AN EXPLORATION OF THE ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS OF EDUCATORS TOWARDS LEARNERS WHO ARE DEPRIVED AS A RESULT OF POVERTY

by

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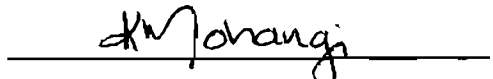
DECLARATION

I, Kamleshie Mohangi, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "An Exploration of the Attitudes and Expectations of Educators Towards Learners who are Deprived as a Result of Poverty" is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.



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I thank God for everything.

DEDICATED

TO

THE MEMORY OF

MY LATE BELOVED DAD

for being my source of inspiration

ABSTRACT

The present study explored the attitudes and the expectations that educators have towards learners who are deprived by poverty. The influence of the educators' race and gender on these attitudes and expectations was explored as well as the relationship between indigent learners and their educators.

The challenges that face educators on a daily basis, make teaching a particularly daunting task. In addition educators have the complex task of teaching learners who come from a diverse range of home backgrounds. These stressors combine to create a complicated learning environment. The interplay between home environmental risk factors, teacher support and learner achievement and performance is of utmost importance for eventual school success and a positive self-perception for the learner.

This study was conducted by using a survey questionnaire which was completed by 53 educators (Indian and African), and semi-structured interviews with 12 indigent learners. The researcher was able to determine the emergent attitudes and expectations of educators according to the educator's race and gender. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 indigent learners to determine their relationship with their teachers and their self-perceptions. The responses to the interviews were qualitatively analysed.

The findings of this study have indicated that generally, educators have positive attitudes towards indigent learners. They are supportive of these learners and try, in most instances, to plan lessons in a manner that would benefit the disadvantaged learner. With regard to race and gender, African male educators were the highest number that perceived indigent learners negatively, while African female educators appear to be the most sympathetic and held the least negative views on indigent learners. Results also indicated that the majority of educators had formed pre-conceived expectations about learner's abilities based on variables such as the home background, knowledge of siblings performances in school, dress and speech. Although African male educators had the most negative attitudes towards indigent learners, they (African male educators) also held the

highest expectations of indigent learners as compared to Indian female educators who held the lowest expectations. This means that African male educators believe that indigent learners have the potential and perform relatively well in the classroom despite their poverty status.

The results of the semi-structured interviews, which were qualitatively analysed, indicated that generally, the indigent learners who were interviewed, were happy at school, had friends and enjoyed a good relationship with their teachers. These learners appeared to always try hard with their schoolwork and held high career aspirations. Based on these findings, it appears that generally, the indigent learners who were interviewed had positive self-esteem based on positive relationships with their educators.

The findings of this research were discussed in relation to previous findings from international literature. The study was concluded with recommendations to educators on monitoring and controlling expectance effects and bias on the achievement and social behaviour of learners.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I've been rich and I've been poor... and rich is better.

- Sophie Tucker (Garbarino, 1992, p. 220)

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1.1 Global Childhood Poverty

Over six hundred million children worldwide live in absolute poverty, an estimated 1 in 4. In many countries, the rates are much higher with over 60 % of children living in households with incomes which are below international poverty lines (United Nations estimates, 2001). In human terms, this means that 183 million children weigh less than they should for their age, more than a quarter of the world's primary school age children are not attending school, and in parts of Africa, over a fifth of children are dying before they are five years old (United Nations estimates, 2001). Garbarino (1992) explained that poverty means that children are at risk. If families are homeless, without food, and without basic health care, children are in jeopardy. While all poverty is an outrage and a waste of human potential, childhood poverty is a particularly serious problem for several reasons including that:

- Childhood is a one- off window of opportunity and development.
- Children are one of the most powerless groups in all societies and the physical and emotional costs of poverty are often passed on to them.
- Poverty is increasingly concentrated among families with children in many parts of the world.
- Today's poor children are all too often tomorrow's poor parents.

1.1.2 Poverty in South Africa

South Africa has undergone considerable political and social changes in the past few years. The second democratic and post-apartheid government, elected in 1999, is facing a number of challenges, like poverty, crime and unemployment. This post-apartheid government has committed itself to improving the lives of the people of South Africa and the eradication of poverty is one of its top priorities (Ngwane, Yadavalli & Steffens, 2001).

A report entitled, " Poverty and Inequality in South Africa", which was prepared for the office of the deputy president in May 1998, indicated that about 19 million people or just under 50% of the population in South Africa could be regarded as poor with most families earning less than R300 per month (May, 1998). Poverty in South Africa is not confined to any one race group, but is concentrated among Blacks, particularly Africans (61%), Coloureds (38%), Indians (5%) and Whites (1%) (May, 1998). Three children in five live in poor households and many children are exposed to public and domestic violence, malnutrition and inconsistent parenting and schooling (May, 1998). As is to be expected, extant poverty levels continue to affect children the most severely. It is reported that approximately 61 % of South African children, the majority of them Black, are currently living below the breadline (May, 1998).

Most of the poor in South Africa live in rural areas: while 50% of the population of South Africa is rural, the rural areas contain 72% of those members of the total population who are poor. The poverty rate (which is the proportion of people in a particular group or area falling below the poverty line, and which measures how widespread poverty is) for rural areas is 71% (May, 1998).

Poverty has generally been assessed in both absolute and relative terms by people's income or by their consumption of certain commodities (Ngwane et al., 2001). However, the limitations of such measures have highlighted the importance of recognizing the multifaceted nature of poverty. The capabilities of individuals and households are deeply

influenced by factors ranging from the prospects of earning a living to the social and psychological effects of deprivation and exclusion. These factors include people's basic needs, employment at reasonable wages, and health and education facilities. Included is the socially generated sense of helplessness that often accompanies economic crisis.

Despite formal definitions of poverty, May (1998) mentions that the perceptions of the poor themselves are a good way to derive an appropriate conceptualization of poverty in South Africa. Poverty is perceived by poor South Africans themselves to include alienation, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are adequately paid and/or secure, and fragmentation of the family (May, 1998). Poverty may also involve social exclusion in either an economic dimension (exclusion from the labour market and opportunities to earn income) or a purely social dimension (exclusion from decision making, social services and access to community and family support) (May, 1998). Thus the experience of most South African households is one of outright poverty or of continuing vulnerability to being poor. Poverty is therefore characterized by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.

For all poor children, the effects of poverty are both direct and indirect (Fraser, 1997). Poverty affects children directly by reducing the quality of food, shelter, health care, education and transportation that a family can afford. Poor children live in less safe and more hostile physical environments. Poverty affects children indirectly by bringing out the worst in parents who struggle to manage in often-impossible circumstances (Fraser, 1997). When they are exhausted from low-paying jobs and enervated by the sheer demands of coping with inadequate resources, parents simply find it harder to be consistent in discipline, to be responsive to children's needs, and to provide a range of socially and educationally stimulating experiences (Fraser, 1997).

Poverty is not a static condition and individuals, households or communities may be vulnerable to poverty as a result of shocks and crises (uncontrollable events which harm

livelihoods and food security) and long-term trends (such as racial and gender discrimination, environmental degradation and macroeconomic trends). Vulnerability to poverty is therefore characterized by an inability to devise an appropriate coping or management strategy in times of crisis (Fraser, 1997).

1.2 POVERTY, TEACHER EXPECTATIONS AND EDUCATION

All the literature on risk factors for psychological development acknowledges that growing up in poverty is the single most powerful and multifaceted negative influence on psychological development (Dawes & Donald, 1994). Too often, teachers' expectations of learners' scholastic aptitude and preconceived notions of learners' abilities, influences learners later educational attainment through a variety of different pathways, such as learners' self concept and the teachers engagement with such children (Dawes & Donald, 1994).

This research attempts to explore the attitudes and expectations that teachers have for learners who are deprived as a result of poverty. It also attempts to explore teacher-learner relationships and the learners' perceptions of themselves in the face of poverty.

1.3 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

1.3.1 Poverty

Despite the obviously large number of people living in poverty, the definition of poverty has been the subject of some debate amongst policy analysts. Poverty means different things to different people, even to the poor. According to Krishna Kumar, Gore and Sitaramam (1996), poverty connotes the notion of a poor state of economic well being or a state of economic ill being. It connotes a state of deprivation. Deprivation can be based on the comparison of an individual's economic state with either an absolute norm, in which case it is called "absolute deprivation", or a normative or relative norm, in which case it is called "relative deprivation" (Ngwane et al., 2001).

Economic deprivation or a lack of income is a standard feature of most definitions of poverty. This in itself does not take account of the myriad of social, cultural and political aspects of the phenomenon. Poverty is not only deprivation of economic or material resources but a violation of human dignity too.

The United Nations (2001) reaffirmed that poverty denies one of choices and opportunities, as well as being a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow ones food or a job to earn one's living, nor having access to credit. It also means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It indicates susceptibility to violence and it often implies living in marginal and fragile environments, not having access to clean water and sanitation.

Thus, from a human rights perspective, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in February 2001 viewed poverty as:

> " A human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other fundamental civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights." (Seminar on Human Rights, 2001, p.2)

1.3.2 Economic Deprivation

The concept of deprivation is often used as if it were a single syndrome, which is actually incorrect because in practice there are always degrees of difference with regard to deprivation (Kapp, 1991). To speak of a deprived child, is to speak of one with less opportunities and it means that there is a deficiency in the child's environment which restrains him in his adequate actualization. Economic implies financial or to do with money matters. Thus the child who is economically deprived is one who comes from a home with severe financial shortage, which results in fewer material possessions and resources. Financial constraints place heavy psychological burdens on parents and

families and have its repercussions in the classroom. This research is based on the child who is deprived in all areas. Such a child may not be committed to lifelong deprivation as the term implies a possibility of improvement.

1.3.3 Socioeconomic Status

The term " socioeconomic status" (SES), typically is used to signify an individual's, family's, or group's ranking on a hierarchy according to their access to or control over some combination of some valued commodities such as wealth, power and social status (Huston, McLoyd & Coll, 1994)). It is not based on an absolute standard or threshold, and its indicators, such as occupational status, educational attainment, prestige and power are clearly related to, but distinct from poverty status. Furthermore, poverty status is considerably more volatile than SES because income shifts markedly from one year to another more often than such SES indicators as educational attainment and occupational status (Huston et al., 1994).

In this study the terms **poverty**, **low socioeconomic status** and **economic deprivation** will be used interchangeably to mean a similar condition. The term **indigent** will be used to describe learners and their families who are poor or destitute.

1.3.4 The terms **teacher** and **educator** are also used interchangeably.

1.3.5 The terms **learner, children** and **pupil** are also used interchangeably to imply the same meaning.

1.4 RATIONALE

As class sizes are increasing and mainstreaming of learners with special educational needs is encouraged, the accompanying teaching and administrative workload of educators is becoming more burdensome and often intolerable. To exacerbate matters, teachers have to face the challenge of teaching children who are linguistically, ethnically, socially and economically more diverse than the context for which they have been trained. The problems associated with poverty, has its repercussions in the classrooms where emotional problems are exhibited. With the increasing numbers of learners in the classrooms, very often the social problem of poverty and its effects on the child is not given enough attention. Poverty can have a devastating effect on children's educational development and their eventual preparation for their adjustment to society later in their lives as adults. Furthermore, educators have received very little departmental support in coping with such diverse classes. A mismatch between what the demands are, educator's expectations and the developmental needs of children lead to negative consequences for children's self-esteem, social adjustment and long term academic performance. Within this context children should not lose out on this, a one- off window of opportunity and development. Research in South Africa, which explores educator's attitudes and expectations, is non-existent. Therefore, there was a need for this study. This study explored the attitudes and expectations that educators have towards indigent learners. Recommendations were made to educators on ways of controlling teacher bias and expectancy effects in the classroom.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and expectations of educators towards learners who are deprived as a result of poverty. It also explored the effects of educator's race and gender on their attitudes and expectations. In doing so, it is hoped that principals and educators would be able to understand that the attitudes, perceptions and expectations that educators hold for learners, influences the eventual outcomes for such learners.

1.6 THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS ADDRESSED WERE:

- What are the educators' attitudes and expectations of indigent learners?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for indigent learners?

1.7 PRESENTATION OF THE CONTENTS

Chapter One: This chapter has provided the context and introduction to the study. It has also outlined the purpose and the rationale for this study.

Chapter Two reviews literature on teacher attitudes, expectations and outcomes for learners.

Chapter Three presents a theoretical overview that is relevant to this study.

Chapter Four: This chapter provides a description of the research methodology, research instruments and the procedures employed to analyze the data.

Chapter Five: The research data are presented for the research findings and results are reported.

Chapter Six: In this chapter, discussion and interpretation of findings will be provided for an interpretation and discussion of the results.

Chapter Seven: This final chapter concludes the study, indicated the limitations of the study and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and expectations of educators towards learners who are deprived as a result of poverty.

The focus of this review is to examine international research, which bears relevance to the following critical questions that frame this study:

- What are the educators' attitudes and expectations of indigent learners?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for the indigent learners?

The purpose of this chapter is to review selected literature relating to poverty and teacher attitudes and expectations. The literature reviewed is mainly American, British and Australian because of the paucity of research done in this area in South Africa. In many instances, inferences were drawn with regard to South African schools and educators based on international research. Much of the literature reviewed is more than twenty years old. However, it was included in this study as it bore direct relevance to the present research.

In the studies that follow various findings on poverty and teacher attitudes and expectations are discussed. Absolute categorization of these aspects on the basis of the critical questions is difficult as studies generally include more than one variable and furthermore, overlapping of issues is inevitable. The following broad areas will be discussed as it directly relates to the critical questions of the study:

- Educators' attitudes towards indigent learners
- Educators' expectations of indigent learners
- Educator- learner relationships
- The outcomes of these relationships for the indigent learner

2.1 AN OVERVIEW

The colonial and apartheid era in South Africa instituted policies that systematically deprived the majority of people of basic human rights and instituted massive structural and economic inequalities (May 1999; Klasen 1997). The history of South Africa is thus a history of poverty and under-provision of almost all the forces of daily existence. Undoubtedly, the macro effects of poverty impact on almost every indicator of social well being, having profound implications not only for the individual but also on society. Children who are exposed to poverty are more likely to experience impaired physical and mental development (Gilbert, Selkikow & Walker, 1996) have parents with mental health problems (Huston et al., 1994), and live in a context of violence, poor health and environmental instability (McLoyd, 1989). The outcome of these multi-factorial conditions can be devastating for the lives of children not only affecting the material conditions of their lives, but also their sense of self worth and agency.

While the struggle against the apartheid system was fought out at almost every level of society, perhaps one of the most volatile arenas was the school and the struggle for equal access to education. The effect of formal education on the child has been linked to numerous cognitive and developmental outcomes that ultimately affect not only the individual but also the wider community (Vygotsky, 1978). While academic performance is a vital aspect of developmental outcome, success within the school system is not homogenous for all segments of society. Access to school is not the only force acting on the child. Once in school, the child needs to be able to benefit from the provision and the opportunities provided. In this regard educational outcomes can be seen as a complex product of the individual and the environment. Even under the most favourable of circumstances, the learner will experience a number of factors that will hinder or foster his or her educational success.

Connell, White and Johnston (1992) agree that the links between poverty and educational processes were far from simple. They maintain that there is a complex range of environmental and psychological pressures involved with poverty, ranging from

damaged self-esteem (heightened by media prejudice against welfare dependents and the unemployed) to racism (given the racial and ethnic composition of families in poverty). Significant as well is a complex cultural dynamic around education and educational selection itself, which leads to families in poverty being excluded from educational decision-making, their skills undervalued, and their children often seen as innately less intelligent (Connell et al., 1992).

School represents the context that is probably second only to the family in importance. It is then obvious that a mismatch between school demands and the developmental needs of children would lead to negative consequences for children's self-esteem, social adjustment and long-term academic performance. This mismatch is explained by Clark (1989) who believes that teachers come from home and earlier school experiences to their jobs with a set of learned predispositions about what "real knowledge" is and about what "promising" students should already know and how they should behave. These internalized predispositions are represented in the teacher's expectations of learners. The ethos of the school site further wields its effect on teachers' dispositions about appropriate standards. Principals and other teachers play a dominant role in setting the tone for what is "appropriate" to expect from a particular learner. Clark (1989) also maintains that during classroom lessons, teachers tend to make higher evaluations and give greater pedagogic commitment to those students whose academic and social behaviour is closest to the classroom standards and rules maintained by the teacher. Clark (1989) refers to this match-mismatch between teacher's preferences for behaviour and student's actual classroom behaviour as an example of "value consensus" or "value dissensus". The term "congruence-incongruence" in goals or cultural interests has been used by some writers to explain the degree of "fit" between what teachers enter the classroom believing about themselves and their students and what their students come to the classroom believing about themselves and their circumstances.

Bowen and Bowen (1998) maintained that the academic, social and motivational ingredients of educational attainment are influenced by the characteristics of homes and schools and the congruence of expectation and experience between the two

microsystems. Therefore, the interplay between home environmental risk factors, teacher support and student achievement and performance is of utmost importance for eventual school success. Bowen and Bowen (1998) maintain that as developmental threats accumulate in the home environment, children need greater support from other sources to ensure their school success and continued educational participation. Developmental threats would range from poverty and malnutrition to parental depression and abuse.

Researchers agree on the supportive role that the teacher and school can play in helping to stem the risk factors in economically deprived children. The importance of teacher support was earlier studied by Rist (1970). Through this study he showed that children from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds are more likely to act out in school and perform poorly scholastically, because teachers favour and spend more time with children from upper socioeconomic backgrounds.

This was confirmed by Bowen and Bowen (1998), who in their study concluded that teacher support had a substantial direct and positive effect on both grades and educational motivation. Students who perceived high levels of caring, respect and encouragement from their teachers had higher grades and educational motivation. Unfortunately, this study indicated that children already at-risk in terms of home environmental characteristics received on average, less teacher support than children with low home risk characteristics. It is thus evident that these students had their home risk status compounded by lower levels of support from their classroom teachers.

According to Miech, Essex and Goldsmith (2001) teachers' assessments of children's present and future scholastic aptitude were lower for children from lower socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds because the children had lower levels of self-regulation. They also concluded that interpersonal difficulties in school were more common among children from lower SES backgrounds. These conclusions may also be regarded as "labeling".

This work in the "labeling" tradition (Miech et al., 2001), has indicated that teachers' labels of children as troublesome or hyperactive may be more likely to represent children's SES than children's actual behaviour. This interpretation then directs research and policy away from the individual child and toward social processes within the school. Therefore, factors such as labeling and differential treatment of children from lower SES backgrounds and different standards of self regulation between teachers and parents with lower socioeconomic status, may also contribute to the inverse relationship between school adjustment and children's socioeconomic status. It thus appears that there are processes within the school system itself and not just the learner that promotes differential treatment of certain learners. Processes within the school would include relationships between the teacher and pupil and between the teacher and parents.

In a study by Hatton and Munns (1996), the focus was on the pedagogical relationships in three Australian primary schools in terms of their capacity to promote progressive change in educational practice for children in poverty. Pedagogical relationships included the social relationships between teachers and pupils and between teachers and the local community. In this study, the teachers at the school, Mungar, had strong derogatory, deficit views of most Aboriginal and Anglo-Australian working class children. These students endured hostility particularly because of the way in which their poverty impacted on their school life. They were said to have come from "bad" families, which were poor and characterized as unstable and unsupportive of the school. Interaction between teachers and students were underpinned by the adverse attitudes and expectations, which the teachers held regarding these students. According to the researchers, "bad" families were those, which caused problems for teachers. Teachers were frequently angry because of the lack of money for educational materials. Although teachers conceded that the families were financially constrained, they still claim that the lack of money for school items represents a lack of commitment towards education, which keeps these families in unemployment and poverty. Overall, the teachers believed that the deficiencies with which the children come to school are profound. They claim that their homes fail to provide them with the experiences and general knowledge essential to school success.

The idea of a poor family being "bad" and the importance of a good background has a long history. The findings by Hatton and Munns (1996) are in keeping with those by Goodacre (1968). Goodacre (1968) in her study of infant teachers and their pupil's home backgrounds found that infant teachers saw the "good" home as one which facilitated the teachers' task by preparing the young child for the classroom both socially and educationally. The child from a "good" home was also judged by his conversations, class "news" and observation of a child's clothes (including underwear) and other personal belongings. Goodacre (1968) also concluded that in middle class schools, teachers seemed to concentrate on pupils they liked most as being personally pleasant. They were thought of as "pupils worth taking trouble over" as opposed to pupils from "bad" homes who had no interest in school.

2.2 TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS OF LEARNERS

A long line of studies has been conducted to determine what effects a teacher's values, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations may have on a child (Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968; Rist 1970; Nash 1976). Rist (1970) believed that the teachers' expectations of a pupil's academic performance might have a strong influence on the actual performance of that pupil

The idea that teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the level of their pupil's ability and the effect on the pupil's actual attainment, has been described as teacher expectations. The first claim to provide experimental evidence of this was made by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). In essence, these researchers predicted to teachers at the beginning of the school year, that certain of their pupils, who were randomly selected, would make unusual intellectual gains within the coming year and these predictions were fulfilled. The effect of the study was immediate and dramatic. It received considerable publicity in the American press and inspired a whole body of research on teacher's expectations. The study itself was also severely criticized, mainly on the grounds of its technical deficiencies.

The Rosenthal and Jacobson's study (1968) had important educational implications. The researchers have suggested that the generally poor school performance of disadvantaged children might be due not only to their social background, to cultural and linguistic impoverishment and lack of motivation to do well at school. Teacher's attitudes and behaviour might also be a contributing factor towards the children's lack of success at school. Simply changing the teachers' expectations, without doing anything else for the disadvantaged child, could lead to an improvement in intellectual performance.

Pilling and Pringle (1978) were of the opinion that teachers might be to blame to some extent, however unconsciously, for the low success of the disadvantaged child, rather than this arising from the limitations of the child himself. In keeping with the above findings, Pilling and Pringle (1978) also found that children's school achievements might be influenced by teacher's knowledge of their older brothers and sisters, and the expectations derived from this knowledge.

It seems then that the most important content to be communicated during teacher-student interaction, whether they are formal or informal, is high expectations. Learners want to receive the message that they are competent, responsible, attractive, interesting and capable of learning what you are teaching. According to Borich and Tombari (1997), the expectations you hold for your learners can create the behaviour you want for them.

The power of expectations in the lives of children begins long before they come to school. Through socialization in the home and community, children learn of expectations for their lives. What they come to believe about themselves is a result of the messages from significant others such as parents and other adults. During the past two decades it has been learned that teachers do indeed form expectations for student performance based on a number of different variables and that teacher expectations influence student performance (Baron, Tom & Cooper 1985; Dusek, 1985).

An earlier study by Rist (1970) had observed that a rather strong informal norm had developed among teachers in the school such that pertinent information, especially that

related to discipline matters, was to be passed on to the next teacher of the student. The teacher's lounge became the location in which they would discuss the performance of individual children as well as make comments concerning the parents and their interests in the student and the school. Frequently, during the first days of the school year, there were admonitions to a specific teacher to "watch out" for a child believed to be "a trouble maker". Teachers would also relate techniques of controlling the behaviour of a student who had been disruptive in the class. Thus a variety of information concerning students in the school was shared, whether that information regarded academic performance, behaviour in class, or the relation of the home to the school (Rist, 1970). The researcher herself has directly observed such teacher behaviour, more recently. During the twelve years that the researcher spent teaching, it was observed that the teacher's staff room and corridors were the places where informal discussions of learners took place. Teachers openly spoke about learners' parents, family problems and even how "good" or "bad" they perceived certain families to be.

Social psychologists use the expression *self-fulfilling prophecy* - what you expect from a student is what the student gives you- to describe how expectations tend to confirm themselves. This may be explained in terms of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977) where the influence of environmental events is primarily a function of cognitive processes. Large group settings, such as the typical school classroom, tend to encourage the expectancy (Pygmalion) effect. Borich and Tombari (1997) believe that when teachers work individually with students or in small groups, teachers receive immediate feedback that either confirms or disconfirms their expectations. However, when teachers work almost exclusively with large groups, they often lack immediate knowledge of the changes that may be occurring in their learner's behaviour that can disconfirm negative expectations and biases. Consequently their beliefs or expectations remain unchallenged. An approach based on expectation theory, says that teachers make inferences about a student's behaviour or ability based on what a teacher knows about a student. Since this can have a potentially damaging effect on students, a programme has been devised to train teachers to interact with students on a more equitable basis. This approach,

according to Hawley (1996), is called Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA).

Rist (1970) studied a class of ghetto children from kindergarten through second grade. It was observed that from the time these students entered kindergarten, they were divided into three groups- "tigers", "cardinals", "clowns"- and each group were seated at a different table. The teacher initially placed the children in these groups based on their socioeconomic status and information from registration forms. The highest status children, the tigers, were seated closest to the teacher and quickly labeled "fast learners". The lowest status children, the clowns, were furthest removed from the teacher and were quickly led to believe they were "slow learners". In reality, each of the three groups had a mixture of fast and slow learners, but the slow learners who were seated furthest from the teacher seldom got the opportunity to interact with her, while those closest to the teacher frequently received her attention. Before long, the abilities of each group were taken as fact rather than as creations of the teacher, so much so that it was increasingly difficult for the "clowns" to be considered anything other than slow by their teachers in subsequent grades. At no time did the teacher seem to be aware that the arrangement was biased or that seating certain students consistently in the back of the room would reduce their contact with her. Thus, this teacher's bias became a self-fulfilling prophecy that extended even to subsequent grades and classes.

A South African research into racial integration in the classroom, found that teachers were ultra-sensitive to any behaviour on the part of African learners that appeared to differ from the norm or what they were used to (Naidoo, 1996). Many principals and teachers felt that they had the need to lecture learners on what was considered to be appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. They were particularly concerned about the exuberant behaviour and loud speech of African learners. The teachers' main concerns with respect to teaching a racially mixed class were:

- Language and communication
- High levels of late-coming and absenteeism among African learners
- Cultural differences

- The disadvantaged background of learners
- Discipline and noise levels
- Lack of parental involvement

Thus the African learner has been perceived by the teacher as being different, not up to standard, an inflection of the norm and a target for change (Naidoo, 1996). This type of stereotyping has caused African learners to be described as lazy, passive and withdrawn or boisterous, aggressive and disruptive (Naidoo, 1996). This labeling leads to the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Good and Brophy (1987) described that expectations lead to self-fulfilling in the following ways:

- Based on what you read, hear, or see about your students, you naturally expect different achievements and social behaviours from different students.
- These expectations affect your decisions while you are teaching- you call on certain students and not others; you wait longer for some students to give answers than others; you seat students in different parts of the room; you check the work of some students more frequently; you assign easier or more difficult assignments.
- Your students eventually learn what they are and what they are not expected to do, and they behave accordingly.
- You therefore observe the students behaviour that confirms your original expectations and the cycle repeats itself. It can only be broken when the teacher receives consistent feedback from students that disconfirms his or her predictions. Such feedback is less likely to occur in large-group instructional formats.

While teacher attitudes and expectations are the focus of this study, one cannot ignore parental expectations for their children, as this is just as important. Smith-Maddox (1999), studied the relationships of social and cultural resources and teacher perceptions of ability to the educational aspirations of African-American eighth graders. It was found

that discussions with parents about school or careers, participation in activities outside of school, parental involvement and parents' expectations were positively related to educational aspirations, whereas poverty status and teacher's perception of low achievement level were negatively related to aspirations.

In an analysis of research over a twenty-year period, Denbo (1986) found that most students demonstrated that both low and high teacher expectations greatly affected student's performances. It was found that teacher expectations are particularly important in the development of positive self-images in Black students. Positive racial attitudes by teachers are associated with greater achievements by marginalized groups (Forehand, Regosta & Rock, 1976). Low teacher expectations have been shown to reduce the motivation of students to learn. It was concluded that perhaps the most damaging consequence of low teacher expectations is the erosion of academic self-image in students.

Black Americans were most influenced by teacher perceptions than by their own perceptions. These were the findings of Forehand et al., in 1976. Black youth can be victimized by low teacher expectations, which are too often based on teacher's pre-conceived notions about the potential and ability of students of a particular race, rather than on the actual performance of individual student (Forehand et al., 1976). These low expectations confirm that they are capable of destroying egos and contributing to the loss of positive cultural and racial identity in students.

The relationship between low teacher expectations and low student self-image can be seen by analyzing the behaviour of teachers towards the students perceived as low achievers. The earlier study by Rubovits and Maehr (1973) who found that Black youngsters, regardless of actual intelligence or gifted labels, are given less attention and ignored more than their White counterparts in classroom settings, was confirmed by Irvine (1985), of Emory University. He found that:

- Black students receive more negative behavioural feedback and more mixed messages than do White students

- Females receive significantly less total communication, less praise, less negative behaviour feedback, less neutral procedure feedback and less nonacademic feedback.

Good's summary (1981) of teacher's behaviour towards those students perceived as low achievers concurs with modern day teacher behaviour directly observed by the researcher. These, according to Good (1981) include:

- Providing students with general, often insincere praise
- Providing them with less feedback
- Demanding less effort of them
- Interrupting them more often
- Seating them further away from the teacher
- Paying less attention to them
- Calling on them less often
- Waiting less time for them to respond to questions
- Criticizing them more often
- Smiling at them less or giving them fewer other nonverbal indicators of support

Research indicates that reversing these negative behaviours improves student achievement. As teachers increase their expectations of marginalized youth, their behaviour towards these youth changes. When high expectations are evident, teachers provide more support and children feel more positive about their ability and self-worth (Good, 1981).

Researchers (Good & Brophy, 1987) studied the ways teachers communicated their expectations to high achievers and low achieves. Their observations of classrooms and their findings concur with previous researchers who revealed that teachers treat low achievers differently than they treat high achievers. Scott-Jones and Clark (1986) believe that academic achievement is dependent on more than the individual's abilities and

aspirations. The social environment in which learning takes place, can enhance or diminish the behaviours that led to achievement.

A study of high school dropouts among Native American students found that dropouts perceived teachers as not caring enough about them and not providing them with sufficient assistance in their work (Fair, 1980). It seems that positive classroom relationships are becoming more difficult to establish as a growing cultural and social distance between students and teachers contributes to a gap in the instructional process.

Winfield (1986) believed that these behavioural differences indicated the existence of sustaining expectation effects that would make learning by low- expectation students relatively more difficult. Cohen and Manion (1981) support the view that differences in classroom interactions can lead to differences in learning outcomes: that is, those who talk more, learn more.

Winfield (1986) found that teacher education students, who are mostly White and monolingual, often view diversity as a problem rather than a resource. This attitude stems from negative attitudes about racial, ethnic and language groups other than their own which influence teacher satisfaction and engagement with teaching. Winfield (1986) explained these feelings that when compared with teachers of more affluent children, teachers who work with students from poorer families are more likely, for example, to believe that their students bring behaviours into the classroom that make teaching difficult, and to believe that they have little influence over their students learning. In addition, teachers in schools with a higher proportion of minority children are more likely to feel that their efforts in teaching are not rewarded with student engagement in learning.

The expectations teachers have for students can be affected significantly by such variables as information about test performance, performance on assignments, track or group placement information obtained from other teachers, classroom conduct, physical appearance, race, socioeconomic status, gender, speech characteristics and various diagnostic labels (Brophy, 1983).

The expectations of teachers frequently are based on the initial achievement of students or knowledge of their past performance. There is evidence, however, that teachers tend to base their expectations on the group performance of students rather than on the performance of an individual child. Black students, in one study, tended to receive lower grades than White students for identical academic performance (Good, 1981). Teachers also attribute the achievement- oriented behaviours of White students to such internal factors as effort or motivation, while they attribute the achievement-oriented behaviours of Black students to factors that students cannot control, such as parental encouragement or heredity (Scott-Jones & Clark, 1986).

Naidoo (1996) confirmed that many teachers anticipated problems with learners based on their individual and group perceptions of new learners. The new learner's general behaviour (which was different to what many teachers were accustomed to) and initial performance tended to confirm these initial assumptions about the abilities of the children who were entering the school. This may have had the effect of conditioning their attitude and response to these learners. In many cases, there was a tendency on the part of teachers to assume that all or most of these learners would perform similarly (Naidoo, 1996).

Placement of students in special education programmes has also been a contributor to the development of low expectations for students. Fair (1980) found that the placement of minority group students in special education programmes further influenced the expectations of teachers who might already have had negative attitudes about the intellectual potential of minority group children. According to Fair (1980), throughout the grades, race, social class, and track assignments correlated consistently with low – income students and non-Asian minorities disproportionately enrolled in low track academic classes and advantaged students and Whites more often enrolled in high track. Other variables include gender, language, class, temperamental styles, race and ethnicity.

2.3 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES

The concept of attitudes refers to the subjective guides to individual action. To say that an attitude is subjective indicates that one is concerned with the personal meanings, which an individual places upon his actions. Attitudes may be directly expressed through words or through bodily stance or gestures. This latter sense, according to Nash (1976), was the original meaning of the word " attitude". Understanding attitudes in everyday life is very much a matter of "reading between the lines", in other words, of interpreting the subjective meaning of the actions of another. Attitudes can be understood as the characteristic mood of an action. With this in mind, teacher attitudes may be rather covert and subtle. Therefore, this study sought to determine what attitudes educators had towards learners who were indigent.

It is important to determine how teacher attitudes influence peer relationships. Wright (1987), on the basis of classroom observations in four primary schools, suggested that teacher's attitudes towards Black children have a strong influence on peer relationships. She reported that in classrooms where the teachers treated the Black and Asian children differently, example by losing patience with them, failing to involve them in group discussions, ignoring their attempts to contribute, assuming that they did not speak English, White children would echo these perceived personal deficiencies to tease and taunt their " different " classmates.

2.4 TEACHER-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS

Nash (1976) maintained that the child's progress will come to be powerfully affected by his teachers' attitudes, values and beliefs; that some of these will be overt and deliberate while others may be implicit and incidental. Others may well be unconscious but just as powerful in influencing his learning (Nash, 1976). Nash (1976) also believed that teachers had an unrivalled opportunity not only to establish a favourable attitude to learning in general and scholastic progress in particular but also where necessary, to improve or entirely rebuild the foundation of a child's self-esteem and hence his attitude

to learning. Nash (1976) further commented that to succeed in this, a teacher had to act on the assumption that every learner possesses as yet unrealized potential for development; that an appropriate "diet" can succeed in improving intellectual or emotional "undernourishment" and that rather than just accepting previous assessments or test results or even the parents judgement of the child's abilities, the teacher should try to "beat prediction" even though he may not always succeed. Such a positive and optimistic attitude communicates itself very readily (Nash, 1976).

Recent research has shown that children's abilities to form and maintain styles and strategies of coping with the social environment in the early school years are important factors in establishing a trajectory of academic and behavioural performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Those children who are able to successfully navigate early social environments in school get off to a better start and continue to profit from their social knowledge and experience and experience as they progress through school. Markers of classroom social adjustment, including emotional regulation, school liking, peer competence, engagement with the school environment and self-control are linked to children's success at school. Furthermore, it is evident that, at least in the primary grades, classroom social adjustment is influenced by adult-child relationships, including teacher-child relationships. Thus it is suspected that the qualities of the teacher-child relationship, even early in a child's school career, can forecast later problems and successes (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Early relationships with adults play an important role in the formation of social competencies that often translate into positive adjustment in elementary school classrooms. Teachers play an important role in shaping children's experiences at school. Beyond the traditional role of teaching academic skills, they are responsible for regulating activity level, communication and contact with peers. Teachers also provide behavioural support and teach coping skills to children (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

The teacher-child relationship is expected to differ in important ways from other social relationships considered. Unlike ties with parents or other children, a child's relationship with a teacher is expected to be less intense, personal or emotional. Teachers are expected to stimulate the learning of all children in their classroom to an equal extent, not to have

favourites and not to relate to a child in terms of an emotional bond. Despite this cultural norm, there is evidence from previous research, that teachers do not respond to children in the same way and that differences in teacher behaviour have impact on both the cognitive and social development of children.

From a child's perspective, positive relationships with teachers may protect against the poor school performance associated with an unsupportive home environment. Just as teachers are likely to put more effort into children with whom they have a positive relationship, children who trust and like teachers may be more motivated to succeed (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1993).

2.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE SELF- CONCEPT

Research has consistently shown that self-esteem develops in response to the reactions of others, especially significant others. Rosenberg (1979) found that high self-esteem is related to parental interest in the child, interest in his friends and interest in his academic performance while Bandura (1977), maintained that people derive much of their knowledge about themselves from direct experience of the effects produced by their actions.

According to Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of development, "identity versus role confusion" is the crisis to be negotiated in adolescence. Erikson (1968) suggested, however, that identity formation is a lifelong process, which is affected by the past and influences the future. Thus the introjection of a safe and trusting relationship with a parental figure, which allows children to know themselves as separate individuals, is a child's first experience of identity. This is developed during childhood when children identify with respected others. In adolescence, these identifications are selected or rejected. As this is a psychosocial process in which social interactions are emphasized, parents, friends and teachers play a vital role in adolescent identity formation.

Considering that positive self-esteem is a key factor in developing sound mental health, social relations and a productive lifestyle, the school plays a significant role, as it is an important arena for social interaction (Boulter, 1995). Much social behaviour are developed and practiced at school. Experience of rejection and affirmation in interactions at school, at home and with peers as well as relationships developed in these settings, influence adolescent's developing self-concept and affect their ability to meet the challenges of each of these areas (Boulter, 1995). When teachers increase their expectations of marginalized children, their behaviour towards these children change. When high expectations are evident, teachers provide more support and children feel more positive about their ability and self-worth.

The school is one of the environments in which the adolescent experiments with different identities in academic, recreational and social activities. However, as various studies confirm, succeeding at high school is more than academic success or failure. Haynes (1990) found that pupil's self-concepts affect their classroom behaviour, group participation and attitude towards authority. Haynes (1990) also found a relationship between self-confidence and school adjustment. They also suggest that school adjustment is affected by the quality of relationships with authority figures and peers at school.

In the South African context, a history of apartheid and continued inequalities means that many children are disadvantaged. Boulter's research (1995), suggests that adolescents in South Africa struggle with issues including self-confidence and self-esteem, emotional stability, self-assuredness, health, family influences, personal freedom, group sociability and moral sense. Programmes in the school can positively influence a learner's self-concept, personality, identity and roles, especially when the self has undergone negative influences within an impoverished environment. Thus, the teacher and the school play an important role in implementing such programmes.

Considering that the majority of indigent learners in South Africa are Black, a major factor contributing to low self-esteem of many Black youth, is the institutional racism found in schools and society. This can be subtle yet pervasive, and it can encourage

teacher and student behaviours and organizational norms that serve only to reinforce low student self-esteem. These behaviours and norms according to Boulter (1995) include the following:

- Curricula, instructional strategies and teaching styles that are incompatible with a Black student's cultural preferences; absence of materials which include Black content and role models
- Stereotyping and the resulting low or negative teacher expectations
- Academic tracking and the resulting failure to foster higher order thinking skills

Although the terms "self-concept" and "self-esteem" are different, many educators and psychologists use these terms interchangeably. While "self-concept" is best thought of as a schema or cognitive structure that one holds towards oneself, "self-esteem" is a global evaluation or judgement of one's self-worth. Harter (1983) indicates that children who make these global judgements do so on the basis of a perceived discrepancy between who they are and who they would like to be. Thus a child with low self-esteem has a standard of who she would like to be and perceives herself as not living up to that standard. She values something, has a standard to live up to, and judges that she has met that standard. Thus, according to Harter (1983), part of one's global judgement of self-worth, or self-esteem, is a quality or skill or standard of performance and perception of how well this standard is met. A perception of discrepancy is responsible for low self-esteem.

Borich and Tombari (1997) believe that since self-esteem is affected by learner's judgements of their ability to accomplish things they value, teachers can enhance self-esteem by building an environment that promotes success. Parents, teachers and peers play a major role in the development of self-esteem. Since self –esteem involves a comparison between what children value and what they actually perceive themselves doing, children's perceptions of their own competence often account for large differences in self-esteem among children. These differences will be based on the child's direct experience of success or failure in the classroom, in school and on the sports field.

2.6 SUMMARY

This review found that with regard to self-esteem and its development, approval from significant others have a major impact on self-esteem. There is also evidence that various factors, including lack of income, low SES status, parental depression and stressful conditions within the family may lead to the parent's inability to provide self-enhancing support. Contexts such as one of parental support can assist a child to successfully negotiate developmental crises.

Support within the school system can be the most influential factor in promoting positive self-esteem and successful outcomes for the indigent learner. The findings of this review impacts on the present study as they relate directly to the critical questions, which are:

- What are the educators' attitudes and expectations of indigent learners?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for the indigent learner?

The following chapter, **Chapter 3** provides a theoretical framework within which the study was conducted.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and expectations of educators towards learners who are deprived as a result of poverty.

The overview of theories is an attempt to offer a context to understand pertinent features of the theoretical background within which this study is conducted. This exploration of selected theoretical postulations is aimed at providing answers to the key questions of this study, which are:

- What are the attitudes and expectations of educators towards indigent learners?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for the indigent learner?

A perusal of literature has indicated that South African research into the role of educator's attitudes towards and expectations of indigent learners is almost non-existent. Therefore, there is a need to consider international theoretical approaches and examine their relevance to the South African context. This theoretical framework is largely exploratory and absolute conceptual relevance to South Africa is not implied.

3.1 THEORIES

The overview of theories is an attempt to offer a context to understand pertinent features of the theoretical background within which this study is situated. This section examines the theories and models, which are applicable to the study. Although the salient features of an eclectic approach is used, the dominant theory that framed the study was the Systems Theory, more specifically, the Ecological Systems Theory. Elements of the Social Cognitive Theory as well as the Transactional Model will be drawn to explain conditions.

3.1.1 Social Cognitive Theory

Elements of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977) may be applied to the present study. A primary tenet of Bandura's approach is that the influence of environmental events on the acquisition and the regulation of behaviour is primarily a function of cognitive processes. These processes are based on prior experience and determine what environmental influences are attended to, how they are perceived, whether they will be remembered and how they may affect future action (Sadock & Sadock, 2000). Therefore, this theory suggests that environmental influences are the most important determinants of behaviour.

Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1989) believe that in this theory, the interactional point of view is adhered to. This means that behaviour is seen as the outcome of the reciprocal influence of the individual and the environment. The individual is not regarded as a passive part of events in which he has no say, but as an active participant in a process in which he is influenced by environmental factors in which he also plays a role by selecting and interpreting environmental influences (Meyer et al., 1989).

With regard to the present study, the learner is in constant interaction with educators, curriculum, peers and family. He influences and is influenced by these dynamic interactions. The outcomes of these interactions for the learner will be determined by how he perceives and interprets these exchanges.

3.1.2 The Transactional Model

A transactional model of development, that included both the child and the child's experiences, was suggested by Sameroff (1987). Within this transactional model, the development of the child was seen as a product of the continuous dynamic interactions of the child and the experience provided by his or her family and social context. Developmental outcomes are not simply the effect of either personality or environment. Sameroff (1987) argues that development is the result of a transaction between the child

and his environment. Central to this model is the notion of process where the development of the child is seen as the continuous and dynamic interactions between participants, which ultimately shape the outcomes for the child (Sameroff, 1987). An innovative aspect of the transactional model was the emphasis placed on the effect of the child on the environment, so that experiences provided by the environment were not independent of the child.

When one begins to assess the effect of environment on child development a wide variety of risk factors are apparent. The most obvious of these is social status. Socioeconomic factors have been consistently related to cognitive and social-emotional competence (Sameroff, 1987). The social status of a child exerts both independent and interactive influences on the child.

Sameroff (1987) believed that the developmental outcomes for young children are multiply determined. The enduring characteristics of the family such as family size and minority status cannot be altered to improve the outcomes for such children. Since parental occupation and educational level is highly unlikely to change, parents are left with coping skills to improve the child's outcomes. The coping skills would include the psychological variables of mental health, parental perspectives and parent-child interaction patterns. These coping skills are described as the cultural code, the social regulatory system that guides children through their development and buffers them from those aspects of the broader environment with which they are not yet able to cope by themselves. This cultural code provides a support system for children and helps in the development of resilience in disadvantaged children.

The transactional model of development argues that behavioural outcomes, such as low self-esteem and aggression, are the product of continuous interplay between psychological characteristics within the child and his context at a particular point in time (Sameroff, 1985). In a context of poverty, where lack of resources and general powerlessness prevail, a child's aggression is continually fed. Therefore, it is understandable that the environment can be seen as an active force in shaping outcomes,

however, this shaping force is constrained by the state and the potentialities of individuals.

Coopersmith (1967) referred to self-esteem as the evaluation, which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself.

Contexts, such as the classroom environment can assist a child to successfully negotiate developmental crises. Unsuccessful negotiation of successive developmental stages can lead to impairment of tasks involved in the development of self-control over aggression, acquiring moral attitudes and social skills, becoming self-directed and self-confident.

3.1.3 Systems Theory

Models that focus on singular causal factors are inadequate for either the study or manipulation of developmental outcomes. The evolution of living systems has provided a regulatory model that incorporates feedback mechanisms between the individual and regulatory codes. By appreciating the workings of this regulatory system we can obtain a better grasp of the process of development. Systems theory stresses the need to understand development of the self in terms of the everyday environment in which children grow up. Development therefore needs to be studied not only in the home, but also in schools, neighbourhoods and communities. With regard to the present study, the emphasis is establishing the role of the school and educators in the supportive development of children whose home environment already places them at risk.

According to Bukatko and Daehler (1995), psychologists have long recognized that not only do children live in vastly different circumstance but also that each child experiences a number of overlapping contexts. The environment of the immediate family is subject to enormous variation: single parent families, extended families, poverty and deprivation,

number of siblings and overcrowding. Differences in the contexts of development extend far beyond a child's immediate family however. Physical surroundings, access to schools, job opportunities, political systems, war and the cultural dictates of the community form and influence the way in which children are reared. Some of these circumstances will be more supportive of social and cognitive development than others.

The transformation from infant to child to adult takes place via a complex system of multidirectional levels of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The outcomes then, are the result of the interplay between child and context across time, in which the state of one affects the next state of the other in a continuous dynamic process. Contextual models, sometimes called systems, views are concerned with the effects of this broad range of biological, physical and sociocultural settings on development. Bronfenbrenner (1986, 1989) and Sameroff (1987) have drawn our attention to development as an interactive process. This understanding has been translated into research models that incorporate both multiple biological and environmental processes. Such a theory, the ecological systems theory directly explains the conditions under study and will therefore be used to underpin this study.

3.1.3.1 Ecological Systems Theory

The most extensive model of a contextual approach to development is the ecological systems theory proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1986,1989). Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989), urges us to view child development from a systems-ecological perspective. Bronfenbrenner (1986, 1989) looks at the child's world as a naturalist looks at nature, as an ecosystem. Like ecosystems, children develop in the context of a process of mutual accommodation. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1989) underscores the many levels of a child's surroundings that directly and indirectly interact with the individual to influence development (Bukatko & Daehler, 1995). Thus, the ecosystemic perspective has much relevance for understanding child and adolescent development more holistically and interactively.

As an extension of the sociological theory, ecological- transactional models take into account the transforming effects of parents, children and environments on each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The model of the self is based on several theories describing social and cognitive processes that may influence children's self-perception. Accordingly, parents and significant others influence children's self-concept by labeling their behaviours and attributes, by communicating which specific areas of performance are important and by specifying the criteria by which performance should be evaluated. According to the transactional model of the self, the feeling tone accompanying verbal messages, the degree to which parents are nurturing and supportive, is the critical determinant of the children's sense of self-esteem.

The child's ecosystem may be visualized as a series of concentric circles. The most central layer, the *microsystem*, includes all those settings where the child lives or spends significant portions or his or her time: home, school, classroom, day-care setting, playground. The child influences and is influenced by the microsystem. Each of these settings is referred to a subsystem. In the child's ecosystem, the major systems include the family, school and peer group. These are the systems with the most immediate and direct impact upon the individual. The microsystem comprises the personal qualities of others, the physical and material properties of everyday settings, and the activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Thus, what happens at home or in the peer group can influence how the individual reacts or responds at school. In this present study, the home circumstances of children living in poverty influences the child's performance at school both directly and indirectly.

Each subsystem within the microsystem can be viewed within itself as a system. The school system is made up of subsystems that include teachers, administrators, support personnel, school board members, and learners. The family system includes a marital, parental, sibling and often a grandparent subsystem. The peer system includes social friendships, academic friendships and sports and hobby friendships. The child's microsystem becomes a source of developmental risk when it is socially impoverished. That is, the child's development suffers whenever the microsystem is stunted be it

because of too few participants, too little reciprocal interaction, psychologically destructive patterns of interaction or some combination of all. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), a microsystem should be a gateway to the world and not a locked room.

The mesosystems, the next ring, is concerned with the interrelationships among the various settings within the microsystem. For example, expectations and events within the family, such as access to books and learning to read or an emphasis on acquiring basic academic and socialization skills may have a critical impact on the child's opportunities and experiences in school. When the households of divorced parents are in different neighbourhoods, regular and frequent moves back and forth between the two homes have an effect not only on family relationships but also on the range and kinds of friendships with peers that the child can establish (Bukatko & Daehler, 1995).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) maintains that the "product" of a healthy microsystem is a child whose capacity for understanding and successfully dealing with ever-wider spheres of reality increases. Such a child learns to have self-respect and self-confidence, and to be socially and intellectually competent

The next layer of the system includes subsystems that the child does not directly experience but that affect the child because of the influence they exert on the micro system. This layer is called the *exosystem*. It may include the parent's workplace, their friends, the school governing body, the parent-teacher associations and other groups. It examines the influence of events occurring in settings, which the child does not occupy, but which are occupied by other family members. An example would be the impact of a parent becoming unemployed. This could produce strains within the family, leading to the child's exposure to increased domestic conflict. It might lead to certain political attitudes being expressed, which could influence the child's attitude formation, or it might lead to a change in standard of living, which could affect the child's level of nutrition and potential survival. The parent who encounters a difficult problem at work may bring frustrations home and express them through angry exchanges with members of

the family. The effect of all of these would depend in turn on the level of development of the child's physical, emotional and cognitive capacities. Thus, contexts removed from the child's immediate environment can still have a powerful impact on development.

Finally, both *microsystems* and *exosystems* exist in a larger setting, the *macrosystem*. By macrosystem, Bronfenbrenner refers to the larger culture or society in which the microsystem and exosystems function. The macrosystem is thought of as cultural blueprints that underlie the organization of institutions, the assumptions people make about social relations, and the workings of the political and economic system (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

Bronfenbrenner urges us to look at child development in the context of the relationships between and among these systems. When the relationships or linkages between systems are characterized by mutual trust, a positive orientation and goal consensus, healthy development results. Borich and Tombari (1997) confirm that conflict among these systems adversely affects child growth and development. They state that, seen in the above perspective, the actions of individual parents, teachers and learners (i.e. the subsystems) are viewed as products of the interrelationships among them. For example, the parent who never signs homework books may not be an uninterested and uninvolved parent as might be assumed. Dynamics within the family system such as poverty, loss of a job, illness, depression, marital conflict may explain the parent's apparent lack of involvement in his or her child's education.

Homes that do not value schooling, do not have formally educated people or books, do not involve reading and other basic academic skills, and do not use the formal language used for instructional purposes, put the child at a disadvantage in school (Garbarino, 1992). It is an important start for parents to visit the school and even for teachers to visit the home. The central principle here is that the stronger and more diverse the links between the settings, the more powerful the resulting mesosystems will be as an influence on the child's development.

The psychologist Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) was one of the first to recognize, that human behaviour was determined by a wide range of influences (Fogel & Melson, 1988). For example, a child's behaviour in school may depend upon such things as the child's feeling of being liked or disliked by the teacher, how hungry the child is, whether the child is behind on his or her homework, how well a child does in a particular subject and the anticipation of after-school social events.

Fogel and Melson (1988), maintain that the teacher-child relationship is expected to differ in important ways from other social relationships. Unlike ties with parents or other children, a child's relationship with a teacher is expected to be less intense, personal or emotional. Teachers are expected to stimulate the learning of all the children in their classroom to an equal extent, not to have favourites and not to relate to a child in terms of an emotional bond. Despite this cultural norm, there is considerable evidence that teachers do not respond to children in the same way and that differences in teacher behaviour have impact on both the cognitive and social development of children (Fogel & Melson, 1988). Some of this evidence stems from a cognitive theory approach, focusing on how teacher cognitions and expectations about children influence their behaviour and affect the child. Other research draws on a learning and social –learning perspective, viewing the teacher as a reinforcing agent and model of desirable behaviour. In general, it appears that children benefit when the expectations of home and of school complement rather than conflict with one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For many children who come from impoverished backgrounds or whose families speak a different language and share different values from those of the school, severe discontinuities may exist between family and school life. Such children need extra help from schools, which need to be responsible to the broad diversity of family life that children experience.

3.2 COMMENT

This study attempted to address the ecological influences (most especially the school), on the development, formation and maintenance of positive self-esteem in the indigent learner.

The ultimate impact of school, peer group and family depends not only on the characteristics of each setting as they interact with the child but also of the interrelationships among settings. In general, when the expectations and behaviours at home, at school, and with peers reinforce one another, the child's development is optimized.

The ecological approach as discussed above, clearly directs attention to many points at which intervention is possible. If one thinks of the task as one of weaving a strong social fabric around the child and parent, the task becomes more comprehensible. The pressing need is to establish an effective partnership between formal and informal support systems so that each child is protected and nurtured by both, directly as in the case of the school and indirectly as through the child's parents and primary care givers. The main implication is that this wondrous human child can and will become a competent person if it is given the chance.

The point of departure in this study is that interrelationships among people within a system and the connections between differently structured systems and the larger macrosystem all lend themselves to the development and maintenance of behaviour problems which arise primarily out of frustrations. The child therefore needs support. Support is explained as resources which are provided by other people such as teachers and that arise in the context of interpersonal relationships. Supportive resources can include affection, physical comforting, empathic listening, assistance in problem solving and perhaps most importantly, reassurance of worth.

The following chapter, **Chapter 4** will discuss the methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a description of the research method and design used in the study.

4.1 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and expectations of educators towards learners who are deprived as a result of poverty. In view of the paucity of research in this field in South Africa, this study focused on critical questions, rather than hypotheses.

The critical questions investigated were:

- What are the attitudes and expectations of educators towards learners who are deprived as a result of poverty?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for indigent learners?

4.2 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), which are used to describe the variables of interest, were used to analyse the questionnaires in this study. Inferential statistics (Chi Square), which allowed the researcher to determine the relationship between variables of interest and whether there were any differences between groups, were also calculated as part of the quantitative analysis of this study.

The semi-structured interviews were analyzed qualitatively, according to common themes as indicated by the phenomenological approach.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was both exploratory and descriptive in nature. It may be regarded as exploratory in view of a limited database in the literature on the attitudes and expectations of educators towards economically deprived learners in South Africa. Since this study focused on educator attitudes and expectations in the current context of post-apartheid South Africa, descriptive research, which describes, notes, examines and clarifies conditions that exist (Best & Kahn, 1986), is considered appropriate.

This study incorporated the survey method where questionnaires were completed by educators and semi-structured interviews with learners who were identified by their educators as being indigent.

4.3.1 The Survey Method-Questionnaire To Educators

The survey method, which allows researchers to elicit information about a population by selecting and studying a sample of people who comprise it (Anderson, 1990), was employed to obtain information on teacher's attitudes and expectations. An understanding of educator's relationships with learners was also elicited from the questionnaire. The survey method is used most frequently to obtain descriptive information (Stangor, 1998). The questionnaires were analysed quantitatively while open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analysed qualitatively. (Refer to appendix 1 for questionnaire)

4.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews with Indigent Learners

In order to explore the indigent learner's view of their relationship with their teachers and the outcomes of these relationships on their lives, semi-structures interviews were conducted to elicit the learner's subjective views. The learners were required to respond to questions that were pre-prepared by the researcher with the focus being on the indigent learner's self-esteem and his perception of himself in the classroom context. Questions

were drawn from the educators' responses to the questions in the teacher questionnaire. (Refer to appendix 2)

Although no definitive hypotheses were formulated, the following objectives guided the semi-structured interviews:

- To explore learners' perceptions of themselves in the classroom situation
- To determine the types of relationships that indigent learners have with their educators
- To determine indigent learners' perceptions of themselves based on their relationship with their educators

4.3.2.1 Method of analysis of the semi-structured interviews

The data from the semi-structured interviews was analysed qualitatively using the phenomenological approach to text analysis. The interview protocols were read several times to enable the researcher to grasp an in-depth understanding of issues in the study. Data was analysed following the five steps of data analysis proposed for phenomenological research (Kruger, 1988).

- Intuitive and holistic grasp of the data

The protocols were read several times in order that the researcher be able to suspend any pre-conceived notions she might have and remain faithful to the data (Kruger, 1988). The subsequent reading of the protocols required more reflection in order to prepare for further phases in which a more extracting analysis is required.

- Spontaneous emergence of themes or Natural Meaning Units (NMU)

The protocols were coded into natural meaning units that emerge spontaneously from the reading. This was based on the assertion that the NMU's are the way in which each subject expresses his or her subjective experience. Kruger (1988) described the natural

meaning unit as a statement made by the subject, which is self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single recognizable aspect of the subject's experience.

- Reflecting transformation of meaning units

The natural meaning units are then transformed from the concrete language of the subject to the psychological perspective of the issues being studied. At this stage it is permissible for the researcher to articulate the central themes in words other than those used by the subjects in order to convey the intended meaning. The researcher can also eliminate the meaning units, which are repetitive and/or irrelevant to the question.

- Synthesis into a suited structure

At this stage the researcher must synthesize and integrate the insight attained by taking into account all the expressed intentions contained in the transformed meaning units.

- Integrating situated structure into a single general structure

All those categories that are related are brought together to form clusters. These clusters will form themes or existential dimensions. It is upon these themes that the descriptions of the experiences of the subjects will be based.

Qualitative methodology was used to access the subjective experiences of learners with their teachers. Qualitative research was adopted in this section of the study because it permitted the researcher to study selected issues in detail and depth. Furthermore, it facilitates a greater degree of participation (verbalization) and conceptualization by participants.

Qualitative research is therefore oriented towards understanding and constructing reality from the contextual world of the subjects. The researcher selected participants who:

- Have the experience of being indigent

- Are verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions in relation to the issues being researched.
- Expressed a willingness to be open to the researcher

Kruger (1988) reported that the phenomenological method concentrates on the description of the experience and the explanation that leads to a meaningful understanding of the investigated psychological phenomenon.

4.4 THE SAMPLE (EDUCATORS AND INDIGENT LEARNERS)

This study is based in the Umhlali circuit of the Empangeni Region in Kwa-Zulu Natal, as enumerated in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education and Culture, Education Management Information Services (EMIS) document (Empangeni Region 2000-2001). This particular circuit was selected on the basis of accessibility, time constraints, expense and convenience. The sample consisted of 4 schools within a cluster sampling (10% of 36 schools in the circuit comprised 3.6 schools). Every 9th school was randomly selected resulting in a sample size of 4 schools. This number comprised approximately 10% of the total number of schools in the Umhlali circuit. Geographically, this circuit is based in a semi-rural to rural area. All educators in each of the 4 schools were required to complete a questionnaire directly related to the topic. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the relevant education department.

The sample of indigent learners that was selected to conduct the semi-structured interviews with comprised 12 indigent learners from the intermediate phase of a school in the total sample. A total of 122 learners were identified as indigent based on their educator's knowledge of the indicators of poverty. Ten percent of this number yielded 12 learners as every 10th learner on a list was selected to be interviewed.

4.5 PROCEDURE

The principals of the schools concerned were contacted and permission was sought to conduct the research. The questionnaires were given to the principals who administered it to the staff of educators. The researcher then collected the questionnaires after 2 days.

The researcher then sought permission from the parents/guardian of learners who were selected to be interviewed. On days agreed to by the principal of the school, the semi-structured interviews were conducted during non-instruction time.

4.6 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

4.6.1 Questionnaire

From a review of the literature, the researcher did not find a suitable instrument that would measure the key issues pertinent to this study. Therefore, a questionnaire was constructed. It is one of the primary types of research instruments used to obtain information from respondents (Best & Kahn, 1986). The availability of a number of respondents at one time and in one place reduced the cost and time required. In addition, it yielded a substantial number of responses that was used by the researcher.

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended items and included the following: (refer to Appendix 1)

- **Title Page**

The nature of the study was clarified and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

- **Section A: Biographical Details**

Respondents were asked to tick the relevant boxes with regard to questions relating to:

- Gender
- Age

- Age
- Population group
- Highest qualification level
- Teaching experience

These questions were all closed-ended questions.

- **Section B: Learner Information**

This section concerned the educator's knowledge of the number of indigent learners in his/her class. Educator's perceptions of what constitutes poverty were also determined. Questions were mainly open-ended and were analysed qualitatively.

- **Section C: Parental Contact**

This section dealt with the type of contact that educators had with indigent parents and families. Respondents were asked to comment on each response.

- **Section D**

This section consisted of Likert- type statements and open-ended questions. For the Likert-type statements, respondents were required to indicate their degree of agreement to each statement on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These statements, as well as the open-ended questions were designed to elicit additional information from educators regarding their views on the indigent child and his family.

- **Section E**

This section consisted of Likert-type statements regarding educator's expectations of indigent learners in the classroom.

4.6.2 Semi-structured interviews with indigent learners

The interviews were conducted with indigent learners from a school in the sample. Learners were identified as indigent from their teachers' understanding of their home backgrounds. From the 122 learners identified as indigent in the intermediate phase of this school, 10% yielded a sample of 12 learners with whom interviews were conducted. Questions of an open-ended nature were prepared and then administered

4.7 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is primarily aimed at improving on and revising the questionnaire before the final implementation (Stangor, 1998). Using this consideration as a rationale, a pilot study was conducted at a school in the North Durban region, which conformed to the characteristics present in the target sample used in the final study. A sample of 7 teachers was randomly chosen for the pilot study, which was conducted in August 2002.
The relevant changes pertaining to the aptness of questions, correct word usage, grouping and order of questions were made.

The following were found to be ambiguous and were duly changed and effected in the final instrument:

- Section A: Question 6- The question which required educators to indicate their number of years teaching at the present school was deleted as it was found to be unimportant to this study.
- Section B: Question 2- The question was not clear to educators as they indicated the number of learners in each of the categories. It was duly clarified.
- Section C: The comments that the educator was required to make after each question was changed to just one general comment on parental contact at the end of the section.
- The term "poor learner" was changed to "indigent learner" as the original term was ambiguous.
- More lines or writing space was added on throughout the questionnaire as it was found that educators had many comments but not enough space to write.

4.8 FACE VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENT

Face validity was ensured by taking steps to validate the use of the scores of this instrument. Face validity is "the extent to which a measured variable appears to be an adequate measure of the conceptual variable" (Stangor, 1986, p.401). The questionnaire was presented to 2 educational psychologists at the researcher's internship site who confirmed the face validity of the instrument and reported no significant inconsistencies within the questionnaire.

4.9 SUMMARY

This study relied upon an equal quantitative and qualitative method of analysis of its data. While quantitative data was statistically analysed via a computer software, the qualitative data was analysed according to common emergent themes.

The following chapter, **Chapter 5** provides the results of the questionnaire survey and the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and expectations of educator's towards learners who are deprived as a result of poverty.

The results are stated in this chapter with a view to addressing the following critical questions of the study:

- What are the attitudes and expectations of educators of indigent learners?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for the indigent learner?

5.1 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme was used to analyse the data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this study. A few sections required chi-square analyses to be carried out. All findings are reported in terms of the 95% level of confidence ($p < .05$). Percentages in tables are rounded off to the next whole number in the discussion of results. The semi-structured interviews with learners were analyzed qualitatively according to common themes that emerged.

5.2 QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN RATE

Although 60 questionnaires were initially given to educators to complete, the number returned to the researcher was 53. Therefore the return rate of questionnaires was 88%. This return rate was considered extremely good considering the workload and time constraints of educators. However, the 12% of questionnaires that were not returned is a significant number as educators play a major role in the assessment of learner's academic and behavioural problems. Due to their contact with learners in a variety of structured and unstructured settings, educators provide important information for both clinical and research purposes.

Of the 4 schools selected to participate in the study, 2 were previously Indian only schools and 2 were previously African only schools. In addition, the population sample comprised 72% Indian educators and 28% African educators. While 64% of the sample was female, 36% were male. It is important to note that these factors limit the generalizability of the results and representativeness of the sample.

5.3 PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings from this study are presented in the form of themes, tables and descriptive statements. General frequencies and cross tabulations (where relevant) are described. The following form the main areas of focus.

- Themes that emerged during the semi-structured interviews
- Description of sample of schools and educators
- Attitudes towards indigent learners according to race and gender of educators
- Expectations of indigent learners according to race and gender of educators
- Educator/learner relationships (based on educator and learner responses)
- Outcomes for learners' self-perceptions (Based on learner responses during the semi-structured interviews)

5.3.1 Qualitative Analysis Of Semi-Structured Interviews With Indigent Learners

The questions that were formulated for the semi-structured interviews arose out of the responses made by educators on the questionnaire. These questions were used as guidelines within the context of the open-ended interviews (appendix 2). Each question was related to a specific theme. The learners' responses were then coded according to the following common themes that emerged:

Positive attitude to schooling and seeing the need for a good education.

Example of responses:

- I like school because I like to get an education and have a better life when I grow up.

- I like to do my homework but sometimes I have too many things to do at home such as cooking and washing the clothes. So I get tired and don't do the homework. Sometimes I play and forget about the work or I get lazy. I do all my homework everyday.
- I would like to learn harder and get better marks.

Positive self-perception.

Example of responses:

- I have lots of friends and I share everything with them.
- I am a happy person and I am friendly.
- I like who I am because I am always happy.
- I feel nice about myself because I don't do wrong things.
- I am an important person in class because when someone is absent I help them with work when they come back. I also don't trouble anyone else but I help my friends.
- I wouldn't like to change myself because God made me like this.
- I don't feel different because we are all children and we are all the same.

Positive relationship with teachers.

Example of responses:

- If I don't understand any work, I go to my teacher and she helps me. She allows me to complete my homework or project in school if it is incomplete so I can get a better mark.
- I like my teacher. I can go to her with any problem, and she won't scold or hit me. She is very kind to me.
- My teacher always answers me when I talk to her. I tell her what is happening at home and she listens to me. Sometimes she brings clothes for me from her home. My teacher will listen to me only if I put up my hand in class and not shout out in class. She also scolds other children who trouble me when I complain.

- I like my teachers because they help me and they teach me. My teacher wants me to succeed and have a better life for myself. My teacher likes me to do well and gets happy when I do well.
- I have lots of duties such as opening the windows, and tidying the table. I help to clean out the bin and to also clean the chalkboard.

The need to change poverty status and acquire material possessions.

Example of responses:

- I would like to have a house with a television and a bed.
- I would like to change where I live. I would like to live in La Mercy.

Participation in class.

Example of responses:

- I like to take part in what is going on in class so I can get educated.
- I really enjoy talking in class but sometimes I don't because I don't know the answers.
- If I don't understand the work then I don't participate in class. I only answer questions and discuss things that I know.

Negative views of teachers.

Example of responses:

- Some teachers are different. They won't even allow me to explain why my work is not done. They say there are no excuses.
- There are some teachers who embarrass the children but my teachers don't. I feel sad and embarrassed when the teachers do this. They should rather hit me.
- I think the work is too much and so I just don't do most of it. But then the teacher gets angry.

High career aspirations.

Careers chosen were:

- Doctor, teacher, lifesaver, rap singer, social worker, policeman, nurse

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in English and the responses were written on prepared interview schedules by the researcher (Refer to appendix 2). The examples of responses were quoted directly from the interview schedules.

5.3.2 Analysis of Open Ended Questions In The Survey Questionnaire

5.3.2.1 Qualitative responses with regard to educator's contact with indigent parents
(Refer to appendix 1- section c)

The responses to comments on parental contact were coded according to the following common themes:

1. Most indigent parents don't attend parent meetings due to the belief that school is unimportant and because many parents are often lack education themselves.
2. There is high absenteeism due to household chores such as babysitting. Learners also stay away from school because of unpaid school fees, lack of uniform, lack of bus fare, rainy weather or lack of interest.
3. Those parents that do attend meetings listen carefully to the teachers but do not follow through at home mainly because of their long working hours, lack of interest or apathy.
4. Some parents do attend meetings and there is some contact with educators where all aspects of the learners schooling are discussed.
5. No comments.

5.3.2.2 Qualitative responses with regard to educator's views on indigent learners.
(Refer to appendix 1- section D)

5.3.2.2.1 The responses to questions 2.1 and 2.2 were coded according to the following common themes:

1. If the learner comes from a stable, close knit, secure family background, he will participate more readily at school. If parents show interest and motivate the learner, then he will be successful despite the lack of material resources.
2. Lack of resources at home curbs participation and thereby success at school eg. lack of television, radio, computer, newspapers, books, magazines.
3. Lack of interest and motivation amongst learners themselves. This generally results in high absenteeism and failure despite their potential to succeed.
4. The home background of some learners make them feel inferior to others and results in lack of confidence, passivity, feelings of inadequacy and unwillingness to participate in class thereby not being successful.
5. Many indigent learners participate in extracurricular activities such as soccer.

5.3.2.2.2 The responses to question 4 were coded according to the following common themes:

1. Yes: Lessons were planned around topics that the learners were familiar with. Some indicated that homework was either reduced or not given at all. Projects were simple and materials easily obtainable.
2. Sometimes: Depending on the availability of resources, learner's experiences etc.
3. No: Due to large numbers in class, it is impossible to take differential backgrounds into consideration.

5.3.2.2.3 The responses to question 5 were coded according to the following common themes:

1. There is no time for individual attention.
2. The focus is on completing the syllabus and so there is no time for each learner.
3. Does not affect my teaching as I have the same relationship with all the learners.

5.3.2.2.4 The responses to question 8.1 were coded according to the following common themes:

1. Yes: It depends on what the learners know well. Some perform very well and dominate the lessons while others will respond only when prompted to do so and if the lessons are stimulating.
2. Sometimes: Learners feel that they might be wrong and therefore not participate. They will sometimes respond when coerced to do so but a lack of general knowledge impedes this.
3. No: Many learners lose concentration, yawn are apathetic and show no interest in the lessons. Some are shy, afraid have no confidence, and are withdrawn and therefore do not participate at all. Others feel afraid to be embarrassed or ridiculed by the teacher if they are incorrect.
4. Participation in class will depend on the learner's character.

5.3.2.2.5 The responses to question 8.5 were coded according to the following common themes:

1. Same relationship as other learners.
2. Sympathetic, caring and understanding.
3. Good relationship but not personally involved.
4. Not a very good relationship-usually educator is aloof.

5.3.2.2.6 The responses to question 8.6 were coded according to the following common themes:

1. Good relationship.
2. Subdued but friendly.
3. They do not get along.
4. If good at sport then looked upon favourably.
5. Keep to the company of others in similar circumstances.

5.3.2.3 Qualitative responses with regard to career prospects for indigent learners

(Refer to appendix 1 –Section E)

The responses to question 2 -section E were coded according to the following common themes:

1. Unskilled or semi-skilled work: labourer or unemployed.
2. Depends on the attitude, motivation and goals in life as bursaries are available for those who study hard.
3. The future is bleak, gloomy and bad.
4. They would drop out early from school as they have no goals in life and are unmotivated.

5.4 Description of Sample

The sample in this study consisted of 53 educators who each completed a questionnaire and 12 indigent learners with whom semi-structured interviews were conducted. The questionnaires were analysed descriptively, while the semi-structured interviews were analysed qualitatively.

The following tables describe the sample of schools and educators who answered the survey questionnaire.

Table 5.1 **Profile of educators according to school**

School	N	%
1	30	56.6
2	6	11.3
3	9	17.0
4	8	15.1
Total	53	100.0

The schools in the sample are numbered according to the following:

1. Fairbreeze Secondary- semi-rural school with most of the learners coming from informal settlements.

2. Kruisfontein Primary- rural school
3. Isnembe Secondary- rural school
4. Quqolwazi Secondary- rural school

Table 5.1 reflects that more than half of the educators in the sample (57%) were from a complex school system Fairbreeze Secondary, which comprised grade 1 to Grade 12. This school is in a semi-rural area and the majority of learners come from informal settlements where there is rampant poverty.

Table 5.2 **Profile of educators according to their gender**

Gender	N	%
Male	19	35.8
Female	34	64.2
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.2 reflects that 64% of the educators were female educators as compared to 36% of male educators.

Table 5.3 **Profile of educators according to their age**

Age	N	%
20-30 years	12	22.6
31-40 years	21	39.6
41-50 years	16	30.2
Over 50 years	4	7.5
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.3 indicates that 40% of the educators were in the 31-40 year age group, while 30% were between 41-50 years old. Eight percent of educators were over 50 years old.

Table 5.4 **Profile of educators according to their population group**

Population Group	N	%
African	15	28.3
Indian	38	71.7
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.4 indicates that 72% of the respondents were from the Indian population group and 28% were from the African population group. The higher number of Indian educators in the sample is due to the fact that 2 of the 4 schools in the study were previously Indian schools that were controlled by the ex. House of Delegates. One school in the sample, Fairbreeze Secondary, a previously Indian school, made up 57% of the total number of respondents. Therefore, there is a higher percentage of Indian educators in the sample.

Table 5.5 **Profile of educators according to qualification**

Qualification	N	%
Matric	1	1.9
Diploma	27	50.9
Degree	17	32.1
Postgraduate	8	15.1
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.5 indicates that 60% of the respondents had a teaching diploma, while 32% held a degree. Ten percent of the respondents taught only with a Matric (grade 12) certificate.

Table 5.6 **Profile of educators according to teaching experience**

Experience	N	%
Under 5 yrs	11	20.8
6-10 yrs	9	17.0
11-15yrs	8	15.1
16-20 yrs	14	26.4
Over 20 yrs	11	20.8
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.6 indicates that 26% of the educators have been teaching for between 16-20 years. Twenty one percent of the educators have more than 20 years of teaching experience while the same percentage has less than 5 years of teaching experience.

Table 5.7 **Profile of sample according to number of learners in each educator's class**

Learners per grade	N	%
25-35	4	7.5
35-45	33	62.3
Over 45	16	30.2
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.7 indicates that of the total sample (53 classes), 62% of the classes have between 35-45 learners in each class. Thirty percent of the classes have more than 45 learners each while 8 % of the classes have between 25-35 learners in each class.

Table 5.8 **Profile of average family income of learners in each class per month**

Income	N	%
Less than R500	21	39.6
R500-R1000	18	34.0
R1001-R1500	5	9.4
R1501-R2000	6	11.3
Above R2000	3	5.7
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.8 indicates that of the total sample, 40% of learners' families have an income of less than R500 per month. Thirty four percent of learners' families have an average income of between R500-R1000 and 6% of learners' families have an income that is above R2000.

Table 5.9 **Indicators of poverty**

Indicators	Frequency	%
1. Unpaid school fees/ not paid on time	51	96.2
2. No lunch to school	48	90.6
3. Unhygienic and unkempt appearance	42	79.2
4. Obvious lack of parental support/ contact	39	73.6
5. Unsuitable living conditions/ overcrowding	40	75.5
6. Large family size	32	60.4
7. Lack of adequate stationery requirements	31	58.5
8. Do not participate in school outings	38	71.7
9. Unruly, disruptive, aggressive behaviour	20	37.7
10. Single parent family	27	50.9

Table 5.9 reflects that 96% of the educators regard unpaid school fees or fees not paid on time, as an indicator of poverty. Fifty one percent regard single parent families as an indicator of poverty, while 38% thought that unruly and disruptive, aggressive behaviour indicates poverty. Ninety one percent thought that if a learner did not carry lunch to school, it was an indicator of poverty.

Table 5.10 **Distribution of indigent learners by gender (total population)**

Indigent learners	N	%
Boys	624	52.7
Girls	561	47.3
Total	1185	100.0

Table 5.10 indicates that 47% of girls are considered indigent while their teachers consider 53% of boys as indigent. Educators were able to identify indigent learners based on their prior knowledge of learner's family background and knowledge of the indicators of poverty as listed in table 5.9. According to the questionnaire, each educator was asked to indicate the number of indigent learners in their class. (Refer to appendix 1 for questionnaire)

Table 5.11 **Types of contact between the school and the indigent parents**

Contact	Frequency	%
1. Parent evening	15	28.3
2.Letter sent home	33	62.3
3. Message in homework book	7	13.2
4. Individual meeting with parent	16	30.2
5. No contact	9	17.0

Table 5.11 indicates that 62% of the educators communicated with indigent parents via a letter sent home. Twenty- eight percent of parents attended parent evenings while 13% of the educators sent a message in the homework book to the parents. Seventeen percent of the respondents indicated that they had no contact with parents at all.

Table 5.12 **Response of indigent parents to invitations to parent meetings**

Section C Q.2	N	%
1. Always attend	0	0
2. Sometimes	34	64.2
3. Never attend	19	35.8
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.12 indicates that while 64% of parents sometimes responded positively to invitations to parent meetings, 36% of parents never attended.

Table 5.13 **Parents' reasons for not attending meetings**

Section C- Q.3	Frequency	%
1. Lack of transport	31	58.5
2. Meeting time not suitable	5	9.4
3. Apathy/ lack of interest	32	60.4
4. Other	5	9.4

Table 5.13 shows that while 59% of respondents indicated lack of transport being the reason for indigent parents not attending meetings, 60% thought that parents did not attend meetings due to apathy or lack of interest. Nine percent indicated that the meeting time was not always suitable, while the same percentage cited other reasons for not attending meetings.

Table 5.14 **Issues discussed at parent meetings**

Section C-Q.4	Frequency	%
1. Academic progress	47	88.7
2. Un-paid school fees	28	52.8
3. Hygiene/ uniform	18	34.0
4. Absenteeism	32	60.4
5. Behaviour	30	56.6
6. Other	4	7.5

Table 5.14 indicated that 89% of educators discussed academic progress at meetings, while 53% discussed un-paid school fees. While 60% also discussed absenteeism, 57% discussed learner behaviour. Thirty-four percent of the respondents also discussed hygiene and uniform, while only 8% discussed other issues.

Table 5.15 **Comments by educators on parental contact**
(Refer to 5.3.1 for code)

	N	%
1.	8	15.1
2.	2	3.8
3.	3	5.7
4.	3	5.7
5.	37	69.8
Total	53	100.0

The comments made by educators with regard to parental contact indicated that 15% thought that most indigent parents do not attend meetings either due to themselves being uneducated and therefore leaving everything to the school or due to apathy and no interest in educational issues. Six percent felt that although some parents attend meetings and listen to educators, there is no follow through at home. Four percent thought that the high absenteeism of learners is due to household chores of baby-sitting, lack of uniforms, lack of bus fare, unpaid school fees and walking long distances. Seventy percent of educators in the sample chose not to make comments in this section.

Table 5.16 **Educators' views on indigent/ poor learners**

The valid percentages of educators' responses for each of the descriptors / views:

Section D	**Strongly disagree/ disagree**	**Neutral**	**Strongly agree/ Agree**
1.Indigent learners are not successful at school.	60.4	11.3	28.3
2.Indigent parents often do not provide educational materials which may result in educational failure.	20.8	18.9	60.4
3.Indigent learners may stay away often from school as they are not motivated to succeed.	30.2	13.2	56.6
4.Indigent families do not often support school events such as concerts, sports etc.	24.6	11.3	64.1
5.Indigent learners are unhygienic.	37.7	26.4	35.9
6.Indigent families may not provide learners with sufficient stimulating experiences.	11.3	20.8	67.9
7.Indigent parents believe that education is sorely a school's responsibility	20.8	17	62.2
8.Indigent parents may not be able to assist the school.	39.7	17	43.4
9.Most indigent learners do not eventually go to tertiary education	22.7	11.3	64.1
10.Indigent families may exploit the school system by having fees reduced, obtaining free lunch etc.	26.4	37.7	35.8
Average	30.09	18.49	51.87

Results on Table 5.16 indicate that the majority of the respondents (60.4%), strongly disagreed/ disagreed with the statement that *indigent learners are not successful at school.* More than half of the respondents (56.6%) strongly agreed/ agreed that indigent learners *may stay away often from school as they are not motivated to succeed.* Sixty two percent also strongly agreed/ agreed that indigent parents believe that *education is solely a school's responsibility.*

Table 5.17 **Participation in school**
(Refer to 5.3.2.1 for code)

Sec.D- 2.1	N	%
1.	10	18.9
2.	20	37.7
3.	15	28.3
4.	4	7.5
5.	4	7.5
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.17 indicates that of the total number of respondents 38% cited that a lack of resources at home hindered the participation of indigent learners at school. Twenty eight percent thought that the lack of participation was mainly due to low levels of interest, motivation or lack of encouragement from parents. Eight percent thought that the learner's background made them feel inferior and inadequate, while the same percentage cited deprivation of food and walking long distances that prevented their participation in school.

Table 5.18 **Success at school**
(Refer to 5.3.2.1 for code)

Sec.D- 2.2	N	%
1.	12	22.6
2.	23	43.4
3.	14	26.4
4.	2	3.8
5.	2	3.8
Total	53	100.0

Results on this table indicate that 43% of the respondents cited lack of resources at home that affects the learner's success at school. Twenty six percent indicated that if there were

no interest, motivation and encouragement from parents, the learners did not succeed at school, even though they might have had the potential. Four percent indicated that some indigent learners do experience success at school in the form of extra-curricular activities such as sport-soccer. Twenty three percent felt that if the learner comes from an intact, close and stable home, he would have potential to succeed in school even though he might be lacking in material resources.

Table 5.19 **Differential backgrounds**
(Refer to 5.3.2.2 for code)

Sec. D- Q. 4	N	%
1.	41	77.4
2.	5	9.4
3.	7	13.2
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.19 indicates that 77% of the respondents always took the learners differential backgrounds into consideration during planning of lessons. Nine percent sometimes took backgrounds into consideration but it depended upon availability of resources and pupil's experiences. Thirteen percent of the respondents did not take pupils' backgrounds into consideration due to large numbers, lack of proper training to assist educators and due to the fact that the subject matter did not allow for this differential education.

Table 5.20 **Educators' relationships with indigent learners**
(Refer to 5.3.2.3 for code)

Sec.D Q. 5	N	%
1.	44	83
2.	5	9.4
3.	4	7.5
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.20 indicated that 83% of the educators cited that they did not have time for individual attention for indigent learners, as they would have liked to. Nine percent indicated that teaching large numbers of learners together in one class did not affect their teaching as there was no personal relationship and that all learners were treated the same.

Table 5.2.1 **Profile of socio-emotional problems that affect indigent learners**

	Frequency	%
1. Depression eg. Sad, unhappy	43	81.1
2. Withdrawn, uncommunicative behaviour	42	79.2
3. Anxiety (anxious behaviour)	25	47.2
4. Problematic peer relations	33	62.3
5. Disruptive classroom behaviour	34	64.2
6. Aggression	26	49.1
7. Lower levels of sociability	38	71.7
8. Other	9	17.0

Table 5.21 indicates that 81% of respondents regard depression as one of the socio-emotional problems that indigent learners face. Seventy-nine percent thought that indigent learners were withdrawn and uncommunicative.

Table 5.22 **Ways in which schools are addressing the needs of indigent families**

Sec. D- Q.7	Frequency	%
1. Reduced school fees	46	86.8
2. Feeding schemes	17	32.1
3. Subsidised school outings	24	45.3
4. Adult basic education for illiterate parents	25	47.2
5.School health services to examine learners	35	66.0
6. Other	5	9.4

Eighty-seven percent of educators indicated that their schools are addressing the needs of indigent families by reducing school fees. It is disappointing to note that only 32% of respondents indicated that their schools are proving feeding schemes for indigent families.

Tables 5.23 **Participation in class**

(Refer 5.3.2.4. for code)

Sec.D-Q.8.1	N	%
1.	24	45.3
2.	12	22.6
3.	11	20.8
4.	6	11.3
Total	53	100.0

The results on this table indicate that 45% of the respondents think that indigent learners do respond to questions and participate in class discussions. Twenty three percent think that some learners sometimes or rarely participate while 21% think that indigent learners do not participate at all in class discussions. Eleven percent believes that participation depends on the learner's characteristics.

Table 5.24 **Do educators ignore indigent learners?**

	N	%
Yes	16	30.2
No	34	64.2
Maybe	3	5.7
Total	53	100.0

This table indicates that 64% of respondents think that indigent learners are not ignored in class. Thirty percent believe that educators and peers ignore unkempt and dirty learners while 6% believe that there may be some educators who do ignore but one cannot generalize.

Table 5.25 **Do educators form opinions based on the learner's family background?**

	N	%
Yes	28	52.8
No	22	41.5
Sometimes	3	5.7
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.25 indicates that 53% of the respondents believe that educators form opinions on a learner based on his family background. Forty two percent believe that opinions are not formed on background, while 6% felt that opinions are sometimes formed.

Table 5.26 **Are opinions formed based on outward appearance and speech?**

	N	%
Yes	35	66.0
No	6	11.3
Sometimes	11	20.8
Maybe	1	1.9
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.26 indicates that 66% of the respondents thought that educators formed opinions about learners based on the learner's appearance outward appearance eg. dress and speech. Twenty one percent thought that this is sometimes the case while 11% do not believe that this is true.

Table 5.27 **Educators' relationships with indigent learners**
(Refer to 5.3.2.2.4 for code)

Q. 8.5	N	%
1.	15	28.3
2.	23	43.4
3.	12	22.6
4.	3	5.7
Total	53	100.0

This table indicates that 43% of educators believed that educators have a sympathetic, caring, concerned and cordial relationship with indigent learners. Twenty eight percent thought that indigent learners are treated the same as all other learners but that they are given food and clothing. Twenty three percent of educators thought that a good relationship exists while 6% believe that the relationship between educators and indigent learners are not very good.

Table 5.28 **Indigent learners' relationships with their peers**
(Refer to 5.3.2.2.5 for code)

Q. 8.6	Frequency	%
1.	20	37.7
2.	13	24.5
3.	9	17
4.	1	1.9
5.	10	18.9
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.28 indicates that indigent learners have good relationships with their peers as they generally come from the same community. Twenty five percent of indigent learners are subdued but have friendly relationships with a few peers as they might be feeling embarrassed. Nineteen percent of educators thought that indigent learners keep to the company of those from a similar socio-economic background.

Table 5.29 **Educator's Expectations of Indigent Learners**

Sec.E	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	13.2	79.2	7.5
2.	24.5	64.2	11.3
3.	30.2	64.2	5.7
4.	26.4	66.0	7.5
5.	30.2	60.4	9.4
6.	30.2	58.5	11.3
7.	37.7	45.3	17.0
8.	39.6	41.5	18.9
9.	35.8	43.4	20.8
10.	37.7	35.8	26.4
11.	35.8	47.2	17.0
12.	18.9	75.5	5.7
13.	37.7	35.8	26.4

Table 5.29 reflects educators' views that most of the expectations that educators have for indigent learners, are only *sometimes* viewed as difficulties. However, 38% of respondents indicated that indigent learners *always* have difficulty with good quality projects and assignments. Thirty eight percent of educators also believed that learners *always* had difficulty in paying school fees timeously.

Table 5.30 **Career prospects for indigent learners**
(Refer to 5.3.2.2.6 for code)

Sec.E-Q.2	Frequency	%
1.	10	18.9
2.	17	32.1
3.	18	34.0
4.	8	15.1
Total	53	100.0

Table 5.30 indicates that 34% of the respondents think that indigent learners have a bleak or gloomy future ahead of them. Thirty two percent of educators thought that it all

depends on the attitude, motivation and goals in life, as there are bursaries available for those who study hard and are motivated. Nineteen percent of educators believe that indigent learners will end up in either unskilled or semi-skilled work or would be unemployed. Fifteen percent thought that indigent learners would drop out early from school as they are unmotivated and have no goals in life.

Table 5.31 **Attitudes of educators towards indigent learners by gender.**

Male (N=19)		Female (N=34)	
N	%	N	%
16	84.21	26	76.47

***Negative attitudes (score of 25 and above)**

Scores were computed on an attitude scale, which yielded either a positive or negative attitude according to the following:

- The total score of the attitude scale was 50.
- Scores above 25 indicated a negative attitude while scores below 25 indicated a positive attitude.
- Percentages were rounded of to the next whole number.

Eighty four percent of male educators responded negatively (score of 25 points and above) on the attitude scale. Seventy six percent of female educators in the sample responded negatively i.e. had a high attitude score. This suggests that more male than female educators showed negative attitude towards indigent learners.

Table 5.32 **The relationship between the educator's race and gender and attitudes towards indigent learners.**

	African (N=15)		Indian (N=38)	
	Male (N=4)	Female N=11)	Male (N=15)	Female (N=23)
N	4	8	12	18
%	100	72.72	80	78.26

Table 5.32 indicates that African male educators perceive indigent learners negatively (100% as compared to African female educators (73%).

Indian male educators also perceive indigent learners negatively (80%) as compared to in Indian female educators (78%).

African female educators appear to be the most sympathetic and least negative towards indigent learners (73%).

Table 5.33 **Expectations according to educator's gender**

Male (N=19)		Female (N=34)	
N	%	N	%
18	94.73	21	61.76

Scores were computed on a scale measuring expectations based on the following:

- The total score measuring expectations was 39.
- Scores above 19.5 indicated high expectations
- Scores below 19.5 measured low expectations
- Percentages were rounded of to the next whole number

Table 5.33 reflects that 95% of male educators held high expectations for indigent learners as compared to 62% of female educators.

Table 5.34 **Expectations according to educator's race and gender**

	African (N=15)		Indian (N= 38)	
	Male (N=4)	Female (N=11)	Male (N=15)	Female (N=23)
N	4	7	14	14
%	100	63.63	93.33	60.86

***High expectations (score of 19.5 and above)**

Table 5.34 indicates that African male educators (100%) held the highest expectations of learners as compared to Indian females who held the lowest expectations (61%) for indigent learners. This means that African male educators believe that indigent learners are capable of performing and achieving academically in the classroom.

Cross tabulations of attitudes and expectations with variables such as race and gender using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme, did not yield significant findings. (Refer to appendix 9)

The results have been presented in the above sections. The following chapter, **Chapter 6** will engage in discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The primary aim of this study was to explore the attitudes and expectations of educators towards learners who are deprived as a result of poverty. This chapter will provide a discussion of the results with the aim of answering the following critical questions posed:

- What are educators' attitudes and expectations of indigent learners?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for indigent learners?

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It is important to note that the results of this study cannot be generalized as the sample size was limited and not sufficiently representative of each race and gender group.

Educators attitudes towards indigent learners

The findings on this study have indicated that generally, educators have positive attitudes towards indigent learners. They are supportive of these learners and try, in most instances to plan lessons in a manner that would benefit the disadvantaged learners. They appear to be empathetic towards the learner's plight and in many instances, provide learners with basic necessasities.

Attitudes according to educator's race and gender

African male educators were the highest number (100 %) that perceived indigent learners negatively.

African female educators (73%) appear to be the most sympathetic and held the least negative views of indigent learners.

Educators' expectations of indigent learners

The majority of educators had formed pre-conceived expectations about learners abilities based on variables such as the home background, knowledge of sibling's performances in school, dress, and speech.

Expectations according to educators' race and gender

In contrast to the above findings of African male educators (100%) having the most negative views of indigent learners, they (African male educators) also held the highest expectations (100%) of indigent learners as compared to Indian females, who held the lowest expectations (61%). This means that African male educators believe that indigent learners have the potential and perform relatively well in the classroom despite their poverty status.

The relationship between educators and indigent learners and the outcomes of these relationships for the indigent learner.

The qualitative section of this study was in the form of semi-structured interviews with indigent learners who were identified by their educators. The basis of this identification was the educator's knowledge of the indicators of poverty. Information was also gathered from the free-response section of the survey questionnaire, which was completed by educators. The general feeling that emerged during the interviews was one of acceptance and satisfaction by the indigent learner. Generally, the learners who were interviewed, were happy at school, had friends and enjoyed a good relationship with their teachers. These learners appeared to always try hard with their schoolwork and held high career aspirations. It is important to note that the learners did not bring up issues of poverty and it's effects on their lives. It seems that their poverty status did not appear to impact negatively on their relationships at school.

Educators' responses indicated that generally, educators had a good relationship with indigent learners. These relationships were based on a feeling of sympathy for the indigent learner's plight. Educators also thought that they needed to help indigent families as much as they could. Based on these findings, it then appears that generally, the indigent learners in this study enjoyed good relationships with educators Learners, who were interviewed, described their relationships with their teachers in a positive light. It was apparent that they respected and appreciated their teachers.. The outcomes then, is that these learners have positive self perceptions and high career aspirations.

6.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS - QUESTIONNAIRE

6.2.1 Total Sample Of Educators

According to results in the previous chapter, 53 educators were profiled in Tables 5.1 to 5.6 according to descriptors such as biographical details and teaching experience.

Significant results indicated that 64% of the respondents were female while 36% were male. The majority of the total respondents were Indian. In view of this, caution should be exercised when making gender and race comparisons with regard to attitude and expectations.

From the biographical information gathered, it is indicated that most of the respondents were in the 31-40 year age group (40%), which is significant since it is an indication of experience and maturity. The majority of respondents also have valid teaching qualifications ranging from diploma to post-graduate degree. Most of the respondents also have many years of teaching experience (16-20 years, 26%), and hence it can be assumed that these educators have considerable experience working with children who range from being affluent to very poor.

Results on Table 5.7 indicated that educators are faced with teaching large numbers in their classes (35-45 learners, 62%). This would almost certainly impact on the type of relationship that educators are able to establish with their learners. A qualitative analysis revealed that many educators found that they had too little time to engage in individual interactions with learners and therefore, did not get to know their learners on a personal level.

The important findings reported in Table 5.8 indicated, that the average family income of majority of families in this geographical area is below R500 (40%). May (1998) reported that over 50% of South Africa's population lived below the breadline of R300 a month. Since the daily battle is to provide basic needs for their children, parents view schooling

and providing educational resources as unimportant as it does not contribute to daily survival.

6.2.2 Indicators Of Poverty

Results on this study revealed that educators regard unpaid school fees (96%) to be the greatest predictor of poverty. The actions taken by principals and educators in this regard have had drastic implications for indigent learners. Presently, many principals and governing bodies of schools are withholding learners' final examination results, as these learners have not paid their school fees for the year. According to Macfarlane (2002), it was reported that at a school in Kwa-Zulu Natal, one learner whose parents had not paid school fees, had threatened to kill herself after a "humiliating experience" at school, where her name and that of other defaulters were read out during assembly. Macfarlane (2002) further reports that in many schools parents who meet certain criteria are exempted from paying school fees. However, they have to meet the criteria for this exemption and this frequently exposes parents to social humiliation where they are forced to declare their poverty and their children to victimization by some educators and principals. Macfarlane (2002) also reports that, according to an eleven year old girl, " the teacher shouts at you. They say that we cannot sit on the seats at school because we don't pay school fees. People who sit on chairs are those who pay school fees. The teachers like to swear at us. They keep on teasing us about the school fees. It is not nice because we also like to pay, we just don't have the money" (Macfarlane, 2002, p.4).

Fifty one percent of respondents confirmed Fine and Carlson's (1992) view that single parent families were, in most instances, characterized by poverty. They maintain that children born into one-parent households are at the greatest risk for poverty and they experience a number of psychosocial stressors. As individuals, single parents may be excellent caregivers. However, as microsystems, their households may be insufficient, unless they are augmented from the outside to produce a fuller, richer range of roles, activities and relationships for the child to use in his or her development. Other factors that indicate poverty and put children at increased risk include homes in which the father

is absent, or where there are many children (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Morgan, 1987).

In keeping with the above findings, May and Norton (1997), report the following characteristics that were perceived by participants of a study as common indicators of poverty:

- Female headed households
- Crowded- large family size
- Little or no food
- Many children
- Excluded from the community and unable to mix easily with other people
- Nobody in the household is employed
- Children are malnourished and the food that is served is of poor quality

Therefore, the findings of the present study confirm the researcher's view that educators have a good understanding of the indicators of poverty.

6.2.3 Parental Contact

Table 5.10 reflects that, most educators (62%) communicate with parents via letters sent home. Furthermore, 60% of respondents thought that indigent parents did not attend meetings or had little or no contact with school due to apathy or lack of interest in educational matters. The majority of respondents indicate that when they do meet with parents, the learner's academic progress is usually discussed. Among other issues discussed at meetings is hygiene matters, absenteeism, behaviour and unpaid school fees.

Comments by respondents with regard to parental contact emphasize that most indigent parents do not attend parent meetings because they are uneducated and regard school as being of no importance to them. They would rather leave educational matters to the school. It was also indicated by respondents, that some parents were embarrassed by their

poverty status and unpaid school fees and would rather keep away from the school to avoid confrontations with the principal or the educators.

Lack of or limited contact with parents is of concern for learner's progress. Clark (1989) maintained that parents of high achievers are assertive in their efforts to maintain contact and attain information about their children's progress at school. The parents of low achievers, in contrast, tended to avoid contact with school personnel unless they were summoned to school by the authority figures. This can be explained by the lack of power or control that is characteristic of families in poverty. Clark (1989) has observed in research, that for low-income Black children and their families, the school experience is often discontinuous with early childhood development as teacher expectations and the culture of the school, often conflict with home experiences. Competencies acquired in the home may not be valued in the classroom (Clark, 1989). This lack of congruence between the home and the school, in most instances results in educational failure.

6.2.4 Teaching Large Numbers Of Learners From Different Backgrounds

Seventy seven percent of respondents indicated that they do take learner's differential backgrounds into consideration when planning lessons. While many indicated that lessons are planned around topics that are familiar to learners, others indicated that they reduce homework or do not give homework at all considering the fact that majority of the learners do not have electricity, water, table, or candles at home. From these responses, one can assume that some educators do have a positive attitude to indigent learners and try to assist them in whatever way they can. However, less than half of the educators (26%) indicated that due to large numbers in classes, it was not possible to plan lessons according to learner's differential backgrounds.

Teaching large numbers of learners at once usually impacts negatively on educators' relationships with learners. More than 80% of educators in the study indicated that having a large class meant that they did not have sufficient time for providing individual attention to learners. With the result, they did not establish personal relationships and

indigent learners were expected to cope in the same way as all other learners in the class. This, according to educators, is frustrating, as they would like to give indigent learners the individual attention that they need. A relatively small percentage of educators indicated that teaching large numbers did not affect them at all as they had the same relationship with all learners. They did not believe that indigent learners should be treated any differently than the other learners.

Planning and teaching according to learner's differential backgrounds is important when considering the sense of alienation felt by learners who are unfamiliar with the topic being discussed by the educator and other peers. Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson and Schaps (1995), claim that while some students (and parents) from disadvantaged groups accept educational values and goals and tend to score as high as others on measures of educational aspirations, they might also see them as relatively unattainable. It is then, up to the teacher to make goals in education attainable for all learners and to take differential backgrounds into consideration in order for them to attain success.

It was suggested by Battistich et al. (1995) that some poor students form groups with competing or anti-achievement values when the educational setting is not fulfilling their needs for belonging and identification. A way to change this may be to create school environments in which all learners feel accepted and valued and to which they feel they are making important contributions. Although it is evident that some schools are truly supportive communities in this sense, this may not be a severe problem for learners from socially and materially advantaged groups. They have other forces in their lives, including family and friends who are stressing the importance of various educational and personal goals and values and conveying the message that they are attainable. Unfortunately, such forces and messages are generally less prevalent for learners from disadvantaged or low socio-economic status backgrounds. Furthermore, studies have shown that parental warmth and support is lower in families that are experiencing economic hardship. Therefore, creating and participating in a supportive school climate will be particularly beneficial for the disadvantaged learner. One can also assume that

warm and supportive relations with educators are particularly beneficial for motivating low socio-economic status students (Battistich et al., 1995).

6.2.5 Socio-Emotional Problems

Eighty-one percent of educators in this study believe that the indigent learners in their classes might be suffering from depression, while 79% indicated withdrawal as one of the socio-emotional problems being experienced by indigent learners. These results appear to support Eamon's (2001) view that poor children face a higher risk of developing a variety of socio-emotional problems. These include depression, internalizing and externalizing symptoms, lower levels of sociability and initiative, problematic peer relations and disruptive classroom behaviours. Living in chronic poverty may also have a strong influence on children's adjustment because multiple life stressors have cumulative effects (Eamon, 2001).

The schools' and educators' attitudes can also be judged from their response to indigent families. By this, it is meant that schools that have structures in place to address the needs of poor learners and their families can be assumed to hold positive attitudes. In this study, 87% of educators reported that schools are addressing the needs of indigent learners by reducing school fees. Although this is encouraging, it does not appear to be sufficient as a mere 32% of educators indicated that schools have instituted feeding schemes. Given the fact that poor learners arrive hungry to school on a daily basis and most do not carry lunch, it is the view of the researcher that schools become actively involved in providing feeding schemes or some form of nutrition to their indigent learners.

6.2.6 Participation And Success At School

Most respondents regarded lack of resources at home to be the hindering factor for learner's participation and success at school. This included lack of television, radio, computer, newspaper, books, magazines, stationery and money for excursions. When viewed in the context of Bukatko and Daehler's (1995) statement, that lack of resources

within the mesosystems of the family, such as access to books and learning to read or an emphasis on acquiring basic academic and socialization skills, may have a critical impact on the child's opportunities and experiences in school, the educators are correct in their views that lack of resources would hinder the participation and success of the learners.

Forty-five percent of educators believe that indigent learners answer questions and participate in class discussions. However, this would depend on what topics they know well. While some indigent learners perform very well academically in class, others will only participate when prompted and encouraged to do so. Less than half of the respondents (21%) think that indigent learners do not participate in class. The reasons cited for non-participation varies from apathy and lack of interest to lack of knowledge to participate in class discussions. Other reasons cited were that these learners were afraid to be embarrassed or ridiculed by their teachers and peers if they answered incorrectly. Some educators thought that learners did not respond to lessons in class due to tiredness, lack of concentration and hunger.

Participation in educational matters would appear to depend on the attitudes and values that are communicated to the learner in the home microsystem. This notion is expressed by Ogbu (1997), who maintains that family attitudes can influence the child's participation and progress in school. In his research, it was shown that family attitudes to school are structured by the social history of the group to which the learner and his family belongs. In this model, the attitudes that people bring into a particular context will thus affect their ability to prosper in that environment (Ogbu, 1997). The importance of Ogbu's work for the South African context point towards the possibility that the very attitudes of marginalized groups might hinder them from being able to participate in any new opportunity. If children see school as a strange place divorced from their lives and experiences and having little to do with their lives, then their educational success might be hindered.

6.2.7 Educator-Learner And Peer Relationships

More than half of the educators in the survey (64%) indicated that indigent learners who were dirty and unkempt were not ignored in class. Instead, time was set- aside in school to educate learners about good hygiene and cleanliness. Furthermore, it was thought that educators treated all learners alike despite their dirty and unhygienic appearances. However, 30% indicated that many educators and peers did not want to be near or sit close to learners who gave off an offensive body odour due to unhygienic practices.

When one has the capacity to relate well to others, it is like a passport to positive feelings about the self and others. Therefore, forming good relationships with peers and educators is an extremely important aspect of a child's world. The educator's relationship with his learners is central to the learner's success and positive self-perceptions. While 43% of the educators indicated that generally, educators have a sympathetic, caring and concerned relationship with indigent learners, 28% thought that indigent learners were treated the same as all other learners.

Once children enter school, relationships with non-parental adults, specifically teacher-child relationships become increasingly important to classroom adjustment. Hamre and Pianta (2001), stress that the quality of teacher-child relationships, even early in a child's school career, can forecast later problems and successes. They also indicate that from a child's perspective, positive relationships with educators may protect against the poor school performance associated with an unsupportive home environment. Therefore, educators play an important role in shaping learner's experiences in school. Beyond the traditional role of teaching academic skills, they are responsible for regulating activity level, communication as well as contact with peers. Educators should also provide behavioural support and teach coping skills to learners (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Lynch and Cicchetti (1993) confirm the above and believe that just as teachers are likely to put more effect into children with whom they have a positive relationship, children who trust and like their teacher may be more motivated to succeed. It was also thought

that even in adolescence, relationships with teachers are one of the single most common resources for children and may operate as a protective factor against risk for a range of problems outcomes (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1993).

Most educators acknowledge the idea that much of children's learning takes place in a social context. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is achieved through cooperation with others in a whole variety of social settings such as peers, teachers, parents and other people who are significant to the child. In other words the child's capacity to learn is embedded in his or her capacity to learn with the help of others. Therefore, Cowie, Smith Boulton and Laver (1994), stress the importance of a secure emotional base for the children before they can begin to fulfill their potential, claiming that co-operation in the classroom is directly related to the growth of effective communication skills, to a climate of trust, and an environment which is friendly and supportive. There is thus a strong support for the view that the creation of a cooperative climate in the classroom can markedly improve the quality of interpersonal relationships with educators and peers.

Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory stresses that educators and significant others also serve as role models for learners to emulate. Cowie at al. (1994) maintained that on the basis of classroom observations done in British schools, it was noted that teacher's attitudes towards Black children had a strong influence on peer relationships. In the classrooms where teachers treat some children negatively such as losing patience with them, failing to involve them in-group discussions, ignoring their attempts to contribute, other children would echo these sentiments made by their teacher and tease and taunt their peers.

Thirty-eight percent of educators in this present study indicated that indigent learners enjoyed a good relationship with their peers. Affluent peers felt sympathetic and shared sandwiches. Nineteen percent thought that indigent learners preferred to keep to the company of those from a similar background to themselves. Twenty five percent of educators thought that indigent learners were subdued but friendly. They indicated that

this might be due to the fact that some indigent learners lacked self-confidence and felt embarrassed about their poverty. They avoided peers and had low levels of sociability.

Eamon (2001) explained that poor children are more likely to experience peer rejection, lower popularity and conflictual peer relations than are non poor children. Fewer family resources would likely constrain purchasing acceptable clothing and engaging in peer activities. Furthermore, children who are perceived as "different" may be stigmatized and isolated and less frequent participation in peer group activities would decrease opportunities for social interactions and building and maintaining peer relations (Eamon, 2001). It is therefore important for educators to teach about peer acceptance and to instill in them a sense of caring and support for those less fortunate than themselves.

6.2.8 The Expectations That Educators Have For Indigent Learners

This study has shown that 53% of respondents believed that educators formed opinions about learners based on the learner's family background. It was also thought that if a child comes from a poor home background and performs poorly then it leads to stereotyping. Furthermore, educators believed that learners were judged based on siblings' ability and performance. Forty-two percent of educators thought that learners should not be labeled because of circumstances. Among this group of educators, it was thought that opinions should be formed based on the learner's academic performance and not their home background. It therefore appears that many teachers form pre-conceived notions of what they expect that the child can and cannot perform in the class based on variables such as socioeconomic status, knowledge of family background and sibling's performance in school, without the child being given the chance to prove himself.

Pilling and Pringle (1978) found that children's school achievement might be influenced by educator's knowledge of their older brothers and sisters and the expectations derived from this knowledge. They also found that factors such as socio-economic status, speech characteristics and physical attractiveness, might influence the judgement of even experienced educators.

Most respondents in this study thought that educators also formed opinions on learners based on the learner's outward appearance of dressing and speech. It was generally thought that if learners were neat and spoke well, educators would have a more positive opinion about them. Many respondents indicated that some educators spoke in a harsh manner to indigent learners as compared to learners from an affluent and educated background.

Clark (1989), maintains that some of the most common behavioural signals that educators expect to see of their learners in class are that the learner can and will rather readily engage in quiet social interactions, ask questions and otherwise participate in class discussions, be obedient and respectful, use good English when speaking and being hygienic and neat at all times. The indicators of teachers' expectations in Section E of the survey questionnaire (appendix 1), was compiled based on Clark's (1989) descriptors as mentioned above.

Clark (1989) also observed that most educators preferred to work with learners whose conduct and appearance was in line with their perception of what was "appropriate". Once such behaviour was exhibited by the learners, educators typically try to reinforce it while engaged in teaching activities, by providing contingent rewards and corrective feedback. Clark (1989) further explains that inaccurate teacher assessments of learner abilities and capabilities tend to nurture student failure by reinforcing prejudicial, stereotypic attitudes and perceptions about the learning capability of poor learners. Under these circumstances then, teachers would not get the opportunity to perceive the intellectual diversity in marginalized families. With standards and expectations for academic performance and social behaviour then lowered or fitted to a generalized stereotype, teachers tend not to teach effectively and pupils tend not to learn. The pupil is then evaluated or "graded" as having only "average " ability or as being hopeless and certain "low yield" pedagogic resources are provided to fit this diagnosis (Clark, 1989).

Pilling and Pringle (1978) cite early research results, which indicate that teachers spent more time talking to and looking at learners for whom they had high expectations and

that high expectation learners were requested to respond more often and were given more praise. Findings also indicated that one of the means through which teachers communicate their approval of high expectancy learners maybe by non-verbal behaviour, such as leaning towards these students, looking and smiling at them more. Learners for whom teachers held higher expectations received more praise for answering correctly, less criticism for wrong answers and more opportunity to make a second response when incorrect or unable to reply to a first question.

According to Fine and Carlson (1992), research in America has shown that teachers are biased against poor children and expect less of them academically, reinforce their low self-esteem and acting-out behaviour and instill in them a sense of failure and feelings of inferiority.

6.2.9 The Future For Indigent Learners

With regard to future career options for indigent learners, 34% of respondents in this study believed that learners have a bleak future ahead of them. The respondents maintained that these learners would be unemployed which would result in a high crime rate. Although 32% indicated that success for the future would depend on the learner's attitude and motivation, as there are bursaries available, 15% thought that indigent learners would drop out early from school.

Garbarino (1992) has indicated that approximately 500 000 American children drop out of school each year. Dubow and Ippolito (1994) succinctly points out that, since poverty produces educational failure, and since lack of education reduces opportunities for employment, it in turn contributes to the perpetuation of poverty.

However, one cannot disregard Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which focuses largely on the individual's personal sense of agency as well as on external factors that restrict agency. With regard to the present study, this means that if indigent learners believe that they have the ability to be successful at school and a career (i.e. they have

positive self-efficacy expectations), then their interest and motivation will be sustained and success becomes achievable. Likewise, the learner's interest and motivation can be negatively influenced by weak self-efficacy, which is aggravated by an unsupportive school environment and leads to negative self-perceptions.

6.2.10 Indigent Learners' Perceptions About Themselves Based On Relationships With Educators

There appears to be an important association between the learners' self-perceptions, the perceptions the educator has of the learners' perceptions, and the learner's behaviour. The educator's feelings of importance and approval are communicated to the learner and perceived by him as positive appraisals. It is likely that these appraisals encourage the learner to seek further educator approval by achieving well and behaving in a manner acceptable to his educator.

Results in this study indicate that learners reported self-concepts are influenced by their perceptions of their ability relative to others in the class, the regard in which their educator holds them, and the extent to which their school achievements are supported by their parents. Learners in this study generally felt that they were experiencing positive relationships with their educators and peers. It seems then, that scholastic success and positive attitude to school co-exist.

6.3 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH INDIGENT LEARNERS

Data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed as indicated, within the phenomenological framework, yielding a qualitative description of the subject's views of their relationship with their teachers and their self-esteem. In line with the research objective, which was to determine the attitude and expectations of educators towards learners who are deprived by poverty, the natural meaning units were extracted and

transformed into psychological themes in accordance with the procedure outlined by Kruger (1988).

Since the researcher was interested in the descriptive information regarding the phenomenon under study, themes identified as essential and common for the subjects were extracted and thereafter integrated into central themes.

The researcher chose one school from the sample to conduct semi-structured interviews with learners. The school was chosen on the basis of easy accessibility and the researcher's knowledge of the socio-economic conditions from which the majority of the learners in this school come from. Based on educators' knowledge of the learner's background (having taught at the school for many years), 122 learners in the senior intermediate phase of the school were identified as severely indigent. Ten percent of this number yielded 12 learners with whom semi-structured interviews were conducted.

The majority of the learners' responses had elements of commonality and was therefore, grouped into themes. Significantly, all learners who were interviewed indicated that they liked school and many were aware that success at school represented a better life for the future. Most learners also indicated that they had many friends who lived in the same area as themselves. Thirty-three percent of the learners indicated that they did not have many friends. Reasons varied from physical characteristics of the learner, such as," I'm short" or "I wear big glasses" to "some children just hit you". Significantly, none of the reasons cited by the learners for not having many friends were related to their home background or poverty status. An explanation for this could be that the majority of the learners share a similar home background.

While the majority indicated that they were happy with themselves as they were and would not change anything about themselves, a learner mentioned that he would like to have a house with a television and a bed.

More than half of the learners indicated that, their peers do tease them. Many get teased for not knowing their schoolwork well, while others get teased for being short or having "magic" hair. However, none of the learners got teased by their peers about their family background or their poverty status.

All the learners interviewed made it clear that their teachers helped them with schoolwork whenever they needed extra help. They also indicated that their teachers understood their needs and was kind to them. However, an insignificant percentage of learners indicated that their teachers do not allow them to explain or give reasons when their homework is not done. The teacher believes there is no excuse for not doing homework. All the learners indicated that their teachers paid attention to them and listened when they spoke. The general feeling among the learners interviewed was that their teachers care about them and wanted them to succeed at school.

Almost all of the learners indicated that they participate in class discussions and answer questions in class. However, many do feel that sometimes, the topics are too difficult and because they cannot understand, they are quieter in class and do not contribute much.

Almost all of the learners appear to have a positive attitude towards homework. Most indicated that they always complete their homework because it is important to do so. Some indicated that while they try to complete homework most of the time, they also have household chores that take up time. This prevents them from completing all homework and landed them in trouble with their teacher. A few learners indicated that they often forgot about homework when they got home and would rather play with friends instead.

About 50% of the learners thought that they were important members of the class. The reasons they cited for this ranged from helping other learners with work when they return to school after an absence, to being friends with those who do not have any friends. The other half of learners did not think they were important members in class because they made a lot of noise and talked too much. While most of the indigent learners interviewed

said that they did not have duties to perform in class, a few indicated that they do help the teacher with classroom duties.

Most of the learners thought that their teachers did not expect too much of them. They indicated that the work was manageable and that they were coping with their schoolwork. They also believed that they were doing well in school because they tried hard and really wanted to improve. However, a few thought that they were not doing very well because English was too difficult and their absenteeism was too high.

While the learners believed that the teachers treated them all alike and they were not made to feel any different, it was their peers who made them feel different about the way they look and speak.

In response to the question about what would you change about yourself if you could, most indicated that they would like to be cleverer and do better in school. Some thought that they would like to change their attitude and become more serious about their schoolwork. A few learners thought that they would like to change their behaviour in the classroom, as bad behaviour was not helping them at all. An insignificant number of learners indicated that they would like to change the area where they lived.

It is evident that the learners interviewed have high career aspirations. Career choices ranged from becoming a doctor or teacher to being a nurse, lifesaver or a rap singer.

6.4 INDIGENT LEARNER'S RESILIENCE

From a developmental perspective, children are not just passive agents within their environments. They act as well as react, in response to their surroundings. The nature of these interactions and it's consequences for the individual and society must be understood from a perspective that captures the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environment over time. The continuous interaction between the individual and the environmental forces over the course of a child's physical, cognitive, emotional and

social development provides the context and experiences for the development of resilience.

Results on this research has indicated that despite adversities in the learner's home background, some are still performing successfully in school and have positive experiences at school and positive self images.

This may be attributed to what Sameroff (1987) describes as a transaction between the child and his environment. Since the learner's development is not simply the effect of either personality or environment, Sameroff (1987) argues that development is the result of a transaction between the child and the environment. Central to this model is the notion of process, the development of the child is seen as the product of the continuous dynamic interaction of the child and the experience provided by his or her family and social context (Sameroff, 1987). Within this nexus of forces there are elements that will ultimately either mitigate or foster what Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1997) have called educational resilience.

According to Wang et al. (1997), educational resilience is described as the heightened likelihood of educational success despite personal vulnerabilities brought about by environmental conditions and experience. Furthermore, educational resilience is conceptualized not as the product of a single precipitating event but as continuous interaction with the environment (Wang et al., 1997).

In their examination of factors that influence resilience in school, Wang et al., (1997) rate in order of significance, Classroom practice 53.3%; Home and Community 51.4%; Curriculum Design and Delivery 47.2%; School-Wide Practices and Policies 45.1% and State and District policies 34.5% (Wang et al., 1997). According to the authors, the home environment and parental support is the second most influential category in developing resilience in children (Wang et al., 1997). Thus families can provide the child with educational resilience through both its structure, organization, example, beliefs and the psychological and emotional stability of its members.

Wang et al.(1997) estimated that the home is the second most influential category for influencing resilience in school. Therefore, even the home environment of a relatively low economic status can offer the child an abundance of resources that can raise resilience. The roles of positive parent child relationships, family cohesion, warmth, assigned chores and absence of discord are stressed as being the factors that can promote educational resilience (Wang et al., 1997). Unfortunately, in spite of this the role and effect of the family can be severely hindered by the various structural impediments that are the result of a long and complicated history of oppression.

The following chapter, **Chapter seven** concludes the study, indicates the limitations and implications of the study and makes a recommendation.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore educators' attitudes and expectations of learners who are deprived as a result of poverty.

The critical questions which guided this research, were:

- What are the educators' attitudes and expectations of indigent learners?
- What is the relationship between educators and indigent learners?
- What are the outcomes of these relationships for indigent learners?

7.1 CONCLUSION

The results of this study have indicated that generally, educators have positive attitudes towards indigent learners. Many educators felt sympathetic and showed understanding and support for the indigent learner. Support was indicated in leniency and empathy towards the indigent learner's plight. However, there were an insignificant number of educators who show negative attitudes and unsympathetic behaviour towards indigent learners and their families. An observation made by the researcher is that teachers are generally overburdened with large numbers in class, which makes them generally unresponsive to the needs of learners who require individualized attention. It was also observed that teachers' attitudes may be so covert and subtle that teachers themselves do not realize that they are exhibiting negative attitudes.

Based on knowledge of sibling's performance and behaviour, home background and learner's speech and dress, teachers expect learners to perform well or badly in class. These expectations may lead to the self-fulfilling prophecy where the learner starts to perform according to what the teacher believes is the learner's ability.

This study has also shown that despite their poverty status, generally indigent learners in this sample held high self-perceptions and career aspirations. They appeared to have formed positive relationships with educators who form their support base in school.

Teachers and schools need to build on, rather than tear down, what learners bring to school. That is, they need to understand cultural, linguistic, and experiential differences, as well as differences in social class, and incorporate them into the learning process. Too often schools fall back on deficit theories and continue the practice of blaming learners and their backgrounds. Instead schools need to focus on where they can make a difference, namely, their own instructional policies and practices (Naidoo, 1996). A multicultural setting can, at times, be very delicate. Educators must be familiar with different cultures and have high expectations for all learners.

It is virtually impossible to find a society that is completely homogenous culturally, ethnically and racially. This diversity has consequences for every area of social policy and has had a significant impact on education in a number of different countries, ranging from policies based on denial of such diversity to increasing recognition and affirmation of such differences.

Unless educators provide encouragement and a nurturing environment in which all children can learn and excel, negative misconception about their academic, communication and social abilities will be perpetuated. In a diverse society, educators must learn to recognize subtle and negative attitudes.

Considering the impact that educators have on the lives of the indigent learners in their classes, teachers must be made aware of the non-intellectual factors which might bias their judgements of a child, of possible differences in their behaviour towards those for whom they have different expectations and of their power to influence children's attainments.

7.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While some of the factors acting on the child from impoverished communities were observed, it is important to note that for the most part, local research on the matters under investigation are in short supply. Lacking research based on local context, theorists have been reduced to extrapolating conclusions from the international literature. Indeed this lack of local material has been one of the most difficult problems in conducting this research.

The limitations mentioned below are related to this study:

- Questionnaires by nature always have limitations. However, every precaution was taken to control the variables that may affect the answering of questionnaires.
- Due to the sensitive nature of the study, educators and learners might have given socially appropriate responses
- Some educators might have perceived the questions differently and as a result answered the questions inconsistently.
- Research in this area of study is virtually non-existent in South Africa

7.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The following offers some guidelines that could be imparted to educators on controlling bias in the classroom.

Inevitable as educators, they will have different expectation for their learners. Access to academic records, report cards, and the anecdotes of previous teachers, as well as the wide range of academic and social skill levels they are likely to have in their classroom, will naturally encourage a tendency to expect less of some and more of others. They will not help but notice who grasps new concepts most quickly and which students are the most persistent and responsible in completing classwork and homework. Expectations cannot be avoided, but their effects on learners can be avoided by monitoring how the

class is lead and communication during large-group, small-group, and one-on-one interactions.

Using the following checklist can monitor expectancy effects on the achievement and social behaviour of learners:

- Avoid calling on high-achieving learners more often than low achieving learners to answer questions, read books in front of the class, recite or solve problems at the board.
- Avoid using low-achieving learners more often as message carriers or to run errands or to distribute materials.
- Give both high-and-low achieving learners equal amounts of time to answer questions and equal number of prompts, hints and leading questions.
- Give equal amounts of feedback and corrective comments to all learners.
- Avoid demanding a higher level of completed and correct work from high achieving learners.
- Avoid seating high-achieving learners nearer the front of the room.
- Avoid interrupting low-achieving learners more frequently when they are reading, reciting or answering questions.
- Avoid praising low-achieving learners for marginal or below average performance.
- Ask high cognitive level questions of both high and low achievers.
- Contact the parents of low achieving learners for academic concerns, not just for behavioural concerns.
- Use similar disciplinary techniques with all learners.

The teacher is responsible for explaining goals, information, tasks, criteria and any other messages that coordinate the work being done in the class. Simply stating information may not, however, be sufficient to meet this need. Creating opportunities to clarify, discuss and correct misunderstandings is a necessary part of clear communication. More than anything else, teachers and learners must know what to expect from each other. Classroom routines should be explained and teacher and learner role should be clear. If

the teacher is expecting certain academic steps to be followed, or certain actions to be taken, he or she should not rely on assumption that everyone knows what to do but rather create explicit moments to describe these expectations and reflect on how well they are working.

Considering the above, teachers should take an honest look at themselves and ask questions such as:

- How am I communicating my expectations to my learners?
- Are my expectations different for my "high" "average" and "low" achievers?
- Does the ethnic, racial or cultural background of my learners affect my expectations for them? How do I know?
- During class, do I call on learners of all abilities equally?
- Am I making an attempt to get to know all my learners on a personal level?

The efficacy of the three elements of better schooling, which are verified by international research and supported by teacher's insights, are the importance of maximizing time on task, establishing high expectations, a school climate that supports academic learning and strengthening the involvement of parents in support of instruction. It is recommended then that further South African based research should be conducted into establishing ways in which these elements of better schooling can be incorporated into the South African school climate.

7.4 RECOMMENDATION

An important limitation to this study has been the virtual non-existence of research in this area of study in South Africa. The sample size in this present study was also small and thereby limited the generalizability of the results. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be carried out using a wider sample that would be representative of the population.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO DETERMINE ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS TOWARDS LEARNERS WHO ARE DEPRIVED AS A RESULT OF POVERTY AND THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM. DATA OBTAINED FROM THE SURVEY WILL BE USED TO FACILITATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EDUCATORS. INFORMATION DISCLOSED IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE TREATED WITH STRICT CONFIDENCE. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR ANSWERS WITH (√) IN APPROPRIATE BOXES ☐ WHERE APPLICABLE. QUESTIONS OF GENDER AND RACE ARE ONLY FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Name of your school:_____

2. Gender:
   1☐ Male 2☐ Female

3. How old are you?
   1☐ 20 – 30 yrs 2☐ 31– 40 yrs
   3☐ 41 – 50 yrs 4☐ Over 50 yrs

4. What population group do you belong to?
   1☐ African 2☐ Indian
   3☐ Coloured 4☐ White

5. What is your highest qualification level?
   1☐ Matric 2☐ Diploma
   3☐ Degree 4☐ Post Graduate:

6. Please indicate the completed years spent teaching:

   1☐ under 5 yrs 2☐ 6-10 yrs
   3☐ 11-15 yrs 4☐ 16-20 yrs
   5☐ Over 20 yrs

SECTION B: LEARNER INFORMATION

1. Please indicate the number of learners in your class:

   1☐ under 25 2☐ 25-35
   3☐ 35-45 4☐ Over 45

2. Please indicate the approximate average family income per month of learners in your class. If you are unsure, indicate how much money you think families on the whole have available to spend per month:

   1☐ Unemployed 2☐ Less than R 500 3☐ R 500 – R1000
   4☐ R1001 – R1500 5☐ R1501– R2000 6☐ Above R2000

3. Which of the following do you regard as indicators of poverty in learners at your school?
   Tick (√) those that apply.

1. Unpaid school fees / not paid on time	
2. No lunch to school	
3. Unhygienic and unkempt appearance	
4. Obvious lack of parental support / contact	
5. Unsuitable living conditions / overcrowding	
6. Large family size	
7. Lack of adequate stationery requirements	
8. Do not participate in school outings	
9. Unruly, disruptive, aggressive behaviour	
10. Single parent family	
11. Other (specify)	

4. Please indicate the number of learners you consider to be indigent in your class:

Boys	Girls	Total

SECTION C: PARENTAL CONTACT

1. What type of contact do you have with indigent parents?

1☐ Parent evening
2☐ Letter sent home
3☐ Message in homework-book
4☐ Individual meeting with parent
5☐ No contact
6☐ Other

2. Do indigent parents respond to invitations to parent meetings?

1☐ Always
2☐ Sometimes
3☐ Never

3. What do you think might be the reason for indigent parents not attending parent meetings?

1☐ Lack of transport
2☐ Meeting time not suitable
3☐ Apathy / Lack of interest
4☐ Other

4. For those indigent parents that you do have contact with, what do you generally discuss at parent meetings?

1☐ Academic progress
2☐ Un-paid school fees
3☐ Hygiene / uniform
4☐ Absenteeism
5☐ Behaviour
6☐ Other

Comments:

SECTION D: EDUCATOR'S VIEW ON INDIGENT/POOR LEARNERS

[The rating in this section suggests what your views might be concerning learners deprived as a result of poverty. E.g. "Strongly agree" in question 1 means that you believe that in most cases poor learners do not succeed in school etc.]

The following scale provides a list of statements. Read the statement and consider your response carefully. There are no right or wrong answers. Tick the number that you think best reflects your opinion.

1. Tick appropriate box (√).

	1	2	3	4	5
In general:	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. Indigent learners are not successful at school					
2. Indigent parents often do not provide educational materials which may result in educational failure					
3. Indigent learners may stay away often from school as they are not motivated to succeed					
4. Indigent families do not often support school events such as concerts, sports etc.					
5. Indigent learners are unhygienic					
6. Indigent families may not provide learners with sufficient stimulating experiences					
7. Indigent parents believe that education is solely a school's responsibility					
8. Indigent parents may not be able to assist the school in any way					
9. Most indigent learners do not eventually go to tertiary education					
10. Indigent families may exploit the school system by having fees reduced, obtaining free lunch etc.					

2. In what way do learner's home backgrounds influence their:

2.1 participation in school_____

_____

_____

2.2 successes at school?_____

_____

_____

3. How do you think living in poverty affects learners:

3.1 emotionally_____

_____

_____

3.2 physically?_____

_____

_____

4. Do you take learner's differential backgrounds into consideration during planning of lessons?_____

How?_____

_____

_____

5. How does teaching large numbers of learners at once affect your relationship with the indigent learner?_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Which of the following socio-emotional problems may be prevalent among the indigent learners in your class? Indicate with a tick (√).

1. Depression e.g. sad, unhappy	
2. Withdrawal e.g. uncommunicative behaviour	
3. Anxiety (anxious behaviour)	
4. Problematic peer relations	
5. Disruptive classroom behaviour	
6. Aggression	
7. Lower levels of sociability	
8. Other, specify:	

7. How is your school addressing the needs of indigent learners and their families? Indicate with a tick (√).

1. Reduced school fees	
2.Feeding schemes	
3. Subsidised school outings	
4. Adult basic education for illiterate parents	
5. School health services to examine learners	
6. Other, specify:	

8. Give a brief response to each of the following questions:

8.1 Do indigent learners respond to questions and participate in class discussions? Explain:_____

_____

_____

8.2 Do you think that educators and peers ignore unkempt and dirty learners in class? Explain:_____

_____

_____

_____

8.3 Do you think that educators form opinions about learners based on the learners' family background? Explain:_____

_____

_____

_____

8.4 Do educators sometimes form opinions about learners based on his outward appearance e.g. dress, speech etc? Explain:_____

_____

_____

_____

8.5 Describe the relationship that educators have with indigent learners:_____

_____

_____

_____

8.6 Describe the relationship that indigent learners have with their peers:_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION E:

1. How often do you think that some indigent learners may have difficulty in:
Indicate with a tick (√).

	1	2	3
	ALWAYS	SOME-TIMES	NEVER
1. Engaging in quiet social interactions			
2. Being obedient and respectful			
3. Using appropriate social skills			
4. Using good communication skills			
5. Using good English when speaking			
6. Doing homework and performing well academically			
7. Reading library books regularly			
8. Having all books and stationery			
9. Being aware of and discussing current news			
10. Good quality projects and assignments			
11. Parents maintaining regular contact with school			
12. Being clean and neat at all times			
13. School fees being paid timeously			
14. Other:			

2. Briefly give your view on what future career prospects for indigent learners might be:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your time and co-operation in completing this questionnaire.

K. Mohangi (Mrs.)
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APPENDIX 2

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH CHILDREN

1. BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS:

1.1 Name: _____
1.2 School: _____
1.3 Age: _____
1.4 Grade: _____
1.5 Gender: _____
1.6 Population Group: _____
1.7 Where do you live? _____
1.8 Number of members in your family: _____
1.9 Are your parents employed? _____
_____

2. Answer briefly:

2.1 Do you like school? Why? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2.2 Do you have many friends? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2.3 Do you like who you are? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2.4 Do you sometimes wish you were different? In what way:_____

2.5 Do you get teased by your peers for any reason? Explain_____

2.6 Does your teacher help you with your schoolwork?_____

2.7 Do you think that your teacher understands you?_____

2.8 Do you answer questions and participate in discussions in class? ____

2.9 Is homework important to you? Do you always do your homework?__

2.10 Does your teacher listen to you when you talk?_____

2.11 Do you think you are an important member of your class? Why?____

2.12 Do you have duties in class? _____

2.13 Does your teacher sometimes embarrass you in front of others? _____

2.14 Does your teacher know your family?_____

2.15 Do you think that your teacher expects too much from you? _____

2.16 Are you made to feel different from other children in class?

2.17 Do you think your teacher cares about you?

2.18 How are you doing in school presently?

2.19 If there were anything you could change about yourself what would it be?

2.20 What career would you like to choose after you complete school?