborn (2004) further explain

that classes can be distinguished according to both the type and the amount of capital they possess and their past history.

Children from different social classes go to different schools, based on what their parents can afford. The social class of their parents may shape their future and quality of their education. This is influenced by the wealth of the parents. Wealth can be defined as valuable material possessed by the individual (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004). Parents with more money will be able to transport their children to school while those that do not have enough money will struggle to provide means of transport for their children.

In order to make sense of how this relationship between economic status (poverty or wealth) and social class affects learners' access to school activities, I will useSens' capabilities approach.

Sen (1993) defines capability as a person's ability to pursue valuable states of being. Capability also represents the combination of things a person is able to do. Walker and Unterhalter (2007) argue that a learner's performance in education is based on his/her capabilities. The utilisation of different resources and other relevant learning aids for education to take place leads to inequalities. For example, some learners cannot afford to attend schools that are better resourced because of their social disadvantages. Social contexts influence the choices of learners and their futures

Walker and Unterhalter (2007) distinguish between capabilities and functions. Functions are achieved outcomes, for example a learner attends school to be educated whereas capability is the potential to achieve outcomes i.e. opportunity to achieve and realising your dream. Walker and Unterhalter (2007) concur with the above statement by making an example of two girls who failed a mathematics test for different reasons. The wealthy girl failed because of her choices i.e. choosing not to study for the test and do other things, and the poor girl failed because of her lack resources such as place to study or studying material to perform well. A similar situation may occur for a learner who has transport difficulties to attend school. A learner who walks long distances to reach school may be assumed by their teachers to be a disinterested learner because they are tired during lessons.

Social conditions such as personal, social and financial wealth sometimes mean people haveunequal opportunities. Walker and Unterhalter (2007) say that:

People need to have agency over their lives. They explain that agency means that each person is a dignified and responsible human being who shapes her or his own life in the light of goals that matter, rather than simply being shaped or instructed how to think.

The above statement will be relevant when all individuals have the same opportunities in terms of their capabilities. Another three important ideas of the capability approach are freedom, unfreedom and development. By "unfreedom" Sen (1999) means that development requires the removal of unfreedom such as poverty and poor economic opportunities. Unfreedom may include, for example, school arrangements to make sure that learners come to school on time.

Sen (1999) speaks about unfreedom as when a person puts themselves in danger because he/she is looking to satisfy his/her needs. In the case of my study, this may occur when learners expose themselves to danger when they walk to school because they want to be educated. Sen (1999) says that the results of economic unfreedomare negative for example when a poor learner is murdered while he/she is walking to school. Thugs may assume that he/she has money because he/she is well dressed. Thus Economic unfreedom, in the form of extreme poverty, can make a learner vulnerable. In turn this violates their freedom to access education (Sen, 1999).

Sen (1999) associates poverty with a lack of capability. He says that an individual can have an advantage of the situation because of the capabilities that he/she has. Poverty can be seen as deprivingthe learner of basic capabilities. Sen (1999) points out that it is important to recognise the crucial role of wealth in determining living conditions and quality of life such as the distance to walk to school. Wealth is an important factor because it allows the freedom to achieve what you want to have. The wealth that Sen (1999) is mentioning is usually acquired by getting employed. Sen (1999) also explains how unemployment contributes to the social exclusion of some groups, and it leads to loss of self – reliance, self – confidence and psychological and physical health. Unemployment of parents affects learners in accessing some basics needs such as money for paying for transport to go to school. Learners end up walking long distances because their parents cannot afford to give them money to take a bus or taxi to school. In Cato Manor where the school is situated there is a high rate of unemployment therefore many learners walk long distances because of unaffordability.

Sen (1999) points out that poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of income, which is the standard criterion of identification.

In conclusion Sen's capability theory (1999) will be relevant for my study in answering my research questions because the theory unpacks the issue of unfreedom and capabilities of individuals. The theory will help in analysing the relationship between capabilities and performing tasks. It will also help in enlightening the issues of not achieving because of the situation you are in at that particular moment. For example in my study the issue will be about learners that walk long distances and looking at how these long walks to and from school affects learners' capabilities in terms of achieving better marks in their subjects and also excelling in extra-curricular activities. Sen (1999) points out that development of the country involve elimination of organised social deprivation, poverty and neglect to assist communities. South Africa as a developing country should address the issues of depriving learners to be at school on time.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and research design

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss my paradigmatic stance in terms of the methodology that I have used in conducting the study. I will further discuss the research instruments, the participants and how I addressed issues of dependability, transferability and credibility, and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The study is undertaken from within the interpretive paradigm. I used the interpretive paradigm because I want to understand learners' experiences when they walk to school rather than taking a taxi or a bus. Cohen at al (2005) point out that a researcher who works with the interpretive paradigm attempts to understand the subjective world of human experiences. In this study, I will focus on the experiences of learners when going to and coming from school and how those experiences affect them. I identify myself with interpretive paradigm because I value people's ideas when I talk with them.I am not interested in the numbers associated with the experience of walking to school like the length of time but rather I am interested in the affect that this experience has on learners. According to Maree (2007), interpretivism focuses on how individuals and communities interpret their experiences. I focused on the experiences of learners when going to and coming from school and how those experiences affect them. The learners told me their stories and by analysing these stories I would understand how they feel about what is happening.Learners' stories will reveal the experiences of the situation rather than the statistical content of such. It will further explain things that they value and also things that are important to them as they are growing up. I believe in knowledge that I gather from people and also value what they say because it is their feelings rather than using statistics.

According to Trauth (2001, p.129), interpretive research attempts to understand phenomena through the meaning that people such as learners assign to them. Research questions revealed the experiences of learners when walking to school and going back home. Garrick (1999, p.149) points out the following fundamentals assumptions of the interpretive paradigm:

- Individuals are not considered to be passive vehicles in social, political and historical affairs but have certain inner capabilities which allow for individual judgements, perceptions and decision-making autonomy. Learners were asked to explain how walking to school will affect their future prosperity.

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- The belief that any event or action is explained in terms of multiple interacting factors, events and processes. This is derived from events mentioned by learners that happen to them to and from school through interviews.

- The view that the aim of inquiry is to develop an understanding of individual cases rather than universal laws or predictive generalisation. As I had mentioned before, it is assumed that there are few learner transport problems in urban areas compared to rural areas yet there are learners who also walk long distances in urban areas to reach school.

I used a qualitative approach to conduct my research. The qualitative approach allowed me to interview learners and get their views about their experiences of walking to school and back home. Henning (2004) reveals that qualitative researchers do not want to find out only what happened but also how it had happened and why it happened the way it did. Therefore, in my study, I was looking to understand the reasons why learners walk long distances to school. De Vos et al (2002) advocate a qualitative approach by saying that the data collected is rich, describing the context, circumstances and feelings of the people involved in the study. This is because the researcher generates data about experiences. Henning (2204) asserts that in a qualitative study the variables are usually not controlled because it is this freedom and natural development of action and representation that we wish to capture. I want to understand the experiences of learners when walking to school and also explain what learners go through in arguments, by using evidence from the data and from the literature, what phenomenon that I am studying. According to Henning (2004) a qualitative approaches specifically enables the researcher to gain an understanding of the perceptions, values, actions and concerns of participants understudy. This will be relevant to me because the study is about learners' experiences. Learners will give their views about what is happening to them and what impact they think walking to school will have in their future.

3.3 Research design

The design of my study was influenced by my working in a school serving the poor urban community where learners walk to and from school. I observed that some learners were coming late to school and missing lessons; they also did not participate in extra-mural activities. Hence I wanted to know how such learners perceive their experiences of coming to

school and how they think this will affect them in their future endeavours. It was important to design the study not to interfere with my day- to- day duties as a school manager. Therefore I decided to conduct the research in the school where I teach. The reason for studying my own school was to research things that the school does with the aim of understanding the behaviour and listen to the voice of learners.

Maree (2007) describes the following research strategies as the ones suitable for a qualitative research design. These strategies are conceptual studies, historical research, action research, case study, ethnography and grounded theory. I will use case study design to conduct my study of learners at one school. It is a suitable design because it is flexible and it allowed me to explore the experiences of learner transport. I have also chosen case study over other strategies because the case study will offer a multi-perspective analysis whereby I will consider views of participants and the interaction between the participants (Maree, 2009)

Maree (2007) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Case studies strive towards a comprehensive understanding of how participants relate to and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of a phenomenon under study.

There are three types of case studies, i.e. intrinsic case which is unusual case; instrumental case which is used to illustrate an issue and lastly, collective case study which includes multiple cases (Creswell, 2007).

My study is an instrumental case study because I was studying one specific issue, which is a poor urban learner trip to school and back home. My focus was on learners who walk from home to school and back and I was interested in describing learners' activities which includes co-curricular and extracurricular activities. (Creswell, 2008)

There are Cohen's (2011) ideas about the advantages and disadvantages of the case study. I had chosen the following advantages because they are relevant to my study: Firstly, case studies can be easily understood by a wide range of people because they are written on a regular basis, this includes non-academics and non-professional people. The study of only one single school in my case study has made it easy to understand the activities that are performed in the school. Sequence of the events in my study are easy to follow because I had used real-life experiences that people are exposed to regularly, and they also see learners walking to school although they are not aware of their experiences while walking to school

and going back home. Secondly, case studies are clear and understandable therefore people can easily follow what is written on it. Studying one school would make the reader to easily understand and follow what is being researched. The readers would be able to associate what they observe with what they would be reading about in the study. Thirdly, a case study can be started by one researcher; it does not necessarily need a lot of researchers for it to be successful. For example, I was able to conduct my study alone. Fourthly, case studies incorporate and construct in unforeseen occurrences and uncontrolled variables. Case studies catch unique features that may otherwise be lost in larger scale for example in surveys and these unique features might hold the key to understanding the situation. Another advantage of case studies is that they provides real examples, generally practical in nature and provides innovative ideas. In my study I used the examples that I got from the learners that walk long distances to school and back home. Learners told me the real occurrences that they were expose to while coming to school.

Cohen (2011) points out the following disadvantages of case studies: Case studies are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity. During my study I had to remind myself now and then about being neutral during my research and to not bring my emotions into what I research. Case studies are not easily open to cross-checking; hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective. Lastly, the results of a case study may not be generalized except where other readers see their applications. Findings of my study could not be used as something that is general happening exactly the same way according to what I had found. Findings could be used to caution the reader about what they should expect when learners are walking long distances to school.

My case study was about learners at one urban high school serving poor communities. I chose ten learners to participate in the case study i.e. five girls and five boys from one grade, selecting them according to the distances they travel to school. Learners in my study walk more than 2, 5 kilometres to school. Cohen (2005) describes a case as a specific instance that illustrates a more general principle. The single instance can be a child, a class, a school or community. The advantage of case study is that it observes effects in real contexts, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects.

3.4 Data generation instruments used in the study

Three methods were used to generate data about poor urban learners who walk long distances to school. They are the individual interviews also known as one-on one interviews, the focus group interview and the transect walk.

I will now describe each method and how I employed it in the field.

3.4.1 Individual Interviews

Interviews are used for different purposes, for example to get a suitable candidate for the vacant post, but in this study it was used to collect data that had direct impact to the study I did. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002, p. 267) define the interview as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Frey and Oishi (1995) define interview as a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions and another answers them. A person who asks questions is called interviewer and the person who answers questions is called a respondent. Jensen et al (1991) see interviews as a useful tool which can lead to further research using other methodologies such as observation and experiments.

I used the one-on-one interview method to collect data from participants. Creswell (2008) defines one-on-one interview as a process where the researcher collects data and records answers from only one participant in the study at a particular time. One-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably (Creswell, 2008). Maree (2007, p. 87) points out that open- ended interviews often take the form of conversations between the researcher and interviewee with the aim of getting his or her ideas, views, beliefs and attitudes about events or phenomena. Nichols (1991) defines open-ended interviews as an informal interview which is not structured by a standard list of questions whereby interviewers are free to phrase their questions as they like. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) point out that open-ended questions allow the interviewer to explore deeper into initial responses of the respondent to gain more detailed answers to the questions. The open-ended questions had assisted to identify different themes that had been mentioned by the participants. Open- ended questions were suitable for the study because participants answered questions in detail. I decided to use the interview method because it would help me to discover how learners think and feel about walking to school, what are their opinions are towards this every school day walk. Learners are able to

discuss sensitive issues such as their economic status which they were uncomfortable to discuss in a group. I was able to clarify ambiguous questions and also convene follow up interviews to follow up on incomplete answers. Interviewees are not influenced by others in a group. I took into consideration that interviews can be very time consuming and that it was also difficult to find participants. I was aware about what was pointed out by Wimmer and Dominick (1997), that open-ended interviews can cause confusion either because of the lack of understanding of the question by the interviewee or by lack of understanding of the interviewee's answer by the interviewer.

Four learners i.e. two boys and two girls were interviewedselected from the ten learners who participated in the focus group interview. After I have purposefully selected ten learners for my study, I asked four learners i.e. two boys and two girls to participate in one-on-one interviews. The reason for interviewing two boys and two girls was to balance the gender and also find out whether they have common challenges in terms of gender. Interviews helped me in getting data about personal experiences from learners. All interviews were conducted at the community library at one of the rooms inside. Interviews were conducted after school hours with the permission from parents/guardian/care-givers and each learner was interviewed once, so that a total of four interviews were held.

Although the interviews were conducted, there were a few challenges that I came across. Firstly, I struggled to get learners for interviews because of afternoon classes that they were attending so it was difficult for them to stay late after attending classes. During the day of the interview I had to drive them home because we finished late however that also helped me to see what they were talking about in the interview in terms of the distance they walk. Secondly, during interviews, boys used one word answer or short response to answer questions. They did not want to reveal everything that was happening to them perhaps because they did not want me to see that they were afraid because they are boys. Lastly, participants were tempted to generalise the issues when they responded to questions and did not respond according to their own experiences. I would occasionally ask them to refer to their own experiences. I also had to drive the participants home because we finished our interviews very late. When leaving participants at their home I had to go to their parents/guardian/care-givers and reminded them the reason for the learner's late homecoming. This also helped in assuring the parents that their children were with me.

3.4.2   Focus Group interview

The focus group interview was used to generate data from learners. During focus group interviews, learners share their experiences by having a discussion amongst themselves. According to Creswell (2008), a focus group interview is the process of collecting data from a group of people. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) define focus group interviews as a research strategy for understanding audience attitudes and behaviour. Using focus group interviews helped me in getting the shared values and finding out what is common in learners' experiences, such as challenges they come across when walking to school although they had different challenges. Maree (2007) mentions that the focus group interview gives participants a chance to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide more information about the topic. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002, p. 288), the focus group interview is when the group discusses a question or topic amongst themselves. Ten learners i.e. five boys and five girls from Grade Eleven were selected to participate in a focus group interview to generate data for two research questions. Learners who were selected were those who walk long distances to school, which is more than two kilometres because it is unusual for a learner to walk this distance in urban area while going to school. Oatey (1999) points out that those members of the focus group should know each other so that they will feel free to talk during interview. To address the above, I had a meeting with all the participants prior to the interview so that they would meet one another and had an informal discussion to ease the tension amongst them. This helped in knowing one another's background and also their names. I used purposive sampling to choose the ten learners that participated in the study. Maree (2009) points out that purposive sampling is used in situations where the sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind. Purposive sampling was relevant for my study because the study is about only those learners that walk long distance to school. Therefore I only chose those learners who walk more than 2.5 kilometres to school. Cresswell (2003) points out that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that best help the researcher understand the problem and research question. Hence my participants were selected in order to give me relevant information about their experiences about long walks to school because they walk to and from school every school day.

Miles and Huberman (1994) bring four important aspects that need to be considered when selecting participants. Those aspects are setting, actors, events and the process. Following Miles and Hurberman's aspects, my research took place in a school and my participants were 10 learners who walk to and from school. As Creswell (2008) mentioned, the participants

were encouraged to speak and give one another a chance to speak. During focus group I tried to avoid the issue of undermining each other amongst the learners. I also addressed what was picked up by Wimmer and Dominick (1997) about focus group interviews being not a good research methodology because of the potential influence in responses from other members of the group. I was also aware that group pressure can influence the thoughts of other members, therefore all members of the group were encourage to speak about their own experiences not of others. I struggled to get all participants on a day that would be suitable for them all. During the interview, all learners contributed although the female learners dominated the interview. Female learners had a lot to say because they thought that they are more vulnerable compared to boys. They had a lot to say about their experiences about their walks to school. Before the interview, learners had the perception that they would be assisted in travelling to school, for example, that they would be given bicycles to help them to come to school. I had to explain to them the purpose of the interview was related to my study only. The only help that I gave them was to buy cakes and cool drinks and also to drive them home after the interview. While driving learners to their respective homes, they commented amongst themselves that they so which it would be easy and safe to go home, like it was happening as I drove them. Learners pointed out that they feel more safe and secure in the car than walking as they do on every school day.

3.4.3   Transect walk

A transect walk is a participatory approach that gives researchers an opportunity to collect qualitative data (Van Staden, 2006). It is also seen as a mobile interview during which the researcher walks with participants from the beginning to the end. I chose my participants for the transect walk based on the following criteria: they were willing to have me walk home with them and they would be able to give the relevant information during the walk. On the other hand, Macchi (2011) describes the transect walk as an observation tool for understanding the location and distribution of resources, features, landscape and major land uses along a given transect walk. A transect walk as an information gathering exercise and the important advice is to identify the transect walk route and purposively select the local participants. The challenge about the transect walk is that it only takes into account the currently observable situation and features and does not include changes that will take place over the course of the seasons and years. Lastly, Keller (2010) defines a transect walk as a

systematic walk along a defined path with local people by observing, asking and looking while walking.

I identified two boys which I walked with. It was difficult to get boys to walk with in the afternoon because of afternoon classes and other social commitments they had after school hours. On the day of the walk, I explained the purpose of the transect walk to them as well as the route of the walk. Although the boys had agreed to walk with me, at the beginning of the walk they were not comfortable to walk with me because of my reputation and my position at the school. Boys had a feeling that other learners would think that they were giving me information about what happened when they go home. It was difficult to walk while talking to each other and some parts of the roads do not have pavements. After the walk, I struggled to get transport back to my car. I had to pay my colleague who lives nearby to take me to the school. It was difficult to transcribe some of the data because of the noise of the cars and because the boys occasionally spoke very softly. I did not walk with girls, although I knew that I was going to get more information from them based on how they responded during focus group interviews. My reason for not walking with girls was to protect them and the perceptions that it would create when other people see us walking together after school hours (Mahiri, 2001).

In closing, learners will be able to generate the required information because they have first-hand information about the experiences on the way to and from school. Choosing learners according to the distances they travel to school will help getting different ideas and views.

3.5 Data analysis method used in the study

I began data analysis after organising and transcribing data. Qualitative data analysis includes organising, accounting for and explaining and making sense of data in terms of participants and the definition of the situation. Qualitative data for my study was derived from individual interviews, focus group interviews and a transect walk. I had transcribed interview data to analyse it and each interviewee was given a name. I had used coding to analyse data. Cohen (2002) defines coding as a name or label that the researcher gives to a piece of text that contains an idea or a piece of information. Cresswell (2007) describes coding as the process of segmenting and labelling text to descriptions and broad themes of data.

Cohen (2002) had mention three types of coding i.e. open coding, analytic coding and axial coding and I had used open coding in my study. Open coding is when the researcher

generates categories and defines their properties and dimensions. I had considered steps of coding that were identified by Cresswell (2007) when I was analysing data. Firstly, I read the whole document of transcription while writing down the ideas from the text. Secondly, I tried to understand the message that the interviewee was trying to get across from the transcription. I also tried to get the meaning of what was said. Thirdly, I began the process of coding by underlining and highlighting all the relevant responses to the research questions. Fourthly, when finished coding the whole transcript I then identified the code words that would be used. Code words that were classified as follows:

- Negative features

- Positives features

- Barriers

- Consequences

Fifthly, I compared the list of codes with the data that I have analysed. I also merged the codes with the specific quotes from the participants:

> **Indlelaezaesikoleniindekakhulu**okuthelelaukuthi**abantubesilisa**sengibasabangend lelaemangalisayongobaibona**abanginikainkinga**kakhuluumangizaesikoleni.Futhina nokuthiumangizamaukubagwemakufanelengihambe I – long distance enkulukunelenaesukaekhaya straight ukuzaesikolenibesekwesinyeisikhathingifike late.**Nomaumakuwukuthingizobagwemangiphumaesikolenisengiyaekhayauma naakangibuziukuthiyini indaba ngibuya late emedaneangishaye.**Futhinasesikoleni**angikwazingiyahlulekaukuathendaama – extra lessons cause**uma sengibuya baningiabantuabangivimbayo la emnyangobenzakonkeabafunaukukwenza cause sihambasodwasingamantombazanaakekhofuthiozosilekelelaemgwaqeni. Bonkebathiimangekengimenomuntungingathandiukumanaye.Ngiyabonga.

After identifying the passage I highlighted the segment that was relevant to the code which was the negative feature. Bold-faced sentences were used in data analysis about learners' perceptions and experiences. This identifies code words that had important features for my study, for example negative features. The codes were determined through what was mentioned by the participants during the interviews. The passage was further narrowed down to what was relevant as is indicated below:

> **Indlelaezaesikoleniindekakhulu**okuthelelaukuthi**abantubesilisa**sengibasaba ngendlelaemangalisayongobaibona**abanginikainkinga**kakhuluumangizaesikol eni. ' [I am afraid of males because they give me lot of problems when I come to school]

My analysis is presented in the next chapter.

3.6   Trustworthiness and credibility

I took into consideration the issue of trustworthiness and credibility in my study. De Vos (2002) mentions that qualitative research must respond to guidelines that represent yardsticks against which the trustworthiness of the research can be evaluated. In trying to achieve maximum validity in my study, I had to minimise the amount of bias. I did this by taking into consideration the points that were mentioned by Cohen (2005) which includes the attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer. I had allowed participants to respond to questions without my influence and interference. I had taken responses from participants as they are not according to what I want. I respected learners' answers, even if they were not what I was expecting. I explained my questions when the participants had misunderstood them. The trustworthiness of my study will incorporate the issues of credibility, transferability and dependability. TerreBlanche and Durrheim (2002) state that credible research produces findings that is convincing and believable. I had done this by interviewing learners who walked to school every school day. This is convincing because it involves learners that had experiences of what happened every day to them.

Accuracy and reliability was addressed by taking the following issues into consideration: All interviews were voice recorded and they were transcribed in IsiZulu. This was done by me because I am an isiZulu speaker. I have asked learners to validate the reliability of my transcript by asking them to read and confirm that what I had written is their own words during the interviews. After reading the transcription learners had confirmed that what was written was their responses during interviews. I used a free loose English translation and the English translation is put in brackets alongside with original IsiZulu. This was done to assist any reader that wants to verify the free translation.

Furthermore my aim is not to generalise, but for my findings to be transferable. Transferability is accomplished by generating a detailed and rich explanation of circumstances. These details will give readers in depth accounts of the structures of meaning which develop in a specific context (Terre Blanche &Durrheim, 2002). I dealt with one case study in the province, however this would be acceptable because I am exploring the topic. I do not claim that what I have found is happening all over South Africa.

3.7   Ethical issues

In my study I generated data from learners from one urban high school. All participants were given consent forms to sign and also given forms for their parents/guardians and caregivers to sign, allowing them to participate in the study. The school also granted me the permission to interview learners. After receiving all the consent forms, I began my interviews with learners i.e. individual interviews, focus group interviews and a transect walk. All interviews were tape recorded.

I had a meeting with participants informing them about the procedure of the interviews and explaining to them where they would take place and my role during interviews. Participants agreed to be interviewed after school hours. The permission for access to the school was obtained from the Department of Education, principal and the school governing body. The reason for asking permission from the above mentioned stakeholders was that they control and govern all the processes that take place in the school. They are also responsible for protecting learners concerning anything that will violate their rights while they are at school. Permission from parents, guardians, caregivers and head of household was asked because the participants are minors. I asked the permission from learners themselves to be involved in the study. Getting permission from learners was important because it gave them opportunity to take a decision on their own whether to get involved in the study or not. Voluntarily participation helps in getting honest responses and full commitment, most of the time. After I had the permission to conduct the study, I explained all the procedures in detail to the participants. Explanation of procedures that will be followed help in making aware everybody about his/her role and responsibilities during research proceedings for example speaking loud when responding and give others a chance to respond. Participants were allowed to remain anonymous in the study. They had the right to withdraw or to continue with the study at any time. The data, which was generated from the participants, was treated with the highest confidentiality and I sought permission from the participants for the publication of the data. Participants who were interviewed individually were given a chance to check the transcript of their interview in the study to confirm whether they agree with what has been captured. Participants took part in the study voluntarily. As a researcher, I did not use my professional authority and power to get data from the participants. I overcame my professional authority by addressing the learners in an informal approach and also by wearing casual clothes during interviews. I tried to use language and tone that was accommodative. The sitting arrangement during interviews also made learners feel comfortable; I did not

stand in front of them or occupy a position that would make them see me as a person who is in charge. After interviews, participants were given scripts to view and verify whether what was captured was correct. They were given a chance to delete things with which they did not agree with. This was done to assure the learners about what they had said during interviews and also to double check whether they still felt comfortable about it. Learners had agreed with what was in their transcripts and they did not alter what they had said during interviews

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I looked at the methodology that was suitable for my study. Using interviews in my study helped me in gathering the necessary information for my study which was in line with the capability theory which I used. I used conversation analysis to analyse my data. I also coded my data by reading it line by line and divided it into meaningful analytical units.

In the next chapter I will cover the presentation of the findings.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I look at three findings from the accounts and experiences of learners about their walks to school. I also connect my findings with my theoretical framework, which is the capability approach.

4.2 Findings

My first finding is that there are learners who walk long distances to school more than 2.5 kilometres in urban areas. My second finding is about the difficulties arising from having to walk to school. My third finding is about consequences of the experiences of walking to school.

4.2.1   Long distances from home to school

My first finding is that there are poor urban learners which walk more than 2.5 kilometres to school. My finding is based on the interviews that I had with learners that walk to school every school day. I also witnessed that in the transect walk, when I walked with boys home for more than 45 minutes. We walked three kilometres in that time yet we did not reach their homes. Mazet mentioned in the interview that the distance that she walks to school and back home is very long. Others agreed with her.During the transect walk, I confirmed that they lived far away from school. Although I walked for more than 45 minutes, it was only a third of the distance to their homes.

The long distance that learners walk to school every school day affects them in many ways. Ngcebs mentioned that when he comes to school, he crosses a wide road. He said:

> Sometimes the traffic light does not function and these results in him taking too long to cross the road and he ends up coming late to school.

The results of Ngcebs late arrival at school are that he misses the first period or the assembly. Activities and subjects of the first lesson that differ from day to day; for example in terms of activities, sometimes teachers introduce new topics, or the class writesa class test, or the lesson is a consolidation of what was learnt previously or a continuation of a previous lesson. Therefore when a learner comes late he/she misses important learning activities. The long distances mean they arrive at school tired. During the interview, Thobs mentioned that

she arrived at school tired and that led to her loss of concentration during lessons. Zoks mentioned that she sleeps during the first period because she has to wake up early in order to walk the distance to school. When learners are tired and sleeping in class, they miss what is being taught by the teacher. Thobs said that she was involved in a learner development programme after school hours. She was forced to pull out of the programme because they finished at 16H00 and that meant she would only arrive home at 18H00. The long distance also prevented her from attending sessions where they consolidate what was learnt in class.

This is related to what was mentioned by Walker and Unterhalter (2007) earlier by saying that the reason learners are unsuccessful in their lessons is sometimes not about their capabilities but it is influenced by other reasons or factors. The performance of the above mentioned learners is influenced by walking long distances to school and therefore coming late and missing important school activities. Their capabilities are jeopardize by not having proper means of coming to school early and also by being tired. Therefore it would be unfair to assume that they are incompetent because of their capabilities.

4.2.2 Difficulties arising from having to walk to school

While learners are walking to school they are exposed to many challenges and difficulties which affect them in their school activities. These difficulties are as follows: Crossing busy roads; sleeping patterns; theft; and harassment by strangers.

a) Crossing busy roads

The school where I conducted my researched is surrounded by industrial areas and prominent shopping centres therefore it is near busy roads which go to these areas. The roads are busy during early hours when people are going to work and also in the afternoon when they go back home after work. Learners who walk to school are caught in these busy roads when going to school and back home.

Ndiswa mention that when coming to school, it is difficult to cross a four lane road with many traffic lights. She says that:

> Crossing a four lane road is challenging for everybody and it is worse for a child who is rushing to get to school on time. These delays, which are caused by failing to cross the road quickly, lead to late coming to school.

Knowing the consequences of coming late, the learner would panic and want to cross the road without taking precautions. These delays affect her state of readiness in class because she is exposed to road accidents every day when she comes to school. Mafundi says that every second week there is an accident and she sees people lying down and full of blood after being knocked by cars. This affects her because it traumatises her before she comes to school. A traumatised person loses concentration because she/he thinks about disturbing scenes and not what is being taught in class.

b) Sleeping patterns

Learners do not get enough sleep. They go to sleep late in the evening and wake up early so that they will be on time for school.

> umausuzohambai-long distance I – affecta even i-habit yokuvuka,
> ngoba you have to ukuthi by half past four usuvukileand
> thanuyaziukuthi by six o'clock uyaphumauzaesikoleni.
>
> [Walking long distance affects you sleeping pattern. You have to wake
> up at half past four and leave your home at six o'clock]

Their reasons for going to sleep late in the evening are that they perform household chores and thereafter they do their homework. They wake up early for the long walk to school.Amas says that because she does not get enough sleep at night she sleeps in class. Because of sleeping at school teachers take them out of class or punish them. They are also chased out of class if they do not finish their homework and teachers do not repeat what they taught on the previous day and the learners lose out on valuable information and they fail their tests.

c) Theft

Learners pointed out in interviews that when they come to school, there are people who stop them and steal their money and their learning aids, such as calculators and text books.

> uzoqaleakufuneiphone.   Anginayoiphone,   afuneiwashi,
> anginaloiwashiafuneicalculator,   anginayo   I
> calculator.Kwesinyeisikhathimasiphuceama-text   books
> babuyebazowadayisaesikoleni. Badayiselelabaabawalahlayo.
>
> [Firstly, they will ask for cellphone, I don't have it, then they will ask
> for watch, I don't have it, ask for calculator, I don't have calculator.

Sometimes they will rob us our books and sell them back to our schoolmates to those who have lost them.]

Amas said that sometimes they are robbed of their school textbooks and the thieves sell the textbooks back to learners who have misplaced their books. Presently Thobs said she did not have a calculator because robbers took it and her mother could not afford to buy her another one. As a result her Maths teacher had punished her and excluded her from the lesson. This meant that if she does not borrow the calculator before the Maths period she does not learn Maths. A textbook is the main learning aid for learners because that is what they use to refer to what was taught in class and the teacher refers learners to it for homework activities and for further readings. It is difficult to learn most of the sections in Mathematics without a calculator therefore learners without these learning aids are at a disadvantage in terms of performing well in subjects where they do not have these learning aids.

d) Harassment by strangers on the road

Learners told me that girls are harassed by male strangers when they walk to school. The strangers forcefully propose love to them and if they refuse to speak to them, they threaten the girls by promising them that they will ambush the girls when they return from school in the afternoon. These threats are not idle because rape is wide spread in South Africa.Ndeka says that if she refuses to speak to them, they threaten her by mentioning that they will wait for her in the afternoon. This distracts Ndeka in class especially towards the end of the school day. She is uncertain whether that person was serious about what he said to her and what will happen to her on her walk home. This makes her lose concentration in lessons that are taught towards the end of the day.

Futhiumangiza   la esikoleningijwayeleukuhlangananabantubengivimbe, umuntuangivimbengenkaningobaefunaukungishela.Ngingathand iengaboniukuthingiyaesikoleniekuseni.Ngithi   uma ngimtshela athi uzongibamba uma sengibuya esikoleni uzongibamba ngenkani.

[There are people who forcefully stop me when I come to school and propose love against my will. If I refuse they wait for me when I come back from school.]

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The above mentioned challenges had a big influence on the capabilities of these learners that walk long distances to school. Before they start their school activities they have been exposed to many distractions which interfere with their readiness for lessons. Therefore their capabilities fall short because of what they are exposed to while walking to school.

4.3 Consequences of the experiences of walking to school

Introduction

Walking long distances to school by learners has a lot of significances in them. The learners that I interviewed came up with the following in terms of their experiences when walking to school:

a) Poor results

Learners believe that coming to school late has a negative impact on their results. They think this will affect them when they want to pursue their studies at university in the sense that they will have insufficient points towards the entry requirements. Thobs says that her academicresults had dropped and she would not have a bright future because universities do not accept learners who have low marks. She said:

> So manjekuyafananokuthienenokuthiyonke le –long distance ubekadeuyihambaubuyihambela I amahalangobaphelaawusaawusaakasafezekangaamaphuphowakhoukuthiuf undeevarsityubeileyontoofunaukubaiyona which means lendlela le iyasi – affectakakhulu cause I it's also destroys our future.[The long distance that I walk becomes a fruitless exercise because I will not fulfil my dreams of going to the university and this will affect and destroy our future.]

b) Relationship between learners and parents/guardians

Parents are concerned about the poor performance of their children and theyreject poor performances from them. This creates a poor relationship between children and their parents because parents think that their children are wasting money performing badly. In interviews learners told me that although their parents are aware that their children walk long distances

to school, they do not see this as a major reason in making them perform badly at school. They said their parents scold them for poor performance.

Learners also said they miss out on learner development programmes that take place after school. The importance of these programmes is that they equip learners with life skills which help them in their future. They also get a chance to discuss challenges that they face in their daily experiences.

c) Negative attitudes towards males

Amas says that she is afraid of men. She says:

> abantubesilisasengibasabangendlelaemangalisayongobaibonaabanginika inkingakakhuluumangizaesikoleni. [I am afraid of males because they give me lot of problems when I come to school]

According to Amas' statement, she has developed a negative attitude towards all males; not only those that give her a hard time when she comes to school. Reasons for Amas to be afraid of males are that they harass her, rob her, take her belongings and they once attempted to rape her. Although she did not mention this explicitly in her interview, she implied it in her comments that she does not trust any male because of what she experiences when she comes to school. The long term consequence of this could affect her social life beyond school in that she may be afraid to enter into relationships with men in her adult years.

d) Life threats

Learners see walking to school sometimes being life threatening. Although they know that educations will open doors for them in the future, they are also afraid that they might not see that future because anything can happen to them while walking to school or going back home. She says:

> Mina future yamiangiyiboniiBrightngobaene I can't say I future yamiibright while I don't know ukuthiumasengiphindeleekhaya right now kuzokwenzekalaniendleleni so I can't say ukuthiifutueyamiibrightngoba right now I don't ukuthi when I go home what will happen. [I do not see my future bright and I cannot say my future is bright while I do not know what will happen to me on my way home.]

Ndeka mentions that she is not sure what will happen to her while going to school and it could be that this could be her last day on earth and that means the end of her future. She says:

> Ngingathingiyahambangiyaesikolenikantisekuwusukulamilokugcinaifu
> tureyamiisiphelile-kelapho. [It can happen that while walking to school
> that day become my last day and my future will be over]

This shows that for these learners coming to school is life threatening and it is a very challenging exercise that they do every school day. When most learners are looking forward to going home, these learners, on the other hand, think twice about the journey that they will take. Knowing and thinking that they might not reach their homes is very distracting and affects performance in their school activities.

4.4 Conclusion

In closing, I found that learners' experiences walking to school are having a negative impact on their lives. The school as an organisation is not supportive of these learners who are walking and also it does not respond to their needs. Learners feel that teachers and the Department of Education should understand that they are walking long distances and provide the means to overcome these challenges. Learners even suggested that there should be an adjustment of times to accommodate them. The most important thing that they want is the teachers to listen to them when they explain their situation and their challenges. It seems as if the school has become a barrier and an obstacle to the education of these learners because on top of what they come across on their way to school, the school environment does not accommodate them.

Chapter 5: Findings, implications and conclusion

5.1 Introduction:

I have come to the end of my study and this is my last chapter. Inthis chapter I look at the implications of my findings, and implications for future research on the topic.

5.2 Findings to research question

Learners came up with different responses towards answering the key research questions that I had in the study. I will now look at the finding for each key research question. The questions are as follows:

5.2.1 How do learners' experiences of travelling to school affect their participation in school activities (i.e. co- and extra-curricular activities)

I found out that walking long distance to school hasa negative impact on learners in regard to their participation in school activities. I discovered that most responses by learners divulge that they find themselves at a disadvantage in what is done at school because of walking long distances. The majority of learners that walk long distances do not participate in extra-curricular activities and those that participate in them end up withdrawing because of the time that they need for walking back home. Learners lose out on morning classes, because they are usually late for school. This has a negative impact in their assessment which gives an impression that these learners are not capable. The reason for beginning these walks home immediately after school is that they want to reach home before sunset and also walk together with others home.

I ascertain that learners who walk long distances have a feeling teachers should consider the distance they walk to school before they decide on starting time for morning lessons. I detect that teachers decide on a starting time for classes without consulting and discussing with learners. I realise that walking long distance to school has a negative impact on the learner's marks because some of the things that are tested were learnt during morning lesson while there were not in class.

I also found that learners that walk long distances had developed a negative towards teachers and school. This is because learners see teachers as people who are letting them down in terms of listening to their challenges of walking long distances to school. Instead teachers make things more difficult for learners by conducting early classes and giving tests in the

morning. Learners believe that tests should be written during school hours when everybody is at school.

Learners that walk long distance can be perceived as not being capable of doing well in class activities and also excel in extra-curricular activities which include music and sports. Their capabilities in school activities are affected by walking long distances. Therefore it is not appropriate to compare their capabilities with learners who walk short distances to school and that are on time for morning lesson and ready to learn. Some of these learners walk long distance because cannot afford money for taxi or bus. This may be caused by either unemployment or poverty and this deprives learners of a basic capability of learning. Sen (1993) mentions that capability represents the combination of things a person is able to do. In the case of these learners that walk long distances it is not easy to realise these combinations from the learners because they sometimes do not get a chance to display what they are capable of.

I will now look at another key research question

5.2.2 What are learners' understandings of the short and long term consequences of not arriving at school on time?

I realise that, learners are aware that tertiary institution admit learners according to good results they have obtained in matric. They are also aware that when filling CAO (Centre of application) forms they are required to furnish a grade eleven report and selection is based on better results. Therefore, obtaining bad results will prevent them from persuading their studies in universities.

5.2.3 What are learners' understandings about the drawbacks of not accessing extra-curricular school programmes?

Extra-curricular activities are as important as what is being learnt in class. During these activities learners are exposed to leadership skills. There are leadership programmes that are done after school hours which deal with empowering learners with leadership skills. Learners shared their frustration of pulling out from these programmes because of their long walks. By not attending these activities they lose out in mentorship that is gained by those that attend. During these extra-curricular activities they also learn and discuss social issues that are related to them as teenagers. These social issues include behaviour, physical development and change that happening in their bodies and also learn about diseases that can harm them

while growing up. Extra-curricular activities programmes also address issues pertaining to youth which include danger in the use of drugs and teenage pregnancy. All learners need to be made aware of these challenges therefore those learners who do not get a chance to attend are a disadvantage.

Extra-curricular activities also include music, cultural activities and different sporting codes. The above activities can be persuaded as a career if a learner had got proper development, training and guidance in the activity that he/she had been involved in. Learners that walk long distances do not engaged in this activities therefore their scope of choosing future career is limited to what they learn in class of which is not enough for deciding the future for the child. Their talents remain unearth because of not getting involved in these activities.

5.3 Implications of the findings

The implications of not accommodating learners that walk long distances to school have negative impacts on learners and the school.

The aim of writing tests by learners is to prepare them for final examination at the end of the year so that they progress to the next grade. Another reason for writing tests would be for learners to obtain high marks towards their continuous assessment which would contribute to their final mark at the end of the year. When tests are written before the school starting time, learners do not catch them and they do not write them, therefore they lose out the above mention reasons for writing tests. Implications of not writing tests would be the great chances of learners not declared competent at the end of the year and not having good year marks towards their final mark. If teachers continue to conduct tests early, learners would begin to hate teachers for the act that they believe is disadvantaging them as learners. Opportunities of studying further would be jeopardise because of the lower marks that they would obtain by missing other tests for continuous assessment.

Duties and responsibilities of the school management team include managing and monitoring the activities that take place within the school. They are also responsible for making sure that the rights of learners are not being infringed and that learners obtain their education without obstacles. The school management should also be aware of bad practices that happen in school towards learners. Implications of not correcting the behaviour of teachers would lead to a negative perception by the community that the school is serving. The community could

start to see the school and teachers as not serving their needs of development and destroying and poisoning the society. Learners would not enjoy learning in a school that does not address their challenges.

Parents play an important role in the raising of their children through supporting and give guidance during their development including attending school and involvement in school activities. Learners should perceive their parents as people who are there to support and protect them when they are facing challenges. Learners should be able to confine to their parents with any difficult they come across. Parents should give learners to explain and discuss issues with them, especially which bother them while attending school. If parents do not listen to their children's experiences the implications would be that learners could be reserved and withdrawn from sharing anything with them. This would further affect learners in their school activities when they do not get support from parents.

5.4 Recommendations about the findings

The main suggestion of my study is that learners who travel long distances to school should be accommodated and be tolerated. Schools should be aware of the challenges of the communities they are serving and their dynamics. Learners who walk long distances to school should also been given necessary support in terms of making up for the loss of time and energy they lose when coming to school. Schools should have relevant transport policies which address issues of learners who come late to school because of the long distances they walk to school. Therefore schools should have a database set up for these learners that walk long distances. There should be systems in place to deal with the accommodation of these learners in extra-mural activities that are done in the school. When we compare South Africa with other countries we realise that challenges are not the same, for example in England learners are encourage to walk to school while here we struggle with good learner transport system and also unaffordability of cars by many families. This gives us an indication that there is nothing wrong with walking to school provided it is not a distance which is unacceptable, and moreover it is safe to walk.

Although the government had started with transport initiatives in terms of National Policy Drafts it should speed up the process of gazetting the documents so that the whole country could have the document to refer to. Initiatives by provinces are appreciated but there should

be uniformity in what is done in terms of learner transport in all areas including urban poor communities. The issue of allocating each school with a mini-bus can also be looked at to assist learners when participating in school activities after school hours. Local transport officials should also be consulted and be advice to design routes that will accommodate learners. Staggering of starting time can also be an option to consider especially in winter when large numbers of learners come late because of the weather conditions of this season. Although this implies a lot of changes it will create a solution, in giving all learners a chance to be on time at school for morning lessons.

5.5 Limitations and future research

My study was a case study of ten learner participants at one school. It gave me an insight into what is happening among urban poor learners. However it cannot be used to generalise about all learners who walk to school. However I am confident that my study will be an eye opener to what is happening in terms of learners travelling to and from school. The transect walk with female learners may have given me more information compared to what I gathered while walking with boys. This assumption is based on the discussion I had while interviewing them and during focus group interviews.

Future research on this topic might include comparisons between poor urban learners and rich urban learners in terms of their experiences when walking to school. This will help in showing the dynamics in South Africa pertaining to learners from different economic backgrounds and their trips to school.

5.6 Conclusion

My study will assist in making teachers aware of the difficulties learners come across when traveling to school and this affects them in achieving in class and in participating in extra-mural activities. The study will hopefully create awareness and assist in formulating learner transport policies to accommodate learners with challenges when travelling to school. School managers should put in place measures to accommodate learners that have special travelling needs.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Sample of questions for individual interviews

Topic

Poor urban learners' long walks to school and the influences on their school activities.

Preparation

I will secure one room in the library to conduct interviews. The room will be furnished with two chairs, a table, digital voice recorder, pens and pieces of paper to write on.

Opening remarks

'Thank you very much for allowing me to talk to you about your experiences of coming to school and how their affect your school activities. I will ask you some questions and please fill free to answer in IsiZulu or English. May I assure you that everything we speak here will remain anonymity and confidential. I will not use my position over what we will be discussing. Are there any questions? Can we start?'

Questions

1. Why do you walk home and not take a taxi or bus to school?

2. Which things you do not like/like about your walks to and from school?

3. What impact does walking to school have towards your performance in class?

4. What impact does walking to school have towards your performance in sports, music and other activities?

5. According to your own opinion how will these challenges affect your future dreams?

6. For how long have you been walking to school?

Closing remarks

'We have come to an end of our interview, thank you for answering all the questions. Do you have any questions for clarity?'

7.2 Appendix 2: Sample of questions for focus group interview

Topic

Interview of learners about their experiences of walking long distance to school towards their schools activities.

Preparation

I will secure one room in the library to conduct interviews. The room will be furnished with eleven chairs, three tables, digital voice recorder, pens and pieces of paper to write on.

Opening remarks

'Thank you once again for availing yourselves for the group interview. I will ask few questions and you discuss amongst yourselves and give one another a chance to speak. Do not speak while another person is talking. Please raise your voice when you say something. Please fill free to answer in IsiZulu or English. The purpose of this interview is for my study not for my position at school. I will treat everything that we do highly confidential. Are there any questions before we start? Can we start?'

Questions

- Discuss amongst yourselves the experiences of coming to school and going back home.

- How these experiences are affecting your school activities on daily basis?

- What are the consequences of not involving yourselves in extra mural activities and extra classes?

Closing remarks

'Thank you for participating in this group interview. Everything went well and it was very fruitful. I will protect this information and also treat it with confidentiality. Are there any questions? Thank you very much you are all free to go now.

7.3 Appendix 3: Sample of questions for transect walk

I will ask two boys from the group of learners that has been interviewed to volunteer to walk with me to their homes. I will a digital tape recorder, a pen and a piece of paper to write. I will also negotiate a day of the walk with the boys.

Interview of learners about their experiences when going home.

Opening remarks

'Thank you for availing yourselves for this walk today. During our walk I will ask you questions and we will walk at the same route you take when you go home. Please try to do all the things you do when you walk home every day. May you also point out all the things that you fill is important on your walks home.

Issues to be covered during the walk.

- Issue of safety

- Issue of friends on their way home.

- Issue of time they take when going home.

- Other relevant experiences they are exposing to when travelling.

Closing remarks

'Thanks for allowing me to walk with you home. If there is any question please fill free to ask me any time.'

Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions

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1. Applicants Details

Name Of Applicant(s): <u>Dladla Thamsanqa . E</u>

Tel No: 031 261 2237   Fax:031 261 2238   Email: dladlathami@yahoo.com

Address: 10 Melrose Avenue, Durban North, 4051

Proposed Research Title:

The influence of learner mobility on their experiences of school activities.

---

2. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other research within the KZNDoE institutions?	**Yes**	**No**
		x

If "yes", please state reference Number: _____

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3. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification?	**Yes**	**No**
	x	

If "yes"

Name of tertiary institution: University of KwaZulu Natal

Faculty and or School: School of Education and Development

Qualification: _Masters in Education

Name of Supervisor: Dr. J. Karlsson

Supervisors Signature_____

If "no", state purpose of research: _____

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4. Research Background:

The need for this study is because there is little that is being done by the Department of Education concerning transport for urban learners because most of the initiatives such as pedestrians' bridges and bicycle projects are for learners from rural areas. Instead urban learners use the same public transport system as working class people, pensioners and members of the community.

Urban learners have problems with morning lessons because they usually come late to school and this leads to them losing out on subjects like mathematics, physical science and accounting. The above-mentioned subjects are taught in the morning because it is believed that they are easier to grasp when learners are awake.

The study will look at poor urban learners' experiences and how this affects their school activities.

5. What is the main research question(s) :

- How do learners' experiences of travelling to school affect participation in school activities (co and extra-curricular activities)?

- What are learners' understandings of the short and long-term consequences of not arriving at school on time?

- What are learners' understandings about the drawbacks of accessing extra-curricular school programmes?

6. Methodology including sampling procedures and the people to be included in the sample:

My study will be conducted using the case study method. My case study will be based on one urban high school serving the poor learners. I will choose ten learners to be the participants i.e. five girls and five boys from grade 10 selecting them according to the distances they travel to school.

7. What contribution will the proposed study make to the education, health, safety, welfare of the learners and to the education system as a whole?: The study will help in developing policies in schools to cater learners having problems travelling to and from school. Department of Education will identify gaps in terms of learner transport in urban areas.

8. KZN Department of Education Districts from which sample will be drawn (please tick) – *Please attach the list of all schools*

Amajuba		Umlazi		X	Sisonke	
Othukela		Pinetown			Ugu	
Zululand		Ilembe			Umgungundlovu	
Obonjeni		Empangeni			Umzinyathi	

9. **Research data collection instruments**: *(Note: a list and only a brief description is required here - the actual instruments must be attached)*: The following methods will be used to generate data:

1. **Individual interviews**
   Ten learners i.e. 5 boys and 5 girls will be interviewed.

2. **Focus group interview**
   Focus group interview will also be used to generate more date from learners. All 10 learners i.e. 5 boys and 5 girls will participate in focus group interviews to generate date.

3. **Transect walk**
   I will walk with and follow two boys when they travel from school to their homes. They will be selected from the group of 10 learners who were interviewed. This will be done with participants that travel middle distance (1 kilometre) to their home.

10. **Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians:**

In my study I will generate data from the learners of a particular urban high school.

I will write letters to the following people and organisation to obtained permission to conduct the study:

- A letter to the Department of Education, principal and the school governing body.
- A letter to parents/guardians/caregivers/head of household.
- A letter to learners themselves to be involved in the study.

11. **Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable):**

In my study I will generate data from the learners of a particular urban high school. The permission for access to the school will be obtained from the Department of Education, principal and the school governing body. Permission from parents, guardians, caregivers and head of household will be asked because the participants are minors. I will also ask the permission from learners themselves to be involved in the study. Once I have the permission to conduct the study I will explain all the procedures in details to the participants. Participants will be allowed to remain anonymous in the study. They will have the right to withdraw or to continue with the study at any time of their choice. The data, which is generated from the participants, will be treated with high

confidentiality and I will seek permission from the participants for the publication of the data. Participants who were interviewed individually will be given a chance to check transcript of their interview study to confirm whether they agree with what has been captured. Participants will take part in the study voluntarily. As a researcher I will not use my authority and power as a deputy principal to get data from the participants.

12. **Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable): N/A**

13. **Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable): N/A**

14. **Research Timelines :**

STEPS	DATES
Data collection	August 2010
Analysis of data	September 2010
Writing of chapters	August to November 2010
Final submission	December 2010

15. **Declaration**

I <u>Dladla Thamsanqa . E.</u> declare that the above information is true and correct

_____   <u>23/08/2010</u>

Signature of Applicant   **Date**

16. Agreement to provide and to grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report.

I/We agree to provide the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education with a copy of any report or dissertation written on the basis of information gained through the research activities described in this application.

I/We grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish an edited summary of this report or dissertation using the print or electronic media.

_____   _____

Signature of Applicant   **Date**

Return a completed form to:
Sibusiso Alwar
Research Unit
Resource Planning
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

Hand Delivered:
Office G25; 188 Pietermaritz Street
Pietermaritzburg 3201
Or
Ordinary Mail
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200
Or
Email
sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za or smiso.sikhakhane@kzndoe.gov.za

kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

THAMSANQA F DLADLA
10 MELROSE AVENUE
DURBAN NORTH
4051

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Date: 20/09/2010

Reference: 0081/2010

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

The above matter refers.

Permission is hereby granted to interview Departmental Officials, learners and educators in selected schools of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal subject to the following conditions:

1. **You make all the arrangements concerning your interviews.**
2. **Educators' programmes are not interrupted.**
3. **Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.**
4. **Learners, educators and schools are not identifiable in any way from the results of the interviews.**
5. **Your interviews are limited only to targeted schools.**
6. **A brief summary of the interview content, findings and recommendations is provided to my office.**
7. **A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers and principals of schools where the intended interviews are to be conducted.**

The KZN Department of education fully supports your commitment to research: **The influence of learner mobility on their experiences of school activities.**

It is hoped that you will find the above in order.

Best Wishes

R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)
Superintendent-General

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

THAMSANQA F DLADLA
10 MELROSE AVENUE
DURBAN NORTH
4051

Enquiries:	Sibusiso Alwar
Date:	20/09/2010
Reference:	0081/2010

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNER MOBILITY ON THEIR EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the attached list has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.

2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.

3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.

4. Educator programmes are not to be interrupted.

5. The investigation is to be conducted from 20 September 2010 to 20 September 2011.

6. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s) please contact Mr Sibusiso Alwar at the contact numbers above.

7. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal of the school where the intended research is to be conducted.

8. Your research will be limited to the schools submitted.

9. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Resource Planning.

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

10. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Resource Planning
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards

R. Cassius Lubisi (PhD)
Superintendent-General

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

7.5 Appendix 5: Sample of the letter and the form signed by the principal and chairperson of the governing body, granting permission to conduct the study at the school

<div align="right">

10 Melrose Avenue

Durban North

4051

20 June 2010

</div>

The principal and SGB chairperson

Dear Sir/Madam

<div align="center">

Request for permission

</div>

I am a student in the Faculty of education at the University of Kwa – Zulu Natal and studying towards Mastersdegree in Education. My study is about how learner transport affects learners' participation in school activities (co – curricular and extracurricular) .

In my study I will interview learners and also walk with learners to their homes. Participants in my study will be 10 learners from grade 10 i.e. five boys and five girls.

Particulars of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr.JenniKarlsson

School of Education and Development,

 Faculty of education at University of Kwa – Zulu Natal

Tel: 031 – 2601398/083 7881433

Email: karlsson@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. Dladla

Granting of permission

A study about poor urban learners' long walks to school and the influence on their school activities.

Researcher: Mr. T. Dladla

- I understand the request of using the school for research purposes.
- I understand that the school should give permission.

I agree/disagree to allow the _____ school to be used as a research site as indicated in Mr.Dladla's letter.

_____   _____

Signature of the principal   Date

_____   _____

Signature of SGB chairperson   Date

7.6 Appendix 6: Sample of the letter and the form signed by parents/guardian/care-giver, granting permission for the child to participate in the study

10 Melrose Avenue

Durban North

4051

01 March 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian/Care – giver

I am student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the Faculty of Education. My student number is 204515669. I am conducting a study about the influence of learner mobility on their experiences of school activities. Your child has been selected to participate in this study which involves interviews, focus group interviews and transect walk. Therefore I am requesting permission for your child to participate in the study. The aim of the study is not to make money so there will be no monetary gain on it. All research material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and the material will be destroyed after 5 years.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw your child from participating in the study at any time. Similarly, if your child decides to withdraw and not participate in the study, I will accept his/her decision entirely.

The particulars of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr. J. Karlsson – Faculty of Education at University of KwaZulu-Natal

Tel: 031 – 2601398/083 7881433

Email: karlsson@ukzn.ac.za

Please complete the form attached to indicate that you understand what I have requested and indicate your reply to this request.

Please return this form to the school before the 8th of March 2011

Yours sincerely

Mr.ThamsanqaDladla

Informed consent declaration

The study is about poor urban learners' long walks to school and the influence on their school activities.

Researcher: Mr.ThamsanqaDladla

- I understand the request about the activities that my child will be invited to participate in doing.
- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and he/she can withdraw at any time from the activity.
- I understand that my child's name and identity will not be used in any reports that are written.

I agree/disagree to allow my child: _____ of _____ to participate in this study as indicated in Mr. T. Dladla's letter.

_____

Signed

_____

Date

7.7 Appendix 7: Sample of the letter and the form signed by learners agreeing to participate in the study.

10 Melrose Avenue

Durban North

4051

01 march 2011

Dear learner

I am a student at University of KwaZulu-Natal and doing a Masters Degree. My student number is 204515669. As part of my study I am trying to understand how transport affects the school activities of learners just like you.

I am writing this letter to invite you to participate in my research. Participation in this study is voluntarily and your name will be kept confidential. The aim of the study is not to make money so there will be no monetary gain on it. All research material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and the material will be destroyed after 5 years. If you decide to withdraw and not participate in the study, I will accept your decision entirely.

The particulars of my supervisor are as follows:

Dr. J. Karlsson – Faculty of Education at University of KwaZulu-Natal

Tel: 031 – 2601398/083 7881433

Email: karlsson@ukzn.ac.za

Please complete the form attached to indicate that you understand what I have requested and indicate your reply to this request.

Please return this form to the school before 8th of March 2011

Your participation will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. Dladla

Tel no:031 2612237/0837749184

Informed Consent Declaration

A study about poor learners' long walks to school and the influences on their school activities

Researcher: Mr. T. Dladla

- I understand the request about the activities that I am invited to participate in doing.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time in the activity.
- I understand that my name and identity will not be used in any reports.

I _____ agree/disagree of _____ school to participate in this study as indicated in Mr.Dladla's letter.

_____   _____

Signature of a learner   Date