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KWAZULU-NATAL™**

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**PROMOTING READING LITERACY FOR SUSTAINABLE
LEARNING THROUGH SUPPORTIVE HOME
ENVIRONMENTS**

by

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DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to the **children** in the township who have the unsurmountable courage and belief that there is unlocked potential in them that will lead them to contribute positively to this world. They must know that they gain knowledge every time they open a book, and in so doing, tell their own stories to make the world a better place.*

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at exploring strategies to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. In order to achieve this, the following objectives have been identified to guide the study:

- To explore the current situation of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To examine the need for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To explore the key elements of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To examine the circumstances and conditions to promote the implementation of reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To identify barriers that hinder the promotion of reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments
- To propose strategies on how we can promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

Ubuntu and the asset-based approach form the theoretical framework of this study as they are relevant because they emphasise that research must be a collective effort, which promotes social justice and the empowerment of the co-researchers. Everyone has an asset or potential talent that could contribute positively to the study and to society in general. The philosophy of Ubuntu combined with the asset-based approach encourages collaborative, cooperative and active participation such that the views of the marginalised are considered and the voiceless have a voice in this study. Data was generated at one school in the Amaotana area in the Pinetown District, KZN.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is used as the data generation method for this study. Also, PAR emphasises the involvement of those affected by the issue under investigation for their own benefit. The co-researchers in this study are the learners, their parents, the local councillor, a representative from the DoE, a representative from the NGO, and the local librarian.

Literature is reviewed according to its relevancy to emerging markets' efforts on promoting reading literacy, the need, key elements, conditions and circumstances, as well as barriers to promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments. Literature is also reviewed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The data that was generated is consistent with reviewed literature in most cases. The action plan is proposed for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environment.

The proposed action plan includes goals, actions, and planning. This entails encouraging children to read, introducing reading at an early age, developing a love for reading in all individuals, reconciling the power imbalance in parent-child relationships, understanding reading literacy as a catalyst for change, lending support for reading at home and the community, working cooperatively and collaboratively as a family to promote reading literacy, creating interest for reading, finding time to read together as a family, identifying barriers that could impede reading, overcoming the barriers that impede on reading time, having a purpose-driven action plan to create a home environment where learners' voices could be heard, promoting reading literacy as a recreational activity, seeing parents as role-models for positive behaviour, appreciating learners' input on the type of support they require, finding best strategies to promote reading literacy, making supporting agents aware of their responsibilities, maintaining order and routine to establish a scholarly culture within the home environment, and changing the attitude of people towards reading.

The main findings indicate that there was little being done to promote reading literacy through supportive home environment. The chief contribution of this study is to develop a tool that could guide home-communities on how to promote reading literacy. It is recommended that the parents take a more proactive role to make these changes suggested by the guide.

KEY CONCEPTS: reading literacy, supportive home environment, sustainable learning, Ubuntu, critical discourse, asset-based approach, participatory action research, parental Involvement, promoting, collaboration, cooperation, reading culture, reading strategies

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CA	Creative Arts
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
DoE	Department of Education
DSEL	Department for School Education and Literacy
EFA	Education for All
EFAL	English First Additional Language
FAI	Free Attitude Interview
FCP	Family Communication Patterns
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HL	Home Language
HOD	Head of Department
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge System
IL	Information Literacy
IPA	The Petersburg International Book
LIC	Low Income Countries
LO	Life Orientation
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RCL	Representative Council of Learners

SES	Socio-Economic Status
SP	Senior Phase
SPOKES	Supporting Parents on kids' education in Schools
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UGC	User Generated Content
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WASCBR	Western Australian Study in Children's Book Reading

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study focusing mainly on the past efforts that have been made to promote reading literacy through various strategies; such efforts proved to be unsuccessful in the main as reading literacy remains a challenge. The background exposes some of the outcomes of what the low scores in reading achievement has done to the general population of South Africa. The legacy of apartheid has done untold damage to the majority of South Africans and we see the effects of it in dismal performances in reading literacy rates. This study challenges the status-quo by proposing that all efforts be made particularly in supporting home environments to improve the state of reading literacy. The statement of the problem refers to what kind of support is given and what strategies can be implemented to improve reading literacy against the tide of semi-literacy that pervades most homes in South Africa. By involving the marginalised community in having a voice concerning what is to be done to turn the situation around, this study hopes to contribute to social upliftment of the previously disadvantaged groups.

It further presents the motivation of the study, which is informed by my introspection of personal experiences on how reading has impacted on me all through my upbringing especially in my home environment. However, there seems to be a contrast to what I am experiencing presently when I observe the lack of interest in reading literacy. Professionally, reading literacy challenges continue to be the thorny issue among schooling fraternities. In some quarters, it is acceptable that learners are under-achievers when it comes to reading literacy and see it as an unreachable goal. Contextually, literature resonates with similar sentiments of negativity in home environments stifling the promotion of reading literacy. Learners grow up in different home environments; some are unsupportive in nature and thus there is a dire need to support such learners, especially in terms of improving their reading literacy rate. This chapter states the main and secondary objectives, and thereafter attempts to answer both the main and secondary critical questions on how we can promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The

significance of the study as well as the delimitations, are also discussed. It also gives a brief summary or layout of all the chapters. Lastly, the summary of the chapter is presented.

Chapter two discusses some operational concepts that are frequently used throughout this study, including the theoretical frameworks (Ubuntu and the asset-based approach) and their relevance to this study. Chapter three reflects on the current literature in promoting reading literacy particularly in the BRICS countries. Chapter four explains the research methods followed while conducting this qualitative study informed by the critical paradigm which is emancipatory in nature. Chapter five presents the data generated based on the five objectives of this study. Chapter six presents the findings from each objective, conclusions and implications of the study; and lastly chapter seven proposes the action plan of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Reading literacy is regarded as an important aspect of learners' functioning as developing individuals equally within and outside schools (Zuze & Reddy, 2014). Reading literacy is the ability to understand and use the written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual (Mullis & Martin 2015). South Africa has been undergoing many fundamental changes in education since the introduction of democracy in 1994. The South African Government has utilised numerous ways in developing the levels of literacy initiatives through the introduction of reading drives such as National Reading Strategies as well the Nal'bali Campaign through its FUNda Leader Campaign (Greyling, 2008). But, the standard of literacy among learners remains low and many teachers in South Africa admit that learners do not have well established reading skills (Spaull, 2013; Mota, 2014; Mati, 2017; Mullis & Martin, 2015). This also confirms that teaching-learning situations become difficult if the foundational skill of reading literacy is absent or lacking. These foundational skills include acquiring information and knowledge which include phonology, phonics, spelling, grammar rules, pronunciation, orals, phrase-identification, and fluency (Brown, 2012). Those competencies are taught at a developmental stage to help with reading improvement that cascades into general academic enhancement in all grades.

In addition, Zuze and Reddy (2014) declare that competency in reading is the basis for self-development and that there is a positive link between reading literacy, educational progress, career enhancement, and general personal wellbeing. One of the goals of education in the new democracy is to enhance the quality of education to meet international standards. Thus, the South African Government (DoE) initiated many programmes and structures to guarantee access to every child regardless of colour, race, creed, religion, background, and physical ability so as to develop the learner holistically to be relevant in a global society. Therefore, promoting reading literacy was the most obvious point of concentration to meet the demands of a vastly competitive international market.

Examining the schooling system in South Africa from a historical perspective of Western schooling philosophy, it becomes clear that it advantages the upper class and limits the marginalised majority (Spaull, 2013). The South African education system delineates two types of school systems for the public. One is the properly performing education structured schools catering for the elite (20-25% of the learner population) who get better scores when assessed mainly as a result of having better resources; and the other is the poorer under-resourced schools (75-80% of the learner population) where the reading literacy results can be described as abysmal. These very different types of schools can be distinguished in terms of socio-economic status, location of the home, and the language they speak. These diverse and unequal education schooling structures hinder the improvement in reading literacy in rural and township primary schools as recorded by regional, national, and international assessment platforms (DoE, 2005; Moloji & Chetty, 2010).

According to Reddy, Prinsloo, Visser, Arends, Winnar, Rogers, Ngema (2012), the ultra-modern TIMSS [Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study] (2011) showed that generally grade nine learners in KwaZulu-Natal were lagging by 2,5 years compared to learners in the Western Cape when it came to science subjects, and that generally the grade nine learner in Eastern Cape is almost two years behind when compared to the learner in Gauteng. Similarly, pre-PIRLS in 2011 indicated that grade four students from rural areas and townships were lagging by two to five years compared to children attending schools in the urban areas (Smetana, 2011). South Africa's levels of disparity are exposed through comparing the results of different provinces, showing the vast divides compared to other countries referred to in this

research project. This gap is visible when we look at results from a grade six learner assessment study done in the Western Cape which showed that while four out of five learners in the former white schools were proficient in reading, fewer than half the number attending former coloured schools could read at the grade they were in; and that only 4 out of 100 in schooling structures that were attended by the mainly coloured population were at a reading level they were supposed to be at (Taylor, Fleisch, & Shindler, 2019).

Since citizens are the cornerstones who build the prosperity of a nation, it is of paramount importance that a country invests in skills development and knowledge-acquisition programmes that will create a literate South Africa via reading literacy. With such challenges as high illiteracy rates, it is imperative, not just for the schools and the Government, but for everyone to get involved to upgrade the standard of literacy through an awareness for reading. In line with this, communities should look at resources that are at their disposal to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments and not just “play the blame game”.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Sustaining learning is possible when there is continued support as well as facilitation of reading literacy which supports the home environment and promotes what children learn in school (Greyling, 2008). When children first attend school, they learn new concepts; but learning at school can be complemented by parents/guardians helping during reading exercise time at home (Kim, 2017). Some children’s home environments also have their own dynamics. For example, in an ideal world some children grow up in families with both parents present, one or both parents employed and where the family has enough income to thrive in a supportive safe environment. However, some children are brought up in single-parent households. In such situations, moving from one place to the next, and changing schools frequently, destabilises the processes of education at school and in the home. In addition, child-headed households face insurmountable barriers that lead to breakdowns in educational literacy processes. In addition, unsupportive and crime-ridden neighbourhoods cause disruptions, reducing the possibility of being literate (Bailey & Collins, 2014; Russell & Odgers, 2016; Vallee, 2010). It is a common fact that not all

children have access to the same home environment and experiences; the cycle of poverty among the marginalised is a real stumbling block to reading literacy.

Numerous children grow up in disadvantaged communities, broken homes and crime infested neighbourhoods that make becoming literate difficult. Putnam (2016) and Smeeding (2016) deduce that parents and caregivers with low levels of education, particularly those who have not graduated from secondary school, have complex barriers to stable employment opportunities, than do better-educated parents. As a result, they are more likely to face poverty and thus depend on public welfare for survival. Parents' and caregivers' education levels also connect closely with learners' academic achievement which is further closely linked to reading-time offered at home (Allen & McNamara, 2011). These opposing conditions are known to have undesirable influence on learners' passion and longing for reading, which limits their exposure to texts and subsequently prevent them from developing the proficiencies that will make them avid readers (Pretorius, 2007). This evidence is endorsed by Statistics South Africa (2015) that singles out that the lack of books (rated at 4,3%) is the most important obstacle for both the school and home environments.

Consequently, learners who experience difficulties in reading are viewed as being in danger to becoming handicapped in acquiring basic knowledge and skills, thus hindering their chances of succeeding academically, and possibly in life in general (Ngwenya, 2010). Hence, South African learners drop out of school and this takes away the opportunity for them to further themselves in their chosen careers. If supportive home environments are not made to be part of the solution of promoting reading literacy, this could affect sustainable learning and could affect the future prospects of the learner, family, community and ultimately that of the country. The gap in research for this study is evidenced by the lack of distinct voices of the population from impoverished communities when it comes to the promotion of reading literacy. In this study, I have located the population's voices regarding their perceptions, active participation, and their interpretation of and about the promotion of reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

This study proposes how we can promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments drawn from three dimensions: personal,

professional and contextual experiences. Firstly, in my personal experience as the youngest at home and coming from a previously disadvantage background, reading in my home was quite prominent. My mother used to work at the museum coffee shop and the library was in the same building. She would ask me to go wait for her there. I would spend a lot of time reading and would borrow some of the books from the library to read at home. We did not have a television set at home, thus books and reading became a salient part of my leisure activity, apart from doing my homework.

However, presently what I have noticed at home is that the television set has replaced that leisure time. Books belonging to my niece and nephew are just lying around unread and no reading time is assigned as part of leisure. When I go over my niece's and nephew's homework and ask them what they were supposed to do, I find that they are failing to even understand the instructions given for their homework. My nephew failed his matriculation examination. One of my neighbour's children came to me to help with their homework and discovered they could not read and understand the instructions given in the question papers and other homework tasks. I asked the neighbour if they assign any reading time to their children. They said they did not, because they felt that children were reading when they were doing their homework and they saw it as not important or urgent in their children's learning, but rather doing homework was more of a pressing issue. However, according to Klauda and Guthrie (2015), the amount of time spent reading significantly predicts text comprehension.

Further, in my professional experience, my observations as a teacher for the past six years of teaching English as First Additional Language in grades 8, 9 and 12, I observed that the level of reading skills amongst the learners in my school needs serious attention. In studies conducted by De Witt, Lessing and Lenayi (2008) and Le Cordeur (2010) it is evident that the existing South African level of reading is alarming. As a teacher, during my English lessons, I have observed that if some of the learners are asked to read out aloud, they are reluctant to do so, and when they make an effort they find it difficult in understanding what they have read. I have experienced that when they have to read silently and then report on what they have read; they cannot give a reasonable response as to what they have read.

Moreover, Grabe (2010) and Koda (2007), in their study of known words and reading comprehension, found that scores revealed that even learners who knew all of the

meanings of the words were not absolutely certain about the whole meaning of the text. Most educators in my school have been complaining that learners often lack reading strategies to comprehend what they have read. They have even advised parents to be more vigilant at home when monitoring their children's reading in preparation for the next day's schoolwork.

Literature states that parents are their children's first educators, as most of the literacy experiences that a child carries to school emanate from the home environment (Clark, 2015; Fuller & García, 2010; Heath, 2012). According to Ngorosho (2011), countless actions of the home environment have been projected in the school environment. The measures differ according to variations in the home environments within and through social contexts. Thus, variables which seem to be suitable for describing the home environment in a definite social context, cannot generally be expected to be appropriate for other backgrounds. In this regard, measures to evaluate the home environment should include the social and cultural aspects, and the geographical location of the society under study. In this research study, the home environment was conceptualised to include both the home living environment and home literacy environment. The living home environment was defined through family Socio-Economic Status (SES), housing circumstances and wealth related aspects. The home literacy environment was interpreted as the availability of educational materials and amenities, including parental involvement in the school ecology. Owing to the larger conceptualisation of the home environment among societies, and the dissimilar ways in which the home environment is measured, inferences about the influence of the home environment on literacy skills vary across societies. How research about home influences on literacy has been carried out, has also tended to vary. In this study, I have also considered physical factors such as poverty, psychological implications due to how children were raised, social environments, and the broader cultural forms of life related to the home environment. However, these factors only focus on aspects that have the potential of having a deficit outlook and fail to mention details of supportive home environments. A supportive home environment includes physical space, adequate equipment and materials, daily structuring and planning of out-of-school educational activities, as well as the cordial relationship between adults and children. These are the assets that could be looked at when discussing supportive home environments to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning. Sawyer,

Cycyk, Sandilos and Hammer (2018) assert that in addition to providing reading literacy support in the home, parents must promote and add to what children learned at school. Taking into cognisance that homes need to have a supportive learning environment to promote reading to sustain learning, this study sought to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Main Objective

To propose how we can promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

Secondary Objectives

- To explore the current situation on promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To examine the need for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To explore the key elements in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To examine the circumstances and conditions that favour the implementation of promoting reading literacy strategies for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.
- To identify barriers that hinder reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

1.5 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main Question

How can we promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?

Secondary questions

- What is the current situation on promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?
- Why is there a need for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environment?

- What are the key elements in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?
- What are the circumstances and conditions that favour the implementation of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?
- What are the barriers that hinder reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Currently, literacy in the home is understood as having intergenerational influences. A common thinking is that the developing of literacy skills and uplifting general academic performance results from planned child-parent interactions (August, & Shanahan, 2017; Coleman, 2018; Haut, See & Gorard, 2015). Cooter (2006, p. 45) defined “intergenerational literacy” as a “sociocultural occurrence” where illiterate parents inadvertently create home conditions that may seriously hinder their children’s reading and writing development, thus perpetuating a cycle of illiteracy (p. 698). This study therefore aims to contribute to national and international debates on how educational institutions, communities and all the interested parties, can promote reading literacy to sustain learning through supportive home environments.

In general, intellectuals have observed high poverty in urban and rural environments. Illiterate parents, a general lack of child-parent contact, and inadequate print materials, are some of the greatest obstacles of promoting literacy (Cooter, 2006; Obiakor, Beachum & Harris, 2010). To reverse this trend, promoting reading literacy requires supporting adults to utilise numerous assets in their social contexts to inspire literacy. Thus, the promotion of reading literacy through a supportive home environment empowers the parents, supports the child to read and nurtures a love of reading, forms a stronger parent-child bond, and stimulates healthy relationships with other people in society. Consequently, instead of considering illiteracy as an individual failure, focusing on supportive home environment exploits the strengths parents or guardians to promote literacy within the family so that the child feels supported and not alone.

Additionally, the results may be used to inform policies in areas such as curriculum development and the compiling of textbooks in the pedagogy of English (EFAL),

particularly in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. These policies must inform and direct the network of role-players who exhibit tangible and intangible intersecting dimensions including socio-demographic characteristics, language and literacy behaviours, accessibility of literacy materials, parental beliefs, values, and temperaments (Burgess, 2011). The aspect of literacy in the home environment presupposes that for most children, the home assists as the first port of encounter with language and literacy, depending on the availability of books, as well as having parents or guardians supporting the learner in the home environment. An indication of a supporting link between children's development and the contexts in which they grow up, is the need to inspect learners' experiences and the environments in which they transpire (Wieigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2005).

The third significance of the study refers to the results which are likely to convince teachers to improve reading literacy as they will be working with parents and all interested parties in identifying and using community assets to promote reading for sustainability. The home is where the emphasis lies, not just for the provision and accessibility of reading material, but also to identify assets which could be utilised in the larger environment to complement the available reading resources. This fosters the quality of reading literacy when put to economically and socially positive use (Barody & Diamond, 2012). Also, the teacher will no longer feel like he/she is working alone but will have the necessary information about the learner so that it can be used to adapt methods of teaching reading literacy. If the educator has an idea of the home context, then he/she can connect what is read at school to the activities the learner can do at home in terms of improving learners' reading (Tomlinson, 2014; Hedgecock & Ferris, 2018).

Lastly, there is great significance in encouraging parental involvement in the school to promote reading by telling their lived experiences. These stories which will eventually become shared, written and ultimately read, will promote reading literacy. Research on family and community involvement has shown that children are more progressive at school when their parents and teachers connect well and work together efficiently (Epstein, 2011). A study conducted by Young and Schrodts (2016) also established parental involvement to be essential to promote children's reading literacy; and that when parents taught their children using specific skills for literacy activities, the rate of progress accelerated. Facer and Pahl (2017) maintain that when families engage in

literacy reading activities they create and present visual artefacts, compile books and tell stories; in this way they are fostering the child's reading skills that develops and enhances academic performance. Fundamentally, such activities reverse the cycle of illiteracy, creates within the learner a desire to become active observers and participants in the reading experience, and develops robust kinship bonds with family members through reading collaborations (Jeynes, 2010; Johnson, Becker, Estrada & Freeman, 2015). Therefore, adults within the family can use domestic chores, religious services, and family events as teachable moments to raise literacy and encourage intergenerational literacy between its supporters, establish meaningful connections with adults in the community, and through these connections, allow them to receive information, assistance, exposure to adult worlds, support, and encouragement (Sullivan, Gnesdilow & Puntambekar, 2011).

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study was limited by the some constraints which influenced the attainment of a more incisive knowledge production. Firstly, the selected participants were too few in number and thus this would not allow for generalisation; however, this study did not seek to generalise, but to give exposure and solutions to this particular phenomenon. In addition, the kinds of methods used were limiting because the study wanted access to the participants' homes which met with some resistance. Therefore, the creation of rapport during meetings was of paramount importance so that the participants could feel at ease to give us access into their homes. Lastly, the educator-participants in the study were not always available, and this somewhat stifled progress.

1.9 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

The **first chapter** introduced the whole study by providing the background, the problem statement, the motivation for the study, as well as outlining the research objectives and research questions. Also, the significance of the study was explained in detail. This chapter concluded by listing the delimitations of this study, and outlining the layout of all the subsequent chapters.

In **chapter two**, the operational concepts that were used and which formed the basis of this study, were explained. Thereafter the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, namely, Ubuntu and the asset-based approach, were deliberated on. The

appropriateness of how these theories fit into this study were discussed. The following chapter reviews previous literature.

In **chapter three**, literature was reviewed paying particular attention to the current situation in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning in developing countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This chapter further explores the need, key elements, and the circumstances and conditions for promoting the implementation of reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The chapter concludes by identifying barriers that could hinder what the study is proposing. The following chapter (4) focuses on methodology used for the study.

In **chapter four**, I discussed the research design and qualitative approaches utilised in the study. I indicated how the critical paradigm, its principles and procedures were integrated within the PAR methodology to address the issues of reading literacy in supportive home environments. The selection and profiles of the participants, the logistical considerations of the research site, and the researcher's background, were highlighted. In addition, ethical considerations, and theoretical and multi-methods used for triangulation purposes were discussed. Moreover, this chapter explains the process and relevance of PAR and the suitability of the data analysis approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Lastly, it outlines the trustworthiness of the methodological techniques used to arrive at the findings, followed by the chapter summary.

Chapter five presented participants' data generated from meetings, verbal and written reflections, and data from focus group discussions (FGDs). This in turn was discussed by following the three critical levels of the CDA. An element of eclecticism using the Ubuntu and asset-based approaches, participants' information, methodological principles/foundations (PAR), and reviewed literature were used to strengthen the analysis process. The analysis and interpretation concerning the development of the action plan, and possibilities for its sustainability in home environments, is detailed in this chapter.

In **Chapter Six**, I discussed findings based on data generated from meetings, verbal and written reflection, as well as from FGDs on participants' experiences, challenges and needs in a home environment using the three levels of CDA. A suggestion action

plan was structured to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The conclusions, implications, contribution of the study, limitations and further suggestions are also presented.

In **chapter seven**, I suggest how we can promote reading literacy through supportive home environments.

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I introduced the study by providing the background, the problem statement and the motivation for this research project. The motivation of the study was inspired by self-introspection on my experiences of how reading had impacted on me personally, professionally and contextually. This chapter also looked at the study's objectives, the critical questions, the significance, delimitations, as well as the layout of all the chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks by firstly defining the frequently used concepts, in addition to elaborating on the two theories underpinning this study; namely, Ubuntu and the asset-based approach. Secondly, it discusses the historical origins of the Ubuntu theory, how knowledge is constructed and the nature of reality in the Ubuntu theory, as well as its basic objectives/assumptions, values and principles. The chapter further looks at Ubuntu theory's stance on the role of the one going to conduct the research and the one who is going to be researched, by focusing on the connection between the two as to how they construct knowledge. In addition, the significance of the Ubuntu theory to this study as well as the rhetoric used in Ubuntu theory, are explained. Also, the asset-based approach especially concerning the aspect of community assets, and the two components of difficulty when using the asset-based approach, as well as the relevance of this approach, are discussed. Lastly, I present the discussion integrating the two theories, Ubuntu and the asset-based approach.

2.2 THE EXPANSION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This section expands on definitions and explanations of this study's operational concepts, notably reading literacy, sustainable learning and supportive home environments, thereby avoiding ambiguities. The key terms are found in project's title; that is, reading literacy, sustainable learning, and supportive home environments.

2.2.1 Reading Literacy

Literacy has popularly and conventionally been understood as using the ability to read and write at an adequate level (Zuze & Reddy, 2014). There are many forms of literacy communication especially with advances in technology. Thus, the notion of new literacies implies that literacy is not just different today, but becomes different everyday (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek & Henry, 2013). For the purposes of this study, reading literacy is defined by PIRLS (2016) which is grounded in IEA's 1991 study, as "the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual" (Mullis & Martin, 2015, p. 31). This was earlier defined by

Delgadova (2015) who states that reading literacy changes to replicate transformation in society, the economy, beliefs and education. Consequently, the individual is able to be part of the ever-changing world that one finds oneself in and be able to make a contribution to that space. The Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] (2015) in conjunction with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2016), describes reading literacy as understanding, using, reflecting on, and interacting with written texts, in order to attain one's goal, to develop one's knowledge and prospects, and to contribute to society. Lam, Cheung, Au, Tsang, So and Zhu (2016) in their study concluded that reading literacy is critical to learning in school which enables future activities in work and community and provides pleasure from leisure reading. Zuze and Reddy (2014) concur that the reading literacy level of a population has been shown to have an assured effect on labour market productiveness and the country's financial improvement.

Of notable importance to this study is the importance placed on learners' capabilities to construct meaning or comprehend texts in the curriculum. The Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2011) structured the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Languages, where the Learning Outcome (LO) is expressed as 'the ability to read and view for understanding and to evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts' (DBE [CAPS], 2012, p. 55). Having well-developed reading skills and the ability to construct meaning are the central considerations of this study. This concept is also elaborately defined and discussed in section 2.2.1.

The PIRLS (2016) description of reading literacy makes provision and alludes to the fact that readers build what the text means in a number of ways (Mullis, Martin & Sainsbury, 2016; Martin, Mullis & Hooper, 2017; Howie, Combrinck, Tshele, Roux, Palane & Mokoena, 2017). Consequently, readers read to acquire knowledge and communication tools to take part in societies of readers in school and ordinary spaces, and for leisure. This interpretation of reading exhibits numerous theories of reading literacy as an optimistic and interactive process (Kintsch, 2012, 2013), because meaning is constructed through the interaction of the reader with the text within the context of a specific reading time (Britt, Goldman & Rouet, 2012). Readers are regarded as actively producing meaning, in addition to gleaning powerful reading strategies on how to reflect on reading (Afflerbach & Cho, 2009; Langer, 2011). While

these definitions emphasise what reading literacy entails, Bharuthram (2012) maintains that radical measures have to be engaged to improve the general literacy and reading levels of learners. Thus, the definition needs to be conspicuous and understandable to all role-players if literacy has to improve, especially among the marginalised.

The OECD (2016) states that the PISA (2015) definition is restrictive when considering the many expectations that are identified with reading literacy. According to O'Reilly and Sabatini (2013, p.7), the definition that is clear and unambiguous is:

Reading literacy involves the development of a constellation of cognitive, language, and, social reasoning skills, knowledge, strategies, and dispositions, directed towards achieving specific reading purposes. Readers seek to acquire high levels of skills to enable them to achieve their personal goals and to participate in a print-rich, literate society.

O'Reilly and Sabatini (2013) argue that although the definition is somewhat comprehensive, some assumptions need to be clarified regarding reading literacy. First, reading literacy necessitates the recruitment of diverse abilities that are not functionally limited to text-processing. The group of skills important to perform precise reading differs with the varieties of text assets, task demands, and evidentiary necessities as connected to the individuals' reading targets. While the collection of skills are not limited to reading, when used in literacy pastime, they work in synchrony.

Second, reading comprehension views reading as the action of reconstructing a sensible spoken message from written symbols to a form of language, which the person can understand (Feng & Chen, 2013). From the understanding of text linguistics, to justify the significance of a text is not only influenced by the subject the writer put into the text, but also the thinking which the reader takes into the text. That is to say, reading is a vigorous process occurring within the reader - not a submissive one. Reading comprehension is "the reconstruction of knowledge through dynamic and attentive reading procedures that direct readers to critically interpret and analyze the passage." (Amani, Syed, & Rahman, 2010, p. 11). The failure to synchronise all that is involved in reading leads to the failure to comprehend or understand a text. Kendeou, Muis and Fulton (2011, p.10) assert that reading comprehension is determined by "execution and integration" of many cognitive processes. This is true

as the connection between reading and language abilities is strong thus it makes no sense in regarding reading as a totally exclusive set of abilities.

Third, reading literacy is attained as a result of having a set of fixed practices shaped and communicated through interaction with people; and for this reason, reading ability skills call for a sophisticated method of social cognition and modelling. Written texts generally encapsulate life studies incorporating the educational tasks, work-related aspects, social factors and the historical past. Inside narratives and literary texts lies ambitions, reasons, and themes which are largely derivative and dependent on information which humans enjoy, where the distinctiveness of social understanding, questioning, and modeling is obvious. Step-by-step, socially reconciled contexts (e. g. gaining access to internet) assist in text know-how according to the related experiences of students and adults. Having the necessary expertise to dissect social literacy contexts is often vital and mandatory to demonstrate genuine understanding when reading texts.

Fourth, individuals obtain information using their abilities, methods, and inclinations. Strategies comprise of querying, self-clarification, summarising, image organising, and critical-thinking skills to interpret textual content (Fauth, Decristan, Rieser, Klieme, & Buttner, 2014; Perfetti & Adolf, 2012). In addition, the aspect of temperament, directs how one seeks information through self-regulation, motivation and exertion to participate, persevere, and learn from print materials (Klieme, Pauli & Reusser, 2009). Consequently, the combination of retrieving facts, the capacity and the character to read incisively, leads to accomplishing comprehension in reading literacy.

Fifth, people adjust their reading activities to achieve specific reading purposes. For most, reading literacy is grasping written textual content, developing and inferring the meaning of that content, and extracting relevant and appropriate information (National Assessment Governing Board, 2010). These draw on characteristics such as responsiveness, expertise, and competencies (Coiro & Kennedy, 2011; Sheehan & O'Reilly, 2012).

Lastly, reading literacy remains a valuable skill because of its social worth to the people and society (OECD, 2009a, 2009b). Twelve years of obligatory schooling should inculcate in all learners a desire to be literate to meet the international demands to communicate and become globally relevant through reading proficiency. With the

advent of massive social media technology, reading literacy is supposed to assist to communicate with all and sundry in an acceptable and understandable manner. If reading literacy did not have such an enormous social and survival value, we would probably not place such a great emphasis on it.

2.2.2 Sustainable learning

A set of sustainable development goals to direct international development until 2030 was put forward by the United Nations (UN, 2015). The 2030 timetable includes best practices in education (Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). But these desires and objectives are under fire and were branded as unclear, weak or hollow, according to a scientific review (Stokstad, 2015). Our common future demands that we view reading literacy as a fundamental skill to sustain learning [World Commission Environment and Dialogue on Sustainable Development] (Borowy, 2014; Holden, Linnerud, & Banister, 2014). Starting from 1987, the concept of literacy and sustainability has been widely used and has been officially followed by numerous international governments (Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). Our common future is inextricably linked to sustainable development with reading literacy being the major tool to communicate ideas that will foster cohesion among the nations providing a route to all that is good and required in a global society. Thus, the sustainable development principle has emerged as so broad and complicated that it cannot only be used to guide policy making, but should go beyond this (Holden, Linnerud & Banister, 2014). Linnerud and Holden (2016) hold that one of the victories of sustainable development has been its capability to function as a grand cooperation among people who are mainly concerned with nature and its surroundings, individuals who value economic development, and people who are committed to improving the human condition.

Azevedo (2017) observes that thirty years later, the United Nations has revised its efforts by highlighting the role that education can play in alleviating environmental peril through launching the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) from 2005-2014. The revitalisation of UNESCO's efforts emphasised that through schooling and gaining knowledge, we are able to attain life-skills primarily based on economic and social justice, food protection, ecological reliability, sustainable livelihoods, respect for all life forms and robust values that foster social cohesion, democracy and mutual action (UNESCO, 2011). Hence, emphasising participatory and crucial

coaching and learning strategies to encourage and empower beginners to rethink their conduct – and take action – for sustainable education to be embedded in policies. In the past, educationalists have predominantly focused on the concept of sustainability within the walls of lecture rooms (Myers, 2012). What is required is the application of various transformative approaches to re-thinking teaching and reading (Misiaszek, 2012). In this study, I propose that the idea of sustainable learning is an aspect that needs urgent reviewing, included being grounded in policies to address the difficulty of attaining a fair degree of literacy particularly in constructing sustainable communities.

Sustainable learning is defined as a phenomenon that continues beyond the years of formal instruction (Knapper, 2006). For this study, I would like to make a distinction concerning the concept of learning since literature has many interpretations of what is learning. Interpretations of learning involve the mapping of experiences onto behaviour patterns (De Houwer, Barnes-Holmes & Moors, 2013; Nind, Kara, Erel, Barnes, Chilisa & Boulton, 2017). In other words, learning is a plethora of influences emanating from lived experiences which later becomes part of behaviour. Domjan (2010) and Ormrod (2008) assert that learning is an enduring transformation to a lasting improved state brought about by receiving new information. The above definitions speak of experience and lasting change, therefore this study intends to centre learning as not only pertaining to change brought by experience, but to have environments, particularly home environments, to support that change. Consequently, this study is about the experiences of participants and all interested parties, which will contribute to promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett and Norman (2010) define sustainable learning as the transfer or application of learned skills or understanding from the learned-in perspective to other context. In other words, learning from one situation and conveying what has been learnt to relate to other situations, is referred to as sustainable learning. UNESCO (2012) refers to sustainability as a paradigm for a well-adjusted destiny of thinking about and taking action on environmental, social and economic concerns in pursuit of improvement and an advanced worth of existence. Sustainability is often thought of as an extended-term goal, while at the same time sustainable development refers to the various procedures and trials to acquire it; as in sustainable agriculture

and forestry, sustainable manufacturing and intake, schooling and education, amongst others(Peris-Ortiz & Lindahl, 2015; Paulus, 2015; Demaria, Schneider, Sekulova& Martinez-Alier, 2013). For this study I propose that communities, especially homes, to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments to ingrain the values of sustainable development perspectives that have become part of the global sustainability discourse as outlined below (UNESCO, 2012, p. 2):

- A systems intellectual approach is how systems influence each other when working towards something. Systems thinking is an approach to solving problems, in which “issues” are viewed as elements of an overall, systems, rather than as reachable parts, outcomes or activities. Sustainability issues are related and are part of an entire entity.
- The consideration of differing interpretations before reaching a decision or judgement.
- The recognising of economic values, religious values, and societal values as being important as people from different interests and backgrounds come together to collaborate.
- The emphasis on the role of public involvement in community and governmental choice-making. People whose lives have deteriorated from making bad choices need to be involved within the process which is so important to make the right choices.

Sustainable learning for this study goes beyond the above perspectives to look at ways about how reading literacy can sustain learning to improve the lives of the communities, organisations, families and individuals. Sustainable learning includes all the activities (storytelling, Bible-reading, using social networks, consulting recipe books, reading the morning newspapers etc.) that homes engage in that promote reading literacy.

2.2.3 Supportive Home Environments

The English Oxford Living Dictionary (2017) defines supportive as providing encouragement or emotional help. Terhoeven (2009, p. 42) maintains that being supportive to learners is one way of ‘safeguarding that all learners have access to education’ and that all learners’ rights to education are adhered to. Therefore having

a supportive home environment shows that there are positive psychological conditions due to, among others, effective parenting, healthy social circumstances, adequate physical spaces, abundance of materials, sound structure and planning, and cordial parent-child relationships (Greyling, 2008). A learner's home environment has an indelible impact on his/her literacy development and educational accomplishments. Research has shown that the home environment is an important catalyst to enhance learners' reading abilities (Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Christenson, Reschly & Wylie, 2012; Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011). For this study, of importance will be all the aspects in the home environment that encourage and support reading literacy.

According to UNESCO (2011) literacy is not totally concerning individuals but also households and societies at large. Previous studies on family literacy have highlighted the importance of the home in promoting reading proficiency (Ho, Leung & Cheung, 2011; Lundberg, 2009). This is related to aspects such as support, motivation and reassurance given at home, at school, at work, and by the community. Studies show that parents who provide stimulating and promising learning environments for their children, develop children with proper reading capabilities which raises school performances (Ren & Hu, 2011). Moreover, It has been powerfully identified that a supportive home environment plays a principal role in one's learning and behaviour. However, families and communities have an uphill battle in making literacy effective and exciting in the early formative years of the child. Families that encourage their children to read within the home are assisting their children to inculcate a good attitude towards learning and ultimately an interest in self-discovery and problem-solving which aid in later instructional fulfillment (Hindman & Morrison, 2011). Additionally, the accessibility of literacy supportive materials at home, in communities, libraries, community learning centres and schools, has an influential effect on the improvement of reading literacy and conduct amongst learners of various ages.

Further, merely having a supportive home environment with access to a variety of reading materials or having parents with a good socio-economic status, does not necessarily promote reading; but also having the support from parents who have the right attitude towards reading, is paramount. Howie (2010) explored a large sample of over 16 000 children and unearthed significant findings concerning parental attitudes on reading regarding fourth graders' literacy achievements in South Africa. Children of parents who had positive attitudes to reading, where one or two parents

were working, parents with higher education, had higher numbers of books in the home and those who wrote the test in English or Afrikaans were more likely to achieve higher scores than those who did not fit this profile. This study proposes even the minutest form of parental support for promoting reading literacy within the home environment.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework states the theory that a researcher chooses to direct the research. For this reason, it is an application of an idea guided by a rational route to analyse a phenomenon, or to clarify a specific experience, or to dissect a problem in society (Imenda, 2014). Theory centres on the presumption that we all see the world through different frames that determine our perspective(s) while limiting our view to only a part of its complexity (Burrell & Morgan, 2017). Therefore, different frames direct attention to aspects of a situation, telling different stories about what is going on and what to do (De Boer, Wardekker & Van der Sluijs, 2010). This research project dissects the problem of low reading literacy levels in South Africa via the principles of Ubuntu and the asset-based approach.

According to Zaitseva, Milsom and Stewarts (2013) utilising a few theories in studying the phenomenon, is known as theoretical triangulation which is concerned with using different theoretical lenses to examine and interpret the same body of data. Triangulation offers researchers numerous advantages:

- researchers ensure validity of their results by using theory triangulation.
- it stimulates the formation of the imaginative.
- it promotes the formation of innovative techniques by using modern means of looking at a problem to stabilise it with predictable statistics series techniques;
- it assists to unearth the deviant dimension of a phenomenon; and
- it will serve as a strict check concerning competing theories (Zaitseva, Milsom & Stewarts, 2013).

Triangulation reduces the shortcomings of single-source studies as two resources suit and verify each other, which reduces the impact of bias. The theory of triangulation strategy is not devoid of some disadvantages. For example, if the researcher is not genuinely focused theoretically or conceptually, it will not produce a satisfactory

outcome. In the discussion of Ubuntu and the asset-based approach in this study, the critical concepts are identified and sufficiently dealt with to minimise this drawback.

2.3.1 Ubuntu

This section discusses Ubuntu as one of the two theoretical frameworks directing this research. The emphasis is on its foundation principles that frame this study.

2.3.1.1 Historical origins of Ubuntu

Khoza (2006) and Broodryk (2006) are of the view that the origins of Ubuntu are within the African notion of being, which decrees that everyone belonging to the human race, has a mutual obligation to belong to and help one another, thereby forming a common pledge and future for the progress of humanity. The maxim, “I am because you are” (Khoza, 2006, p. 45) is an African proverb (*‘umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’*). Khoza (2006) elaborates by suggesting that Ubuntu is an African belief that emphasises that the collective surpasses the individual and that interdependence is an advanced reality in contrast to independence. Karsten and Illa (2005) agree that Ubuntu is a form of humanness, a pervasive spirit of being concerned for the community, by displaying team-spirit, hospitality, respect and responsiveness. Wiredu (2002, 2006) adds by defining Ubuntu as an African philosophy that interprets society as a mutual entity that does not allow for antagonism between people. This, according to Khoza (2006), is what spared African societies from the class struggles so common in Western and Eastern history. Generally, members of post-oppressive regimes in Africa have strived to be at an equal level politically (Metz, 2011; Khoza, 2006; Tutu, 2010; Wiredu, 2002; Mbigi, 1997). Christians (2004, p. 242) agrees that “Ubuntu is a magnificent, African worldview and notion system that characterises the collective nature of the African people”.

Khoza (2006) differs somewhat by arguing that while Ubuntu is an African global view, it is a humanism similar to the West, only with a more resilient communal element. Nelson Mandela (cited in Khoza, 2006), advances support for this view, suggesting that Ubuntu is a humble, massive idea. It announces that the mutual ground of our humanity is greater and durable than the versions that separate us. Even though we range across cultures and faiths, and even though statistics has separated rich from poor, oppressed from free, active from powerless, and race from race, we personally

accept that the commonplace ground of our humanity is greater and durable than the versions that separate us.

Khoza (2006) contends that while the idea of Ubuntu is a sizeable one with scholars still engaged in debates about its meaning and simplicity, Ubuntu is, in fact, a complicated and unique concept to untangle (Khoza, 2006). Edmonds (1996) asserts that due to the intricacy of Ubuntu as a complex and unique philosophy, all the components, including humility, dignity, compassion and generosity, which function in the plan of Ubuntu, are different and have their own variables.

However, Edmonds states that Ubuntu's components are interdependent and inextricably intertwined. Derrida (1990) points that no idea can occur in seclusion because every theory, by using language, makes reference to every other. Tutu's (1999, p.45) definition of Ubuntu reiterates that "a person is a person through other people, that humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably with yours" and "after I dehumanise you, I inexorably dehumanise myself". Ubuntu disregards cultural obstructions and goes beyond cultural ideals and values, as it lies within the heart.

2.3.1.2 Ubuntu and knowledge-construction

Ubuntu as a vision for all cultures encourages cultural expertise and understanding from deep within (Larkin, 2015), allowing for reflexivity and reciprocity via communication while being conscious of humility and intercultural considerations. As a consequence, we see that an abundance of Ubuntu enhances and alters the primary human potential to speak simply, be open about trials one faces, and seek help when needed from the community. Maphalala (2017) is of the view that culture plays an integral part such that when there is a problem at home, it will affect the learners' achievement in school. Consequently, Mason (2017) identifies special epistemologies in numerous contexts, and cultures. Therefore, this study recognises that each epistemology embodies an indigenous knowledge system (IKS) for a given tradition concerning reading literacy. Mubangizi and Kaya (2015) refer to IKS as a body of knowledge and competencies specific to a culture, often outside the formal schooling system that allows groups to thrive. Also, the IKS stays implicit, sacred and embedded in practices, relationships and is often transferred orally through the generations (Gastrow, Kruss, Bolaane & Esemu, 2017). The loss of documentation, the lack of

clear ownership, and slow progress makes it easy to disregard African IKS in favour of Western knowledge structures.

Knowledge (such as human science and indigenous knowledge or ways of being) is known as subjugated information (Bacchi, 2009). Subjugated knowledge according to Foucault (1980), has been inadequate due to missing the scientific aspect. 'Evidence-primarily-based' policymaking in South Africa concentrates on scientific understanding over other knowledges and thus influences "who can talk ... and with what authority" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 237), and whose ideas are heard and considered vital, sizable or useful. As the main researcher, I paid close attention to the huge discursive texts and the manner in which they assemble contributors (specialists, children, families and communities) and the type of information they draw upon and who they subjugate to create 'truths' about what to analyse and how. Jackson (2017) contests the traditional view of policy as unravelling recognised problems and proposes that 'problems' be solved using the existing policies. From this perspective, policy can appear as a strategic and political tool to influence current practices. Bacchi (2009) explains that when someone proposes to do something about a situation that needs to change, it becomes difficult as the policy may be silent on how to approach the problem that the policy targets to resolve.

Therefore, knowledge of policy as discourse to tackle problems is ineffective in a South African context. Bacchi (2009) recognises the precise function of the academically educated, whether employed by Government or in civil society, especially in terms of possibilities for action. It is essential to remember that in South Africa the academically inclined and skilled citizens have all succeeded in a system of education powerfully brought on by colonial and/or apartheid schooling. Individuals who create these policies best "assign positions, and value other groups, and prioritise other knowledge over others (Nind, Kara, Erel, Barnes, Chilisa & Boulton, 2017). This undermining and subjugation of indigenous knowledge is an example of radical exclusion dividing humans using colonial methods which is still evident today (Nind et al., 2017). According to Seth (2017), modern Western ideas is a devious strategy that divides social truth into geographical areas. As a result, conventional, lay, working-class, farmer, or indigenous information vanish as relevant knowledge (Tate, 2018). In bringing forth subjugated knowledge primarily based on my lived experiences with

communities, I am continuously interrogating loads of my Western knowledge that have been assumed as fact.

Ubuntu embraces indigenous knowledge of the collective hence the maxim “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*”. Akena (2012) explains indigenous knowledge understanding as being multidimensional, while European culture regards it as being lesser, irrational and primitive. Indigenous knowledge is a multifaceted accumulation of indigenous experiences embracing storytelling, histories and culture. Indigenous understanding is viewed as a possible tool for regaining vital methods of expression that have been purposely suppressed or subjugated by using Western knowledge. The dominance of Western traditions of knowing should not weaken the value of indigenous knowledge. Akena (2012, p. 603) asserts that “whilst information is produced, conceived as civilized, and imposed by using dominant groups onto others without due consent of the recipient population”, the tendency to approve of this action facilitates the domination of imported knowledge. This emphasises that the Western epistemological paradigm enforced its assumptions and images on the colonised indigenous populations. Therefore, while learners read, they find it difficult to relate to what they are reading, and this diminishes their interest in reading, and this does not sustain their reading interest. What is visible to Eurocentric intellectuals as rational information is meaningless to those who were oppressed by apartheid/colonialism. The reader can take a look at his/her context while interrogating the text and ask about the relevance of the Eurocentric context; the Afrocentric context has potentialities and relevance in terms of indigenous understanding.

Code (1995) concurs that epistemology depends on disproportionate assumptions by excluding groups that regard knowledge as either scientific knowledge or no knowledge at all. Code (1995, p. 117) explicitly opposes “the old positivist credo in keeping with which knowledge is either scientific knowledge or it is not information at all. The model of physics is thought of as being incorrect in the ways human beings and communities accumulate information. Indigenous knowledge can create a unitary outline from the multiplicity of association manifestations, information and expertise developing from the investigation method with the community. Kramer and Amos, (2017), and Kim (2017) maintain that information can consist of a selection of productions including experiential expertise (participation and relationships), and

presentational knowledge (what art transmits is presentational expertise). This differs from the “discursive knowledge” of philosophy and technology, which is knowledge that can be put into words, written down, analysed, and legitimised. Presentational knowledge can't be captured in phrases due to the fact that it is too new, unknown, still too intuitive, too instinctive, too somatic (Pässilä, Owens, Kuusipalo-Määttä, Oikarinen & Benmergui, 2017). It is therefore presented using images or provoked through action (expression through forms of conversation and cultural rituals). Propositional expertise involves synthesised information about the community. Practical knowledge is about community skills, roles and traits. This variety of knowledge (presentational, practical and propositional) emerge from indigenous knowledge that comes from what the communities deem as their reality.

2.3.1.3 Nature of reality

Reality is made up of epistemology and ontology. Ontology is the study of being, that is, the character of existence and what creates fact (Gray, 2015). European thought remains divided by two contrasting ontological traditions. Heraclitus (c.535–c.475bc), who lived in Ephesus in ancient Greece, placed emphasis on a changing and emerging world. Parmenides (c.515–c.445bc), who succeeded him, placed quite a diverse emphasis on a perpetual and unchanging reality. Between the Heraclitean ontology of becoming, and a Parmenidean ontology of being, it is the latter that has held command in Western philosophy. Hence, reality is seen as being composed of clearly formed entities with identifiable properties; in contrast to the Heraclitean emphasis on formlessness, chaos, interpenetration and absence. Once entities are held to be stable, they can become represented by symbols, words and concepts. Thus, a representationalist epistemology results in which signs and language are taken to be precise representations of the outside world. This representationalist epistemology orientates our thinking towards outcomes and end-states rather than processes of change and transformation. According to Straume (2017), only recently has postmodern epistemology defied traditional-being ontology with notions of an alignment to truth-seeking. It would be an error, however, to view being ontological as leading to epistemological situations that are unitary and universal. There are three positions that exists: objectivism, subjectivism and constructivism.

The African Ubuntu philosophy adopts a critical stance of reality which does not exist in some external universe but is formed through challenges in relation to the world. As such, subjects build their own meaning in various ways, even in terms of the same incidence. Therefore, more than one recount of events can arise. According to Battle (2009, p. 135), “African epistemology begins with community and moves to independence”. The individuals who make up the community do not necessarily make up the knowledge base, but the idea of knowledge in Africa is within the community. Essential in the powerful wisdom of Africa is the ontological need of the individual to know the self, the community (Battle, 2009, p. 135) and discourses on Ubuntu. The epistemology of daily life is based on cultural experiences and considerations (Van Manen, 2016). This seeks the wisdom of its community in supporting homes to strengthen reading literacy for sustainable learning. To achieve this, is not relying on individuals, but on the collective of the community. The knowledge that they have accumulated over the years from their experiences forms their banks of knowledge. How the community views their reality will determine what is going on and what needs to be done to transform their reality and establish appropriate forms to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

2.3.1.4 Basic objectives and assumptions

Khoza (1994) posits that Ubuntu is a notion that emphasises supportiveness, teamwork, and cohesion. It is the basis of a social agreement that surpasses the narrow regulations of the nuclear family but is extended to kinship linkage and the community, especially in terms of moral virtues, ethical traits, and humanness to promote reading literacy as a goal of Ubuntu. (Ramose, 1999). Africans frequently say of those who lack Ubuntu are not real people (Dandala, 2009) or that they're even ‘animals’ (Pembroke, 2017, p. 52). Those who completely fail to exhibit human (ethical) excellence, have as an alternative actualised their lower, improper character (Ramose, 1999).

Gyekye (2010) further explains how people turn out to be real humans when they show Ubuntu by knowing what it is to commune or staying pleasantly and cohesively with others. On the other hand, there is what Sigger, Polak and Pennink (2010) call ‘identification’, being counted as being close, experiencing existence as bound to others, belonging and collaborating, and considering oneself a part of the complete

entity, where one displays the function to being sympathetic, being dedicated to others, responding to others' goals, and performing for others' benefits. These supportive behaviours exhibit characteristics of collaboration, permitting others to make deliberate and wise choices, practising camaraderie and empathy, accepting that which is true, reaching for community-enhancement goals, and displaying reasons for being regarded as a productive member of the community. Since the act of identifying and sharing with other people, displays cohesion and concern for others, this can basically be what the West construes as friendliness or an immense feeling of filial love. In contrast, starting divisions, hoping for misfortunes, and practising individuality and materialism lead to deeds such as killing, raping, deception, manipulation, corruption, and breaking communal rules (Metz, 2011).

2.3.1.5 Values of Ubuntu

Mbigi (1997) highlights five key social values of Ubuntu known as the 'collective finger's theory'. A thumb, although it is strong, cannot kill aphids on its own; it would require the collective cooperation of the other fingers (Taylor, 2017). Fingers must be seen as individuals who cooperate in a collective way in order to attain a definite objective. Additionally, the fingers represent the essential values that are requirements in order to generate and uphold a collective culture. The corresponding values are survival, solidarity, compassion, respect and dignity (Mbigi, 1997). Eliastam (2015) determines that Ubuntu is a collective value system grounded in the above core values, which are discussed below.

i. Survival

Survival is the most valuable characteristic of Ubuntu. It emanates from the confidence of everyone in the community, coupled with brotherly love and care so crucial to conquering problems (Bertsch, 2012). This guides collective perception to view survival as being possible through communal care and collaborations; that is, we depend on each other for survival and sustenance (Riedy, 2017). Theletsane (2012) labels survival as the capability to live regardless of problems. Imperiale and Vanclay (2016) concur that survival is displayed as a personal duty in the spirit of service concerning the survival of the community. Through a collective and collaborative spirit, Africans have developed a shared will to live despite the atrocities of apartheid and colonialism. To promote reading literacy for sustainable studying through supportive

home environments, schools, communities and its leaders need to work collectively with the educators and parents to believe in one another for survival and support.

ii. Essence of solidarity

During the young and tender years, Africans are conscientised to take into account that difficult future ahead with its untold responsibilities which can only be performed as a collective (Bertsch, 2012). Generally, the concept of someone as an individual within the Ubuntu context does not exist; in fact, 'self' refers to the community (Naude, 2017). Migheli (2017) also mentions that people are described at the heritage of the collective community such that community desires to turn out to be more critical than one's personal goals. In South Africa this spirit embodies the Batho Pele slogan "we care". Taken collectively, the spirit of survival and solidarity appear to be lacking in communities who now are swept into the Western value-system (Bertch, 2012). Mulaudzi (2012) posits that Ubuntu is about solidarity, sharing obligations and the knowledge that there is power in numbers. Tutu (2010) articulated that as humans we are bound by the virtue that we are human, nothing should separate us although we may come from different countries, race or gender; we are all the same. At school, within the community, and with local leaders, this significant spirit of harmony means that interested parties must collectively engage everyone in participating to find ways that promote reading literacy and share responsibility in making that possible by empowering each other. The teacher must be able to reach out to the parents/guardians, to the local librarians, to the NGOs and the local councilor, to function as a unit to make communities literate by showing solidarity towards the quest to survive in a highly competitive global society.

iii. Compassion

In Africa, being concerned for other people is recognised in terms of compassion (Naicker, 2015). Zembylas (2017) concurs that compassion is a human character which considers the predicaments of others and looks to assisting them. In Africa, compassion is lending a hand to others and exercising altruism in order that relationships and friendships can be made (Du Plooy, 2014). Moyo and Ramsamy (2014) term this as African philanthropy and in addition expound that Africans' interconnectedness means sharing without the expectation of receiving. Mati (2017) adds that African tradition is deeply entrenched inside the African subculture, where

human beings have been generously unselfish without looking to gain anything in return.

Theletsane (2012) confers that Africans are interrelated with each other and that engaging and giving is the best way one may receive. This articulates the Batho Pele slogan "we belong". For an African, compassionate acts show a form of love which is an essential part of communal existence (Henry & Williams, 2015). In promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments, the community through the leadership of the local councillor, together with the local librarian can mobilise the community in giving and sharing stories, books, magazines or any worthy reading materials. While sharing their local stories, the promotion of compassion towards each other is engendered. These stories can be written and read for future gatherings and kept as historical records of the community.

iv. Respect and Dignity

"Ukuhlonipha", a Zulu word meaning respect which is the most dominant value of Ubuntu because it specifies the social function of an African in a society (Theletsane, 2012). In the community, respect pertains to regarding the rights of others, values, beliefs, and property of the community (Garnsey, 2016). Respect and dignity take into consideration vital values in many societies and cultures (Theletsane, 2012). It is about merit or excellence attributed to humans by virtue of being humans (De Grunchy, 2011). *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) that is based totally on Ubuntu values also emphasises that the human worth of all people be acknowledged and secured. All the interested parties such as the DoE, principal, teachers, guardians/parents, local councillor, NGOs and local librarian, are individuals with expertise in their various positions; however, each one must treat each other with utmost respect and dignity; only then will the missing ingredients everyone needs in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning, be uncovered and thus benefit all.

2.3.1.6 The ideologies of Ubuntu

Ubuntu is underpinned by five interconnected ideologies:

- sharing and communal possession of possibilities, accountabilities and demanding situations.
- the prominence of humans and relationships over matters.

- participatory choice-making and management; and
- devotion and reconciliation (Malunga, 2006).

These are discussed below.

- i. Sharing and communal ownership of prospects, accountabilities and challenges

According to Mkabela (2015), Africans are known for their strong orientation to collective values, particularly a collective sense of responsibility. This is captured in the Ubuntu philosophy and worldview. The strong positioning of communal values, particularly a cooperative sense of duty of the indigenous African people, should be used to stimulate research which entails the cultivation of connectedness when conducting research. It therefore suggests that research should be collectivist and orientated towards benefiting all the research participants and their collectively determined agendas. There should be a common understanding and a common basis for such an understanding, where the concerns, interests and agendas of the researched are taken into account and vice-versa. Mkabela (2015) adds that sharing a collective obligation complements group spirit which would be required in this community initiative of promoting reading literacy. Smith (2011) affirms that in a community initiative situation, community leaders ought to share and involve parents, guardians, and teachers in the duties of the project they are embarking on. The group leaders may delegate some of their work to others in the project as this will also help to empower all participants.

- v. The prominence of people and relationships in initiatives

Ohmer (2010, p. 9) purports that community engagements are transactional settings in which residents have the opportunity to enhance collective efficacy through relationship-building, maintaining that this engagement “is a potential mechanism for facilitating neighborhood collective efficacy by providing opportunities for neighbours to develop trusting relationships, which creates the foundation for shared expectations and behaviors”. Similarly, Collins, Neal and Neal (2014) contend that civic engagement provides opportunities for individuals to build relationships of trust and reciprocity, which in turn, encourages collective community-building processes. In this study, it is imperative for the participants to frequently encourage the building of strong relationships within the group. The many suggestions that a community can come up

with to promote reading literacy will not strain any relationships because that contribution will help someone within the group. As people live together, there bound to be some instances where group members may not see eye-to-eye with others and conflict may arise which could pose a problem when trying to find solutions on how to promote reading literacy. However, all the participants must trust of each other, and that they must divulge to each other in a spirit of openness if they are not clear on something within the collective. The principle of Ubuntu means that we can create healthy relationships based totally on the recognition that within the network of humanity, everybody is linked to everyone else (Arthur, Issifu & Marfo, 2015).

vi. Participatory leadership

As with community initiatives, appointments to positions call to be performed with comprehensive transparency, integrity and responsibility such that all participants are happy with the whole process (Malunga, 2006). Ubuntu management encourages communal choice-making (Msila, 2014) inside the community programme such that members must work closely and collectively in making choices (Ismail, Zainuddin, & Ibrahim, 2010). If all members are encouraged to take part in selection-making processes, then they will own the process, and thus their experience of being a part of the programme is advanced.

vii. Patriotism/loyalty

According to Malunga (2006), Ubuntu promotes the idea of patriotism in that community programme interests precede private pursuits; in other words, the programme is more important than the people, regardless of whether the person is loved or not. One of the significant elements of the Ubuntu philosophy is loyalty (Msila, 2014). Organisations should encourage a culture of joy amongst individuals and inspire loyalty for the programme such that participants devote their time, experience, and belongingness to the programme.

viii. Reconciliation

Mengesha, Yesuf and Gerber (2015) maintain that community initiatives using Ubuntu concepts in their programmes must have mechanisms for dealing with difficult decision-making situations that are specific to them, that ensures equity, authenticity, reconciliation, and relationship-constructing. Tension may exist when the group is

trying to negotiate strategies on what could be done to create supportive home environments, because homes are different and the group may not all agree about child-rearing habits each family adopts and this may create conflict. Mengesha (2016) Forcing people to change will not resolve conflict and may have negative consequences; however, trying to reach consensus is more advisable as conflict-control accentuates the ideals of equity and reconciliation. In a community programme situation, contributors ought to usually preserve objectivity while there are conflicts within the organisation or between participants, and every case ought to be handled with astuteness to maintain justice and respect.

2.3.1.7 The role of the researcher

The identity of the researcher is consciously or unconsciously embedded in notions of superiority or expertise (Law, Sonn & Mackenzie, 2014). A person regardless of social standing, gender, or race is accepted, valued, and respected for his or her own sake in Ubuntu (Nel, 2017). Hence the role of the researcher has to be in line with these values of Ubuntu, especially of mutual respect. Ubuntu is also thoughtful, considerate, sensitive, generous, wise, humble, and understanding (Chuwa, 2014). These virtues link the community in a web of social causality and reciprocity. Since, as a researcher immersed within the community, one must demonstrate such values.) One exercises reflexivity when one is critically examining oneself and the surroundings; it is about looking at one's own privilege according to situation and place, understanding that people are carrying with them a storehouse of experiences of being marginalised and discriminated against in one form or the other - therefore it is essential that as the researcher, one acknowledges this (Law, Sonn & Mackenzie, 2016; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). As researchers have certain views and own ideas on what constitutes reality, we need to be mindful of that when doing research. Schreiber and Tomm-Bonde (2015) also suggest that the humility Ubuntu principle is connected to issues of strength thus there is a lowering of one's personal feelings of entitlement and the standard way of doing things. Humility implies maintaining a modest view of one's very own importance and rank. Reflexivity is essential and relevant in psychology, in particular for researchers who conduct qualitative research with marginalised communities on touchy topics which include reading literacy, where the family can be embarrassed and not divulge the truth.

Being humble in research entails dealing sympathetically with participants from marginalised positions as many co-researchers may experience various emotional difficulties (Gould & Taylor, 2017). Humility may lead to different epistemological relationships with the participants who may have different interpretations of the data. Having a humble attitude allows us to accept our own imperfections and powerlessness. Through un-numbing our emotions, we are more likely to feel a whole spectrum of emotions, including joy, gratitude and happiness, and hence produce knowledge that better represents the truth which leads to transformative social research (Brown, 2012). This opens the door to a more equal foundation of power within a relationship between researcher and participants. Ubuntu has the incredible ability of enhancing self and others, thus erasing all negatives and threats. Humanness or Ubuntu develops the characters of individuals, families, and communities to promote teamwork; not just one person viewing the other as superior, but as equals. In addition, Ubuntu sympathetically views another's struggles to share in their burden; hence, as participants in the programme, they will be able to share their struggles that they are encountering with reading literacy, and in so doing they can promote it to sustain learning through supportive home environments.

2.3.1.8 The position of the researcher and the researched

As a researcher one needs to be reminded of the fact that the participants are the experts concerning their own lives/worlds/experiences, and the researcher has to learn from their sharing of information. Schreiber and Tomm-Bonde's (2015) study on Ubuntu, where they utilised interviews to generate data, indicates that participants led them in unexpected directions that were important to them, redefining somewhat the foci of their studies. The participants need to feel that they are not looked down upon by these experts (researchers), and researchers need to acknowledge and address the power imbalance between them and the participants which reflects a co-construction of a shared reality (Schreiber & Martin, 2014). Schreiber and Tomm-Bonde (2015) emphasise with the Ubuntu value of solidarity and communality, built on an egalitarian ethic when engaging with participants as researchers. Ubuntu is about harmony, distribution of duties, and the idea that the more people offer to help and do things together, the more ideas will flow in solving problems. Here we are reminded of the geese who fly in a V-formation where the goose leading the flock may get tired, but the next goose will take over the lead (Mulaudzi, 2012). This is how Ubuntu works

by way of distributing responsibility symbolising the spirit of unity and harmony. The role of the researcher and the researched is not one where the researcher always leads the process on what has to happen next but is one where the researched also take the initiative on what needed to happen next.

The researcher will not be overburdened with work because everyone is sharing in the responsibilities of finding ways to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive environments. Schreiber and Tomm-Bonde, (2015) also used reflexivity, made explicit through memory and discussion on how they were situated with regard to the issues under study while remaining open to sharing this with participants. This study, in line with the Ubuntu theory, also used reciprocity to address the power imbalance. For example, through being non-judgmental, listening closely to what participants had to say, and ensuring that participants recognise their voices in the findings (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016; Kornbluh, 2015; Morse, 2015). The roles of the researcher and the researched are not blurred, but is one of working collectively, where roles complement each other, rather than being one of a power struggles.

2.3.1.9 The relevance of Ubuntu for the study

The PIRLS (2016) states that 78% of learners could not read for comprehension (Manasoe, 2017; Maphalala, 2017). Reading such headlines evidently demonstrates that the DBE is not making any inroads to promote reading literacy. The PIRLS (2016) research findings show that we face the enormity of tackling the issue of reading literacy and finding solutions for it; the starting point is to involve the people who are directly affected by it. Schreiber and Tomm-Bonde (2015) had point out that this a key factor for policy and practice, such that we see the problem from the lenses of those whom we want to help. Hence, using the Ubuntu theory for this study seemed an obvious choice because of its people-centred - the people are the main source of finding solutions to their own challenges. Also, the practice of local wisdom traditions to guide research allows previously hidden knowledge to emerge that can aid in this study. To have access to this much revered knowledge, building relationships is central to promoting reading literacy through supportive home environment (Taylor, 2017; Fullan, 2014).

Through building relationships with others, the participants and other interested parties would build trust which fosters collaboration and reciprocity. Participants would be cognisant of interconnectedness as a principle of Ubuntu and thereby empower others by allowing them to act on their own initiative and believe in themselves (Manasoe, 2017). As an African philosophical discourse, Ubuntu is a communal problem-solving practice with cultural experiences associated with living on the African continent to promote human interdependence and cohesive and harmonious co-existence (Whagid, 2016).

Ubuntu is a significant principle in the practice of additional support, where those who have information may share to tackle the issue of promoting reading literacy with other participants. Similarly, it deals with the spirit of compassion to make life meaningful for others, and develops efforts to advance the well being of the underprivileged (Nzimakwe, 2016). People are dynamic, always interactive, creating their worlds of meaning; and Ubuntu serves as a moral guide in these processes. Okoro (2015) maintains that it is this ideal that gave birth to the humanity perspective of Ubuntu, which maintains that it is only in a human community that we can and do fully know, experience and express ourselves as individuals. Ubuntu reflects the deep spiritual truth that we are one, having one planetary life system, one human race, and one interdependent global community.

Ubuntu affords the opportunity of reflexivity which refers to a certain level of consciousness. Reflexivity entails self-awareness (Lambert, Jomeen & McSherry, 2010), which leads to being actively involved in the research process. It is a process of introspection that influences subjectivity in the research process. It must also be a continuous process of reflection by researchers on their values and of recognising, examining, and understanding how their “social background, location and assumptions affect their research practice” (Van der Riet, 2012, p. 17). The key to reflexivity is “to make the relationship between ... the researcher and the participants explicit” (Jootun, McGhee & Marland, 2009, p. 45). This process determines the filters through which researchers are working including the “specific ways in which our own agenda affect the research at all points in the research process” (Gough, 2016, p. 17). However, this does not mean limiting what one can know about social realities. The researcher’s situation does not exist independently of the research process, nor does it completely determine the latter; instead, this must be seen as a dialogue challenging

perspectives and assumptions, both about the social world and of the researcher himself/herself, thus enriching the research process and its outcomes (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, & Caricativo, 2017).

Ubuntu considers the context of any research which may present challenges stemming from what prevails in the community and what the ideal should be. Khupe, Keane and Cameron (2016) distinguish between the actual situation, the hypothetical situation and the arranged situation in education research done from a critical perspective. They define the actual situation as that which prevails in the community, schools and homes. The hypothetical situation is an imagined situation that is based on goals, policies and theories. The arranged situation is collaboratively created by the researcher and participants in the light of the actual and hypothetical situations. The arranged situation, particularly in rural communities of South Africa, is quite often unstable as a result of unplanned circumstances such as deaths and multiple community commitments on the part of participants (Khupe, 2014). Because of this instability, the researcher may not be certain about the direction, nature or content of empowerment or emancipation in a research study (Eckard, 2017). Nonetheless, the arranged situation can have outcomes that stretch beyond knowledge to include community priorities of economic and social development (Gilchrist & Taylor, 2016). I concur with Palaganas et al. (2017) that research has to be defined and enacted in context, and should carry possibilities of transformation and hope for participants.

2.3.1.10 The rhetoric

According to Lunsford (2010), rhetoric is the art of discourse wherein a writer or speaker strives to inform, persuade or motivate particular audiences in specific situations. However, over the last century or so, the academic definition and use of “rhetoric” has evolved to include any situation in which people consciously communicate with each other. In brief, individual people tend to perceive and understand just about everything differently from one another (this difference varies to a lesser or greater degree depending on the situation). This expanded perception has led a number of more contemporary rhetorical philosophers to suggest that rhetoric deals with more than just persuasion - it is a set of methods people use to *identify* with each other, to encourage each other to understand things from one another’s perspectives. Particularly in interpersonal relationships, the capacity to understand or

modify another's perspective is one of the most inherent abilities that humans have. Hence, understanding rhetoric in terms of "identification" helps us to better communicate and evaluate all such situations.

In Ubuntu theory (and in this study), Ubuntu is defined as the potential in African cultures to explicitly show compassion, humanity and dignity (Abdi, 2018). As such, it is crucial in building communities such that they can be identified by qualities of equity, justice, mutual respect and care. In this regard, Ubuntu is therefore a framework of promoting a community subculture that emphasises commonality and interdependence as it recognises a character's popularity as a human being who is entitled to respect, dignity and acceptance from other participants of the community. It resonates with aspects such as building civil society, enhancing community family members, and encouraging social cohesion. In this context, Ubuntu's function in community encourages people to accomplish things that they could do best in assisting others. Since Ubuntu is about building a community of delicate relationships of interdependence, these networks are marked by confirmation and acceptance of others.

However, Dreyer (2015) queries the distinctiveness, importance and efficiency of Ubuntu, as a sensible guide to what needs to be done and how it should be done. His study highlights some of the contradictions inherent in Ubuntu and explores how the anomalies among the ideas and values implicit in Ubuntu can be resolved. This involves the reality whether some of the elements of effective communities such as democracy, citizenship and civil society, are in fact accepted and practised by community members. The belief that Ubuntu is anti-modernist, represents outdated values and stands in the way of efficiency, is controversial.

2.3.2 The Asset-based Approach

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) developed the asset-based model as the ideal approach to community development. At the core of this approach is the belief that every person in the community has capacities, abilities, gifts, skills and social resources (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). The theory asserts that support for communities is possible, feasible and sustainable only if it begins from within. According to this approach, beginning from within means determining available assets (capacities, abilities, gifts, skills and social resources) to be utilised within the community. This

process of identifying available assets is conceptualised as the mapping of assets (Lightfoot, McCleary & Lum, 2014). Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) add that the asset-based approach is a system of building groups from within to realise who they are on the outside; hence, this leads to building these communities from the lower levels until they reach their full potential. Beilin and Reid (2015) interpret it as an “internally focused” tactic to community improvement. The approach is connected to the notion that communities have some assets; they are not completely devoid of resources (Hopkins & Rippon, 2015) - they can best add directly to what is already there. The researcher acknowledges that hard work aimed at promoting reading literacy through supportive home surroundings can simply work if they acknowledge and utilise what these homes and their surroundings already possess. The asset-based approach is a second route to community development which contests the deficit model which emphasises the needs, deficiencies and problems of the community (Cameron & Wasacase, 2017).

According to Taylor (2017), the approach of always concentrating on the needs has always been used concerning development initiatives in Southern Africa. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) stress that the needs-based approach generates a mental map of groups who undermine their personal capacities and strengths. On the other hand, asset-based strategies are recognised as being fundamental to community development work as they are preoccupied with bringing human beings and groups collectively together to stimulate high-quality transformation using their personal knowledge, talents and lived experiences (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2012). The asset-based approach is in line with the Positive Psychology strategy with its focus on looking at the inside and outside of available assets which can be described as the collective resources which individuals and communities have at their disposal that they can use to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning.

The application of this approach brings about a range of changes for the individual, groups, organisations and communities linked to this way of working. At the individual level, the asset-based approach is synonymous with the strengths-based-practice (Garven & MacLean, 2016) which is a moving away from the narrow focus on the limitation of people and preoccupation with problems, treatment and case management. Instead the strength-based-practice involves people to locate, articulate and build upon their individual assets or capabilities (sometimes termed their inner

resources) with an emphasis on what they can do, not what they cannot (Pulla, 2012). In other words, regardless of previous experience or history, everybody has something valuable to contribute.

At the individual level, the asset-based approach involves personal co-production (Griffiths, Foley & Prendergast, 2009). This form of co-production generates value directly for the individual. Some authors believe in collective co-production rather than the individual form of co-production that has dominated the European context (Findley & Matos, 2015). Putting ideas together as a community will open doors on how to promote reading literacy. The Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is central to asset-based approaches - the idea of people in control of the community's lives through development of their inherent capacities. It is thought that such control enables people to become better connected with each other thus encouraging a spirit of cooperation, mutual support and caring (McLean & McNeice, 2012).

2.3.2.1 Levels of community assets

Chikoko and Khanare (2012) cited Mourad and Way (1998) categorised community assets into three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary (outside level). Primary level assets are the ones that are in the immediate environment, while secondary and tertiary (outside) levels are not.

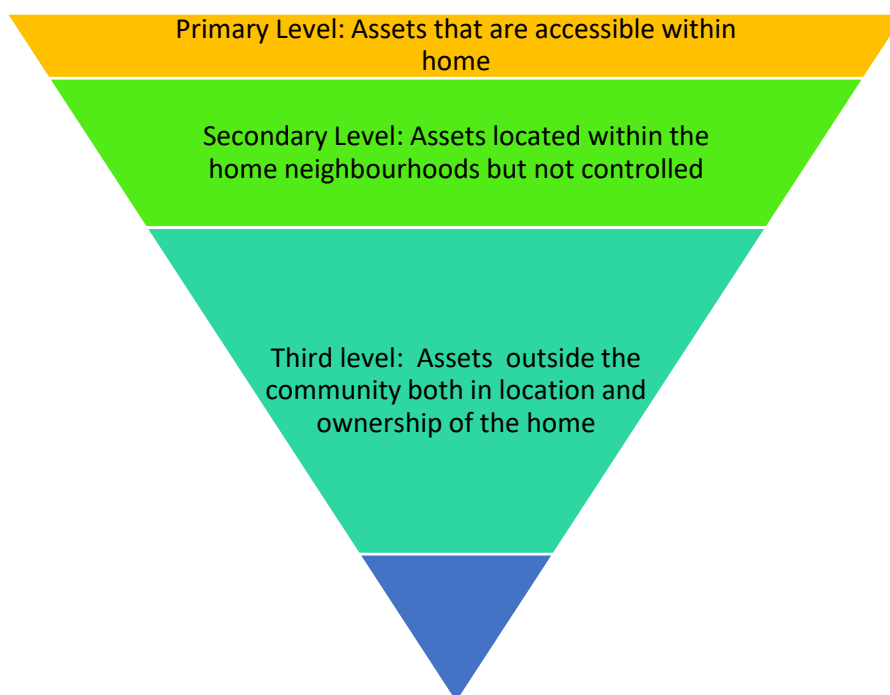


Figure 2.1: Levels of community assets. Source: Mourad and Way (1998) (Chikoko and Khanare (2012: 31)

i. Primary level: The supportive home environments

The primary tier encompasses the assets located in the homes, such as the actual structure of the home; one being the skills inherent in parents, guardians, siblings, extended families, and loved ones. The home equips children for reading development in terms of language (Bendezú et al., 2017; Chansa-Kabali, Serpell, & Lyytinen, 2014; Hart, Sooden, Johnson, Schatschneider & Taylor, 2013), and other early kinds of literacy, both conceptual and behavioural, that facilitate their first steps into the literate world (Kaunda, 2013; Musonda, 2011). However, some researchers point out that most studies have relied on single indicators such as family income (Hanscombe et al., 2012; Son & Morrison, 2010). They contend that there has been less exploration concerning the support that the child receives when reading at home, and other aspects which are strongly associated with direct instruction. Some may argue that the structure of the home is quite small due to the socio-economic status of the family, and the learner may not have his/her own space and time to read (Tucker-Drob et al., 2011).

However, the lack of private space and being in constant contact with family members, can be turned into opportunities to promote reading within the home. The lack of space that many researchers have deemed to be a downside may be seen as an asset within the asset-based approach. Although research provides evidence that socio-economic circumstances impact negatively on the development of cognition, this study shows that low SES is not conclusive to stifle a child's ability to practise reading (Razza et al., 2010; Chansa-Kabali & Westerholm, 2014). Children aspire to read regularly when they observe that it is socially valued and enjoyable for adults. They also become motivated when engaging with other people on what they are reading, and when they receive constructive and supportive feedback from others. Access to books is not enough: South Africa needs an army of adults reading with children; and the home is one place where you normally find more than one adult at a time.

To attain this ability in the face of poverty and adversity, children need adults who take notice of them, care for them, and make them feel secure, safe and cherished. Masten (2010) calls this an everyday magic – competence and resilience are advanced

through indelible relationships among nurturing and able adults. The complexity of the process calls for a multifaceted method that requires the specialised knowledge of the teachers.

ii. Secondary level: Local community of the home

The secondary tier involves the direct local community of the home, namely the school, local library, local businesses and associations. School or local libraries perform a pivotal role in developing, increasing and helping enrich literate environments. Regardless of where the library is positioned, research has indicated that the provision of books that students can choose from is positively related to reading achievement (Allington et al., 2010). By caring for and sharing reading and literacy materials for all age groups, impartial and free access to information is made available for the whole community (Galloway & Lesaux, 2015). Libraries help in accessing records which unlock possibilities for gaining sustainable knowledge and promoting literacy development, and ultimately empowerment in an increasingly more elaborate global sense (UNESCO, 2011). Through imparting information to all, libraries inspire essential citizenship in an all-inclusive democratic society. Additionally, they play a major role in bridging the digital gap by means of giving free access to information, in particular, the internet (Huang & Hong, 2016). Also, libraries offer materials and spaces to all reading interest groups of all ages and for all disciplines, as they are suitable places (usually centrally located) for providing literacy education.

In addition to the use of the libraries by parents and learners to disrupt the cycle of illiteracy (or semi-literacy), supplying families with literacy and intergenerational activities (Younger & Schrodt, 2016) helps to establish reading as a promoter of sustainable learning. The librarian's function is to acquire and make available suitable materials, and to make the library a reading-friendly zone or invitational environment which can be easily accessed by all members of the community, learners in particular (Uzomba, 2014). However, simply presenting an assortment of quality organised reading and literacy materials will attract those community individuals who are already spending time at the library – the challenge is to reach the public who are not frequenting libraries. A starting point may be going into the community and provide appropriate reading and literacy materials in classrooms, homes, places of

employment, religious institutions, Government agencies, and different community gathering settings.

Another way is to organise innovative and stimulating programmes within the library, such as writing essays for literacy competitions, joining book clubs, free-writing tasks, creative writing education, summer time reading activities, celebrations and festivities, book exhibitions, storytelling sessions and workshops for basic skills for reading literacy. Such programmes also permit adults with low literacy levels who may have no formal education to take advantage of these learning opportunities (Guo, 2017). This may also guide the children of these adult learners to participate in reading literacy programmes. Modern librarians are facilitators of information and sustainable learning possibilities, who focus on competencies, recognising consumer needs, and promoting communication.

Libraries and literacy are “partners” just like schools and literacy. The school library is associated with the education system to enhance essential literacy education by supporting the curriculum and academic goals. Primary school libraries, for instance, can be very instrumental in supporting the development of reading abilities and promoting a reading habit (Flood, Heath & Lapp, 2015). Educators also want to be professional and should utilise college libraries effectively and show learners how to use them as invitational places to broaden their knowledge base.

The youth who come from deprived backgrounds and for children and adults who are not part of an academic system, the libraries might be their best chance to have easy access to books. Where school libraries are rare, the general public or community library could fill this gap and vice-versa. Ideally, every learner should have access to the school and the public libraries. If a school has little physical space, the community library (if available) can assist by sponsoring containers with reading materials. Libraries, whether within the school or outside school, public or community, play a vital role in growing and supporting a reading culture by fostering a love for reading. Pleasure gained from reading ingrains a consistent reading habit.

iii. Tertiary level: Outside/Other interested parties

The third level consists of interested parties such as universities and research institutions not in close proximity to the community. The successful utilisation of assets involves drawing from the first level in advance than transferring immediately to the

secondary level, and so on. This facilitates the change in communities that were not previously willing to act as agents of promoting reading literacy. However, Myende and Chikoko (2014) stated that despite these levels of assets in the community, the deficit approach still prevails.

In the home context, parents, guardians, learners and extended families think of themselves as being powerless to solve their problems without outside help (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). External agencies in turn might see humans inside homes as being deprived of property or capacity to deal with the demanding situations they face (Bryson, 2018). This situation will possibly generate low self-esteem in communities concerning overcoming their challenges if it is exclusively reliant on external intervention (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). However, the asset-based approach resists this deficit model and suggests that communities must unite to assist in solving their personal predicaments thus developing sustainable partnerships (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). This method is also powerful in making sure that groups understand themselves as being creative and able to look after themselves (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007; Myende and Chikoko, 2014). In South Africa campaigns by the Department of Basic Education such as National Reading Strategies, Nal'wali, Campaign through its Funda Leader Campaign will become truly active and relevant when communities see them as partners rather than just organisations that are there to help them (Bryson, 2018)

Rachmiati (2010) concurs that communities can create their very own learning centres (CLCs) which may be located within the community and managed by the people within the community. A CLC may be the learning space, apart from the home which will likely be located nearby. This will have a huge impact on the promoting literacy in an ongoing manner amongst newcomers who are able to take this information home to help their family members in promoting reading literacy. A CLC also helps to get access to primary education, literacy and lifelong learning for people in far-off areas, to those belonging to other ethnic and linguistic subgroups, the jobless, out-of-school children and teenagers, illiterate adults, as well as the physically impaired (Rachmiati, 2010). The essential function of a CLC is to provide information, activities, and precise services so as to improve the understanding, competencies, and outlook towards the self-improvement of learners ultimately leading to the development of the whole community.

The CLC may additionally assist as a material centre or a general community centre, and not just a learning centre, empowering them to have the ability of figuring out services and programmes that concentrate on the needs of the community. A number of these programmes also may include simple literacy instructions for youths and adult learners, livelihood programmes, fitness and nutrition programmes, or cultural activities. The CLC may partner with other Government organisations and private groups to initiate such programmes. In addition to materials provided by schools, CLCs must offer a wide assortment of books and teaching-learning aids. Most of these materials need to be written in the language of the community. The content of these books ought to be about the community or displaying appreciation for the community.

2.3.2.2 Components of the asset-based approach

Rather than focusing on problem-fixing within communities and addressing such challenges entirely with external skills and funding, the components of the asset-based approach identifies individuals, groups and institutions within a community that may play key roles in growing a community's assets (Boyle, Coote, Sherwood, & Slay, 2010). The planned asset-based method consists of numerous procedures that are vital in realising and ensuring that the community assets are used for their targeted purposes. These components are mapping of assets, appreciative inquiry, and mobilising assets.

i. The mapping of assets

Boyle, Coote, Sherwood and Slay (2010) regard asset-mapping as ascertaining and recording the strengths and contributions of the people and other resources available in a community, and is often considered the key first step to conscientise people and companies to understand what assets they have within themselves – such as resources and competencies. Asset-mapping constitutes one of the important techniques of asset operating which is considered as a way of building a document of the strengths and contributions of the people that is inclusive of all the community members before they start the intervention. Asset-mapping uncovers the assets of the whole community and highlights the interconnectedness among them, which in turn exposes other hidden talents (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). It permits people to think positively about the area in which they stay or work in and makes people to understand how other people see and experience the same community.

Asset-mapping is considered the vital starting point to changing the way groups work collectively (O'Sullivan, Corneil, Kuziemy, & Toal-Sullivan, 2015). Asset-mapping lets individuals in a community to conceptualise the things they want to improve; whether physical, social, emotional or cultural (Alevizou, Alexiou & Zamenopoulos, 2016; Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, & MacLennan, 2015). How each individual's property or assets or talents can be used may contribute to a plan aimed towards making the upgrades they have identified. Asset-mapping consists of documenting the tangible (bodily property e.g. parks, network centres, church buildings etc.) and intangible (non-public belongings e.g. stories, capabilities, expertise, passion etc.) resources of a community, viewing it as a pool (of assets) to be conserved and utilised.

Having a map or an inventory is not just for simply gathering facts, it is a development and empowerment system (Hopkins & Rippon, 2015). This 'mapping' approach is designed to promote new connections, new relationships and new possibilities among people and groups by making observable positive changes, while supporting the use of sources such as people, families, corporations and groups. It could moreover assist in recognising what's working for the community as a richer idea of the property or assets in an area can engender community interest and movement. Asset-mapping is only effective if it is performed through the group with an agreed community vision (Hopkins & Rippon, 2015) that can deliver a degree of balance to the work that is executed, especially to collect data related to the problems and desires of the community, in addition to spotlighting any prevalent inequalities people might experience in getting access to valued belongings, opportunities to influence choices on the equitable distribution of scarce resources, and overlooked in getting opportunities to make a meaningful contribution to society (Demirtas, Hannah, Gok, Arslan & Capar, 2017). To summarise, asset-mapping starts the process of identifying the most relevant assets to implement strategies aimed toward promoting reading literacy for sustainable reading through supportive home environments.

ii. The mobilisation of assets

During the mobilising level of the asset-based approach, the emphasis is on assembling and activating assets to reap preferred community outcomes. Underpinned by an open and engaging process of sharing facts, it's far important to preserve the vision of the community at the centre of any planning efforts and to

mobilise contributions around the strengths of the community. In this way, the individuals can focus on reaching consensus ensuring that everyone interested in events is able to contribute to succeed in stimulating progress (Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016). The participants have equal say over what happens about their initiative of promoting reading literacy; there will be no obligation to try one individual's idea, but everyone's ideas will be taken into consideration.

Additionally, reaching consensus using the asset-based method, fosters collaborations, partnerships, and new opportunities (Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016). In other words, an "association of associations" may emerge that permits and projects growth in promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments and community engagement. Mobilising previously dormant inherent assets in individuals in the community regarding reading literacy development and information-sharing processes, moves beyond locating and building relationships among assets. This community building process aims to mobilise the community's assets fully for two important purposes: Developing the community, and strengthening the community's ability to shape and exchange information (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Hopkins and Rippon (2015) describe this phase as mobilising citizens to grow to be self-organising and lively by sharing information and resources and identifying common interests. Sharing knowledge creates another asset for the community - it creates a knowledge bank for the community.

Strengthening the communities' ability to shape and exchange information is essential to the success of local plans and strategies for reading literacy. The capacity to exchange information at a local level needs to be strengthened, in addition to an understanding of where existing communication channels have developed. It is key to identify local communication leaders and geographic spaces that can be strengthened, validated and expanded. The goal is to increase the capacity for a community to exchange its vital stories, plans and definitions of what is reading literacy and how best it can be promoted for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) state that this focus on communication paths "rebuilds the central nervous system of a community, without which the process of restoring the love for reading becomes unimaginable" (p.351).

2.3.2.4 Possible challenges of the asset-based approach

Some critics say that the asset-based based approach is 'ill-defined and can embody an extensive form of strategies and interventions which have little in common (Lorenc, Petticrew, Welch&Tugwell, 2012, p. 234). It is understandable that the DoE would be reluctant to accept an approach that will expose its current ineffective curriculum when it comes to reading literacy, especially if it disturbs the status-quo. Some officials may be suspicious of both community-led initiatives and community development approaches, which continue to be regarded as being very low because it lacks evidence like a formal assessment. Smith and Wilhelm (2010), and Howie (2010) hold that it is not always the dearth of evidence that appears to be the issue; as an alternative, it is the lack of status of the evidence on asset-based strategies.

Supporters of asset-based processes argue that it is the very width and variety of these approaches that are their fundamental strengths. The complex and contestable nature of reading literacy, and the teaching of it, is a hindrance; linear interventions exacerbate the situation rather than challenging the techniques which have been used in promoting (or stifling) reading literacy (Lorenc, Petticrew, Welch& Tugwell, 2012). Critics speculate that an intrinsic conflict exists between the do-it-yourself, a self-sufficiency attitude, and accountability. The DoE officials argue that If community individuals are endorsed to mobilise on their very own accord, and bypass policymakers, then policies will become white elephants leaving little room for review (Friedli, 2012). Friedli (2012) argues that the strength of the asset movement is that it generates dialogue to redress the stability of power and remove the tension among conflicting parties.

Morgan (2014) asserts that the test is to make certain that the criticisms or perceived weaknesses of the method are taken seriously and that we think about methods of addressing them, such as prioritising theoretically-based positive paradigms for reading literacy and involving individuals and local groups cordially and effectively, which leads to connecting the person with the community and to the broader society. Hence, collaborations must be choice-focused, multi-professional and multidisciplinary promoting self-efficacy and moving away from the reliance on outside agencies.

Friedli (2012) adds that the quality of resilience emanating out of social injustice and other inequalities is a powerful tool to overcome obstacles that hinder the process of reading literacy. To reject the asset-based approach for material intents could be simplistic and may deny literacy opportunities for the marginalised. Bull, Mittelmark, and Kanyeka (2013) warn that asset-based approaches should co-exist with strategies addressing social justice. I, as the main researcher, contend that the asset-based total approach to reading literacy is not only appropriate, but necessary because it addresses the issue of social justice as it gives the power back to the people by emancipating them through literacy.

2.3.2.5 Relevance of the asset-based approach

According to Hopkins and Rippon (2015), asset-based approaches supplement services and other movements that are meant to decrease inequalities, while focusing on the needs of the community. Communities are empowered to take control over their situations; hence, this closes the gap that had been created by the lack of viable strategies in dealing with their problems. Asset-based approaches harness individual and shared abilities of community members by ensuring that the community members participate in designing community improvement plans and efforts. Community participants' critiques are heard and act as monitoring guiding forces behind community improvement projects and intensifies communication capacities among community members (Kramer & Amos, 2017).

The asset-based approach is a bottom-up approach that evolved from a service-orientated perspective to an empowering tool. It implies a shift from a mentality of supremacy (or subordination) to collaboration, lively partnerships where equal participation is emphasised and practised (Heath & Holmqvist, 2017). While the identification of problems remains an important part of the approach, trouble-fixing is central in making and rebuilding relationships among individuals, spouses, children and institutions (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Within an individual's home environment there exists a number of assets that are untapped and remain dormant which can contribute in promoting reading literacy. The asset-based approach helps to create the awakening of the community by giving them information to recognise their assets and not remain helpless where they can help themselves. This is done by

informing communities to focus on what is current in the environment, and what the competencies inherent in the people and the surroundings are. It does not start with what's lacking or intricate, as they already recognise what their problems are and they are looking for answers. It has a robust internal intention, which means that problem-fixing and mission-development need to come from the inside. The significance of inherent creativeness combined with control and influence is emphasised as each individual is unique; but through collective consciousness, individuals' working capabilities, skills in sharing information, and other inherent skills may be exploited.

The asset-based approach is clearly defined as relationship-driven (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) in that relationship-building is acknowledged, to combat different dividing forces that drive individuals apart which is a remnant of a history of segregation and diverse bureaucracy in apartheid South Africa. The relationships which can be developed while using this approach, need to be based on strengths and competencies of the individuals' participation, and not on the weaknesses and problems.

2.4 INTEGRATING OF UBUNTU AND THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

According to Lent (2017), integrating is more than just a synopsis of the rudiments of each theory. Tangible integration has the freedom to critically take a look at a number of the conventions within the authentic theories; such as integrating the Ubuntu theory in this study to complement the asset-based approach. Ubuntu's integral feature, particularly collectivism as an African social culture, translates into the needs of the individual being less important than the needs of the community. This collectivist mentality encourages teamwork and promotes a non-competitive environment (Manasoe, 2017). Ubuntu as a moral guideline is quite effective and efficient when paired with the asset-based approach. Ubuntu, as analysed by Nzimakwe (2016), is a worldview of African societies, and a determining component within the formation of perceptions which has an impact on social behaviour. When the community is busy working using the asset-based approach into finding ways to help themselves, it makes the engagement diverse, thus leading to the best suggested possibility.

The theory of Ubuntu integrated by the asset-based approach illustrates a shift in paradigm; a move away from a deficiency, needs and problem-based orientation to a strengths and asset-rich thinking which includes communities (Demeshane, 2015).

The basic premise of both Ubuntu and asset-based communities, no matter how poor, is that they have strengths, assets and energies which can contribute to a self-sustained way of altering their situation. Both the Ubuntu and asset-based approaches do not focus on what people do not have, but as an alternative how they can cope and survive, no matter the restraints and limitations (Nel, 2015; Schenck, Nel & Louw, 2010).

Ubuntu includes the moral code of how this new-formed engagement should be, considering that information is extracted from the broader historical past of the community, inclusive of the political, legal and economic environment, institutions and infrastructure. However, the manner in which they are acknowledged and dealt with differs between the asset-based approach and Ubuntu. It seems as if the Ubuntu theory is more *laissez faire* - resenting interference from institutions. As long as any person has some kind of positive contribution to make, they are free to take part. However, this can be risky as anybody can take over and leave the community again in a dependent state, whereas the asset-based approach is structured in a more backside-up, supportive manner, prioritising and emphasising on constructing the communities, while aware of the mobilisation of the assets and strengths in communities; a constituent not highlighted within the Ubuntu theory.

The purpose is to bring to the fore hidden 'gifts' to complement what is already there in order to cultivate a positive vision of what is needed (Blackman, Buick, & O'Flynn, 2016). This transformation is activated from the community by way of developing or discovering, reaffirming and improving their sometimes-hidden talents, interests, information, sources, objectives and hopes of individual, families and groups in communities (Facer & Pahl, 2017). When people become conscious of their abilities and strengths, the likelihood is that their self-esteem will increase, they become energised and they start taking responsibility for their own development. However, the Ubuntu concept does not explain in detail the process of acquiring these assets, an aspect which ought to be intertwined in the integrated approach.

Moreover, the asset-based approach while revealing the assets of all participants, is not definite about community shared participation; however, in this study the integrated approach has a more positive outlook in that such outcomes are anticipated. Therefore, Ubuntu unfalteringly maintains its philosophy that it promotes communities

to collaboratively work together and to actively participate in finding ways of transforming their challenging situations. As described by Khoza (2006, p.6), the capacity in a subculture to reveal compassion, empathy, dignity, kindness and mutual respect leads to community-building.

A sustainability measurement instrument is included in both the Ubuntu and asset-based approaches. A network is sustainable if it improves its capabilities and assets, and provides effective support to the community with opportunities to promote educational goals through reading literacy (Green & Haines, 2015; Schenck, Nel & Louw, 2010). The integrated Ubuntu-asset-based approach not only empowers the present community, but also empowers generations to come, by sharing and practising what they have learned from the integration.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter firstly clarified the concepts that are used in the study and dealt in-depth with the theories underpinning this study, that is, Ubuntu and the asset-based approach. In the Ubuntu theory the chapter clearly explained how knowledge is constructed as well as explaining the nature of reality from the lens of an Ubuntu theorist. The chapter also examined the values and principles of Ubuntu and also clarified the role of the researcher in using the Ubuntu theory. The relevance of the Ubuntu theory for this study was also justified and the rhetoric used in Ubuntu theory was analysed. This chapter also looked at the intricacies of the asset-based approach such as the levels and the components. The chapter consistently deliberated on the challenges and relevance of the asset-based approach. Additionally, it showed how the integrating of the Ubuntu and the asset-based approach operates. The Ubuntu and the asset-based approach theories are people-orientated, putting the individuals in the community at the centre. It acknowledges the individual is important but his/her strength is very limited without the input of the community. Chapter 3 deals with reviewing literature, focusing mainly on the BRICS countries on their current situation of promoting reading literacy

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deliberates on current literature promoting reading literacy in the five largest emerging market economies which are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). It deals in-depth with the current situation in BRICS; however, there is a need to first clarify what makes BRICS into emerging market economies, and what have BRICS done to promote reading literacy? The chapter explores the need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments, as a home has an influence, effect and impact on the learner. Further, the key elements such as advocacy and shared story-reading to promote reading literacy are analysed. Additionally, the benefits of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environment, are outlined. The chapter concludes by mentioning the barriers that obstruct reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

3.2 CURRENT SITUATION IN PROMOTING LITERACIES IN BRICS COUNTRIES

The current situation on promoting reading literacy emerged as one of the objectives of the study; therefore, I had to look into what is the situation on promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments of the five largest emerging economies (BRICS).

3.2.1 Definition of an Emerging Market Economy

Emerging Economies are low-income, speedily improving nations directed by using financial emancipating policies implemented in large part after the Second World War [WW2] (Kim & Li, 2014). This rapid growth was accomplished by implementing the appropriate policies they recognised to stimulate reforms, and this addressed the need for turning around the country from stagnation into a booming economy. Keukeleire et al. (2011) concur by broadly defining an emerging economy as a country making an attempt to change by improving its economy with the intention of elevating its performance to that of the sector's extra innovative nations.

Evidently the Second World War, apartheid-South Africa and other forms of instability in each of the emerging economy countries ushered in an aftermath of challenges such as economic uncertainties. The individuals in each country identified an asset within each other to approach the challenge one would be confronting. Expressions such as 'growing markets', 'rising markets' and 'swiftly industrialising international nations' are frequently used interchangeably. Emerging markets are countries which are in a transition period from developing to developed markets due to rapid progress and industrialisation.

3.2.2 Characteristics of an Emerging Market Economy

Researchers have observed different characteristics unique to emerging markets. Montiel (2011) posits that an emerging market has three categories of common characteristics such as physical features in terms of distinctive socio-political and economic characteristics in terms of political instability, insufficient legal framework, fragile social discipline, exclusive cultural characteristics and restricted personal income, in addition to the influence governments have in economic life. The cultural aspect of emerging markets is dissimilar from high-income countries as people in emerging markets are socially rooted and follow cultural hierarchies (Bang, Josh, & Singh, 2016).

3.2.3 The Importance of Reading Literacy to Emerging Market Economies

Winthrop, Bulloch, Bhatt and Wood (2013) maintain that the 21st century is marked by worldwide interconnections as individuals, capital, information, and goods and services transcending borders at an ever-increasing rate. They maintain that by 2030, not only will emerging economies make contributions of 65% of the worldwide GDP, but they will also be home to most of the working people of the world. Business will increasingly seek to recruit proficient employees it needs from these economies, located largely in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the end, the young people in these areas might be the engines of the world's future upsurge and prosperity. As populations in most of the world's rich nations start to age, the massive younger population inside the lower and middle-income countries will increasingly come to be the world's workers. The private sector will increasingly expand into these regions as emerging market economies capture the majority of global GDP.

3.2.4 The Advances of BRICS in relation to PISA and PIRLS in Reading Literacy

According to the World Bank statistics, it is seen that BRICS have a population of more than 40% of the total world population and covers about a quarter of the world's surface area (Yilmaz, 2017), thus BRICS gained a strong economic power base together. Foreign direct investment is considered as an active factor for economic development and is seen as an important factor for market requirements, competitiveness and development of emerging economies. Given these conditions, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have to increase foreign direct investments to reach the levels of developed economies (Nistor, 2015).

The acronym was coined in 2001 to focus on the superb position of the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China [BRIC] (O'Neill, 2001). It pointed out that the excessive growth rates, financial capacity and demographic improvement were going to position BRIC at the forefront (O'Neill, 2001). The four nations themselves started to meet as a group in 2006 and it was only in 2010 that South Africa was invited to sign up for the organisation, which became BRICS in 2011. Oropeza and García (2014) maintain that due to their geographic and demographic dimensions, BRICS economies are critically influencing worldwide development, particularly in low-income countries (LIC). Kirton (2015) points out therefore that the principle areas of BRICS' cooperation have to encompass exchanging best practices in education, striving for inclusive monetary growth with the purpose of eradicating poverty, dealing with unemployment, and promoting social inclusion.

3.2.4.1 Reading literacy in Brazil

The 2015 International Programme for Student Assessment (PISA) showed that almost half the number of the Brazilian students assessed were below the level of learning and considered inadequate, particularly in reading (OECD, 2016). However, the PISA examination raised questions on the use of reading as a social exercise citing that students liked talking about and exchanging books with friends and family, particularly comics which are most frequently read in Brazil (Baptista et al., 2016). A study was conducted following the results from PISA 2015, where it was found that reading comic books negatively correlated with reading comprehension, whereas the amount of school reading definitely correlated with the comprehension of written

textual content (Baptista et al., 2016). Seeing that magazines, newspapers, and comic books are easy to access, inexpensive, and takes less time to read than fiction or non-fiction books, it remained as sources of reading discourse for children.

One aspect of the home environment that can be affected by poverty is book access (Neuman & Moland, 2019). It has been proven that book access can improve reading literacy skills. However, in reality in growing nations, a large percentage of the population residing beneath the poverty line, are affected adversely by the inability to access books, thus impeding reading literacy.

i. The Brazilian's efforts to promote reading literacy

To be proactive and tackle the situation of low literacy scores by the international assessment bodies, the Brazilian Government initiated a national public school literacy development programme called "*Reading First*". It was found that pupil's reading results improved over the years through brilliant reforms and the effective implementation of *Reading First*.

Da Silva Baltar and Da Mota (2016) point out that very little has been done at home to influence Brazilian children's reading literacy and language skills (Da Silva Baltar & Da Mota, 2016). Kairaluoma, Torppa, Westerholm, Ahonen and Aro's (2013) inquiry indicates that reading problems may be located in teenage years. But the authors did look into social and cultural factors such as the home environment and reading experiences and its relationship to reading problems. These are particularly essential in developing societies, and the researcher argues that a comprehensive version of reading achievement must consist of social and cultural variables. The promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments particularly focuses on social factors such as parental involvement in the child's reading, such that learners will be motivated when they see parents prioritising plans to access books (Kim, Lee & Zuilkowski, 2019).

3.2.4.2 Overview of reading literacy in Russia

Students in the Russian Federation and Singapore surpassed their international peers in reading achievement at the fourth grade, consistent with PIRLS (Mullis & Martin, 2015). In keeping with the results of PIRLS posted in December 2017, school students in the Russian Federation had the best average reading achievement score (581) and

25% of its students surpassed the PIRLS international benchmark. Conducted every 5 years by TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College, PIRLS is an international assessment standard of reading comprehension at the fourth-grade level in 50 countries worldwide (Martin, Mullis, & Hooper, 2017). The inquiry analyses how well fourth-grade students can interpret, combine, and examine narrative plots and records in especially complex texts, which will provide an indication of the home, school, and classroom contexts in which students learn how to read. However, Russia was not always first in the world ranking, as according to PISA for the year 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012, Russia was not among the top ten countries (OECD, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2011, 2014a). Subsequently, through research, it was discovered that the Russian participants lacked critical-thinking skills. In 2010, Russia then introduced critical-thinking skills in their national assessment (Carnoy, Khavenson, & Ivan ova, 2015). However, critical-thinking is a high order skill, and if one does not understand what one has read, critical-thinking may never occur (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018).

i. What are Russian's getting right in promoting reading literacy

The Russian Federation's strong performance at the 10th percentile in all 4 PIRLS cycles has helped to make sure that the country achieves its key targets – to enhance Russia's ranking in the global surveys of the quality of education (Froumin & Kuznetsova, 2012). For a period spanning 15 years, the PIRLS cycles from 2001 to 2016 saw a series of massive adjustments to the structure of the education in the country, which have been used to explain the general elevation in the Russian Federation's performance in PIRLS. As an example, all youngsters now obtain four years of primary schooling, compared to the general public of children prior to 2006, who only acquired 3 years of primary education. This ensures that each child gets early exposure to reading. Learners who are falling behind their peers are assisted to read (Froumin & Kuznetsova, 2012). Children receive support in their homes to promote reading literacy regardless whether they are struggling or not at school. Besides the international bodies confirming the success of Russia, Russia had historically placed great emphasis on reading literacy.

The Soviet Union's education system was carried into the new Russia's academic system. Universal literacy was an early and powerful achievement of Soviet rule. A limitless number of people from previously excluded groups (which include

uneducated employees and the rural population) received opportunities to acquire an education and raise themselves in the social hierarchy using education as a social elevator (Sagitova, 2014). Historically, Russian schools have been closely connected to families and the community of their children's education by reinforcing the schools demands at home on the student to read and do homework (Light & Pearson, 2012). Russian professionals accentuate the importance of reading in human development as it enhances knowledge and creates responsible individuals, capable of self-improvement and self-actualisation (Valeev & Baranova, 2013). The Petersburg International Book (IPA) Report of 2017 provides evidence of the vibrant reading culture in Russia with over 350 events and 200 000 people attending the Book Fair event at St Pietersburg International Book Fair (2019 April).

3.2.4.3 India's international participation in reading literacy assessment

India participated in PISA 2009 and after a disastrous performance, it declined to participate in 2012 and 2015 (OECD, 2010b). India opted out because the Ministry of Education in 2012 said that there is a socio-cultural disconnect between the questions and the Indian students as they find the questions out of context (Wagner, 2011a). India demanded to consider its socio-cultural milieu in framing the questions. In a diverse world, with numerous types of individuals (ranging from neighborhood NGOs to the UN), it isn't easy to agree on any set of worldwide goals, including the setting of questions for literacy assessment.

i. India's programmes to promote reading literacy

Saakshar Bharat is the centrally sponsored national literacy programme of the Indian Department for School Education and Literacy (DSEL) of the Ministry of Human Resources and Development. Public awareness and recognition for the programme had been raised through various types of mass media by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of India (Banerjee, Banerji, Duflo, Glennerster & Khemani, 2010). The programme aims to significantly reduce the number of non-literate children, adults, specifically women in India, and to foster an environment within communities that encourages lifelong learning. The annual Report 2012-13 of the Department of School Education and Literacy pronounces that *Saakshar Bharat* will be included countrywide in the twelfth *5 Year Plan* (2012 to 2017) (Hanemann, 2015). Using the revised method, *Saakshar Bharat* is defined as a peoples programme, with the

Government acting as a facilitator and resource companies working with local groups to tailor the programme to their wishes, throughout 372 districts (Hanemann, 2015).

Using a randomised field test in India, researchers evaluated the effectiveness of adult literacy and parental involvement interventions in enhancing children's learning to read. Households have been assigned to receive both literacy (language and mathematics) classes for mothers, and training for mothers in a way to enhance their children's reading at home. Both interventions had significant but modest influences on children's mathematics ratings. The interventions additionally accelerated mothers' assessment scores in both language and in mathematics, in addition to reflecting extra involvement of mothers in their children's education (Andrabi, Das & Khwaja, 2012).

The literature on intergenerational transmission of human capital suggests that more educated (or, in a few instances, more literate) mothers make decisions that improve their children's gaining of knowledge (Banerji, Berry & Shotland, 2017). *Read India* is an extensively used intervention evolved and implemented through the *Pratham Mumbai Schooling Initiative*. It is available in just over half the number of all villages in India. *Read India* is primarily based on a logic that engaging with the community in their individual homes can assist to improve children gaining knowledge even in the absence of the formal education system or the wider community, and that a community's sense of ownership of the programme is essential in bringing about this change. The dreams of this system are to ensure that all children in grade 1 know their alphabets and numbers, all children in grade 2 can read phrases and carry out easy mathematical calculations, and that all children in grade 3 to 5 can read simple texts fluently and solve mathematical problems (Banerjee et al., 2010).

Some other programmes which were evaluated included training local volunteers to offer literacy education through "camps" held outside of school hours. The villages involved in the assessment were located where conditions were unfavourable for literacy success. Villages had as many as sixteen literacy camps, staffed by various volunteers. The classes were open to children in the villages. Across all participating villages, about 8 per cent of the kids participated in the programme (Spier et al., 2016). The researchers drew on two dimensions of studying: contexts that support reading literacy, and reading effects in the regions of pre-literacy and literacy. Ecological approaches have verified that the most proximal contexts, in particular the school,

home, and community, have the most powerful effects on learning (Kremer, Brannen & Glennerster, 2013). In these contexts, impacts may be labeled as human (e.g. households) and non-human (e.g. print resources).

Additionally, the programmes influenced several intermediate results associated with the decisions of mothers and the home, and the home learning environment and its effects on children's reading. In other words, these programmes helped mothers to gain knowledge, and to become interested in their children's education, in addition to providing basic educational materials at home. However, it was found that no meaningful outcome was evident in terms of time spent in directly assisting children with homework. This shows that child learning outcomes in the home environment might have been influenced through the quality of time spent, or frequency or form of interactions. However, it was found that the maternal literacy and blended programmes elevated learners' attendance in formal education (Spier, et al., 2016).

3.2.4.4 China's performance in international reading literacy assessments

Shanghai Province has been hailed as an example of excellence (Kamens, 2013) in the light of its performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in which its students emerged highest in reading in 2009 and 2012 (OECD, 2010, 2014a, b; Tan, 2017).

The common International test rating for the PIRLS 2016 round of testing, changed into an IEA rating of 500 (Kam, Ip, Yee & Ming, 2017). The grade 4 students in Hong Kong, with an average check rating of 569, came 3rd amongst the schools participating in the 2016 testing for students (Kam, Ip, Yee & Ming, 2017). Students from Russia came first, with a mean rating of 581, trailed by students from Singapore with a median rating of 576 (Kam, Ip, Yee, & Ming, 2017). Students from Chinese Taipei and Macao SAR ranked 9th and 19th respectively, with common rankings of 559 and 546 (Kam, Ip, Yee, & Ming, 2017). The Hong Kong typical reading attainment rating had fallen slightly compared to 2011. In PIRLS 2011, Hong Kong ranked first with an average rating of 571, at the same time in PIRLS 2006 they came second with an average reading score of 564 (Kam, Ip, Yee, & Ming, 2017). In the 2001 cycle of assessments, they ranked fourteenth with a median score of 528, the same level as accomplished by the students from Russia and Singapore (Kam, Ip, Yee & Ming, 2017)

i. China's efforts in promoting reading literacy

The Chinese Government's annual work report, promised to promote reading nationwide (Keqiang, 2016). In 2014, the National Government launched a programme called *Every Citizen Should Read* (Keqiang, 2016). Following this initiative, several provincial and city governments, as well as non-government organisations, have set up programmes to promote reading across the country, specifically in rural regions (Keqiang, 2016). Families need to do something they are able to do to aid their youngsters but do not understand what activities they must offer, or they will suppose that their children are not ready to engage in certain types of learning activities (Masseti & Bracken, 2010). For instance, families with young children might not be aware of the significance of such activities as reading books, telling stories, or singing songs with their children (Masseti & Bracken, 2010, cited in Erickson & Wharton-McDonald, 2019).

3.2.4.5. South Africa's reading literacy rating according to PIRLS

South Africa was positioned last out of all 50 nations who participated in PIRLS 2016. The Russian Federation (top performing country) attained 260 points more than South Africa. South Africa at a 320 rating score is significantly under the PIRLS minimum of 500 points (Mullis, Martin & Sainsbury, 2016). The international benchmark offers information about what children can do at particular score-point categories. Attaining the lowest benchmark rating (under 400 points) shows that SA learners cannot read for meaning-making or retrieve primary information from the textual content to answer fundamental questions (Mullis, Martin & Sainsbury, 2016). In the 2006 cycle, the South African grade 4 PIRLS mean rankings had been very low and results from the African languages could not be used (Howie et al., 2017). However, the Afrikaans and English Grade 4 measurements from 2006 had been sufficiently strong and could be used for trend comparisons (Howie et al., 2017). The researchers found that there was no statistically sizable differences between the two rounds of participation for 2011 (323 score points) and 2016 (320 rating factors) (Howie et al., 2017). Bharuthram (2012) contends that drastic measures ought to be employed to enhance the overall literacy and reading proficiency of learners. Reading skills are indispensable to the academic success of learners in middle or high school (Rajchert, Zultak, & Smulczyk, 2014).

i. Promoting reading literacy in South Africa

The disquiet concerning the ongoing literacy discrepancy, prompted the SA Government to launch a campaign called *Kha Ri Gude* (let us research) in 2007, which welcomed the participation of a much wider range of governmental and non-governmental bodies (UNESCO, 2011). The *Kha Ri Gude* initiative was transformational in that the approach acknowledged the numerous learning needs of various agencies using an integrated and multilingual approach (McKay, 2015). Although *Kha Ri Gude* is an adult literacy programme, it is an indication of the parent's literacy levels as a determinant of the child's literacy levels; hence, improving the caregiver's or parent's literacy levels will positively influence or rub-off onto the child's home-based literacy activities (usually shared book-reading) which fosters and accelerates the development of reading in later years (Hamilton, Hayiou-Thomas, Hulme, & Snowling, 2016; Hartas, 2011; Hannon, Nutbrown & Morgan, 2019). As practised in other countries, South Africa proceeded with a *National Strategy for Reading* beginning with participating in some of UN's development projects. These incorporate the *UNESCO Literacy Decade 2003-2013*, and the *Education for All (EFA)* campaigns, which aimed to upgrade literacy scores by 50% through to 2015 (DoE, 2008; Nel, Mohangi, Krog & Stephens, 2016). Indeed, there has been a documented increase in literacy rates since 2015; the adult literacy rate for South Africa was recorded at 94.6 % - the adult literacy rate in South Africa elevated from 88.7 % in 2007, to 94.6 % in 2015, improving at an average annual rate of 1.09 % (DoE, 2017). Initiatives such as *Nal'ibali* is promoting a culture of reading in South Africa, as they have found that many parents, caregivers and community-based organisations are already reading and telling stories of the past to their children. *Nal'ibali* is already recognised and respected because of its influence and capability of upgrading individuals and groups in literacy development. It is also working to build a bigger network of people across the country who are interested by and enthusiastic about storytelling, reading and writing with children. In helping them to find more approaches to form reading and writing habits in children's everyday lives, we all contribute to build a country of powerful readers and storytellers, ultimately leading to a literate and globally-employable citizenship

3.3 THE NEED FOR THE PROMOTION OF READING LITERACY IN HOMES

The need for the promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments for sustainable learning emerged as one of the objectives of this study and I looked at how other scholars viewed the need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments.

3.3.1 Reading Approaches that are provided by Home Environments

Reading has been popularly defined as the technique through which the dynamic interchange of what the reader already knows, the facts inferred by the written language, and the reading scenario context (Patterson, 2016; Kim, 2017; Mosher & heritage, 2017; Basaraba, Yovanoff, Alonzo & Tindal, 2012). More currently, Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Stouffer (2016, p. 1218) argued that definitions of reading should move further to pay attention to processes as it takes place in the context of “socio-culturally-built literacy practices”, inclusive of the values, ideals, and influential members of the family, that characterise the one’s practices, one’s language, gender, ethnicity, religion, economics, and geopolitics.

An approach (which means the way to handle an issue) clearly gives meaningfulness for this study regarding reading literacy strategies explaining how supportive home environments act as spaces of encouragement and growth. There are many available reading approaches that could be utilised in homes to guide us as to what is expected; and this could result in better outcomes, giving confidence to the guardian/parent or any other person assisting the learner to read at home.

3.3.1.1 Possible and actual reading approaches to promote reading literacy

The process of reading and reading comprehension has continually been a research challenge for psycholinguists and psychologists (Yang, 2017). Based totally on researches on the nature of reading, a few theories about reading have been established. These theories which make up the traditional reading approaches can be divided into 3 types:

- the bottom-up version, represented by Gough’s Model;
- the top-down model, represented by Goodman’s Model; and

- the Interactive version, represented by Rumelhart's Model (Yang, 2017).

In the bottom-up approach, the reader can get the idea of the text by breaking down parts of the text from the smallest (letters) to the biggest (text); this is generally done by highlighting the cohesive devices in the language and their function across sentences and paragraphs (Qurrotul'Ain, Budiasih & Hum, 2017). While the bottom-up approach may be perceived as merely breaking down words and certain sections in the text, this requires a lot of time and skill. However, in the top-down approach the reader does not rely on the text by breaking it down into easily understandable parts, but brings previous knowledge into play and keeps guessing if the text confirms what he/she knows or adds more to his/her background knowledge; thus, It is a cognitive process where the reader “embroils” or connects himself/herself interactively with the text.

Further, Hanemann, Glanz and Grossklags (2015) as well as Lesgold and Perfetti (2017) critically state that the top-down models tend to emphasise such high-level abilities because the prediction of meaning using contextual clues or certain kinds of background information, stifles lower-level competencies such as the speedy and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms. Hashemi, Mobini and Karimkhanlooie (2016) note that effective reading calls for both top-down and bottom-up strategies operating interactively. The interactive approach model is the collective of the two approaches of reading where the reader extricates the meaning of the textual content and also pays attention to the linguistic features.

3.3.2 Preparing for Lifelong Learning through Information Literacy

Educational structures are charged with the responsibility of teaching students in ways to educate themselves for lifelong-learning, beyond the confines of formal education; hence, imperative to the development of sustainable learning, are information literacy programmes (Becker, Clark & Collins, 2011). Information literacy is about a person being able to understand when facts are needed and thus develops the ability to locate, examine, and selectively use relevant material within an environment of speedy technological changes. This suggests that information literacy (IL) can be viewed as a fixed set of abilities that permit people to identify the problem of inadequate information and provide information to address this. People who are information-literate are

perceived to be organised and equipped for lifelong learning due to the fact they have got the ability to locate relevant information required for any task or choice at hand (Ross, Perkins & Bodey, 2016; Ratcliffe & Boughton, 2019). However, scholars maintain that the realisation of the relevance of information literacy depends on the home environment variables, parental involvement and child-rearing practices that are critical when considering past and present social inequalities.

3.3.3 The Role of Supportive Home Environments

Parents have a great responsibility in developing their children's readiness for school (Kochanska, 2017; Kalil, 2015; Maloney, Converse, Gibbs, Levine & Beilock, 2015). Most countries (such as BRICS) set a number of literacy targets during the 20th century, beginning from homes and communities being the places where reading (and writing) become frequently discovered and utilised, to making the schools as the locus of control (Uno & Nagai, 2016; Hanemann, 2015; Inuma, 2016; Chianca, Ceccon & Patton, 2018). This literacy drive recognised the school ecology as the focal point where reading was imparted, and the home as the support structure in which the children practised their reading. Accordingly, Smith (2011) advised agencies in helping parents to assist their children learn to read and to experience reading at home through a diffusion of media, till education became thoroughly set up within the centres of home and school. The cliché that you obtain positive information, knowledge and growth from the company you keep, is so apt especially when it comes to literacy (Smith, 2011).

The responsibility of supportive home environments involves parental-modelling and the promotion of children's reading in conjunction with an enabling literacy environment which eventually leads to academic success (Nag, Vagh, Dulay & Snowling, 2019). As evidence, Crosby, Rasinski, Padak, and Yildirim (2015) observed that parents' role in encouraging reading lessons at home impacts positively on their children's literacy development. Their study examined the effectiveness of a parent-involvement programme that teaches parents how to offer their children reading classes at home, which found that implementation of this system became associated with higher levels of children's academic achievement. In addition, they found that children whose parents finished the parental-literacy-lessons accelerated their literacy

development, when compared to those children whose parents attended and applied fewer lessons, or did not follow the guidelines at all.

3.3.4 Effects of Supportive Home Environments in promoting Reading Literacy

In addition to home the environment, parents who were responsive, supportive, and interested in their children's conduct, and who provided a structured and stable emotional atmosphere at home, had a positive effect on the children's language and literacy improvement (Ciping, Silinskas, Wei & Georgiou, 2015). Therefore, parental-involvement is key as "parents' behaviours in the home environment is intended to guide their children's academic development" (Nokali, Nermeen, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010, p. 989). Vygotsky, a celebrated Russian psychologist, pioneered the social-constructivist theory which emphasises the position of scaffolding the learning of children (Berns, 2016) - and reading is not an exception. Children who grow up in homes with a nurturing, language-rich environment with a high quality parent-child-relationship show more improvement in reading achievement (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2010). Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, adds that healthy parent-child relationships are crucial as it broadens fundamental recognition of the self (learners), a time when learners view themselves and their lives in the context of their social spaces in order to change to become better citizens relevant to a global society (Beck & Purcell, 2010; Glass, 2014). The change will sustain learning because learners want to better their lives through continuous engagement with reading texts as they have found that with reading comes hordes of information that has a positive impact to increasing the rate of literacy.

3.3.5 The Influence of Supportive Home Environments on Reading Literacy

Further, family literacy levels play a major role in children's development of reading skills as parents will be more ready to avail reading materials in the home to embed a culture of home-reading (Wasik, 2012). The children of mothers protecting these ideals showed greater interest in reading. Parental fostering of literacy was not only the best activity to engage socially with their younger children, but it was also at the same time developing preschool children's language and literacy abilities (Chiu & Chow, 2014). Proficiency in reading cannot be achieved at school alone (Klemencic, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2014); it must be initiated and developed at home such that

parents make a salient contribution to their children's academic lives. Adolescents are encouraged through observing their friends and relatives who indulge in reading for pleasure at home (Mishra & Shanwal, 2014).

According to Phillipson and Phillipson (2012), evidence from a study that was carried out determined that parents' influence their children's educational performance predominantly through reading, which is a part of cognitive development. Grounded on their findings, they proposed a cognitive-effect model of fulfilment. This model indicates that academic achievement relies on subjective cognitive functionality of the child which depends on responses from parents through their message of beliefs concerning their children's capability and academic possibilities. Hence, it is imperative that sound communication between teenagers and parents stays a priority (Brooks, Magnusson, Spencer & Morgan, 2012).

3.3.6 The Significance of Promoting Reading Literacy

Malhi, Bharti and Sidhu (2017) view that the home environment is significant because it is the children's first space for literacy experiences as it avails access to reading sources, exposure to modelled reading behaviours, and participation in reading literacy activities. A supportive home environment in the form of parent participation accelerates the child's achievement in reading as evidenced in many studies (Froiland & Oros, 2013; Powell, Son, File & Froiland, 2012). A supportive home environment not only develops reading skills in children, but also acts as model-behaviour by making reading a recreational activity. Research studies have generally reported a positive relationship between time spent in recreational reading and academic achievement scores (Li & Tan, 2016; Mol & Bus, 2011; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014).

According to Ng and Graham (2017), reading is both social and personal in nature. The social nature of reading is reflective of the way where reading develops inside specific cultural and historical contexts. Cultural models, values, norms, roles, and identities are significant elements that come into play at the same time as children read and make sense of what they may be reading. Moreover, collaboration and interaction are critical social processes that are regularly involved in analysing texts. From a social standpoint, the level to which learners are given an opportunity to share,

collaborate, and discuss their reading is an enormous educational deliberation for supporting reading literacy. Directing learners on the significance of reading and communicating high expectations, promote learners to read. When parents show behaviours and attitudes that promote reading, children are more likely to read for themselves, without being instructed to do so. Masten (2010) states that while model-reading, parents set the stage for reading for pleasure, creating immense enthusiasm for reading. For instance, a parent who reads famous novels for amusement, transmits this feeling to their children. Masten (2010) also asserts that modelling reading by parents does not necessarily mean that they are teaching the children to read, but it communicates a preference or interest in reading that can be shared in the home on a continuous basis - not a one-time occasion - but something that is done for pleasure and acculturated over time.

3.4 THE KEY ELEMENTS FOR PROMOTING READING LITERACY

The key elements for promoting literacy are central to this study as it clearly guides the processes in the acquisition reading literacy through supportive home environments for sustainable learning.

3.4.1 Advocacy for Reading Literacy in the Home

Advocacy for reading literacy at home has become a priority as researchers maintain that children benefit from having books at home. A stimulating academic home environment accelerates a child's cognitive development and this later cascades into adulthood (Moriano-Gutierrez, Colomer-Revuelta, Carot-Sierra & Sanjuan-Arias, 2016; Ohgi, Loo & Mizuike, 2010; Weinstein, 2016). Behavioural positives acknowledged in the research identified improvement in children's self-discipline, feelings of bonding with family with others, and a general sense of increased self-esteem (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Children developed more confidence in their skills after participating in family-based literacy programmes (Osborne, Alfano & Winn, 2010), which led to displaying unprecedented literacy interests, both at school and at home (Lam, Chow-Yeung, Wong, Lau & Tse, 2013; Robinson, 2012). Children who had formerly exhibited behaviour problems, now presented a higher capability to control their behaviour (Robinson, 2012). In over 50% of the studies, these favourable behaviours in children led to better parent-child interactions after participating in family

literacy programmes (Lam, Chow-Yeung, Wong, Lau & Tse, 2013; Osborne, Alfano & Winn, 2010). Results of the family literacy studies show a carry-over value to other parties after parents discovered the way to guide their children's literacy progress.

3.4.2 Good Reading Habits to Sustain Learning

Appropriate reading habits act as strong tools for the students to excel in life (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012). As such, Palani (2012) states that good reading habits are critical and crucial factors for developing a global literate society. Everyday reading consists of individuals' reading activities for numerous purposes, such as for relaxation or information (Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe & Adedeji, 2012). Constantly reading and no longer being aware of it, means reading habits were ingrained in the individual. Ogbodo (2010) identifies three primary kinds of reading behaviour; those of hobby, recreational and concentration. A hobby is an interest one acts out due to the fact that one derives pleasure from doing it. After passing the formal education processes, some people like reading as their hobby or their interest. Its purpose is to widen the reader's horizons into areas like education, religion, politics, economics, current affairs, fiction and non-fiction. The exercise of reading as an interest facilitates one to be flexible and critical concerning knowledge-acquisition in many areas such that the person can discuss issues knowledgeably and accurately with others.

Essentially, reading for recreation is very common among the knowledgeable elite. People who are employed spend the entire day within the places of work seeking to clear up issues associated with the roles they perform, and when they come back home from work, they usually desire a change by reading books, newspapers and other written materials which might be different, and of interest to them. Students should be encouraged to read magazines and newspapers in addition to reading textbooks. Students who read magazines periodically learn to loosen up, cool their minds, avoid intellectual fatigue, and live a disciplined life in the school and in the community. In most cases, its effect in inducing sleep and rest after much academic work within the classroom or the library, leads to healthy behaviour, in addition to achieving the desired performance outcomes (Ogbodo, 2010).

3.4.3 Types of Support in the Home Environment to promote Reading Literacy

From the learners' first literacy experiences and throughout life, this journey of reading practice needs to be first supported at home particularly through parental support or by a more knowledgeable family member.) Parental support is one of the crucial factors that contributes to high reading achievement rates; hence, the significance of a supportive home environment in promoting reading literacy (Howie, Combrinck, Tshele, Roux, Palane & Mokoena, 2017; Webster-Stratton & Bywater, 2015). However, controlling parental support (referred to as helicopter parenting) negatively affects students' emotional health and motivation to read (Froiland 2011; Schiffrin et al., 2013). In a meta-evaluation of mediations with students, Su and Reeve (2011) observed that intervention studies where there is parental autonomy, led to children's intrinsic motivation, stable emotions, academic attainment and inventiveness (Froiland, Powell, Diamond & Son, 2013b).

Autonomous parental support has also been found to be significant during the individual's teenage years (Smetana, 2011; Wray-Lake, Crouter & McHale, 2010). Accordingly, adolescent students' educational self-motivation and well-being concerning intrinsic life goals had a positive effect on Chinese teenagers (Lekes, Gingras, Philippe, Koestner & Fang, 2010). However, no studies have verified this finding concerning parental autonomy in supporting learners' reading.

3.4.4 Reading Motivation to promote Sustainable Learning

Reading motivation, described as the likelihood of conducting reading or opting to read (Gambrell, 2011), has for some period been identified as a key aspect in reading overall performance (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang & Meyer, 2012; Park, 2011). The PISA evaluates reading literacy in over 70 international locations, and it carries out research to determine the relationship between motivation and reading (OECD, 2016). International assessments specify that developing countries have lesser reading scores than developed nations. However, students in many emerging countries are more fascinated to read and use up greater time reading than students in advanced nations (OECD, 2016).

Adkins and Brendler (2015) state that reading motivation is multidimensional and has three categories: competency and efficacy beliefs, reading purposes, and social

purposes of readings. They found out that children frequently have a variety of characteristics that impact their motivation, and children do not react the same way to motivational strategies. Therefore, no one set of teaching practices will extend to all children therefore one has to be extra capable of supporting reading at home. However, Klauda and Guthrie (2015) observed that low-achieving students did not benefit from reading motivation, adding that evidence shows disadvantaged students from high-poverty backgrounds frequently have little motivation to study. As a result, it is important to see what encourages underprivileged students to read, and to discover modern-day techniques to engender motivation in them.

Guthrie's (2010, p. 16) theory of motivation and engagement explains that good readers have both "skill and will," as "students with skill may be capable," but they cannot become successful readers without ample motivation to read. Guthrie cites interest, dedication, and confidence as the three elements that cultivate motivation in students. After considering the theoretical framework gleaned from Guthrie's theory, it is evident that motivation to read is an integral part of reading success. Schiefele, Schaffner, Moller and Wigfield (2012) analysed the relationship between reading motivation and reading competence gathered from a twenty-year span of research, where it was discovered that interest, choice, and involvement are predictors of reading comprehension growth. When these aspects are used in instructional practice, students become more motivated to read. Additionally, the analysis of this study shows that reading motivation and reading comprehension are linked (Schiefele et al., 2012, p. 453). This connection is noteworthy, as motivation may encourage literacy skill development.

3.4.5 Availability of Reading Materials at Home for Sustainable Learning

Research has discovered that getting access to print sources (books, testimonies, newspapers and magazines) early in a child's life has both an instant and long-time effect on their vocabulary, associated statistics, and information capabilities (Allington et al., 2010.) Children in poverty-stricken conditions have low reading test scores due to having limited access to books (Krashen, 2014; Maharsi, Ghali & Maulani, 2019). A survey involving 27 countries with more than 70,000 cases publicised, indicated that

a book-orientated home environment where children have access to equipment, is especially beneficial in learning at school and in future life (Evans, Kelley, Sikora, & Treiman, 2010). In keeping with Mullis, Martin, Foy and Drucker's (2012) PIRLS' surveys involving 215,000 children across forty-nine countries, the presence and use of books in the home predicts high reading attainment; while the opposite is also true.

No matter the reality that computer devices have spread out new possibilities for e-book reading, there is evidence that access to the internet is not always possible. A current survey (Rideout & Katz, 2016), for example, established that many low and middle income families are not competently linked by mobile and other IT devices, and this is exacerbated by unreliable connectivity. A current investigation by Krashen, Lee, and McQuillan (2012) also demonstrates that imparting greater access to books and the internet can mitigate the effect of poverty on reading achievement. Lindsay (2010) pronounced that gaining access to print material at home improves children's performance and encourages them to read more and for longer durations. It has been suggested that the literacy environment of the home, as measured by the number of books at home, is an important contributor to a child's vocabulary, information, reading, writing, and comprehension skills; and these in turn impact on a child's learning at school. In another survey, Evans et al. (2010) collected data from 27 nations, with over 70,000 cases, and examined the connection between the number of books available to children at home and their educational attainment. The authors found that children reared in homes with many books were more likely to complete formal schooling within the prescribed period, in contrast to children brought up in homes with few books (or no books at all), even if parents were schooled, or had high job-statuses – an indication that every book added to the home library, is related to greater educational gains.

3.4.6 Reading Culture in Promoting Reading Literacy

Naiditch (2016) asserts that it's important for children to be engrossed in a culture of reading books earlier on in their lives although libraries are few and far between, as research has verified that the book just being there in children's homes is related to positive reading attainment (Mol & Bus, 2011). Children interact generally out of interest in a particular activity that brings them joy; they engage with those close to them and books help as exquisite communicative tools. The psychological relationship

that transpires through joint consideration with sharing books stirs a child's enthusiasm for reading books, hence a sound reading ability is developed (Neuman & Moland, 2016).

3.4.7 Shared Story-reading Activities to Promote Reading Literacy

An important strategy for enhancing reading literacy is through shared-book-reading particularly with struggling readers, as it improves attention, word recognition, reading comprehension, and promotes the overall development of language skills (Roy-Charland, Perron, Boulard, Chamberland & Hoffman, 2015; Sim & Berthelsen, 2014). Reading to the child affords a completely unique opportunity to be exposed to phrases, which aren't normally encountered in spoken language (Malhi et al., 2017). Multiple studies show scaffolding (which is helping a child with an activity until they are confident enough to do it independently) to be a technique that fosters ongoing interest in reading. The SPOKES (Supporting Parents on Children's Education in Schools) programme that integrated scaffolding as a reading strategy was facilitated by Scott et al. (2010) where parents watched movies, had group discussions and participated in workshops. These activities gave parents the foundational capabilities required to assist their children in literacy progress and behaviour control. Parents additionally used the technique of praise by complimenting their children for contributing to shared-reading time. When the programme concluded, parents autonomously used these tactics (including scaffolding) at home. Instruction in most programmes involved constructivist approaches as parents who were in the ongoing training sessions to prepare for the shared reading activity they will be having with their children, wanted to become more capacitated. Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) add that family literacy studies indicated that children's involvement in literacy activities improved children's reading, which led to elevating their self-esteem. Children who experience success with reading, together with their parents, give positive feedback. These reinforcing memories advance children's self-efficacy, which, according to Bandura (1977), leads to favourable outcomes. Simultaneously, parents observed that their efforts were rewarded as they observed their children's higher quality performance in formal assessments.

3.4.8 Attitudes to Promote Reading Literacy in Supportive Homes

The common definition of attitude refers to a characteristic identified by way of an individual's behaviour towards a person, object or a subject (topic) (ZainolAbidin, Pour-Mohammadi & Alzwari, 2012). Consequently, a person is considered to have a positive attitude when displaying favourable behaviour towards someone or something. Conversely, someone is diagnosed to have a bad attitude by displaying aggression, lack of respect, ignoring the *audi alteram partem* principle (listening to the other side), and generally possessing negative values.

In two studies by Sani and Zain (2011) and Kirmizi (2011) results have indicated the effect of attitudes in promoting reading literacy on reading comprehension and the ability to read -showed that reading comprehension was influenced by the reader's attitude in a minimal manner. However, Kirmizi (2011) conducted research regarding the connection between attitude in studying and techniques in reading comprehension: from 1316 students from fifteen schools in Denizli, Turkey who participated in the study, comprising of girls and boys, and classified as fourth and fifth graders, students' reading comprehension level and attitude in reading, play a big role. This was supported by research done by Ozturk, Hill and Yates (2016), and Axelsson, Lundqvist and Sandberg (2019) who found children's attitude towards reading as an influential factor in promoting reading.

3.4.9 Exploring Reading for Pleasure

Wilhelm (2016) maintains that reading for pleasure refers to reading that we do during our personal free time in the knowledge that pride and joy will be elicited from the act of reading. It also refers to reading that began at another person's request, will continue due to interest in it. Reading for pleasure is important because of its impact on literacy attainment, its influence on different academic and like-skill outcomes, in addition to the "experience" it gives to understand the world at large (Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). Particularly, they argue that research proved that reading for pleasure is positively associated with reading achievement, comprehension, vocabulary development, positive attitudes about reading, self-assurance in reading, and enjoyment of reading for later life.

Moreover, Wilhelm and Smith (2014) hold that there are four categories of pleasure: play, work, highbrow, and social.

Firstly, immersive play pleasure is the first and essential type where the individuals experience the pleasure they get from living through a story and getting totally lost or immersed in a book (Wilhelm, 2012a). One of the most salient findings is that the immersive pleasure of play not only coincided with engaging in reading, but it became virtually essential, and a prerequisite to experiencing all sorts of different pleasures and advantages of reading; hence, learners want to read books that immediately sustains immersive satisfaction and interest. Intellectual pleasure is about figuring out what is going to happen next. The participants in the study commented that when they are given books at home, they know that their parents want them to know something in terms of academic knowledge (Smith & Wilhelm, 2010; Wilhelm, 2012b). Unlike when one selects one's own book of interest where discovery is spontaneous and this will keep one reading for social pleasure telling others with delight the details and joys of the book (Wilhelm, Douglas & Fry, 2014). Additionally, the pleasure of reading leads to self-discovery when the reader, usually a teenager, identifies with a certain character in the book, ultimately fostering positive character changes. Erikson (1963) explains this impulse to relate a character(s) in a book to oneself may stem from understanding relevant psychosocial conflict of formative years concerning identity, as the teenager must find himself/herself in the world he/she lives in – hence, identity, according to Erikson, has a social meaning.

Secondly, work pleasure is the satisfaction one derives by extracting textual content as a tool to perform something to enhance one's work (Mayes, 2010; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014; Wilhelm et al., 2014). Wilhelm (2016) adds that the importance of exploring more about reading for pleasure, ingrains you with a passion for something that you see benefits in, especially in work-related tasks> also, you enjoy the feeling that you get from it so you continue doing it; hence, making you into a lifelong reader who derives joy and changes elicited through reading.

3.4.10 Creating Time for Parent-child Educational Discussions

Parent-child educational discussions refer to ongoing dialogues among parents and their children concerning school-associated activities which include reading, short and

long-term goals, and other educational matters (Altschul, 2011; Gordon & Cui, 2012; Hayes, 2012; Hsu, Zhang, Kwok, Li & Ju, 2011; Park, Buyn & Kim, 2011). Activities that promote high reading performance in children are not confined to school-linked activities. Hampden-Thompson et al. (2013) believe that learners become capacitated during different social and cultural dialogues on topics of interest, deliberations with parents about books, movies or television – these were ranked higher in relation to reading.

Reading development improves when sharing stories while eating as a family. Families who eat together frequently have time to speak at some stage during the meal, and these discourses help broaden vocabulary and adds to literacy skills growth. Harris and Graves (2010) claim that cultural activities such as frequenting museums, libraries, and zoos were related to better reading achievement. The other indicator of achievement in reading is the parents' attitudes towards reading (Ozturk, Hill & Yates, 2016; Yeo, Ong & Ng, 2014). Students who are battling with reading regularly have parents who are also battling with reading (Silinkas et al., 2012). The reason is that parents do not talk about the importance of reading to their children. Parents, who emphasised the importance of reading to their children by means of demonstrating their own reading behaviour, have children who are in all likelihood reading to their maximum potential (Clark, 2010). Araújo and Costa (2015) explain that parents reading to their children and permitting them to choose their favourite reading material, improved learners' dedication and commitment to reading. Parent-child communication about school matters has tremendous positive effect concerning reading (Castro et al., 2015).

3.4.11 Initiating Family Literacy Programmes

Wilkins and Terlitsky (2016) assert that efforts geared at enhancing family dedication and unity should emphasise constructing functionality by supporting learners to read. This could be attained through family literacy programmes in which educators work with parents to deal with children's literacy shortcomings. The structure of such programmes is divided into four parts: abilities, self-assurance, connections, and cognition; the combination of which is preferred for parents to help with learners'

reading deficiencies. Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) confirmed that when parents found out how to assist in literacy activities with their children in age-appropriate ways and disciplined their children when needed, children's literacy and behaviour improved immensely, which resulted in parents having confidence in such programmes (Osborne et al., 2010).

Another study by Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) looked at 82 family-reading-literacy programmes and discovered that these programmes were effective in accelerating the reading literacy rate and improved the behaviour of the child. All parents who participated in the study were either illiterate and/or marginalised whose previous experiences prior to the instituting of the programme prejudiced child-rearing habits. As parents elevated their abilities to assist their children, they have been much more engaged in their children's education which in turn precipitated better academic performances (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015; Lau & Ng, 2019).

3.4.12 Paradigm Shift of Viewing Poverty as a Problem

In literature, poverty has been considered as one of the most serious impediments in developing countries, especially concerning literacy rates (Janjua & Kamal, 2014). Discussions associating low-literacy competencies to poverty are gradually moving away from this stereotype. Darder (2018) clarifies this by echoing Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) who challenged this assumption stating that we can rise above capitalistic oppression if we consciously change our mindsets from a deficit model to a model of opportunities - we can turn negatives into positives. Darder calls for a paradigm shift (or a change of mindset) so that people can have control of their own emancipation, and reading literacy affords this opportunity as we discover new worlds, new knowledge and people that can help to break free from the shackles of oppression (e.g. poverty) that bind them. Such perspective reduces the responsibility on institutions, including schools because influential discussions must steer a new brand of thinking away from associating low-literacy skills as stemming from poverty (Compton-Lilly, Rogers, & Lewis, 2012). Parents investing in literacy-associated resources together with their involvement in home literacy activities with their children, are considerable contributors to their children's overall reading performance, even if parents' SES are far from ideal (Ho & Lam, 2016).

Researchers discovered discourses that support literacy as an intervention for social and economic disparities to be narrowed, paying attention more to the significance of person-accountability (Moyo, 2014). Often, the desire to assist children to get geared for school or lend a helping hand in homework, motivates parents and caregivers to increase this involvement so that they can gain more knowledge of themselves and strengthen their own literacy, numeracy, language and different fundamental educational skills. Among disadvantaged homes and communities, a family literacy and learning pattern is much more likely to halt the intergenerational cycle of low education and poor literacy competencies. It is also more likely to nurture a subculture of getting to know the whole (truth) rather than fragmented bits of knowledge at the individual level. In sum, intergenerational approaches to literacy and learning offer possibilities for adults and children to promote lifelong learning to get out of the poverty cycle (Hanemann & Krolak, 2017).

3.4.13 Encouraging Reading at Home

International literature recognises the significance of reading at home. The family literacy intervention has for the past thirty years been seen as a way of decreasing the number of the inequalities in society such that literacy development becomes smoother when children start schooling. Family literacy practices preserve the normal and regular literacy actions that occur (often with slight or no conscious making of plans) in families. Also, family literacy programmes when planned very well, maximises children's engagement in all academic activities. There is clear indication that family literacy can genuinely improve children's engagement in literacy (Hannon & hen, 2012).

Setting aside reading time at home shows parental commitment and willingness to assist in children's reading, thus creating an interesting and flourishing literacy environment (Graves, Brown & Wright, 2011; Stylianides & Stylianides, 2011). Crosby et al. (2015) observed that parents' reading programme at home accelerates children's literacy proficiency, hence their study was underpinned by the principle of effective parent involvement where structured programmes guide parents on how to deliver effective reading education at home. Results suggest that the implementation of the programme led to better literacy rates. However, children whose parents implemented fewer reading training sessions or did not provide any reading lessons at all, scored

poorly in assessments. Sukhram and Hsu (2015) explain that parents who exhibited positive attitudes about reading and who actively engaged with their children, created an environment of enthusiasm for literacy and learning. By showing the value of reading, emphasising the importance of reading frequently, displaying positive attitudes and interest in reading, and providing opportunities to learn through a literacy-rich environment, parents become a critical component of reading success.

3.4.14 Local Libraries to Strengthen Ties with Communities

Public libraries are now a characteristic feature for all in our new democracy (Brown, 2004). Kranich (2013) described libraries as “energetic agents of democracy” while Madsen (2009, p. 10) called them “democratic hothouses”, and Walker (2011, p. 20-28) stated that they provided access to democracy. Extra careful voices, however, caution the too naïve, nice sounding expressions for libraries concerning democracy (Ignatow et al., 2012, p. 68–69). The Carnegie Commission Report (1932) found that the idea of libraries for the public as being democratic agents was dubious in light of the reality that they mainly served the advantaged minority. The insignificance of libraries due to non-accessibility as a result of racial discrimination in the apartheid era flowed over into the democratic era, thus we see the burning of libraries within the past few years (Lor, 2014) According to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) schedule five (part A) the Government allocated the responsibility for public libraries to the 9 provinces. However, budgetary constraints and a lack of will by politicians in the national and provincial governments, saw to it that libraries were not a priority.

After years of abandonment and deterioration, in 2008 public libraries became recipients of large injections of funds, and municipalities started building libraries as directed by the National Development Plan (NDP, 2012). Although many new libraries have been built in the past few years, some of them have been burnt down during service delivery protests.

The social inequalities of being disadvantaged when it comes to information gathering perpetuates the cycle of poverty and illiteracy (Britz, 2004). The issue of providing an efficient library service in South Africa remains stagnant, compared to international

standards in terms of addressing transformation in the world (Chitiga, Sekyere & Tsoanamatsie, 2015).

Public involvement is a controversial subject in the dialogues concerning libraries in democratic societies. Public disengagement and indifference prevail. Janes and Ptacek (2013) observe that libraries are searching for approaches to increase their footprint. The online library approach is gaining ground but certain communities are not yet capacitated to access online facilitations due to the lack of knowledge or absence of IT equipment. The library can work outdoors to improve engagement with the community by going out to the community members to promote literacy. Libraries need to change from the traditional way of readers coming to a building housing books, to going out to the public to avail their services. Librarians will then get data critical to gauge the needs of socially excluded people (Williment, 2019). Public engagement would possibly include working with the community members to build collections of indigenous knowledge (Greyling, 2008), developing boards for teenagers to advise on the forms of libraries they need (King, 2005) or in building businesses of little one-boomer volunteers (Ristau, 2010). But, traditional literacy programming must include authentic community and political literacy (Clubb, 2006). We need to turn libraries into centres for deliberations on neighborhood and national problems in order to foster authentic democracy (Kranich, 2013). Others view the mission of libraries is to protect the liberty of expression (Berry, 1999). All this shows a shift from the libraries' passive mediatory position of the past (Hart & Nassimbeni, 2016). In line with this new role of libraries, Madsen (2009) speaks of a Danish librarian, Grete Halling, who presents her library as an agent-provocateur in introducing a sequence of debates on cutting-edge political problems.

3.4.15 Children should be Encouraged to Read

Merga and Roni (2018) advise us to look at the stages of encouragement that children receive once they pass the early years of schooling. They discovered that children do not always get encouragement to read. Children from ages 8-12 were asked if they received encouragement to read; half the number (mainly in the nine-year old group) replied in the negative. This finding shows that even young children are not receiving words of encouragement to read (Merga & Roni, 2018).

The gender of the child has a certain influence in the way parents allocate time to encourage children to read, with contemporary studies indicating that time spent to read is more with girls rather than boys (Baker & Milligan, 2016). Girls get more encouragement to read because boys are less inclined to get hooked onto reading (Merga & Roni, 2018; Butler-Barnes et al., 2018). This will perpetuate the gender disparity in reading frequency, which will give an increase in the imbalance in literacy rankings among boys and girls that has been broadly observed all over the world (Merga & Roni, 2018; Butler-Barnes et al., 2018; Mwoma, 2019). In later schooling years' students' reading may decrease as parents think that educators are supervising it and vice versa (Doherty & Dooley, 2018; Muntoni, & Retelsdorf, 2019). As educators cannot convincingly anticipate that parents are competently knowledgeable, eager, and able to encourage reading at home, and parents assume that educators are taking over the complete duty of reading literacy in the light of competing and extensive curricular needs, a hiatus is created (Merga, 2015). In addition, not all teachers are regarded as reading representatives who focus mainly on literacy, so ideally parents have to continue the reading time at home (Merga, 2016). After learners have learnt to read on their own, parents should not put pressure on their children to read. However, it was found that for many students, once left on their own to read, the encouragement by parents started to decline, which researchers term as "perished expectations" (Merga, 2014, p. 153). The significance of parents modelling in reading practices is well known; and when parents become inconsistent when they do not read themselves, children become aware of this. (Merga & Roni, 2018).

3.4.16 Learners should have a Voice on what they should Read

A number of students from economically, culturally and linguistically underprivileged upbringings do well in reading and other literacy evaluations as a result of being sufficiently motivated and supported by various role-players especially concerning the selection of their reading material (Guthrie, Coddington & Wigfield, 2009; Luke, 2012; Ng, Wyatt-Smith & Bartlett, 2016). To alleviate the problem of illiteracy through the lack of interest in reading, substantial efforts have been made to promote reading engagement, given the short and long-term advantages of regular reading (Klauda & Guthrie, 2016; Ng & Graham, 2017; Wigfield et al., 2008). Therefore, self-efficacy, attention and autonomy assist in lifelong interest in reading. To this end, the

importance of learners' voices in promoting reading engagement has been underrated (Ng & Graham, 2017; Ng et al., 2016). Ng (2018) maintains that the lack of learners' voices is a wasted possibility due to the fact students have large and precious information regarding their reading specifics and the manner they interact in a reading activity.

Mitra and Serriere (2012) found that students' voices can be an engagement enabler which an educator should accept and hence focus on methods to pursue reading proficiency using suggestions based on students' voices. This collaboration with an emphasis on listening to students' suggestions, provides a possible substitute for enhancing reading engagement that is based mostly on researcher or educator-centred interventions. Students' voices, in this study refers to students' sharing of personal accounts, viewpoints and thoughts for boosting reading engagement. Mitra and Serriere (2012) add that it is the privilege of the use of pupil voice to restore outcomes, reading, classroom practices and educator advancement. Within literature, learners' voices refer to practices regarding learners' viewpoints and participation, extending to learning sessions, teamwork, partnerships and management (Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2008; Rudduck & Wagner, 2019). While students' voices have been variously reflected in studies, an undisputed recognition is their contribution to the sharing of ideas and their participation in decision-making processes. Suggesting listening to students' voices reveals interactive engagement and pro-activeness (Sather, 2006, 2014; Pearce & timber, 2019).

Reinforcing this enthusiastic engagement is a brand new form of strength dynamics in which teachers recognise their rights, knowledge and interventions (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Even as instructors and parents, specifically inside the home environment, the treasured approach may be to use and to value students' voices. Sooner or later parents, guardians and educators may be informed to pay attention and respond to students' spoken and unspoken concerns, needs and reviews. In this way, learners' voices, in addition to being an engagement-enabler, can promote a renewed determination to grasp reading literacy skills thoroughly through meaningful partnership with students. Ng (2018) stipulates that it is critical to regard students/learners as people who are talented, informed, opinionated and agentic in their literacy pursuits.

3.4.17 Reading should be Monitored through Achievable Goals

The acquisition of reading literacy skills is a goal in motion, in terms of time, place and space (Sabatini, Reilly & Doorey, 2018). The reading literacy ability of a high school graduate is built over twelve years, in contrast to a grade R infant who has just begun the literacy journey. Moreover, given the degree of technological and social transformation of the virtual generation, Sabatini, Reilly, and Doorey (2018) maintain that we should anticipate that the nature of reading literacy twelve years from now maybe notably one-of-a-kind. Leu et al. (2013) are of the view that a phase of the intensity to take action stems from the popularity of the concept of reading literacy. Cairo (2009) reiterated that we need to address present-day needs while tracking shifting societal problems and making adjustments. Sabatini, Reily and Doorey (2018) recommend six elements of reading that might vary beyond what's conventionally measured during an average reading evaluation.

Firstly, they suggest that people must read with the intention of gaining something in particular, by being aware of what they want to know and how they are going to read to extract this information for later practice. Therefore, all reading activities need to consist of a predominant reason that defines what resources and data are crucial. Van den Broek, Lorch, Linderholm, and Gustafson (2001) argue that, if the objective of reading becomes to locate information, then one only has to scan the text, not read the whole text.

Secondly, they elaborate on reading objectives using many skills. Reading comprehension often requires human beings to read, blend, and create a summary of facts. Britt and Rouet (2012) maintain that study or academic goals may be tough to reach, and the solution to one's questions won't come easily and from one supply.

Thirdly, in gaining knowledge of various situations, learners ought to be furnished with reliable (and unreliable) resources so that they test their critical-reading and evaluation competencies.

Fourthly, in this century, we basically need the ability to utilise generation-wealthy environments with a range of asset-types, hence modern-day evaluations of reading must reflect this.

Fifthly, today's educational and assessment criteria must include feedback that leads to students understanding their mistakes and errors which they must learn from, and then appropriately correct them – this prevents fossilisation. In short, reading is a planned activity that includes observing one's knowledge and adapting behaviours to reap rewards through consistency (MacNamara, 2007).

These deliberate actions may also enrich a person psychologically to allow for a deeper understanding which facilitates the acquisition of expertise in a particular field. When people do not recognise what they have read, they need to become aware of their problem and then take action to rectify this by applying memory strategies. In sum, we accept as true that there is value in having students analysing and correcting their errors, and they must critically dissect knowledge including information from others. The habit of arriving at new information from understanding errors is key in modern-age-reading and collaborative studying.

3.5 Favorable Conditions for promoting Reading Literacy

The circumstances and conditions concerning the general context of the implementation of reading literacy programmes such as family functioning, collaboration, cooperation, open communication, the home and neighbourhood in which a learner lives, are some of the issues which will be elaborated on. Ingram and Schneider describe implementation as being successful and devoid of complications if progressive knowledge and multiple support systems are in place (1990). Hence, adhering to these components of reading literacy, leads to sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

3.5.1 Family Functionality

Globally, a healthy social unit is crucial to the smooth functioning of individuals and the family, which cascades into the wider society (Hochfeld, 2007). Families lay the foundation for the development of the individual - children begin to assimilate their beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviours which are considered as appropriate to society's norms (Ogwo, 2013). Families are guided through three key strategic priorities aimed at acquiring core capabilities.

These key priorities include:

- the promotion of healthy family lifestyles which prevents families from becoming dysfunctional by means of promoting positive attitudes and values about the importance of productive families within communities;
- family strengthening via deliberate procedures of creating opportunities, relationships, networks, support and safety, especially in the face of adversity and social transformation; and
- family preservation, which normally refers to keeping the family-collective tight and within the bounds of societal norms by initiating programmes (such as reading literacy) to strengthen families especially during crises (Department of Social Development, 2013).

In essence, the above priorities are designed to bolster families in order that there are advancements in the manner how individual family members work and interact with one another. Therefore, family functioning can be seen as a multidimensional process where interaction with one another involves collaboration in achieving a common goal with positive outcomes (Botha & Booysen, 2013). Effective family functioning affects each person's state of mind positively so much that each type of support received from the family is significant to the person's sense of satisfaction with life which leads to overall success in later life (Roman et al., 2016). When the family is functional, an exhilarating experience of the self is established which prevents crises and enhances the families' trouble-fixing skills through growing a sense of togetherness. Positive family functioning creates an environment where the family members help and accept each other's uniqueness, and together engage in activities while facilitating child development especially in areas of schooling and literacy.

3.5.2 Collaboration

Collaboration is increasingly identified as an important educational process (Lai, DiCerbo, & Foltz, 2017). One of the most widely cited definitions of collaboration comes from Roschelle and Teasley (1995) who characterise it as a shared idea of the problem by the people who try to solve it together by engaging in activities in an organised, synchronous way. Hughes and Jones (2011) clarify that real collaboration refers to a process involving how team members interact for the ultimate successful solving of the group's problem. In a family context, collaboration is a necessity as each

family member will be contributing to a bank of knowledge to promote reading literacy in the home which depends on their collaboration and cooperation. In a family context the collaboration is a necessity as each family member will be contributing their knowledge for the success of the promotion of reading literacy in the home. Research affirms that students do exceptionally well in school if their parents and others in the community are interested and concerned about their education, as reported in research articles and reports, literature reviews, and meta-analyses of published papers (Epstein, 2011; Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein & Lloyd, 2013; Wilder, 2014; Sheldon, 2019).

3.5.3 Cooperation

A major part of our social lifestyle involves cooperation which conventionally refers to collaborative actions of two or more individuals during the production of a common behavioural action. Such behaviours are planned, implemented and directed towards the achieving of a particular objective or the completion of activities which suggest a shared interest which benefits all those involved (Vanutelli, Nandrino, & Balconi, 2016). By implication, the key objectives require cooperation in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning. In the case of synchronised activities, the adoption of common techniques is essential, however this method may be strongly influenced by other variables (Balconi, & Vanutelli, 2017). In previous studies, it was observed that cooperative responsibilities strengthen the sense of being a part of an entire unit; in this sense the family (Balconi & Pagani, 2015; Chung, Yun & Jeong, 2015; Cui, Bryant & Reiss, 2012)

3.5.4 Open Communication

Teenagers and parents communicate in complex ways (De los Reyes, Elrich, Swan, Luo, Van Wie & Pabo, 2013a). A mother may believe that she has a relaxed communication relationship with her teenager, while the teenager may consider that very little communication exists between himself/herself and his/her parent (De los Reyes et al., 2013a). These contrasting opinions between teenagers and their parents happen across many spheres of teenage years affecting family communication.

However, by understanding family communication patterns (FCP) in the home environment is critical when promoting reading literacy, as the utilisation of information

in getting the family home environment to be supportive promotes reading literacy as the message may be communicated in different ways as different family members may perceive the same idea in different ways. The FCP theory affirms the family system as being the main socialising agent that has power over how the family members inter-relate with one another (Koerner & Schrod, 2014; Young & Schrod, 2016). Young and Schrod (2016) primarily based their perception of family communication at the cognitive level of co-orientation which refers to two or individuals specialising in and evaluating the same object in their social or material environment (Koerner & Schrod, 2014). When individuals are aware about their shared awareness, then distinctive cognitions occur; that is, a personal evaluation of the item, and a notion of ways others evaluate the object. However, the child and adult family members do not necessarily continually share the same notion of the objects in their social environment, neither is agreement constantly essential to create a shared social fact. For instance, a child may suggest that the family devote time for reading as he/she may see this as an opportunity to enhance school academic performance, while the other members of the family see it as a waste of time considering house chores and different errands as priority. Although a child may disagree, if they accurately understand each different perspective, then what they agree on becomes the social reality.

Consistent with Jones et al. (2017), individuals can attain a shared reality in distinct, but inter-related ways. First, the process of socio-orientation emphasises the relationships among a circle of relatives who act as contributors of information (literacy). Households that are perceived as excessive on this orientation depend upon other participants' reviews to influence their very own interpretations. In light of the example of the member of the family and the child, the child may be willing to accept as true with the family member's point of view if he's from an excessive socio-oriented family because of the importance of parental authority and hierarchy in family decision-making. Second, the process of concept-orientation focuses extra at the actual topic being discussed and emphasizes extraordinary family participants' viewpoints and ideas. Families who are perceived as high on this orientation will speak various viewpoints of the item and arrive sooner or later of agreement or compromise. Families create social realities through their interactions with one another and therefore develop schemas of understanding that members use to provide and interpret communicative messages.

Communication orientations replicate families' perception systems about norms of social collaboration, consisting of supportive communication, as well as the manifestation of feelings (Koerner, 2014). The FCP principle describes two styles: dialogic orientation, and conformity orientation (Jones, Bodie & Koerner, 2017).

Dialogic orientation refers to the degree to which families create an atmosphere in which all family members are encouraged to participate in unrestrained interactions about more than a few subjects. In high-communication-orientated families, parents see frequent communication with their children as the way to socialise them. Conversely, in low-verbal exchange-orientated families, there is less verbal exchange of personal opinions, emotions, and activities. These families keep in mind that open and common exchanges of thoughts, feelings, opinions, and ethics are useful for the functioning of the family in general, and for the child's socialisation specifically.

The second orientation, conformity orientation, refers to the degree to which family communication engenders a climate of homogeneity of attitudes, morals, and views. Excessive-conformity-orientated families are characterised via connections that emphasise consistency of beliefs and attitudes. In these families, parents make decisions for the family, and children are expected to behave in keeping with their parents' wishes. Connections commonly mean consciousness of compliance, coherence, conflict evasion, and the interdependence of family members. Families at the lower end of this side are characterised by numerous attitudes and beliefs. Communication reflects beliefs in the parity of all family members but much less in hierarchically ordered families. Low-conformity families generally inspire the growth of a person even though that may lead to weakened family bonds, but members outside of their own family are also regarded as significant in terms of social relationships.

The FCPs are significant in terms of different cognitive, social and psycho-social outcomes. People with high conversation-orientations displayed increased levels of emotional wellbeing, were better at adapting, became successful communicators, and were superior in expressing themselves more than people with low communication skills. Conformity orientation is associated with a good state of mind, having social support and companions with disciplined behaviours (Young & Schrodt, 2016).

3.5.5 Making Time to Read

Fiorini and Keane (2014) offer evidence concerning the significance of time use, particularly the time spent on educational activities for cognitive improvement. Merga (2014) agrees that increased cognition is related to sound reading proficiency, hence families must place extra emphasis on homework and free reading such that children's assessment scores are enhanced. For family television-watching, the correlation with achievement is more negative for high-SES families.

However, when evaluating across ethnic backgrounds, we see that they are advantageous for family improvement concerning the improved reading ratings for Black and Hispanic households. These outcomes demonstrate that media publicity have distinct effects in one-of-a-kind families, possibly because of variations within the content material itself or what the media time replaces. The family's innovations in reading has a positive effect on a pupil's cognitive improvement throughout subjects. Positive relationships between family members and academic time were determined. In other words, time increases in homework and free studying led to increases in test rankings – the opposite is also true. The connection among own family innovations to free reading and family improvements to reading scores ($p = 0.27$) is stronger than the relationship to math rankings ($p = 0.19$). Conversely, family innovations to homework time are more strongly related to families' improvements to math scores ($p = 0.24$) in comparison to reading ratings ($p = 0.21$). These correlations are useful bearing in mind that a pupil can increase his/her reading skills from reading frequently on his/her own (Hull, 2017).

From a measurement point of view, the usefulness of time on venture and the venture final results respectively, rely on the items' complexity. In other words, in assessing simple abilities, individual variations will arise affecting the accuracy of results especially in tests of reading comprehension or problem solving (Van den Broek & Espin, 2012; Greiff et al., 2013). Reading a text needs a number of cognitive processes and associated capabilities: readers should pick out letters and words; syntactic rules are then applied to phrases; sentences are parsed for their syntax and therefore meaning is extracted; and thereafter coherence must be established between sentences and paragraphs (Hull, 2017). In addition, cognitive and meta-cognitive

strategies must be employed followed by the setting and organisation of textual content.

Methods such as phonological recoding, orthographic evaluation or the retrieval of word meanings from long-term memory are slow and blunder-inclined in younger readers, but grow to be quicker and extra accurate as reading skills improve. Some of reading tasks require attentional cognitive processing to a sizeable degree as readers may need to actively choose which parts of a text to attend to whilst pursuing a given reading goal (OECD, 2011). In the case of a tough textual content, strategies which include re-reading or accomplishing self-explanations are needed for comprehension (OECD, 2011). Also in skilled readers, such tactics require cognitive effort for strategic reading requiring comprehension (Sullivan, Gnesdilow & Puntambekar, 2011).

3.5.6 Reading as a Recreational Activity

Leisure reading is considerably identified as a beneficial interest. Reading regularly is related to some literacy rewards (Clark & Douglas, 2011; Mol & Bus, 2011; OECD, 2010). While reading different textual content types, the reading of books extends one's literacy proficiency (OECD, 2010; Pfof, D€orfler & Artelt, 2013; Zebroff & Kaufman, 2016). Consequently, it is advisable with instructional and other studies to look at measures through the lenses of younger people whose dedication in reading books can be further improved. While seeing how gainful this would be, reading can be seen as a social exercise (Allington & Swann, 2009); and regarding literacy it may be seen as a pastime activity. Social interactions within the learning environment are related to students' motivation and their reading outcomes (Guthrie, Wigfield & You, 2012), Also, by providing possibilities for dialogue about books and studying, enhances the social prestige of reading. Young people's observations of the social value of reading can stimulate their degree of dedication in reading, as social influences promote an individual's subjective venture into reading (Wigfield 1997).

Petrich's (2015) study discovered that getting to know something brings rewards, such as learners' improved discussion capabilities, which leads to them extending themselves to higher-level books to be on par with their classmates. Smith (2014) contends that the satiating experience of using reading for companionship and socialisation with others, and the choice of using reading to make a place for ourselves

in a global society, is a very powerful motivational force. At the same time dialogues and conversations in book clubs offer students the experience of healthy socialising around book discourses. Students' attitudes regarding conversations about books determine the quality of social interaction in the classroom, home and other social spaces. Further, it radiates children's positive attitudes regarding socialisation through books that help make dialogues pleasing ensuring a disciplined way of interacting with peers and elders (Kozak & Recchia, 2019).

3.5.7 Routine to Foster a Supportive Home Environment

A significant number of studies have proven that routines can enhance the health and well-being of children and parents (Bakker, Karsten & Mulder, 2015; Bater & Jordan, 2017; Budescu & Taylor, 2013). For families with children, routines can include rules for mealtimes, chores, homework, and bedtimes. Family routines are instrumental in nature, are repeated regularly, and usually involve verbal exchange between family members to help guide children's behaviour (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). During this guidance the value and importance of reading can be introduced. Families with regular routines are much more likely to have competent parents, properly-adjusted children, and healthy families (Crespo et al., 2013).

Additionally, routines have been shown to improve biosocial consequences for children, together with reduced stress and advanced self-regulation (Bater & Jordan, 2017). Also, instructional success and emotional fitness, were subsidiary benefits (Fiese, Eckert & Spagnola, 2006). Through regular interactions, parents socialise and mould children in ways that promote the internalisation of educational dreams (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy & Mundt, 2013). The most common recurring routine is during mealtimes, which enhances social norms and roles in addition to increasing family togetherness, a sense of belonging and emotional safety (Fiese & Jones, 2012). Throughout family meals, parents communicate one-on-one with children as well as model pro-social behaviour, along with being warm, responsive, and sensitive to their children's needs and questions (Fiese, Foley & Spagnola, 2006; Helton, Schreiber Wiley, & Schweitzer, 2018). However, routines have been found to have a negative effect on specific types of eco-cultural influences including chaotic environments, poverty, and chronic health conditions (Crespo et al., 2013; Yoo et al., 2010). Nine (2018) posits that even though we do not like our house regulations or no

longer experience it to be a place run by ourselves, we still will generally enjoy this as not being an imposition from the outside. In almost all cultures, the house is the roof under which family members sustain themselves. It makes them feel that it is their personal space where they follow the rules and norms governing the space, and they see themselves reflected in the atmosphere of the home which carries over into the local community organisations. This organisation and predictability help to structure stability to promote reading literacy.

3.6 BARRIERS HINDERING READING LITERACY IN HOMES

Studies identify an increasing problem concerning students beginning secondary school education who are expected to already be capable of reading with proficiency - poor readers often fall behind without intervention (Rennie, 2016). This study looked at some of the barriers that exist in the home environment that have the potential to be overlooked.

3.6.1 Failure to Realise the Importance of Reading

Failure to realise the importance of reading leads to the late or delayed intervention of parents in assisting learners with reading problems. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) posit that parental involvement in children's education is one of the keys to success at school. This reflects the importance of the social process through which children begin to learn to select from diverse ideas, develop abilities, and thus develop an identity. This socialisation is initiated in the early years of being a young person within the family setting (Corsaro, 2010). A specific feature of socialisation is that it happens in both environments (school and home) where children's educational development involves literacy movements. Early parental involvement is normally reflected in the ability of the child to speedily imbibe literacy skills (Kloosterman, Notten, Tolsma & Kraaykamp, 2010; Wilder, 2014). Silinskas, Leppänen, Aunola, Parrila & Nurmi (2010) discovered that children's educational competencies at schools can be correlated to the level of involvement in literacy activity at home.

3.6.2 Parental Aspirations and Expectations

Studies conducted in China and Brazil on parental expectations report that there is a strong connection between educational achievement (particularly reading scores), and

parental support and expectations (Antonopoulou, Koutrouba & Babalis, 2011; Choi, Chang, Kim & Reio, 2015; Gordon & Cui, 2012; You, Lim, No & Dang, 2016). Chen and Gregory (2010) discovered that, amongst participation variables, parental expectation has become the most prominent factor concerning their (parental) involvement in their children's lives. In psychology, numerous social-cognitive theories like the expectancy-value model advocated by Oyserman (2013) have cautioned that parental expectations can have a negative impact on reading literacy by putting too much pressure on children to achieve beyond their true potential. From this evidence, it may be critical to educate parents to be realistic about their children's performance and not to rush into propelling them too speedily as each child is unique and progresses at his/her own pace. However, promoting children's overall educational performance gradually, especially in literacy studies, is highly recommended to extend learners (Jeynes, 2011; Baroody & Dobbs-Oates, 2011).

Concerning assessment, literature shows a correlation between parental expectations and the children's instructional overall performance; however, there is a dearth of research to test valid adverse outcomes of parental expectations (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). Parents with idealistic expectations of their children's academic performance are too concerned with their children becoming high-flyers to be able to effectively enhance their children's achievement in reading (Murayama, Pekrun, Suzuki, Marsh, & Lichtenfeld, 2016). In other words, extreme parental aspirations and expectations that exceed sensible boundaries might also cause over-involvement, undue pressure to perform, and excessive control over a child's behaviour (Murayama et al., 2016). Research findings extracted from parent-child discussions, showed the positives and negatives of parental expectations and parenting styles concerning learners' literacy acquisition (Boonka, Gijsselaers, Ritzen & Emblem-Gruwela, 2018; Jeynes, 2010).

3.6.3 Parenting Style

Different styles of parenting affect children's acculturation (Prady, Kiernan, Fairlay & Wright, 2013). Accelerating a child's reading literacy proficiency depends on the type of parenting. Mothers and fathers have exceptional roles in parenting, and these roles may vary from country-to-country (Newman et al., 2015). Parenting styles may be labeled into 3 types: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Sikiö et al., 2016).

These three styles of parenting differ according to two fundamental elements: affection (warmth) and control. Authoritative parenting is characterised by using parental affection and behavioural control that positively correlated with the performance of children of different ages (Nakayama, 2011). This parenting style demands discipline coupled with powerful communication to develop a powerful relationship between parent and child (Piko & Balázs, 2012). Conversations within the authoritative parenting style promote reading literacy in the home environment.

Authoritarian parenting is marked by high behavioral and punitive manipulations, and low affection (Hoskins, 2014). Researchers observed that paternal authoritarian behaviours are related to excessive control of children to perform academically (Wang & Fu, 2012). The authoritarian parents try to evaluate, form and control attitudes, and monitor the conduct of their children in line with set standards of behaviour, called absolute standard. In the light of this absolute standard, children are supposed to comply with very strict policies defined by their parents. In case the children fail to comply with such rules, they may be punished. Cherry (2015) points out that authoritarian parents normally fail to provide reasoning to back up such rules. In line with Hoskins (2014), authoritarian parents exhibit low responsiveness and they may be paranoically worrying. In this style of parenting, emphasis is on conformity and obedience in a much less inviting environment. Furthermore, authoritarian parents show a low degree of engagement and trust towards their children. They most usually discourage open communication and display strict control of their child's behaviour. In other words, it is extensively believed that an authoritarian figure is forceful, punitive and believes that a child must adhere to work according to ethics, and must be obedient. In the authoritarian parenting style, parents are more involved with the conventional family structure, thus parents restrict the child's autonomy, and consequently a low parent-child relationship develops (Chen et al., 2014; Coley, Lewin-Bizan & Carrano, 2011). The child is dictated to stick to parents' orders without any questions; therefore, it can be argued that the authoritarian parenting style depends on rules and thus has dire consequences on school achievement (Chen et al., 2014; Coley, Lewin-Bizan & Carrano, 2011).

Permissive parents, also called indulgent permissive parents, provide warmth, support and trust (Sovet & Metz, 2014). According to Abidoeye (2019) these parents are more

approachable than they are demanding. They are tolerant, do not require mature structure, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid conflict. They easily give in to their children's demand. Permissive parents do not require children to control themselves or behave accordingly and this makes it for their parents to talk to them. As Ishak, Low and Lau (2012) agree that permissive parents have a low demandingness level but a high responsiveness level as they rarely say no to their children however give in to their children's demand.

3.6.4 Absence of a culture of reading

The absence of a culture of reading at home deprives learners to access the various 'worlds' through wide reading. Wide reading includes the reading of a plethora of textual content and this extensive reading is a powerful tool to becoming fully literate. If students do not get opportunities to master a selection of texts, there may be a high possibility that they will not become confident talented readers (Rasinski, 2014). Non-readers or part-time readers did not have the advantage of the reciprocal effects of reading, resulting in the stunted growth of their academic skills, in addition to being denied the satisfaction and pleasure of reading (Horbec, 2012, p. 59). Further, reading for pleasure builds reading comprehension, will increase background understanding (that is beneficial in all content areas), increases vocabulary, broadens our understanding of human behaviour such that we can empathise with others (Murphy, 2013). Creel (2015) asserted that the absence of a reading culture disadvantaged students resulting in their reluctance to read prescribed school literature books such as novels and short stories.

3.6.5 Lack of Reading Materials

Despite it being generally known that reading materials in a learner's home language improves literacy (Sailors, Hoffman, Pearson, Beretvas & Matthee, 2010). Disadvantaged children still have restricted access to print resources and home learning possibilities, and their parents/caregivers may face severe challenges considering their socio-economic status (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011). These obstacles lead to low levels of schooling, difficulty in finding jobs, dysfunctional families, an absence of modelling, and higher levels of despair, thus making it difficult

for parents to support their youngsters in mastering reading literacy skills, and this leads to a further lack of opportunities in later life (Colarocco, 2012).

Young people who live in low socio-economic home environments additionally have the added burden of not experiencing a rich literacy environment with books, trips to the library, and interesting discussions on book topics with their peers. Books and book reading which expose children to language and stories outside of their day-to-day experiences, are some of the most influential instruments for expanding children's vocabulary (Hindman & Morrison, 2011). If learners restrict reading to only academic textbooks for the purposes of preparing for assessments, they will deprive themselves of a tremendous amount of gratification from reading other books for pleasure. The less time devoted to reading, the less probable that they will increase their vocabulary and grammar competence (Lee & Mallinder, 2017). A study by Krashen, Lee and McQuillan (2012, p. 30) further demonstrates that presenting greater access to books can mitigate the effect of poverty on reading achievement.

3.6.6 A Disengaged Interest in Reading Literacy

Interest describes a characteristic relative to the environment, which, in a supportive home, enhances the children's (and parents') engagement in reading (Rounds & Su, 2014). Therefore, the quality of interest is an iterative practice of suitability between person and environment: a person selects a favoured environment and avoids disturbing environments, because harmonious environments support interest and intentions to progress in life. Consequently, situational factors determine the amount of interest a person displays in academic studies including the quest for becoming proficient in reading (Renninger & Hidi, 2011).

If the situational factors stimulate the reading of a novel (for example), this may be sustained for a longer time, and may eventually turn into what is known as a person's interest or hobby; this is done through repeated engagement with particular textual content through the years. Interest has a positive effect on reading and has a carry-over value into academic success and prepares one for later life (Renninger & Hidi, 2011). Moreover, interest in recreational reading gives an indication of the reading potential in children who spend little time engaged in reading activities. The home, school and community environments should devise motivational strategies to entice

reluctant readers, especially those living in dysfunctional homes, to exploit their reading potential at school age, even in the face of adversity (Eklund, Torppa & Lyytinen, 2013).

The lack of interest, largely due to a non-motivational environment, troubles the promoting of reading literacy. Interest is connected to a motivational function such that human actions are executed through inspirational influences (Nye, Si, Rounds & Drasgow, 2012). Since interest has an emotional element concerning the direction, strength, and tenacity of goal-orientated behaviours, it is estimated that it will lead to goal-fulfilment through reading literacy; thus all role-players need to heed the call for strategies that will inspire children to develop a passion for books and other reading sources.

3.6.7 The Home and Neighbourhood

One's residence is the most crucial physical set-up for the majority of people. It can be insufficient, threatening or dysfunctional; on the other hand, it can be loving, secure, enjoyable, restorative, a sanctuary, or a haven for conversations (Gifford, 2014). Both set-ups have implications (positive and negative) and it is the duty of the relevant role-players to help create the best possible learning environment (for example, a noise-free zone) for students by becoming models of behaviour and resilience (Shagoury & Power, 2012; Pierrette, Marquis-Favre, Morel, Rioux & Vallet, 2012).

3.6.8 Minimising Distractions in the Home

According to Lavie (2010), the concept of attention tells us that the better the cognitive load, the more inclined people are to new distractors. For example, the constant ringing and talking loudly on cellphones draws attention away from other pertinent ongoing activities, phones can also increase cognitive load. Learners are at a greater risk of distractions, and may suffer from inattention and hyperactivity. According to Kushlev et al. (2016), the time-based resource sharing model of attention, advocates switching among obligations - even briefly – but it requires cognitive effort to later complete the duty. Switching attention consequently will increase cognitive load (Kushlev, Proulx & Dunn, 2016). Williams and Pence (2011) contend that smartphones

have been visible more as interruptions in the classroom. These phones have been designed more to attract the entertainment desire of individuals; although it can, if used responsibly, foster access to online academic materials. Myrberg (2017) suggests that students simply turn off notifications or turn on flight mode to avoid disturbing others (Singer, Trakhman, Alexander & Berkowitz, 2017). Studies assert that we must focus on the content, be more present in the moment, and be more cognitively engaged (Dobler, 2015; Keller, 2012). Explicitly, strategies must be developed, taught, and modelled to minimise distractions and maximise concentration (Hamer & McGrath, 2011).

Interruption is defined as an externally generated, random, indiscreet event that breaks the continuity of cognitive recognition on a primary venture (Marotta & Acquisti, 2017). This definition emphasises the external nature and randomness of the interruption (including email notifications and on-the-spot messaging). This study by Marotta and Acquisti (2017) warns that interruptions have a destructive effect on individuals' overall performance, and that individuals who are interrupted are much more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and frustration.

However, not all interruptions are externally driven (Marotta & Acquisti, 2017). Self-interruption refers to personal choices to attend to every other notification, verbal or otherwise (Adler & Benbunan-Fich, 2013). A few authors have proposed theories to categorise self-interruptions; among them, Jin and Dabbish (2009) use a grounded theory approach to identify seven types of self-interruptions, grouped into two broad classes, internal and situational. Internal self-interruptions are initiated by using one's cognition and may be traced either to the need to take a mental break or the tendency to follow routine steps. Situational interruptions emanate from situations in the environment. Moreover, self-interruptions are influenced both by the propensity to briefly abandon a challenge that is no longer rewarding, as well as through the tendency to switch to an unrelated challenge while a sub-venture is being completed. It follows that interruptions may not usually hamper overall performance; in fact, certain interruptions (like breaks) might recharge the batteries and result in improved concentration as opposed to being detrimental to learning (Payne, Duggan, & Neth, 2007)

3.6.9 Reluctance to become Familiar with Technology

The advent of the digital age caused great anxiety in peoples' lives, especially those in lower socio-economic backgrounds. Technological advances, especially those pertaining to social media platforms, have a decisive influence on society that touches our daily lives (Itō et al., 2009; Boyd, 2014). There are many public discussions about the outcomes of the progressively distinct use of electronic media and virtual gadgets on the quality of reading literacy. Research surveys have shown that literacy levels have deteriorated as a result of having shorter attention spans – a habit resulting from social-media overload (Greenfield, 2015; Goleman, 2013). Understandably, for these reasons (among others), the reluctance to use technology for academic purposes to supplement reading sources has widespread implications for the future (Sorbring, 2014).

Moreover, young people from affluent families not surprisingly read widely and had access to different types of technological devices and materials, in contrast to those from poor backgrounds (Sorbring, 2014). Yet, as Clark (2014) points out, this discrepancy isn't necessarily a consequence of better access as there's no sizeable gap in this respect among both groups. Moreover, Clark's (2014) study found that although fewer children from the low SES group liked reading after school, they however read a variety of books after school than their counterparts. The excessive hope for the future success for the technologically-empowered cyber kid may be misleading as the manufacturing of content has brought about an explosion of data and thus an upward thrust in redundant information (Itō et al., 2009). In addition, the costs of using IT has become unaffordable to the marginalised.

The lay person frequently is left unacquainted about the complicated and uneven influence of screen reading (Livingstone & Sober, 2005). Hasebrink, Jensen, Van den Bulck, Hölig and Maesele, (2015) assert that the digital reality is worsened by often too quick policy selections and rapid changes regarding the creation of information (ICTs). Schools in some countries struggle to train staff and students in new media IT literacies stemming from a whirlwind of complex capitalistic-imposed changes (Deszcz-Tryhubczak & Huysmans, 2018)

Simultaneously, there was ongoing debate about who must participate – parents, educational institutions, the media industry, government, and companies – and who

should be responsible for children's media education and behaviour (Lemish, 2015; Howard, Mehrotra, Datar, Klein & Borzekowski, 2019). Lemish (2015) asserts that as the internet, online technology and cellular devices become increasingly massive, home environments need to adjust to new media technology which most parents found to be of important enough to facilitate global citizenship. A major concern was the children's knowledge of using the internet responsibly, but they have to be made aware of the dangers of cybercrime and other disadvantages of using the internet and social media.

Young people's use of popular culture, media and modern technologies according to a study by Marsh, Brooks, Hughes, Ritchie, Roberts and Wright, (2005), concerning their engagement with innovative technology, found that they (young people) acquired a wide range of skills and knowledge related to using social media and new technologies. Also, younger children's use of media was found to be normally lively and beneficial to playing, speaking, listening, and reading. The most current National Literacy Trust's survey with children and young people reading in 2015 established that during that year, children and young people generally spent more time reading materials online than reading books (Clark, 2016) . Wang and Chen (2018) observe that learners' increased and unprecedented use of modern cellular phones suggests an increasing reluctance to read hardcopy books, as they now prefer e-books on *Kindle* or screen-studying. This increasing trend in cellular phone usage in reading suggests that people's study behaviour and analysing techniques are changing (Su & Xie, 2017). With the development of the digital-net generation, human beings gradually shift from traditional studying to virtual studying and sensible analysing (Ghalebandi & Noorhidawati, 2019). A diffusion of digital terminals has gradually replaced a number of paper sources (hardcopies), such as conventional library books – we now generally use online sources (Pandya & Boricha, 2019). The introduction of social media which facilitates conversation among people throughout societal, cultural, ethnic and national boundaries, representing interplays of worldviews, values and ideas new opportunities are opened that demand research (Bouvier, 2015; Jaye, Lomax-Sawyers, Younger & Egan, 2019). Reading styles are also evolving from the real to the virtual, from e-book and newspaper studying to screen studying. The emergence and rapid growth of the social media community have liberated human beings from a closed communication system of reading into an era of socialised reading on an open IT platform.

Consequently, the studying habits of a reader have changed through social media by interacting with User Generated Content (UGC) material.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the current literature of promoting reading literacy in the five largest emerging market economies - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). The chapter analysed the current situation in BRICS looked at what makes them to become an emerging market economy, and what they have done to promote reading literacy. It expanded on the need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments by deliberating on the different approaches families can use to promote reading literacy. It also looked at how the home environment has an influence on the learner, while considering the key elements of promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments such as advocacy, shared-story-reading, good reading habits, types of support, reading motivation, availability of reading materials, reading culture, attitudes, and reading for pleasure. In addition, the benefits of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments precipitated parent-child discussions on reading literacy, thus capacitating families with knowledge, ideas for the reduction of poverty, and advice on general family health.

The chapter concluded by outlining the barriers of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments which included the failure to realise the importance of reading, parental aspirations and expectations, parental style, absence of a culture of reading, lack of reading materials, and a disengaged interest in reading. The home and neighbourhood were explored with the intention of minimising distractions (barriers) for promoting reading literacy. through supportive home environments.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methods that were applied in this study. The reasons for adopting such a research paradigm, clarifying the paradigm, and justification for the choice of the critical paradigm approach, are all outlined. This is followed by the approach and design of the study; the design being the participatory action research (PAR) model. Thereafter, this chapter explains how the participants were selected, as well as how data was generated – this incorporated the methods, focus group discussions, participant observation, and reflective verbal and written reflective journals. The instruments that were used in the study were audio-recordings of free attitude interviews (FAIs), the interview observation schedule, and reflective journal prompts. The ethical considerations in conducting the study are outlined. Also, the approach to analyse the data found in the field is described. The chapter concludes by confirming the validity, reliability and vigour of the findings.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Selecting an appropriate research framework or paradigm is crucial because a paradigm, as Asghar (2013) suggests, provides worldviews that define the nature and range of possibilities for its followers in relation to reality. In other words, ontological (realities), epistemological (activities) and methodological concerns shape the dimensions of any paradigm. Additionally, Creswell, (2012) defines a paradigm as a worldview or a set of assumptions about how things work, how research should be conducted, and what role the researcher should play. Kumar (2014) agrees that a paradigm is a belief system that guides the way to do things; or more formally establishes a set of practices which can range from thought-patterns to actions.

4.2.1 Critical Paradigm

This study is underpinned by the critical paradigm approach. Horkheimer (1982), one of the founders of Critical Theory (CT), defines the critical paradigm as an approach that seeks human emancipation, to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them. Critical paradigm, because of its inherent transformation agenda, goes beyond mere recording of observations, and strives to bring about reform to create a

better world (Asghar, 2013). It therefore challenges the status quo and strives for a balanced democratic society. It is particularly concerned with the issues of power relations within the society, and interaction of race, class, gender, education, economy, religion and other social institutions that contribute to a social system (Asghar, 2013).

As mentioned above, paradigm is a way of describing a worldview that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology i.e. what we believe about the nature of reality). Chilisa and Kawulich (2012) add that, interconnected to the worldview are ways of knowing (epistemology i.e. how do we know what we know). This study looks at the related assumptions of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology by critical theorists.

4.2.1.1 Ontology

Ontologically critical theorists consider the nature of being, that is, what constitutes authentic life. (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). Ontology looks at what we're dealing with in terms of the nature of reality about what we are researching. Examples are: people's knowledge about the importance of reading, attitudes about reading, the vocabulary people use, the number and genres of books in a school library, and how long people spend on reading (Dillon & Wals, 2016). The emancipatory paradigm adopts the stance that social reality is historically bound and is constantly changing, depending on social, political, cultural and power-based factors (Wynn & Williams, 2012). South Africa's oppressive pre-democracy regime ensured that public libraries, sitting at the park to read, among others, were places for the privileged white minority. This policy of apartheid stifled the marginalised from progressing to develop a passion for reading.

Critical theorists adopt the stance that reality is out there to be discovered. Reality has multiple layers; for example, the surface reality that is visible, and the deep structures that are unobservable. Theories and historical orientation help to unmask the deep structures by utilising instruments to access them. Mertens (2012) points out that the researchers must take it upon themselves to dissect what is real, particularly in terms of issues related to wealth, incapacities, sexual orientation, deafness, faith, geographical location, inequalities, and politics, among others. Emancipatory research observes that different versions of reality are given preference such as those of the

advantaged; this needs to be critically and analytically examined to judge why the opinions of marginalised people are ignored (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). This significant enquiry should lead to a reality that changes past injustices by advancing social fairness. This ontological supposition should spread to include ideas connected to recognising dimensions of variety that are pertinent in each setting as catalysts to access power and give legitimacy to all forms of reality.

The analytical deduction states that people work in a realm dependent on influence. As such, hardships are ironically connected to opportunities (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). However, an analytic view is subject to societal, political, economic, cultural, race and gender beliefs that have been ingrained over a period of time – and these can complicate any analytical process which wants to find authentic answers to local and global issues (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011).

The legacy of apartheid left the marginalised to continue surviving in harsh daily living conditions (which will take many years to dissipate) with atrocious socio-economic disparities where many homes are left without the presence of a mother or a guardian figure as family members are forced to be away from their homes for long periods of time as they find employment in far-off places; and this has a destabilising influence on children and their education. Thus, the past-time of sharing stories is something of a privilege as mothers and guardians come home exhausted from toiling and still having to prepare food for the evening. The luxury of time for storytelling and reading is now rare as the high unemployment rate compels parents to look for jobs further away from home (Manguel, 2014). Telling stories is something of a rare occurrence as traditionally this was done by the *Gogo* (grandmother) roles have since changed with the scourge of HIV/AIDS. *Gogo* is no longer the one waiting for everyone to come home, but is also now out there looking for temporary employment to feed her orphaned or abandoned grandchildren. Women remain marginalised economically and because much responsibility rests on them, therefore, children's leisure time for reading in the home becomes restricted (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011).

4.2.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemologically, critical theorists believe that knowledge is socially-constructed, based upon what interests people, and is fixed in a particular context (Kilgore, 2001).

For essential theorists, knowledge is lucidly constructed through human pursuits, while sifting and examining knowledge including challenging old knowledge which creates an inflow of more (and new) information offering a greater sense of power – reminiscent of the old adage - knowledge is power- (Walter, 2010). This emanates from the fact that information is not always neutral, because it is controlled by those in power; in other words, power-relations dictate all information-production, thus reading with a critical mind is essential.

In this study, the critical paradigm proposes that when people have the ability to read proficiently, they will have more control of their lives rather than living a life of dependency. Within the critical framework, knowledge constructed is shared among people in collaborative discourses. Therefore, reading books is likely to promote discussion over what is read and thus knowledge can be deconstructed and re-constructed to add to new knowledge. According to Asghar (2013), the most important attribute is to have a positive style for investigating information from writers who have isolated the marginalised majority who have so much potential in terms of bringing new knowledge to the table.

On the question of what is truth, critical theorists maintain that information is true, if it may be changed into practice that empowers and transforms the lives of the common people (Wynn & Williams, 2012). Wynn and Williams (2012) add that authentic understanding as a collective and sense-making by the people, lead to improving the lives of human beings as knowledge is constructed from the members' frames of reference. Further, the relationship between the researcher and the researched is not based on influential hierarchical positions and status; it exists in the interpretative paradigm, which includes the transformation and emancipation of each participant, as well as the researcher.

Mertens (2012) posits that the transformative epistemological assumption increases questions about the nature of relationships among researchers in relation to who controls the research, as research is no longer carried out by non-members of the community groups. The members of the affected group(s) must be directly involved in the research project especially if it concerns issues within the local community. It also increasingly raises questions about the nature of expertise in terms of influence and privilege. To recognise differing versions of reality and the way they are synergistically

associated with problems of influence, the researcher needs to establish an interactive connection with community individuals. This entails expertise concerning the historic and social contexts, as well as building relationships that consider energy variations and help the development of trust among the affected parties.

The promotion of reading through supportive home environments depends on home conditions and circumstances, which have a pervasive influence owing to the culture of the home and the history of the communities. Knowledge generated by the researcher, took cognisance of which stories were told, by whom, and how. Hence, the participants were of varying ages displaying various power relations among them. The participants ranged from the councillor, who represents both the community and political will of his party, right to the learners who by the virtue of their age, places them at a less powerful position within this community. Therefore, trust had to be firstly established among all the participants, irrespective of position in society, if the research project was to attain success.

4.2.1.3 Methodology

Methodologically, the critical paradigm is flexible in adopting any technique or approach which can assist in the enhancement of the social structure to bring about parity. Hussain, Elyas and Naseef (2013) look at the use of qualitative, quantitative or mixed techniques. However, they agree that analytical research should take the direction of qualitative designs. This study used qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus group discussions, reflective journals and participant observations. Interviews are believed to provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena; as such, qualitative methods put participants at ease through the use of open-ended questions, which assist in building up confidence and rapport which leads to the generation of rich data (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

According to Rowe, Baldr and Earles (2015), the critical research should unearth revolutionary and participatory practices that empower the oppressed and support social transformation. Participants engage in figuring out the problem, defining the problem, collecting and analysing the information, and disseminating findings to inform and to take action to remedy the problem. This study used Participatory Action Research (PAR) to generate data to make the participants fully engaged in discovering

how to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments using the four cyclic steps: observation, planning, action and reflection.

4.2.1.4 Axiology

Axiology relates to moral issues and our individual philosophical viewpoints. Mainly researchers, irrespective of their favoured technique of inquiry, might well know that axiology plays a vital role in the selection and formation of research questions, driving their interest in certain issues over others. Generally, a distinguishable role of the researcher and the researched exists as companions in the research process (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011).

The analytical aspect of PAR is an acknowledgement of one's axiological position. Through this, ongoing researcher reflexivity and/or important subjectivities are foregrounded. This is carried out not simply by acknowledging and mitigating validity-threatening biases, but by also being fashioned with an operative axiology which strategically incorporates researcher values as well as a system of inquiry (Maxwell, 2013). The paradigm's axiological assumptions specifically pertain to "the recognition of strength differences and the ethical implications that are derived from these variations in terms of discrimination, oppression, misrepresentation, and being made to feel invisible [marginalised]" (Mertens, 2010). In a culturally dominated home environment, the lines are not usually blurred when it comes to the position of the child, the woman, and the man in the home. The ethical implication considered how to promote reading literacy through supportive environments by not side-lining anyone's views and ideas. The main researcher was conscious of the aspect of discrimination and did not want to see it being practised during the research process as the aim of PAR is to emancipate the silenced voice in the home environment.

4.3 APPROACH OF THE STUDY

This study is qualitative in nature because it explains behaviours, processes, the 'actors' in the processes, attitudes, and motivations. Rahman (2017) agrees that qualitative studies are related to procedure to arrive at desired outcomes. The qualitative researcher explains and explores, among others, the behaviours of the

learners, parents, community and valued partners' who were engaged in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The distinctive features of qualitative studies include the objectives and goals that are directed at imparting in-depth and interpretive details of the social issue under investigation in order to instill change in current practices, views and histories (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Silverman, 2013).

Generally, qualitative studies are regularly described as naturalistic, interpretative and concerned with exploring phenomena from the inside (Flick, 2009; Mayer, 2015) and is sensitive of the perspectives of research participants as a starting point. De Vos et al. (2011) adds that qualitative studies deal with descriptions regarding the complexities related to a selected social phenomenon. Similarly, Maree (2011) states that qualitative studies are empirical in that they explore a specific phenomenon in its naturalistic context utilising various avenues to collect evidence. Further, it generates information within real situations where the phenomena being studied is at hand. This research sought to get thoughts and views from the participants about finding ways to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) assert that a qualitative approach offers the researcher the possibility of "looking inside" the individuals' real lifestyles in their natural contexts.

4.4 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A research design is defined by Kumar (2014, p. 123) "as the path that one decides to observe all through his or her research adventure to locate answers to certain research questions as validly, objectively, correctly and economically as possible". Kumar (2014) further refers to it as a plan via which the researcher comes to a decision for himself or herself and communicates to others his or her choices concerning what study layout he or she proposes to use, how he or she can gather information from contributors, how he or she will be able to choose his or her contributors, how facts could be analysed, and how findings may be communicated. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011), a study's layout refers to all of the choices a researcher makes in planning the study's design. This refers to design as a plan, shape and approach of the study to reach solutions by analysing questions or issues; hence the main researcher opted for PAR.

4.4.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Ungar, McGrath, Black, Sketris, Whitman and Liebenberg (2015) outline PAR as a method to investigate and evaluate; and that it builds partnerships with people who have the necessary expertise and information to critically think about what they see, as PAR is in itself a social and academic process that mainly concentrates on educational practices. It evaluates the control practices of individuals who are operating inside the context of a school and the community with the objective of empowering practitioners as co-researchers in giving them a voice to combat obstacles that stifle a community from progressing, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or any other form of discrimination.

In PAR, the educator community can reduce its expertise status to empower the parents and all other co-researchers in order to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. This also leads to improving the quality of teaching-learning simply through engaging in processes that guide PAR. One of its (PAR) foremost distinctive characteristics is that it is a social technique of collaboration for eliciting information from groups who were in need of changing practices through interaction in a shared social world (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2013). What the participants/co-researchers offer in the research process promotes policymaking, programme development and plans for the future (MacDonald, 2012). In this research project, PAR was utilised to engage parents, educators, learners and all co-researchers to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The general aim of PAR (and that of the researcher) is to use this study's findings to steer social change to hasten emancipation and transformation.

When a learner is able to read, that learner is equipped and is emancipated, thus becoming part of his or her learning, and a useful member of society. The family together with the other valued partners are part of this transformation, as they are also emancipated and can counteract similar challenges with the knowledge they have gained during their participation in the research. Accordingly, PAR calls for genuine participation and collaboration – this allowed others to ask questions, to generate and interpret facts, and to understand mistakes; as these were visible as sources of learning which showed that risks envisaged have to be avoided. Therefore, the

participation of key stakeholders is important in PAR as it encourages complete attention to the big questions through smaller, but more specific inquiries.

4.5 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

A challenge in implementing PAR procedures centres around who to invite, who to engage as the 'most affected' ones, how to provide leadership in what is to be explored, and what to make of the interpretations in a meaningful way. These are done for the express purpose of improving community members' social, material, educational and material conditions (Barnes, 2012; Sargeant, 2012; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). All valued partners are participants in the PAR process, and they were deliberately selected because they could add value to the study by responding to the research questions and thus enhance knowledge of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2009; Scotland, 2012; Trotter, 2012). The participants for this team of co-researchers included the following:

- **Learners:** Initially six learners, boys and girls from grades 8, 9 and 10 were selected from the school. Choosing these participants allowed me to generate a close-up view within their particular context regarding reading literacy (Manson, 2017). I decided not to include learners from other grades (11 and 12) due to their study workload and other academic commitments. However, their participation would have added much needed value to the study. To recruit learners, I approached the principal as the gatekeeper of the research site, who requested that English teachers participate in the study. The English teachers then identified learners who were interested in participating in the study. I then addressed the learners about the objectives of the study thus opening the invitation to all the learners however only four learners participated in the study. This was done to ensure that I still had other participants at hand if some participants decided to withdraw from the study.
- **Learners' family members:** This included any person (one from each family) who lives with the learner, either parents or guardians or older siblings, who help learners with their schoolwork, particularly reading. To recruit each of these family members, I extended the written invitation through the learners who took invitation letters home. The explanation in motivating them to join the research project centred around that whatever we were investigating, was likely

to be complex, nuanced, situated and contextual. According to Manson (2017), by including this information to the parents, it would not only increase our horizons of being able to use these details to understand how matters are handled in particular contexts, but also to grasp how difficult situations or issues are grappled with from a different perspective; that of the parent/guardian who is under severe pressure to survive in a world that has marginalised him/her.

- **The local librarian:** I requested the chief librarian be part of the team who would be available to provide meaningful data about the frequency, behaviours and attitudes of the community in accessing the library.
- **One teacher of English (EFAL):** This was an English teacher from the participating school because the LOLT is English. To recruit this teacher, I approached the principal of the school to recommend a teacher of English (EFAL) who would be able to enhance my study with rich data. After this, I extended the invitation to this teacher for participation in the study.
- **The local councillor (or the representative):** I as the main researcher, looked for an individual who dealt with issues concerning education as they may be existing community programmes dealing with promoting reading. I approached the councillor's office and extended the invitation.
- **An NGO representative:** I also approached the NGO office to recruit a member who helps learners with reading or homework. Also, the fact that NGOs may have existing programmes of reading that assist learners in the community, may add to the richness of the collected data. The NGO office identified a relevant and knowledgeable person to participate in the study.

4.6 PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH SITES

Selecting a research site is important as it will enable us to choose suitable participants, meet, discuss and observe the home environments, especially in terms of how they support reading literacy for sustainable learning

4.6.1 The School

The school which I selected as a research site is in Amaotana (near Durban), Pinetown District, KwaZulu Province. This school is situated in a very disadvantaged socio-economic area; thus it has a quintile 3 status. The KwaZulu Natal Department of Basic Education is supposed to procure all the school needs because it is a non-fee paying school under Section 21 of SASA. The school provides education from grade 8 to 12, and has an enrolment of 875 learners. IsiZulu and IsiXhosa are the main languages spoken at home by the learners; however, the medium of instruction at school is English. English First Additional Language (EFAL) is a compulsory subject at school which includes reading and comprehension as basic learning skills.

The staff comprises of the principal, one deputy principal, three HoDs, 20 educators, one administrative clerk, one cleaner, one gardener, and five food handlers from the nutrition programme. Creative Arts, Life Orientation and EFAL fall under the control of one HoD.

There were five teachers who taught EFAL in the various grades:

- one teacher for grade 8 A;
- a teacher for grades 8B to 8 D;
- another for grades 9B, 10B, 11A, 11 B
- one teacher for grades 9A to 9D as well as 10 A to 10D; and
- one teacher responsible for grades 11 C to 11E, 12 A, 12 B, 12C

The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) comprised of six members. The school has two formal unions that are recognised by the Department of Education (DoE), and they are SADTU and NATU

This research site (the school) was selected because it offered EFAL as a compulsory school subject. I, as the main researcher, purposively selected the school due to the fact I taught here where I was once an acting HoD for languages. I discovered that the school had programmes for reading; however, I had little knowledge of what the parents were doing to assist their children, and how to assist them. There is a library located in close proximity of the school which learners from the school frequent. Therefore, I saw it as a great opportunity to involve all stakeholders; specifically, the librarian, the local community members, and the school community, in finding ways to

promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. Grade 8 to 12 EFAL teachers from the school were committed to teaching reading thus most of the learners read well, even though some struggled. Hence, the researcher chose the site which had the potential for rich data to enhance the quality of the study. The next phase discusses the profiles of the co-researchers.

4.6.2 Pearl's and Ruby's Homes

Pearl and Ruby live in the Amaoti area, a street away from Amaotana in the Inanda District, close to Verulam (Kwazulu-Natal, RSA). This is a poor community surviving on low incomes and Government grants. The RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) housing meets the basic needs of most South African people.



Picture 4.1: A RDP home

The African National Congress (ANC) Government initiated the building RDP housing units in order to provide for the previously disadvantaged and to address the severe housing backlog that had developed in South Africa spanning decades. However, in spite of these good intentions, there has been profound criticism with regard to the inferior building standards and poor quality of these housing units, exacerbated by the lack of basic services and amenities concerning these development projects (Moolla, Kotze & Block, 2011; Chakuwamba, 2010; Bradlow, Bolnick & Shearing, 2011).

A typical RDP house has an area of 36 m² and is situated on a 250 m² lot (Cox, 2008). Each of the units consists of an open-plan bedroom, lounge and kitchen, with a separate lavatory-cum-bathroom. Generally, these homes are built with brick and mortar with galvanised iron roofs, metal doors and two or three small windows (Moolla, Kotze & Block, 2011). However, not all RDP homes are the same; some are bigger and can measure up to 45 m², but according to Pottie (2003), only 30% of all houses built by the Government were larger than 30 m², and very few of the houses constructed up to 1999 complied with standard building regulations. On the other hand, local municipalities and provincial governments all have different specifications for RDP housing units, resulting in these discrepancies (Pottie, 2003). Nevertheless, all of these houses have access to clean running water, and are connected to a sewage system (Cox, 2008).

4.7 PROFILE OF THE CO-RESEARCHERS

Below follow the co-researchers' profiles (no specific order, and the names are fictitious).

4.7.1 Learners

Learner one (Pearl) was a grade eight female. She was 13 years old. She lived with only her mother. She has been at the school for two years in the Senior Phase. She enrolled for all grade 8 subjects. She attended all the research sessions.

Learner two (Ruby), a grade eight girl learner was 14 years old. She lived with her mother, father and three younger siblings. It was her second year in SP. She was registered for all nine subjects and her HL is isiZulu. She attended all the study sessions.

Learner three (Diamond), a grade nine male learner, was sixteen years old. He lived with his mother (his father is deceased), three siblings, an aunt and a nephew. He was in the final year of SP. He was registered for all nine subjects and his HL was isiZulu. He attended all the research project meetings.

Learner four (Sapphire), a grade nine male learner, was 15 years old. He lived with his mother, and seven siblings. It is his third year in SP. He is registered for all nine subjects at the school and he attended all the research meetings.

4.7.2 Learners' Family Members

The parent who participate was the 32-year-old unemployed mother of learner three, who was recently widowed. She has a diploma in tourism which she obtained in 2002. She survives by sewing clothes. She attended 90% of the research meetings.

4.7.3 One EFAL Teacher

Mrs H (pseudonym), a grade 8 EFAL teacher, holds a Professional Teacher's Certificate, a Professional Teacher's Diploma with English as a major subject, a Certificate in Education Law, a certificate in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), an Honours Degree in Education. She has for the past 33 years worked as an educator, and has been at this particular school for almost a decade. She specialises in EFAL, isiZulu and Life Orientation, having taught these subjects for her entire career. She attended 10% for the research sessions.

4.7.4 The Local librarian

Mrs G (pseudonym) was the local librarian who holds a Library Science Honours Degree. She has been working in this community library for 25 years but has been with working as a librarian for about 34 years. She attended all the meetings.

4.7.5 Local Councillor

Mrs C (pseudonym) held an educational portfolio in her ward. She was nominated recently in July at her political party's congress meeting. She has never held this portfolio before, but is very passionate about education. She attended all the meetings.

4.7.6 NGO Representative

Ms N (pseudonym) was the NGO representative of 22 years of age, who was passionate about projects that concerned education, hence she attended the majority of the research meetings. She has been with the foundation for three years. Her organisation has seven programmes: ECD feeding, life skills, the business that the organisation runs, and the mentoring programme to help with literacy with the grade 8 and 11 learners. The organisation intends to (in 2019) introduce reading in English for grade 3 learners to fill the gap to become English literate as English instruction only commenced in grade four, which some felt was too late. Also, they were going to

introduce parenting skills, in addition to conducting surveys to find out the educational needs of the community.

4.8 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher was an EFAL and Life Orientation teacher in one of the schools in the Pinetown District. She previously had acted as a Languages HoD at the school where she is currently working. She started working in 2012.

During her tenure as a HoD for languages and EFAL educator for six years, she had observed that teachers were doing all they possibly could to promote reading literacy among learners, but learners were not getting the same support from home. Therefore, she deemed it necessary to conduct a study on promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments. To assist homes realise that they do have assets that they can use to support their children's reading literacy, the study will propose ways in which this could be done.

4.9 DATA GENERATION METHODS

The non-standardised, adaptable methods to gather data were suitable for the social context of the study so that every participant had an equal opportunity of analysing the problem under investigation. This included data which are distinct, loaded and complicated. The aspect of openness to recognise other theories that assist in analysis and interpretation of data was practised. Data that consists of distinct descriptions of the phenomenon being researched were grounded after consideration of the views of the members. This incorporates the reflexive technique in which the function and attitude of the researcher is stated. For some researchers, reflexivity is also a manner of reporting the researcher's personal study of 'the sector' (Creswell, 2013).

4.9.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

In this study, the FGDs were utilised to generate data. According to Creswell (2013), FGDs are conversations performed in a group defined by size, composition, and conversation tactics. The participants influence each other through their experiences, opinions and general contribution during the course of dialogue, conversations and meetings. It was important that group members keep to a code of conduct that prevents confident speakers from dominating FGDs (Gorse, McKinney, Shepherd &

Whitehead, 2006). This gave a chance for the previously marginalised participants to have a voice about this phenomenon.

Ordinarily, a FGD consists of six to eight participants who are selected generally on homogeneity (Ryan, Gandha, Culbertson & Carlson, 2014; Roman et al., 2016). The FGDs generally give rise to evaluations of current situations in the community based on participants' thinking and reasoning (Belzile & Oberg, 2012). Face-to-face discussions of between one to two hours on a set topic(s) were planned. To facilitate the answering of FGD questions and recollection of events, the participants clarified meanings and a scribe took minutes of such meetings (Ryan, Gandha, Culbertson & Carlson, 2014). Information was built on from gathering shared thoughts, views, ideas, stories and experiences of the participants to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. The organised manner in which participants interacted in FGDs stimulated free-flowing, constructive, and collective discourses of experiences and recollections. The team of participants comprised of learners, teachers, a mother, a councillor, a librarian and other relevant stakeholders including the main researcher (myself as the coordinator). For the study, it was initially planned that each focus group will have more than eight participants in case of some dropping out. (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Hence, when some participants did drop out, the group still remained with eight participants. The study consisted of one homogenous group, there were four planned FGD meetings and all four materialized.

Farnsworth and Boon (2010) maintain that the group dynamics in terms of social interactions and social relationships that emerge inside the focus group assist in meaning-making for the main researcher and all the participants concerning the subject under investigation which must be interrogated decisively. In this study, to facilitate uninhibited conversation and for the participants to develop cohesively as a group, I had to position myself not so much as the head co-researcher, but as one of them. I maintained an empathetic stance by breaking down barriers between myself and the focus group participants, such as sharing duties and authority by allowing members to "own" the process.

4.9.2 Participant Observation

Observation is an organised action with the intention of watching the way people behave devoid of asking any clarification on what is happening. Participant

observation is a qualitative technique with roots in conventional ethnographic research, whose goal is to help researchers examine the perspectives held by the population being studied (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). Participant observation continually happens in community settings, in places believed to have some relevance to a study's questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Urquhart, 2015). As the main researcher, I visited five homes of the participants (three learners, NGO's and local councillor's education portfolio officer). I made two visits to each home, before and during the data generation period. I observed habits and actions in participants' homes. I used participant observation for acquiring information about the home/school environment, social-cultural and economic contexts in which relationships exist among people, contexts, thoughts, norms, events, and people's behaviours during leisure time (what they do, how regularly, and with whom). The method is extraordinary because as the main researcher I had to go to the member's home instead of asking one-on-one questions outside the home. Accordingly, Paechter (2013) states that when the researcher engages in participant observation, he/she attempts to analyse what daily life is like by acting as an insider, whilst being an outsider. While in the participants' homes, I made careful, objective notes on what I had noticed, recording all observations like notes in a field-notebook. Also, effective communication and cohesive relationships with all participants was a critical factor in gleaning as much information as possible. The objective and authentic records that I compiled through participant commentaries served as a guard against individuals' subjective reporting.

4.9.3 Reflective Verbal and Written Journals

Reflection is described as a useful activity where the participants examine experiences and practice, on the journey to learning and improving (Dunya et al., 2011; Williams, Williams & Spiro, 2012). The stories that one has in action research can be powerful, but effective transformational mastering cannot be done without reflection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Reflective writing and written journals were used during data analysis to compare what the participants said and compared to what they had written alone not with the group. Reflective and written journal were used as a triangulation method to that of the focus group meeting. Ultimately the reflective writing and written journal will assist action researchers who recognise themselves and their positions as being at the centre of the research process, and the use of a reflective journal is invaluable as it preserves one's everyday learning. Without the information of each day or weekly

achievement of knowledge, it will be difficult to understand the transformation of oneself over the years (Gutiérrez & Penuel, 2014).

4.10 DATA GENERATION INSTRUMENTS

Generating data depends on reliable data generating instruments to elicit and record information, and this includes having a thorough knowledge of what each one does, and if it is going to do what it is intended to. For this study, I used an audio-recorder, Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs), an interview observation schedule and reflective journal prompts.

4.10.1 Audio-recorder

The audio-recorder recorded all the FGDs and all that transpired at all the meetings and verbal discussions. Literature indicates that recording, whether while observing, taking notes, attending meetings, video-recording, or taking photographs can be intimidating in a research context (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). Therefore, I ensured that the context was safe in terms of acquiring the required permission and ensuring anonymity for all participants. In addition, building rapport with all participants through informal one-on-one meetings ensured adherence to ethical guidelines.

4.10.2 Free Attitude Interview (FAI)

I used an effective, scientific and user-friendly interview technique formulated by Meulenberg-Buskens (2011), known as the Free Attitude Interview (FAI). This instrument of collecting data was used to probe using clarifying questions in order to allow responses from one question to flow unobtrusively into a conversation (Mahlomaholo, 2009; Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002). This instrument, according to Tsotetsi (2013, p.161), ensures that “participants are free to intervene and the researcher can respond in a flexible manner”.

4.10.3 Observation Schedule

An observation schedule is a type of schedule having questions which guide an observer systematically. The observation schedule was used at the homes of the participants to observe what they do, how frequently it is done, and with whom.

4.10.4 Reflective Journal Prompts

Reflective journal prompts were used to probe further into verbal and written reflections.

For the use of all these instruments, I adhered to ethical considerations and obtained the legal consent from participants.

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in research involve considering what is proper or improper and right or wrong when undertaking a research project (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Name, 2005). To ensure that proper ethical conduct was followed, I sought permission for ethical clearance from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix A) where I am registered as a doctoral student. Also, a letter was sent to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) seeking permission to conduct research at one of their schools (Appendix B). I also required permission from the principal to use the school premises (including selected staff members and learners) as a research site (Appendix C). Moreover, selected teachers and parents, as well as other stakeholders were provided with informed consent forms with a declaration to be signed. For learners, because they are minors, permission from parents was sought and learners were requested to sign the provided assent forms which was translated into isiZulu Home Language for better understanding the study's aims and objectives before they consented to collaborating (Appendix J).

Furthermore, critical paradigm recognises the need to exercise "process consent," where the agreed communication channel is not viewed as a particular event to sign documents, but a continuous process that may be re-examined throughout the duration of the study (Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia & De Roche, 2011a). In person-orientated studies, the selection of prospective members for data generating purposes must follow stringent guidelines to validate the research project. The explanation of all ethical issues was done before the formal meetings. Resnik (2015) avers that the understanding is that participants must have all the information that would fairly influence their willingness to participate, which include risks, discomfort and "unpopular" findings. In addition, all such information must be explained in writing to the participants so that they can peruse it later to understand the details of the

research project better. Further, the aspects of discretion, anonymity and confidentiality form part of the ethics, thus pseudonyms are used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Leedy & Omrod, 2010).

This study adopted a critical paradigm where participants are expected to be interactive and incisive. Related to this active participation, is the inclusion of individuals from marginalised groups in the research process (Friesen, Redman & Caplan, 2017). This ultimately leads to an improvement in the conditions of society through people's involvement research processes.

Cascio and Racine (2018) propose general guidelines when using participants from the community being researched:

- appreciate the holistic personhood;
- acknowledge the lived-lives of participants;
- recognise the individual's potential; and
- foster better researcher-participant relationships.

Morgan and Yoder (2012) describe the above considerations as being respectful because people have the right to make decisions and implement interventions, but they must consider biological, social, mental, and religious factors that strengthen their interdependence in the local community. These factors show a visible connection with the principles of research ethics as the appreciation of people is the cornerstone of research ethics and is exhibited throughout all types of person-orientated studies. Appreciation for people is typically understood to integrate the principle of respect towards autonomy, and is the number one motive for members wanting to offer knowledgeable, voluntary consent.

The acknowledgement of lived-lives motivates participants to unveil past or current stories of the community such that it leads the researcher to extract rich data (Cascio & Racine, 2018). Giving credit to people's life-experiences is tied to the traditional research ethics concept of autonomy, in particular a relational or contextual perspective on autonomy, as "independent" participants are people who make impartial, independent, rational decisions (Allen & McNamara, 2011). A research ethics-based approach acknowledges autonomy as a relational and contextual

characteristic entrenched in a communal setting (Ells, Hunt & Chambers-Evans 2011; Racine & Dubljević, 2016, 2017; Racine, Aspler, Forlini & Chandler, 2017).

Different everyday inspirational experiences for researchers and co-researchers ensure that individuals gain information about (and for) their own family or different support systems before deciding to participate (Skyrme, 2016). This decreases social or structural boundaries concerning participation in research through strategies which consider meeting individuals' favoured time and place, if possible (Robinson et al., 2011). Khodyakov et al. (2016) emphasise that this is an exercise that has to be culturally appropriate and not stigmatising as it gives an understanding of the individual's situation which includes life information, manner of existence, beliefs, traditions, and character (Morgan & Yoder 2012).

Focus on the person doing the research (main researcher) and the co-researchers' (participants) relationship must instill confidence within all participants creating a bond among all members of the participating community (Khodyakov et al., 2016). Researchers emphasise the importance of the social cohesion attached to human studies such that time is catered for social niceties; for example, tea-time – which can reveal interesting facts about individuals in the home (Robinson et al., 2011). Lichtner (2014) stresses the traditional harmonious interaction between the researcher and the research participants which eradicates the strains between which promotes social energy leading to a balance in the findings of the studies.

The research task sessions are mentioned below.

4.12 THE PARTICIPATION ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS (PAR):

Planning, the research session, and preparation meeting

The preliminary session was held at the research site (the school) as this was the most central and convenient place for all the interested parties to gather. The meeting was planned as a preparation session regarding dates and details of the agenda as outlined in the invitation letter (Appendix X). The main researcher (myself) and eight participants were present consisting of our learners, one parent, an NGO representative, a Council representative and the librarian. The grade 8 EFAL teacher tendered an apology explaining that it was a school holiday and she lived far from the school. The co-researchers agreed to the sessions being audiotaped and signed consent forms were submitted. The session was minuted and audio-recorded.

The person leading the research(myself) received and welcomed all the participants. The research method, the motives for the inclusion of the participants, and the ethical considerations, were read out as well as given in writing. Every participant was introduced to each other. The co-researchers were briefed about the finer details of the research project. The topic, vision and goals, and the role of each co-researcher were explained. At this stage, the main researcher mentioned that any member was at liberty to withdraw from participating at any stage of the research process without repercussions and with no questions being asked.

The following are the informal discussions recorded while the co-researchers introduced themselves:

Pearl: I'm glad I am part of this study as learners in my class are struggling with reading. Learners in my class are not focused; I don't blame them because they love to play but yet they love to read.

Ruby: I'm a learner and I am doing grade 8. I want to contribute to this study.

Ms N: I'm Ms N. Since I work with learners in facilitating life skills, maybe I can add value to the ways of assisting learners to read.

Diamond's mother: I would love to help other learners to be able to read. I'm glad to be here and to assist where I can.

Diamond: I am also glad to be given this opportunity to give other learners an opportunity to be able to read.

Mrs G: I'm the librarian here and happy to see so many participating. We do our best to try to promote reading everywhere; in schools, the library, and in homes. So I'm glad you are doing something like this that is going to promote reading and combat illiteracy.

Mrs N: [Err...] I'm the BEC member and I lead the portfolio of Education and I'm glad to come in to help out where I can.

Whilst the co-researchers were introducing themselves, they were also informed about the theoretical framework of the study (Ubuntu and asset-based approaches in conjunction with PAR and CDA). The group members mentioned the actions which

needed to be implemented within the proposed plan. They further proposed the diagnosis of their actions while adhering to the goals of the study with the intention of improving the proposed plan, testing the method and finalising the approach. Having outlined the activities of the proposed plan, the team then discussed their individual and group responsibilities in the research process. Below are the responses of the research participants.

Researcher: Now that you are aware of the activities that we need to engage in, we therefore need to develop a research plan. We now need to look at the dates and time that will be convenient for all of us. Today is Friday, 10 August 2018, so what dates are you looking at?

Pearl: I think doing it next week on Friday 17 August after school would be best because on weekends some of us observe Saturday as a religious day and others go to church on Sundays. So I think when we come back from school we meet on Friday, but I don't know at what time. But I think Friday is the most suitable.

Researcher: Okay, is that because you finish school early on Friday? So do we all agree with Friday?

Mrs N: What will everyone be rushing to? After school will be great. We can finish this in one week. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We can skip a day.

Diamond: Are we allowed to develop ideas about why learners are not reading at home on our own?

Researcher: The ideas that you have will form part of the discussions that we will have during our focus group discussions. I see you are so eager to start...[laughs].

Diamond: [Laughing] Yes!

Mrs G: [referring to learner four] That is why you have to go home, see what is happening and come back and share with the group.

Ms N: So now are we going to observe what is happening with reading at home or out there in the community?

Researcher: Everywhere, as soon as you leave here even now.

Researcher: So are we sticking to Monday, Wednesdays and Friday?
The first day then will be 13 August?

Mrs G: Are you going to meet on Mondays and Wednesday? I won't be here, I got a quiz competition and a Women's Day function. But can I write down my observations. I will give you feedback on what I have done. Even if I'm not here, I will give it to a staff member to give it to you. What time will you guys be meeting? You say Monday and Wednesday? Monday I might be here because my meeting finishes at 10:00.

Researcher: Thank you Mrs G. Monday, what time guys? Remember school finishes at 14:40.

Emerald: 16:00.

Diamond's parent: 16:00 is perfect.

Mrs C. I'm okay even if it's 20:00.

Learners: [Laugh]

Mrs G: [Laughs]

Researcher: [Laughs] I will then draft the plan and give it to everyone before our first formal meeting. Now these are the days you are agreeing on. Now for each day we need to know what we are going to do. On Monday we will discuss the objectives but we might not finish them on the day and have to finish them on Wednesday. Still on Wednesday, we will have to come up with a strategy which will have to be tested on Thursday and Friday which we will reflect on thereafter finalise the plan. Do you still remember the objectives?

Ms N: Is it possible to make copies of the objectives for us?

Mrs G: Maybe we should all just write the five objectives down.

Researcher: Okay, you can just copy them from this page [showing the co-researchers the page]. Okay, that brings us to our project planning meeting. Until Monday at 16:00. Thank you.

In the plan that was going to guide the study, each participant needed time to consider the logistics of the plan, such as Mrs G who stated that she had an appointment at 10:00 and that the times for attending conferences must be factored in. The days of the week for sessions that had been proposed by the participants were verified to accommodate each participant. The condition that the KwaZulu-Natal DBE imposed was that no teaching-learning time must be sacrificed while carrying out the study.

Below is the research plan which was to be distributed before the next meeting:

Table 4.1: Research Plan

Date	Time	Activity	Person Responsible
11-12 August 2018	Not specified	Distribution of the research plan	Researcher
13 August	16:00	✓ Discussion: Situational analysis, need and key elements for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.	Research Team
15 August	16:00	<p>✓ Discussion: conditions conducive to implementation, and possible barriers in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.</p> <p>✓ Developing a programme for promoting reading literacy for sustainable</p>	<p>Research Team</p> <p>Research Team</p>

		<p>learning through supportive home environments.</p> <p>✓ Nominate a co-researcher to field-test the plan.</p>	
17 August	14:00	<p>✓ A report from the co-researcher who field-tested the programme.</p> <p>✓ Discuss the report.</p> <p>✓ Finalise the programme</p>	<p>Nominated co-researcher</p> <p>Nominated co-researcher</p> <p>Research team</p>

Co-researchers had the opportunity to present their reviews during the first meeting. The participants' feedback follows:

Mrs C: I'm really happy about this project because it opens my eyes in a sense that I now have the courage since I'm not working, to gather young children and tell them what we are reading now. They must read books and do their homework after school. I will get the teachers to help if we don't understand anything. While getting others else well to realise it is very important to support our children to read.

Researcher: You are saying that your world has opened up a bit after this experience. Anyone else who like to share their experiences?

Mrs G: I'm just excited that we are doing something to promote reading literacy.

Researcher: Thank you guys for that.

The co-researchers (Learners one, two, three, and four) indicated that they understood the whole process and will willingly contribute to the project. The co-researcher (Mrs G) pointed out that it was great that some initiative is being undertaken in the community to promote reading literacy. The other co-researcher (Mrs C) said she was

delighted to be part of the project because it was opening their eyes about the importance of reading.

4.12.2 The Action Phase: First Meeting

The primary research session was held on the planned date at the designated venue. This session discussed the plan that guided the research study. The main researcher and eight participants were present at the session. The team at this first session comprised of four learners, one parent, one NGO representative, a Council representative and the librarian. The EFAL educator was absent; however, she tendered her apology for not attending stating that she now had difficulty in finding time for meetings and would not be attending future meetings. The other learner and her parent who were invited were not present and did not tender an apology.

As the main researcher, I opened the meeting by greeting and welcoming all the participants. The group deliberated on the primary goal of the study, which was investigating the home environment concerning promoting reading literacy. Discussions took place where co-researchers were reflecting on their observations in their home environments. The second objective was then discussed; that is, the need to promote reading for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. Prolonged discussions were held around objective two. The session concluded by discussing objective three (i.e. the key elements in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environment). Information generated for the duration of this session are detailed in chapter five. Having had lively interrogative discussions with the co-researchers (participants) pertaining to the three objectives of the study, the research team then decided on the day and agenda of the next meeting (consistent with the research plan). The details follow:

Mrs G: So on Wednesday we are going to examine the factors that are conducive to reading, and find out which are the barriers that could prevent reading.

Mrs C: Sure.

Learner one: Yes.

Mrs G: So if I am not here, can I write my ideas and give it to you?

Researcher: Does the team agree that Mrs G can write down her ideas and give them to us?

Ms N: Sure, no problem.

Researcher: Thank you team, see you at the next meeting.

4.12.3 Second Meeting

The second research meeting proceeded as planned time and centred on the study's blueprint (Research plan, Table 4.1). The main researcher (myself) and seven participants were present at the meeting. Co-researchers present were four learners, the NGO representative, the council representative and the librarian. The librarian stated before that she had to attend a Women's Day function, but this the function had been postponed, hence she was able to join the meeting. The parent of learner four was absent and did not give any reason for her absence.

The main researcher greeted and welcomed everyone present. Mrs G gave a quick outline of the previous meeting by focusing on the first three objectives. She updated everyone on the study's three primary goals. The fourth objective of the research study (i.e. the conditions and circumstances under which promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments) was dissected with the emphasis being on implementation. Discussions continued, largely focusing on the conditions under which promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments, could be implemented. Thereafter, deliberations on fifth objective of the study followed (i.e. barriers in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments). The research team then concluded with the details of the plan, and nominated learner one to field-test the plan and then give feedback. During the deliberations learner four mentioned that the school closes early on Friday and proposed an earlier meeting time. The time was then rescheduled for 14:00 and everyone agreed.

4.12.4 Final meeting

This session was held at the research site as planned (Research plan, Table 4.1.). The main researcher as well as seven participants attended the session. Present were the four learners, one parent, the Council representative and the librarian. The NGO member was absent and did not tender an apology.

I, as the main researcher greeted the participants and welcomed them cordially. Firstly, learner four briefed the team about the task she was given to field-test the proposed strategy. Secondly the research team gave their input on how it could be improved having now received feedback on the feasibility of the plan. The research team concluded the meeting by drawing up a revised plan on how to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

In summary, the research meeting sessions were successful and informative. All sessions had different team members as participants as others had to stand in when somebody was absent. The parent and the NGO representative attended only one meeting. The planning sessions focused continuously on aspects that should be generating data, especially adhering to the first three objectives. The second meeting centred on the fourth and fifth objectives, developing the plan, and nominating the co-researcher who was going to field-test the plan. The very last session dealt only with information that should be relevant emanating from observations in the homes. Sessions went without a glitch as every participant laboured as a collective by interacting harmoniously while valuing each participant's contribution. Even learners voiced their opinions openly. Principles of Ubuntu, the asset-based approach, and PAR were successfully integrated. The sub-section that follows deliberates on how records of collected information could be analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

4.13 DATA ANALYSIS AND PROCEDURE

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a tool utilised by researchers who follow the critical paradigm. Asghar (2013) and Van Dijk (2015) define CDA as a form of discourse analytical research that frequently studies the social power abuse, dominance and inequality which are enacted and reproduced by textual content which communicates the type of social and political setting. This definition gives the positive characteristics of CDA, while exposing the misuse of power by means of a few social groups who are politically, culturally, morally and gender conscious. The challenge of the critical analyst is that it is not always simple to recognise the depths of social inequality that is so visible on the surface but "invisible" deep under (Asghar, 2013; Mertens, 2009). Like many discourse analysts, the CDA researcher rejects the idea of the "value-free...objective" research and in contrast frequently positions a CDA

venture as intervention-orientated and aligned with the positions of the marginalised (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011, p. 358).

Joergensen and Praestegaard (2018) are of the view that while historically CDA has centred on macro-level discourses, it also has served as a connection to micro-level practices (i.e. normal interactions) with macro concerns (i.e. the broader traditionally socio-political context). Equally important is Fairclough's (1999) view on CDA as being three-dimensional: textual evaluation (description) of what members said about the promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments; processing evaluation (interpretation) involving the manufacturing and interpretation of texts (their beliefs about reading); and social evaluation (rationalisation) which is the analysis of members' views on how to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. This means that language is a part of society and it is a tool to make sense of discourse in terms of the context. Power in language ensures that debates are understood for the purposes of meaning-making, and may result in relevant information being included and irrelevancies being excluded (Donoghue, 2016).

Hence, the relevance of CDA to Ubuntu and the asset-based approach is the obvious choice as both emancipate the marginalised by giving them a voice and making them active participants for their own liberation. The CDA processes used in this study exploited the power of language that had previously shattered the marginalised by rendering them powerless and deficient. The CDA, Ubuntu and asset-based approaches empowered the participants in this research study by clearly advocating the free choice of language to express their views. Additionally, it demonstrated how CDA made the participants conscious of what was implicit and explicit, emphasising Ubuntu as a communal problem-solving practice and the asset-based approach as being instrumental in unveiling the hidden potential (assets) of the participants. All these collaboratively contributed to the plan of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

Consistent with the three levels of discourse, Fairclough (1999) expanded on the three stages of CDA: description, interpretation and explanation. For him, discourse is a social practice which leads to social reform. Discourse is aligned to context, interaction and text where text lies inside at the bottom showing that it is the end result of interaction (Fairclough, 1999). To understand culture and society, discourse is

necessary for the production, processing and interpretation of information depending on the context. Asghar (2013) asserts that language makes use of its tools in reworking the way of life in a society, such as power relations. Fairclough attempts to outline his approach of CDA using a model as seen in Figure 2 (Fairclough, 1995, p. 98) that embeds the three exclusive varieties of analysis, one in the other.

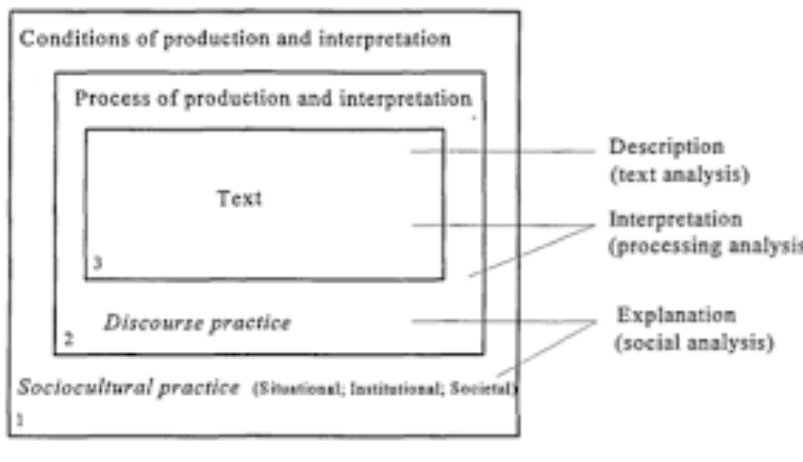


Figure 4.1: Fairclough's dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995, p. 98)

Jank (1997) suggests that it is easier to capture the interdependence of Fairclough's boxes if one thinks of them three-dimensionally as boxes nesting one inside the other, instead of as concentric circles. This three-dimensional picture allows one to take into account that an analytic move to look at a single container breaks the interdependence among the packing containers and requires subsequent actions which re-insert that box into its interconnected area. The point of interest on any one box, therefore, must be seen as an especially arbitrary place from which to start. The primary stage entails the analyses of the written and spoken text of a single textual content after which it fills the inside gaps and unanswered questions raised by this restrained and arbitrary access point (Janks, 1997). Secondly, it assists to recognise emergent patterns that may be used to promote reading literacy. Thirdly, it facilitates the answering of questions regarding the social relations and discourses in terms of textual content. Janks recommends working from textual content to discourse(s) - starting with textual analysis (Fairclough's box 3), while being aware that it is only one lens through which one can see the facts; and that there are other lenses which are important to provide different views.

4.14 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Qualitative researchers aim to design and include methodological techniques to ensure the “trustworthiness” of the findings. According to Connelly (2016), in order to take into account, the study’s trustworthiness, the impartial criterion for measuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research is when the study demonstrates credibility, suitability and confirmability. Therefore, comparing and dissecting facts suggest the neutrality or objectivity of the data especially when two or more persons (or methods) with similar information are used (Grbich, 2012). In qualitative research, neutrality refers to facts neutrality and not the researcher’s neutrality which means that the findings are detached from bias. In agreement with Creswell (2012) and Mertens (2014), personal biases may influence findings and may be seen when selecting individuals to participate in the research study. Thus, the techniques used to analyse data must have enough depth and relevance to give credibility to data generation processes and evaluation.

To generate data for this study, participants who had been invited had to have a direct interest in the study’s topic, and this negated chances of bias involving the selection of participants. Meticulous record-keeping, demonstrating an authentic and secure “paper-trail” with information being consistent and transparent, was practised (Maschi, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2017) recognise the significance of incorporating correct operational measures to maintain high standards. Thus, specific techniques were employed, consisting of questions in the data generation process, data analysis, and data interpretation. The development of an early familiarity with the individual co-researchers before the commencement of the series of dialogues was imperative (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Further, similarities and differences across studies in this specific field were noted; and this led to accessing more rich and thick information hence assisting findings to be valid and reliable and in the process reducing research bias (Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2013).

Moreover, participants validated findings by verifying group discussions/meetings transcripts to check for accuracy; and whether the records mirror their ideas on how to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Similarly, triangulation was applied as a technique. Baskarada (2014) asserts that triangulation is the utilisation of various techniques and views to help produce a more comprehensive and rich set of findings. This involves the use of an extensive

range of participants (group meetings, reflections and observations) or data collection sources. In this study personal viewpoints and reports had been verified by comparing others or other similar studies.

4.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reflected on the research methods followed while conducting this study. I critiqued the necessity of a research paradigm, by firstly clarifying the paradigm concept and giving a justification for my choice of the critical paradigm. I then outlined the approach and design of the study - the design being PAR. I then illustrated how the participants were selected as well as how data was generated, showing the methods used which were focus group discussions, participant observation, and reflective verbal and written reflective journals. The instruments that were used in the study included the audio-recorder, free attitude interviews (FAIs), the interview observation schedule, and reflective journals prompts. I explained the ethical considerations required for the study. I also elaborated on the approach I used to analyse the data found in the field. Lastly, I discussed how validity, reliability and authenticity of the findings were achieved.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the analysis and interpretation of data based on the objectives of the study. Firstly, the chapter looks at the findings concerning the current situation on promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. Secondly, it investigates why there is a need to promote reading literacy, in addition to outlining the key elements for promoting reading literacy. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the circumstances and conditions which are conducive to implementing reading literacy through supportive home environments. Fourthly, the barriers that impede reading literacy are identified. Lastly, a discussion is presented on strategies and best practices that can promote reading literacy through supportive home environments.

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main Objective

To explore how we can promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

Secondary Objectives

- To explore the current situation on promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments;
- To examine the need for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments;
- To explore the key elements in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments;
- To examine the circumstances and conditions under which reading literacy can be promoted and implemented for sustainable learning through supportive home environments; and
- To identify barriers that impede the implementation of effective reading literacy efforts for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

5.3 THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING PROMOTING READING LITERACY

During the first meeting, I tackled the current situation on promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments. The co-researchers discussed the current situation that prevails in the homes, in the community, and at school. The participants were concerned that little is being done towards literacy, and that there was a lack of commitment from the parents/guardians on promoting the reading literacy skills of the learners. Pearl put it in the following manner stating that it appears that very little attention is given to using homes as supportive environments for promoting reading literacy:

Pearl: I do not think that much is done about reading literacy at home because parents, guardians and members of our community think that learning ends at school.

Mrs G also echoed the same view adding that time must be set aside for reading:

Mrs G: I don't think enough is being done to promote reading at home. There is no time set aside for reading. However, there is time set aside for meals ... what have you, but there is no time set aside for reading. Maybe parents should start with a newspaper, if that is the only source to read at home.

When Pearl says "I do not think much is being done", this can be seen as a disconnection between what is being done at home and what is done at school. To the learner, the home environment is deficient concerning support for reading literacy. While Pearl acknowledges that something is being done, she states that "not much" is done to make a difference to learner-achievement in reading literacy blaming it on the lack of support from people surrounding the learner such as parents/guardians and the community.

Not having a supportive home environment has a detrimental effect on the reading outcomes of the learner. As Mrs G pointed out that a family possesses assets such as time-planning (e.g. "there is time set aside for meals"). The inference is that "there should also be time set aside for reading" as part of the time-plan of the family. Looking at Ubuntu which emphasises the maxim "*umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu*" (we are who we are as a result of others' influences). In other words, learners cannot do things on

their own; they need the assistance of the people in the home. Pearl emphasises below that the learner is most times occupied with academic tasks:

Pearl: ...but we must also be aware that the learner always has something to do whether it is reading, writing or including finishing uncompleted work from school.

“We” emphasises the fact that promoting reading literacy is not an individual task but a collective effort of those especially within the home. “Aware” suggests that there is a need for information to be cascaded to the rest of the family about the need for support for reading literacy. Below, Pearl makes a profound point:

Pearl: Reading is something that you always have to do; it must become a habit.

Pearl acknowledges that reading is not an event, but what everyone “always” have to do in order to improve literacy. She acknowledges that to be good at something you have to spend a lot of time at it, and it cannot be achieved overnight. Also, she views reading as a daily duty and not merely an obligatory task. This shows how the community views their reality especially when they see what is going on and what needs to be done to transform their worlds and establish appropriate daily patterns to promote reading literacy in order to become visible in a vastly competitive global society. The participants’ primary concern was the quality of the language pertaining to what is being read. Mrs G criticises the language on social media:

Mrs G: Reading is being done, but maybe not with books as such...mmm...people are reading and texting on their cell phones.

The above excerpt reveals a concern about the resources that are available to learners as indicated by “people are reading on their phones”. This tells us that the language of most social media communication sites is not the same as in traditional sources such as in high-standard books, newspapers and magazines. It is generally agreed that the language used in texting on cellphones (e.g. WhatsApp messages) are generally not formal and may lead to “loose” language usage compounded by the accessing of non-researched or unreliable information (including fake news) – for example, most universities in SA discourage texting language and using Wikipedia as

a site for information. EBooks have a place if they contain formally structured language but learners in most marginalised communities cannot afford tablets.

Mrs G is a librarian and has generally observed learners not taking even one book out of the library for home-reading, but they are constantly on their cellphones because they have free Wi-Fi at the library. The Wi-Fi is the Government's initiative in making internet accessible to all. This contributes adversely to learners' reading-aloud skills and impedes interest in the formal reading of books, newspapers, journals and magazines. However, my observation while being at the library is that many of the books on the shelves are outdated, and this exacerbates the disinterestedness in reading.



Picture 5.1:Learners at the library looking at their cell phones.



Picture 5.2: The local library with the books on the shelves

When learners have to do research, they have to download some information from the websites because it is not available as a hardcopy. The availability of Wi-Fi has promoted the accessibility to information but most marginalised communities are deprived of this service that is supposed to be provided by the Government so that quality education can be an attainable goal. The lack of the latest edition books at the library does not only deprive the library users of current information, but also the staff who have to constantly update their own bank of information to advise library users who seek specific current information. When the local library fails to provide the required latest-edition books, this has a domino effect on the rest of the community in that reading interest is lost.

Mrs G: So there may be some form of reading but I do not know about vocabulary usage, and whether it is proper English, or proper IsiZulu or if it is shorthand.

According to Mrs G, there is a feeling of uncertainty about whether the children are reading the proper content with proper language, indicating that she does not have control about what their children are exposed to. While the community library provides free Wi-Fi, the type of information accessed and language usage may have unintended outcomes. Mrs G's concern is that the learners are now neglecting reading formal books with formal language, and are now mainly focusing on accessing social media which may not necessarily promote good language and communication skills. The following excerpt emphasises this point:

Librarian: People are looking at their phones all the time; you know they are reading, so we can't say there is no reading, as there is some kind of reading going on but it is just different.

"People" suggests that the librarian is not only referring to "learners", but to the general public also. The problem affects all age-groups and thus creates uncertainty as to who is going to assist the learners when the adults themselves are also falling prey to mainly using social media to communicate by generally using colloquialisms. The advent of free Wi-Fi has diminished the hope of parents seeing their children frequenting the library to borrow books and bring them home to read.

Mrs C: What I would like to see is parents encouraging our children particularly to know that there is a library where books are available to read.

Participants in this research have an optimistic vision for the future hoping for a positive change when formal reading will be acculturated, instead of texting and mainly using informal and unsavoury platforms of social media. They wish that their children frequent the library because they feel that physical books promote good reading literacy habits as well as formal language usage. Parents sometimes blame themselves for the poor reading habits of their children as they (parents) did not previously encourage them to read. The preoccupation to survive in a poverty-stricken environment exacerbated by the oppressive apartheid policy of the previous white government, did not help parents to be good examples, especially when it concerned literacy. Mrs G, in the following excerpt, states the urgency of being literate.

Mrs G: We have to teach them to frequent the library, borrow books and read the newspaper as well, especially if there is something interesting and something that concerns our lives.

The above excerpt indicates that the participants (and parents in general) have to take an interest in what the children need to do to improve their reading skills. Here, Mrs G points out that parents must display a sense of urgency towards promoting reading literacy in their children ("We have to teach them to frequent the library"). However, with the library not providing the relevant and current books, it makes it difficult to promote reading literacy at home. Participants agreed that when children do bring

books home, the home becomes the ideal place where guided practice in reading with the aid of books borrowed from the library, can positively lead to higher literacy levels.

In chapter three, the importance of the home as a catalyst environment to engender good reading habits in children's lives, was discussed. Moreover, it is well-known that teenagers are motivated through the perceptions their friends and loved ones have about reading. Also, their circle of relatives, social groups, ethnic groups, and gender groups, influence discussions that affect teenagers' perceptions of reading (3.3.4). Peer groups, parents and other groupings should positively develop reading literacy skills in children by acting as models of behaviour by entrenching reading as a permanent recreational activity in the home.

In summary, the reality is that little is being done to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. Firstly, there is minimal support that learners are receiving from families and peers as there is no (or very little) time set aside for reading. Secondly, there is a disinterestedness concerning the importance of reading as the flow of literacy information from institutions into homes, is virtually non-existent. Thirdly, the attitude of learners is a stumbling block as they view reading as an obligation to please parents and teachers. Fourthly, having minimal exposure to good quality reading of the language, is an impediment. The participants agreed that reading takes place, but most learners are reading content from social media which is not always the ideal source of knowledge-acquisition – the plethora of fake news reports exacerbated by colloquial language usage hinders the acquisition of formal language skills. This negatively affects learners' reading comprehension skills especially when interacting with formal written texts such as in fiction or non-fiction books. However, the lack of books containing current and relevant information affects literacy efforts in the home environments. Lastly, learners are too preoccupied with games and video-clips (among others) on the internet and do not bring books home for formal reading.

5.4 THE NEED FOR THE PROMOTION OF READING LITERACY

The participants deliberated on reasons for the need to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. They concurred on the importance of reading, citing self-empowerment as this will give an individual an opportunity to be an active participant in a global society.

Parent to learner 4: Yes, it is important that children read. I would be happy that in schools there would be more debate clubs as this helps the learners to acquire more recent knowledge by reading more. This leads to fruitful discussions on current issues.

This concerned parent rightfully expresses the importance of reading; however, she also implies the heavy reliance on schools to help in reading literacy. Parents must realise that they possess assets to promote reading literacy at home. However, the knowledge-base that the parent has regarding the kind of content learners need to be engaged in regarding reading literacy, is limited. This parent feels that if her child could engage in critical-thinking discourses (such as debates), then it would motivate children to access a broader base of knowledge and thus improve critical-thinking skills while reading texts. The child then will be able to develop an inquisitive mind to learn more about their circumstances and perhaps be motivated to change them. By inference, the school that the parent's child is attending has not helped to stimulate the child's reading interest. Mrs G explains the practicality of being a good reader:

Mrs G: Yes, I think reading is important as it is a source of empowerment - you are empowering yourself, you know. To read anything, whether it is a book, magazine, a newspaper, or a signboard, you gain a lot of knowledge, so libraries should serve the community. For example, if you are getting lost, you can use a map to find your way. Also, your learner driver's license can be mainly obtained if you are able to read and understand. You need to know how to read for you to be able to drive. So it is not only to gain tertiary qualifications and become someone important, but it can also help in simple things like cooking and looking for a recipe.

Mrs G, as the public librarian, expressed her opinion on the importance of reading. Her preconceived notion of the importance of reading tells of the kind of information we need to survive in this world, and this leads to self-empowerment. She is also implying that the library has not generally met the needs of the community. It is crucial that a library invests in resources so as to be functional in the community. In the following excerpts, the participants speak of how necessary reading literacy skills are in order for individuals to be relevant in society:

Diamond: What I would like to see is many children reading or studying because without reading skills you can't go anywhere.

Pearl: I will like to see children being more focused on reading and studying.

These two learners' views on reading highlighted the urgency of planning for the future. Pearl and Diamond have not limited the use of their reading skills to "cooking"; they see limitless possibilities that reading empowers them with. Diamond's opinion ("without reading skills you can't go anywhere") is very profound as the high failure and drop-out rates at schools are indicative of poor reading skills. Diamond adds to the urgent need to become literate:

Diamond: Reading is important. Learners fail exams because they can't read. Learners have to put some effort into reading and I would like to see many learners get help in reading.

Diamond reaffirms that reading skills are indispensable to academic success and to life in general. Diamond asserts that it is a struggle for them (learners), but it is a universal requirement that they have to cultivate. The lack of support from their environment (home, school or the community) over the years has left them feeling disempowered; but there is a growing concern from them now to seek help to become literate so as to become relevant to the global society in order to increase their opportunities for employment.

In addition, the participants discussed the availability of reading materials in the first meeting and gave feedback of what they have observed in the participants' home environments. The presence of books is very significant as it establishes a scholarly tradition as a lifestyle in homes. However, the number of books that participants have at their disposal is grossly inadequate in the home environment. The free local newspapers have very limited substantive content – some even use sub-standard language. They are not up-to-standard to the language demands that examinations and other written formal tasks require. Learners sometimes declare that they do read, but they are still found wanting considering the required language level. Much of the reading material that they have access to such as local tabloids is non-stimulating to the learners' experiences and needs. Reading materials must develop and expand learners' vocabulary, and help in communication strategies that motivate them to

express themselves with confidence as global citizens. The following responses from participants create a sense of positivity and hope:

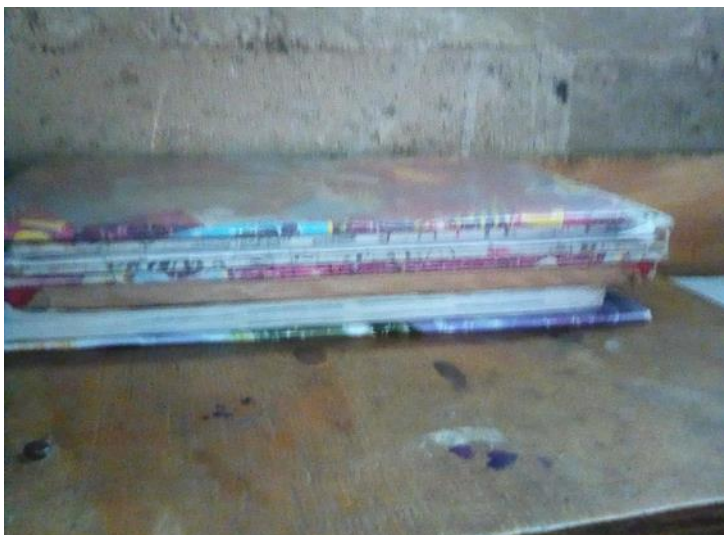
Pearl: I think there are things that learners can do at home. For instance, I have short novels that my mother bought for me (and my mother loves reading). So we do have books at home.

Parent to Diamond: I only borrow books from a library.

Ruby: I have magazines and many newspapers that I use for reading, including textbooks from school.

Diamond: I have books such as English and IsiZulu novels, and even newspapers.

Pearl: Yes, I have purchased a book, actually an English novel.



Picture 5. 3: The library corner described by one participant

The above picture illustrates the impoverishment of this community when it comes to book-access. The participant who said that her mother who loves reading has provided her with short novels is somewhat fortunate as most learners live in academically-deprived home environments.

Mrs C, the community leader and also a participant-parent component of this study, is now convinced of the importance of promoting reading literacy.

Mrs C: My gosh! No, we are not used to such living, but we found out today the importance of reading because our children are learning from

us, so we need to read. I would observe that when I go to workshops, someone would take out a book to read. I would say to myself that this person has no work to do, why would they just take a book and read? So I see now that reading gives you an opportunity to learn other things and it broadens your mind if you read.

Mrs C, in the above excerpt, implies that she was unaware of her role in important decision-making processes to uplift the community and assist with its needs. The leaders of the community reside in the community and their children go to the school (which is the research site) and they use the same library; as such they should have been involved in community matters that affect them and their children.

The discussion on the attitude of family members towards reading revealed some concern as support in promoting reading literacy within the home environment was virtually non-existent as many parents thought it was the responsibility of the school. The participants then did an introspection on how their attitudes (and sometimes ignorance) as parents contributed to the failure of effectively promoting reading literacy in the home. This is clearly shown below:

Mrs C: The problem with us as parents, is that we come tired from work, and then realise that the household chores are not done because the children started first with playing. Then they get busy reading and you start shouting at the child. We as parents must give our children a chance when they are doing their homework, so we must leave them to do reading and other school tasks. We should do the work ourselves. So it is us as parents who do not encourage our children to read because of our attitude of prioritising household chores instead of schoolwork. Books before dishes... (Laughs).

The participants were of the view that most children's parents are domestic workers, or factory workers, and worked long hours which affected them when they got home. This is a common challenge most parents experience. In their state of exhaustion, they tend to ignore their children's educational obligations, particularly reading. The children themselves walk long distances to and from school and reach home fatigued. However, they do not attribute their lack of reading to physiological reasons, but to the

lack of interest from the community, especially the more capable adults. Pearl (below) criticises the library service and most parents:

Pearl: I do not think much emphasis is put on promoting reading literacy. We have a library close by but it is not used to the maximum. There are books at home to read but very few. However, our community does not encourage learners to read; what they know is just to send children on errands, not considering that a child needs time to read.

Pearl feels there is very little or no support from her immediate environment or community. The use of “our” implies that it is a common problem among the participants and the community at large. The excerpts below tell of the little progress in reading literacy:

Diamond: Before I used to read when I was bored because I did not like reading, but I had to put in more effort because I was failing. I think I have repeated a grade once or twice, and I realised that it was due to my poor reading skills. But now I can read properly and enjoy reading.

Parent to Diamond: My son just loved playing but I always asked him to focus more on reading. He would say he was coming back to read while rushing to go out and play.

Diamond has realised the importance of reading, though they have limited resources:

Diamond: Newspapers show us what is happening around the world. If you read, you are able to follow what is happening, but if you can't read you just only see life through blinkers and don't know what really happened.

In summary, there is a need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. This is particularly to empower the person to be an active participant within his/her community. The heavy reliance on schools to come up with strategies to fulfil this goal needs to be relooked at, such that families also take on this responsibility to enhance the reading literacy of their children. Further, the disconnection between the school, the local library and the community, exacerbates the problem. This creates a lack of information-sharing of what the community requires from the library and vice versa. On the positive side, they (learners) understand the

value of reading to upgrade academic achievement considering the limitless possibilities it provides. To improve the situation and establish a scholarly culture of reading in their homes, all role-players in the community must change their attitude towards reading by not prioritising the completion of household chores; instead reading should take precedence if successful career paths are to be achieved.

5.5 THE KEY ELEMENTS FOR PROMOTING READING LITERACY

On the second day of the group discussion the participants deliberated on the key elements that can lead to the promotion of reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. Participants agreed that the motivation for promoting reading literacy is receiving support from all stakeholders. However, they differed on the idea of forcing a person to read (as indicated below):

Mrs C: You can't force a person to read. If you do that then a person can take a book, and just look at it pretending to read. But if it is a child, maybe you can insist, but if it is an adult you can't force because they will just take a book and look at it.

Learner 1: I think to force one to read could be the only way one could actually begin to read. When they get home they usually watch television, and don't open their books until the next day when they get to school. It is right to force a person to read; it the only way they can understand and in the end they will say you were right to force them to read.

From the above, we see that there are differing views on forcing a person to read. The leadership in the community reacted by stating: "You can't force a person to read". Pearl feels that the culture of not reading is not something that can be undone effortlessly, but a deliberate attempt is required from all interested parties. Also, Mrs G feels that children should be exposed to reading from a young age, and this should be done by parents (who themselves should be examples of good readers) reading to their children from the earliest possible age (generally 3 – 4 years) to inculcate a culture of reading. Mrs G elaborates on this point:

Mrs G: I think from the time a child is very little parents must read to them. So that's where the concept of the library comes in because

books are easily borrowed so that parents read to their children. So you have to create that love for reading such that the child takes an interest in stories, thus keeping the imagination active. This is how you make the child want to love to read by inculcating this practice early in life. As they grow older they strengthen this passion to read. If you start from a young age, then you don't have to force the child in later years.

The participants, particularly the learner component, are quite cognisant of the importance of reading; not only through what has been said about reading, but what they make of their own understanding of reading. The value of reading and how to ignite the passion for books was evident in all discussions (as seen in the following discussion).

Pearl: People who are hungry for knowledge will do their best to be able to read and find out what books to read. If one opens the door and one sees a newspaper, one should get curious about what the articles in the newspaper are saying, and thus you start reading and you then broaden your knowledge.

Ruby: If the book is attractive and interesting ...

Ms N: Maybe if you are reading an interesting book, then you can share it with other people; thus, more people will read it and it becomes more enjoyable like a hobby.

Here the learner component is echoing the resilient spirit to circumvent the lack of resources such as books. As such pearl states a salient point:

Pearl: People who are hungry for knowledge will do their best to be able to read.

Pearl expresses the opinion that one's desire to change one's circumstances and conditions must drive one to seek new knowledge to increase one's chances of a better future. They have to go out of their way to access facilities like libraries that are available to them. They have look at sources that arouse their interest and lead them to glean information and to enjoy reading for pleasure. Mrs C appeals to her community to share literary resources like story books such that the acquisition of knowledge could be shared and expanded. This attests to the values and principles of Ubuntu that they share resources as a community.

The participants discovered that they had to find something within themselves to enjoy reading, instead of always being dependent on outside help, or playing the blame game. Mrs C elaborates on how the TV and interesting books keep the fire alive to read:

Mrs C: I like watching news on television, and the soapies. I like soapies because there is always suspense as to what is going to happen next. So even when I borrow a book, it needs to keep me captivated - I must be longing to know what the next chapter has in store.

However, the choice of content of what readers want to read (or view) is dictated by the availability of sources such as satellite TV or books. Many have identified current news channels and soapies as particular sources knowledge and enjoyment. If they could find a book similar to a favourite soapies, then it could motivate them to read.

Mrs C's comment about suspense being a technique in soapies and books to hold her interest, informs us that as a reader one needs to know what one is reading for. Hence, reading should be goal-orientated whether for educational enhancement or purely for entertainment – but both hold the readers' interest. If readers know what they are reading for (e.g. knowledge acquisition and pleasure), then this will make them want to influence others to read, and thus the book will be shared. Other participants elaborated on the above:

Ms N: Maybe if you are reading an interesting book, then you can share it with other people, thus more people will come to hear about it and it becomes more enjoyable to all interested in reading.

Mrs G: So it is sharing all the time. Like she said, if you read a good book then you will like to share it. Form book clubs where you sit and you discuss, and you have people giving their opinion about the book. When you are sharing knowledge, you get other people interested too.

In summary, the key element to promote reading literacy is encouraging children to read and share books. But others felt that even though efforts are made for learners to read, it remains their choice at the end. Reading should be goal-orientated; for example, it should increase the chances for a better life through being literate. Other participants felt that reading should be monitored like homework. Learners who do not

find reading tasks enjoyable would rather watch television but if sufficiently motivated to read, they end up being grateful when they realise the gains from reading. Other participants felt that reading literacy opportunities should be presented to children at a younger age to curb having to later coerce children to read. The participants also pointed out that people have to develop a love for reading so that they can possibly solve whatever challenges they may face by using the facts and knowledge gained from reading. Participants in the main strongly believed that reading should be treated as a recreational activity such as joining book clubs where you sit and discuss the book as a group.

5.6 CONDITIONS FAVOURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF READING LITERACY

The participants appreciated the fact that internal and external factors cannot be ideal all the time; however, they said that there needs to exist certain conditions and circumstances for promoting the implementation of reading literacy through a supportive environment. They out that when the family members cooperated with each other, it becomes possible to promote reading literacy. However, the extract below displays varied power relations between a parent and a child:

Ruby: Maybe when you return from school your parent comes back from work and he/she is tired and thus she watches TV to de-stress and she will sleep around 21:00, but then you want to study at this time. You can just take out books, give them to your siblings and all of you can start reading. You must switch off the television, then they will not be disturbed because they will also be busy reading. Then all of you will be able to read.

Ruby clearly expresses what she would like to happen; however, this will require a dramatic change from the parent in first acknowledging that the learner requires support (“Maybe when you come back from school your parent comes back from work and she is tired”). Here Ruby gives the listener/reader an insight into her life which is the reality of most children – even those who are participants in this study. They have to contend with little support from parents as they (parents) come home tired, and could be irritable and not be able to give their children enough attention to see to their reading needs. Hence, very little support is forthcoming from such parents in making time for the child who wants to study. The child here is powerless as the initiative

needs to be taken by the parent who plays a big role in supporting a functional home environment. The parent is in the position of power and needs to use it to support the goal of all family members becoming literate. Below Ms N comes up with a plan:

Ms N: I suggest drawing up a study time-table, like when you are writing exams you have to involve everyone at home. Like you know at home someone loves watching TV...oh... what else do they like that can replace a TV? I live with my mother who likes shouting. I suggested that when I'm reading during Saturday or Sunday she should start reading her Bible and after reading it, she can tell me what she had read. I will then also tell her what I read - that will then also encourage me to read because I will also see my mother engaged in reading. When we are done, we can share what we both have read. Now I always see her reading the Bible most of the time.

Mrs N elaborates on the physical environment of the home. She is a volunteer at the NGO and is also affected by the dynamics that are prevalent in some learners' homes. Ms N has accepted that most homes are "normal" in that the community lives in RDP two-roomed houses where a family may comprise of the parents and up to eight others. The watching of television or when one is disturbed when someone starts shouting, hinders silent reading. Clearly, such disturbances in the household are not geared towards the common goal of creating a supportive reading literacy environment. The lack of knowledge in parents who constantly view themselves as being in a position of power by virtue of the fact that they are older, poses a threat in promoting reading literacy within the home environment.

The community's views indicate that they have placed much trust on institutions like schools and libraries, to an extent that the home has been disregarded as a supportive environment. The learner component was silent on this point and this affected the flow of discussion thus hindering the data collection process. Other participants did not consciously try to actively engage the learner component on the aspect of the home being a collaborative agent in reading literacy. This demonstrates the deep-rooted cultural habit of fearing authority. The following excerpts elaborate on the importance of collaboration:

Mrs C. What I see is that in school we need to engage with teachers. If the school finishes at 14:00, the school must then give learners a study time period for about 30 minutes. Thus, the parent will know that the child finishes at 15:00. This study time for an hour will also help upgrade results.

Ms N: For example, one school is a bit too far from the library, so we suggest having a mobile library, so that learners can have access to books, and therefore they will be motivated to read. The child will then say, "I have to read since the library is on my doorstep". The library administrators must get out there and promote reading to learners. Learners should get a library card at an early age. If you are going to start encouraging a person when they are in grade 11 or 12 and you have not done it an early age, it may be too late for some to catch up. But if there is mobile library service then there can be that small change.

The above illustrates a heavy reliance on the school as it was suggested that the school needs to adjust its time-schedule to take over the extra work (after school hours) that the parent should have assisted in. This kind of thinking is disempowering the community by not making them identify assets within themselves that they can use to promote reading within their homes. In addition, the dependence on library staff to provide extra services is also taking away the responsibility of the parents. This type of thinking creates a sense of helplessness among the members of the disadvantaged community – the culture of relying on being helped and not helping themselves, is stifling progress in such communities.

In trying to promote reading literacy in the family, different family members may put forth ideas in many ways. What came through the discussions was that parents require support in making the home environment conducive to reading literacy? Mrs C gives her opinion on the above:

Mrs C: I think parents need this kind of engagement that we are having. I think we as parents have a contribution to make towards our children who do not know how to read. We live in one-room shacks and space is a problem. You come from work and you expect the children to have washed the dishes and cleaned the house, thus there is no time to go to

the library. I think we need as parents some sort of education and guidance to motivate a child to read. I think as parents we sometimes contribute to children not being able to read, especially when we pile household chores on them. Support from parents is quite important especially for children to become literate as the school cannot do everything for us.

Mrs C evidently shows that the lack of knowledge in her community has disadvantaged them and hence contributed to the low reading rate of their children. In addition, the kind of housing structure (“one room”) does little to have a conducive environment to read in. Mrs C sees parents as sometimes contributing to their children not reading (“...we sometimes contribute to children not being able to read. Support from parents is quite important”).Ruby adds to the discussion:

Ruby: I think when you come from school you are able to read because not everyone is back home at that time. People who come early home usually switch on the TV or radio which can disturb you.



Picture 5.4:Learner-participant reading and doing homework

Ruby is hopeful that the importance of reading is communicated within the family. The respect for age, as mentioned earlier, is the stumbling block that prohibits open communication. The family environment in terms of open dialogue irrespective of age needs to foster reading literacy as far as possible.

In summary, the circumstances and conditions under which promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning is to flourish, must include cooperation and collaboration from all interested parties. However, there exists a power imbalance among members of families. The voice of the learner is unheard as the parent is dominant. The best condition for the learner to be heard and where learning needs are acknowledged is in an environment which is democratic and supportive. The parent is in a position of power and can institute these changes in the home environment. Some of the physical home environment structures are disorderly due to inadequate living space. However, most family members try and use the space in a way that it promotes reading literacy. Participants suggested that parents show support by joining in the reading sessions as well, and later share as a family what each one was reading, thus promoting family harmony through discussion. Also, learners need to be vocal about what they feel needs to be done to support their reading literacy goals. This will dispel the notion of helplessness and lead to helping themselves.

5.7 BARRIERS HINDERING READING LITERACY

During the third meeting the participants discussed the barriers that inhibit reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. Here, it emerged that the home itself may be a barrier that could hinder reading literacy. The participants pointed out barriers such as internal and external distractions, lack of interest, unrealistic parental expectations, and lack of information. The discussion below highlighted some of these barriers:

Mrs G: There are technological distractions like the cell phones as there are times when you want to read but you are getting a message from a friend and then you become busy with your phone. The TV or the video-games also hinder reading. Distractions from friends and neighbours who pitch up for social talk get one distracted.

Mrs G highlights the kind of powerlessness the community members and their families experience. The advent of technology, though useful in some areas, has “disturbed” the disadvantaged community especially when it concerns reading books and magazines. This easy access to technology has robbed family members of time that could have been profitably utilised for reading. This situation is compounded by inadequate space in houses as depicted below in picture 5.5.



Picture 5.5:Example of a house that some of the children in this community live in

Mrs G elaborates on the impoverished home environment as a barrier to reading literacy:

Mrs G: Maybe you are not interested - yes, maybe you could be lazy that day or tired, and you don't feel like reading today but will read tomorrow. So you have to convince yourself by saying that you and the family are going to do this as this is a family who wants to change its environment to make it a reading environment. So even if you get distracted, or you feel tired, you are still going to try and overcome these obstacles because your focus at the end is what you want to achieve to lead you to a better life.

The participant here is using the technique of self-motivation. However, for the learner experiencing this kind of distraction, it becomes difficult to become self-motivated to read. The learners have to contend with the shortage of space in the house. These houses consist of two rooms shared by a number of family members who are probably older than the learner and their need will probably supersede that of the learner. Mrs C who is a member of the community is at a loss on how to handle such a situation and is feeling powerless when challenged with such problems in the home environment.

Mrs C: Let's say I stay in a house with only one room, here we cook, sleep and do everything. Are you saying that the children must turn off

the television? They won't turn off the television, they want to watch it. What do you do in a situation like that because there are children who live in squatter camps, in tin houses, one-room houses? In these houses not only do we cook, but also all of us sleep in that one room. It may happen that others are watching television till late, then you will also end up feeling sleepy. So these are the situations that children find themselves in.



Picture 5.6:The corner which the learner participant uses to read

Mrs C observed quite a few distractions in her environment. Some homes do have some space wherein a child can read, perhaps a quiet corner to read as shown above (picture 5.6). Ms N adds:

Ms N: Sometimes when you start reading your parent expect you to read for a certain time, but you know how long it takes you to read. There are people who can read for three hours and other who can only read for one hour, or just for thirty minutes. You have to know yourself, it's like running; there is a person who can run short or long distances. You have to gauge that you can read between certain times; do not

start with a three-hour marathon to read. Give yourself time to do different things like homework. Also, there are people who distract themselves by thinking of other things. Maybe a story is connected with something that happened personally to you and you become distracted and waste time thinking too much about a personal incident.

From the above excerpt, Ms N shows that parents do have expectations and they tend to push their children excessively. Parents with unrealistic dreams concerning their children's academic attainment are in all likelihood to push their children to the limit to improve reading skills. However, excessive parental supervision that exceeds normal expectations can result in excessive pressure on the child and a high degree of control over a child's academic performance. This sometimes has disastrous consequences.

Moreover, Ms N implies that learners themselves have a particular notion about their parents' expectation of them. Parent-child communication uncovers learners' challenges they might have with reading. Ignoring the voice of the child prevents parents from gaining insight into the reading and study habits of the child.

In summary, the barriers to reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments generally lie within the homes. Some examples include the lack of interest from parents and unrealistic parental expectations. Further, technological devices such as television, video-games, cell phones and iPads in the house become distractions when there is already limited space. Although there are high parental expectations, little support from parents causes frustration to the learner. These high expectations are caused by the lack of communication between a learner and the parent.

5.8 DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSAL TO PROMOTE READING LITERACY

During the discussion at the last meeting, the participants started structuring their proposals on promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

Firstly, participants strongly suggested that the family must be involved. This entails working cooperatively and collaboratively by communicating to all the family members the importance of the programme. Dialogues should reflect household systems' norms of social interaction, communication lines, and views about working collectively. In a

family context, collaboration is a necessity as each family member will be contributing to knowledge-acquisition thus promoting reading literacy in the home. The collaborative actions, in line with the objectives of the intervention programme, will be coordinated and monitored, implemented and directed towards promoting reading literacy. The participants also mentioned that involving the family members ensures the sharing of information on best practices to promote reading literacy and create a supportive environment for it to be workable. Each family member is unique, and the sharing of information will enable them to make this proposal to suit different home environments. They also emphasised that it cannot be that just certain members of the family who should read, but it would be best, if possible, for everyone to get involved. This is reiterated in the following discussion:

Ms N: First, I must involve my family and tell them about this proposal pertaining to promoting reading.

Mrs C: Involve the family by emphasising the importance of reading literacy, including why and how as a family we should be reading, and how we all will benefit.

Mrs C: Because once it only revolves around you, the family is not involved and is not aware about what you are doing. So you need to involve the whole family. Remember we said that we are working with Ubuntu principles - your family is not just the only one, you can even introduce this idea to your neighbour.

In the above excerpts, the participants are insistent on involving parents in promoting reading literacy as it is going to bring major benefits or opportunities to all. However, there is the element of uncertainty when Mrs C seems anxious of the kind of reception she is going to receive at home; hence, she says she needs to inform them about the importance of reading literacy. This implies that the family will not necessarily be receptive of this kind of idea; hence, much deliberation and negotiation must take place within the family. However, she highlights the point that the family has to be on board and accept the idea of reading literacy being an integral part of the home environment. She hopes that the mentioning of the Ubuntu philosophy of communality will stir all family members to spread the word on the importance of reading as it open many doors of opportunity in the future. However, when introducing this concept at

home, we should ensure that we will not adopt the top-down approach. Further, the possibility that this is a foreign concept being foisted on them exists, so all role players need to play a part to convince traditionalists that this is for the benefit of all. There will be no ownership of the concept as the asset-based approach speaks of using the assets of the individual(s); and the family already possesses some of these assets (e.g. time-planning and sharing of resources). Mrs C expands on the sharing of family assets:

Mrs C: It says we must share. I tried this at home. My daughter is ten years old. Her father stopped at grade five, and he has not gone further than that. My son as well stopped at grade 8 and I spoke to them. But they asked how are we going to help each other read? Are we are going to read what my youngest daughter is reading at school? She is going to read to us in English and she is going to translate in IsiZulu. Maybe I can read as well and she could translate for me what I read. Out of respect for elders, we are going to talk to them in a certain way. We love the idea of the child reading and to become successful in the long run through being literate. Now let's talk about how we are going to help further, maybe with her homework. What my daughter requested was that she did not want to do this alone, but with a friend of hers. I now have a duty to go to our neighbours to invite them that they must come and sit with us at a certain time to read.

Mrs C, as a previously marginalised member of the community, introduces the concept of hybridity by undermining existing forms of cultural authority and representation. Hybridity refers to the emergence of a culture in which its elements are being continually transformed or translated through encounters that take the members onto a higher plane in the socio-economic environment. She suggests that her child leads the reading literacy promotion drive in her family ("She is going to read to us") as her husband and son did not finish school, not as a way of undermining them, but showing that they can still gain through reading literacy time at home. She is not letting the traditional forms of authority at home continue to be dictatorial as she wants to make this (reading literacy) a family initiative; not about who is older and who makes the rules and who should obey. However, it should be done respectfully. When they acknowledge their humanness, they build each other up in a climate of hope in order

to survive. This also demonstrated expanding the group and inspiring others to become literate as indicated by the request of the child to include a friend in the family literacy session. Mrs G adds:

Mrs G: However, guys it cannot be that it is just your daughter who is involved in reading at home; she must be able to see you guys doing it as well. Maybe she can read part of the way, and then the others chip in so that each member participates in some reading activity. So it is not just your daughter who is doing the work but each member of the family group is ...

Emerald: ...involved!

The Ubuntu theory is about collectiveness and collaboration (“it cannot be that it is just your daughter reading”). Thus, the whole family has to be fully involved. This initiative of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning by engaging the family members should commence as soon as possible, and should not be delayed by waiting for others to tell you what to do.

Secondly, the participants decided that the second step of the proposal should focus on creating interest. The participants suggested that by creating interest you prepare the minds of the family members to accept of the benefits of reading. This will arouse their interest and enable them to see reading as beneficial to them in opening up their minds to see a better life ahead. Participants also suggested that reading time should not be something very formal (or forced) but flexible to allow for the smooth flow of discussions emanating from the texts. Sharing a book or newspaper with a family member should be part of the programme of activities that may include reading school set-works and other sources for pleasure reading. Interestingly, participants also suggested the use of drawings and other artistic sources that could be interpreted as narratives that are told and later written to be read. The discussion rolled onto how reading interest should be instilled and sustained:

Researcher: What do you propose we do next?

Mrs G: Creating the interest, changing their attitude to get them involved in reading. Say “now it’s time to read, and today we are going to read this ...”, thus creating interest and structure.

Emerald: I think first you will have to emphasise how important reading is. You may be asked, by teaching us to read, how is it going to help us? You must create interest by telling them the short-term and long-term advantages of literacy, including how enjoyable the story will be.

The librarian and the learner-participant differed as to the approach as the librarian projected a tone of authority (“Now, it’s time to read, and today we are going to read this”). The learner participant portrayed what most youths are asking today - how is reading going to help them when there is so much unemployment and abject poverty when they are constantly being told to read. The role players should be prepared in order to answer the questions knowledgeably – the background to austerity conditions stems mainly from illiteracy and poor language skills in a world that requires good communicators for employment purposes. The learner-participant realises his need for reading which will also help him finish his homework accurately. The following responses emanated from the discussion on creating an interest in reading:

Researcher: So do you know what to do to arouse interest, and what are you going to be engaged in?

Mrs G: You share your ideas with them at home. In this way you create interest while sharing it. Interest in reading leads to it being an enjoyable experience.

Pearl: I will try out the ideas in the proposal, and I will involve my whole family.

Ms N: It doesn’t have to be something difficult or thoroughly planned out - just pick up a book with an interesting story that you could share with the family. What do you guys think? During reading time I must also think of activities to arouse family members’ common interest. What can one add on?

The NGO volunteer knows all too well the kind of environment prevalent in this neighbourhood and suggested a less formal environment as a two-room house may not have much space for a formal reading session. Sometimes a kitchen is used as a TV room as well as a sleeping room. These are the myriad situational challenges that

these participants have to contend with. In the following excerpts Pearl and Ruby suggest ways in which a reading session can be structured using different sources:

Pearl: As I am a regular at the library, I'm used to taking the free newspapers. I have a lot of them at home so I can give them to everyone to read.

Ruby: To arouse interest you must decide what structure the reading session will take. One way is to use my set work text from school, mother may use her magazine, and the siblings may read short stories from the library book.

The easy access and availability of the Government and local newspapers at libraries is commendable as it promotes reading in homes, but one must first peruse them to check if the content is newsworthy and relevant to family members to arouse interest. In addition, they must be written in good formal language. One challenge that confronts informal settlement dwellers is the proof of residence to secure a library card. Diamond proceeds to discuss drawings as a possible source to encourage literacy.

Diamond: Drawings tell stories when closely looked at, so we should study what they are saying. Mrs G said reading is not only about words but drawings which must be regarded as narratives. You should draw something and weave a story around it; but make it interesting. Maybe one day you should start writing narratives from the drawings.

Diamond significantly suggested using drawings as a “reading” source. Drawings tell people’s stories of what is happening currently in their environment, and instant feedback may be possible. A picture tells a thousand words, thus stories of families and communities may be unearthed. Hence, the communities will be creating their own sources from own their lived-lives which need to resonate with their own experiences. If these sources are ignored, then records of communities such as African village stories will be undocumented.

Next, the participants agreed on the concept of time as their third step of the proposal. Participants agreed that families needed to time to read for at least one hour everyday, but at the time when everyone is at home, and that time must be convenient for everyone. Arranging a common time-slot is what they suggested so

that all the family members could gather at the same time. They said this would allow for the young ones in the family to be able to get some assistance if the need arose. The participants' responses below offered some suggestions concerning time for reading:

Mrs C: The third aspect of the proposal is on time - maybe we can read for an hour every day. This must be entrenched in the family time-plan.

Pearl: We agreed that we start at 16:00 until 17:00.

Researcher: Will everyone be at home at that time?

Pearl: Yes!

Finding a common time slot for reading as a family will give the sense of collectiveness and unity as all members will be doing something profitably together. However, some family members, particularly the parents, come home late as some work at odd hours and often reading literacy sessions may seem impossible. Government and labour unions need to control the working conditions of the vulnerable groups as the outcome of them working late leads to the children of the workers being neglected and this perpetuates a culture of poverty and illiteracy, so prevalent in the oppressive apartheid days. The contributions below tell us of the desire to read as a team:

Researcher: By not locking oneself in the room and planning reading as a family-together session, what happens during the reading session?

Ruby: We are going to be together, no matter what!

Pearl: I said that we must read together. If one does not understand a concept or point in the book, then an adult or the knowledgeable one will be able to help. Because parents like to assist their children when they not understand something, it will build interest in many parents as they feel part of the session.

An ideal situation for a child to grow academically and holistically is when the family is together ("We are going to be together"). These learners need adults around them who can offer support, particularly with reading, for adults generally like to be part-and-parcel of their children's education.

Fourthly, the participants suggested that before the family sits down to plan the reading session, they must firstly identify barriers that could impede the reading activity at home. They cited possible physiological barriers within and outside the home environment such as physical and mental exhaustion, lack of books, television interference, loud music, and running errands. Below, the participants mention some of the practical obstacles to reading:

Diamond: As we are going to read, we need to identify the barriers. One may say one is tired. How are you going to react to that?

Pearl: I feel that most of the time they are distracted by the TV, and my mother usually sends us to run some errands late in the afternoon, sometimes far from home. I feel that could be a barrier because it takes up a lot of time which could otherwise be used for reading.

A response most children are familiar with when seeking support from the others (possibly adults) is that they are tired. For some individuals, working long hours as a learner or adult, picking up a book is the least of their concerns. When they get home they sometimes distract those who are trying to do the work on their own. Also, the parent has to see that the household is functional. The parent will prioritise the household chores instead of the child's reading literacy activity.

Diamond: I think even though I did not go and test the proposal but there are things that could disturb you, like a neighbour who plays loud music while you are trying to read.

Researcher: Are they playing the radio from morning till evening?

Diamond: No, they don't play the radio the whole day, as during the late afternoons many people are watching TV.

Pearl: When I first introduced the idea to my mother, she was against it. But when I started telling her everything, especially about the long-term advantages, then she bought into the idea.

Researcher: What was her reason for initially being against the idea?

Pearl: Her first reason was that she studies every day; she doesn't need a separate time to read. Her second reason was that I should read on

my own, but I told her it is beneficial if we collectively read, and she finally agreed.

Generally, parents know the importance in reading; however, some still view it as an interruption to their daily routine not realising that reading is not only for them, but it benefits their children also. Through this initiative, some parents also try to improve their education levels, while supporting their children's education. The participants' discussion on supporting learners' reading literacy continues below:

Diamond: If there is a TV on, we must maybe switch it off, as it may be of disturbance. Others are on their cell phones so we need to switch them off, so that we sit together and read without distractions.

Researcher: Do you have a library card?

Pearl: No, I read books here at the library.

Mrs G: Which means you have to think about enrolling and getting a card.

Learner 1: I'm going to enrol and get a library card.

Researcher: Is it free Mrs G?

Mrs G: Yes, it is free!

Most of these learners live kilometres away from the library and accessibility is difficult. The library was built for the Indian community during the days of apartheid. In reality, this community that participated in this study has no library and learners had to walk kilometres to get to the previously known "Indian" area where the library is situated as the school did not have a formal and functional library.

Researcher: Maybe ask them what books they like to read so that you [the librarian] can get these books to them.

Pearl: My mother likes magazines, non-fiction books and sometimes she reads modern romantic paperbacks.

Researcher: So how are you going to address that now? Number 5 on the proposal, the last one. What did you guys decide?

Learner 1: I think that when my mother wants to send us somewhere to run errands, she should send us early.

Researcher: Did you speak to her about this particular barrier?

Learner 1: I did speak to her and she said she will have to send us early before our reading time. Also, she agreed that the TV as well as the cell phones, will have to be switched off during reading time.

This shows that parents are willing to assist their children despite having little or no financial resources to maintain the household. The alternatives they are coming up with will be sustainable because they were part of the solution and no one dictated to them what and how they should operate.

Researcher: What does the plan say in number 5? You now have identified your barrier; for example, your neighbour playing the radio loudly. Maybe at home we can switch off the radio but what about the neighbour? You can't tell the neighbour to switch off his radio. Maybe you can look into what time they play their radio?

Researcher: What does the plan say concerning number one?

Learner 4: Involve the family members!

Researcher: So this means that nobody is going to come and switch on the radio because the whole family would have sat down to engage in the reading session.

All interested parties must come on board as they are part of the community – even rowdy neighbours and friends who drop in unannounced should cooperate in the spirit of Ubuntu to uplift the literacy levels of the community. The distraction of television and the radio will be controlled by the family members because everyone is on board. The discussion continued:

Learner 4: We reached an agreement and an understanding. I understand now.

Mrs C: Sometimes you encounter difficult words in a book and you find that there are words that you do not understand. Then I will be able to ask my daughter what the word means. Also, if I don't understand it then

I could go and search the meaning of the word in the dictionary and then continue with the reading.

In summary, the family must be involved in working cohesively and collaboratively to promote the programme. The actions of the family must be planned and directed towards promoting the implementation of reading literacy. They must define the key objectives aimed at making changes in family members' habits leading in the direction that they would like to see the family taking. This should involve sharing information on the best strategies and practices that can promote reading literacy to create a supportive home environment. As such, interest should be created in stimulating everyone's' mind for seeing the benefits of reading. Reading time should be democratically planned and not forced on members. Sharing a book or a newspaper with a family member should be one of the activities. Others sources include magazines, literature prescribed books from school, pamphlets and comic books. Also, drawings could be interpreted as stories that are told and later written to be read. A common time is created so that the family members can gather as a team that will allow for the young ones in the family to be able to get some assistance, if and when needed. Moreover, the family should sit down to identify barriers that could impede their reading activity session at home; for example, physiological barriers within or outside the home environment. Identified barriers should be analysed with a view to eradicating them.

5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and analysed the findings. Firstly, I recapped on the research objectives. I then presented discussions from the focus group meetings that tackle relevant issues in conjunction with each objective. The objectives included investigating the current situation as well as the need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. The participants also discussed the key elements, the circumstances and conditions, and the barriers to reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. After this, the participants started designing the proposal based on the objectives. They then came up with five steps which would promote reading literacy. These focused on the supportive element of succinctly informing each home of what they must do to make the home environments more supportive so that reading literacy can be effectively

promoted. The first step was to involve the family, the second was to create interest, the third was to create a time-plan, the fourth was to identify possible barriers, and the fifth was to find a way to overcome these barriers. The next chapter (6) is going to present a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on Ubuntu principles and the asset-based approach that frame this study, while combining Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a method to generate data. The study's findings, conclusions and implications for future research are explicitly stated in this chapter.

6.2 THEORIES FRAMING THIS STUDY

Ubuntu and the asset-based approach in conjunction with PAR (to generate data) underpin this study's theoretical framework. The discussions that follow confirm Ubuntu, the asset-based approach, and PAR's relevance to this study. The relevance of the theory of Ubuntu and the asset-based approach was openly evident as participants were relating to each other in a manner that showed their interconnectedness by working collectively and harmoniously thus empowering everyone involved in this research study (Manasoe, 2017). Based on the philosophy of the asset-based approach, the perception is that each person in the community has capacities, capabilities, gifts, competencies and social resources (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). It is regarded as fundamental to community development in that it brings individuals and communities together to acquire effective trade skills and relevant knowledge (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2012). The meetings which were called for the strategic planning of the research project utilised the objectives of the asset-based approach which led to the process of observation in the home and in the community. This led to interventions that included innovative strategies and best practices from lived-experiences to promote reading literacy.

Additionally, the Ubuntu principles guided the interactions of the participants to find truth in their personal world, and not in some external world. Battle (2009, p. 135) contends that "African epistemology begins with community and then moves to individuality". For this reason, expert skills reside within the African community (as a collective) and not in the individual. Inherent in African philosophy and Ubuntu, is the ontological need for one to understand oneself and the community (Battle, 2009, p.

135). The epistemology of everyday lifestyles is primarily based on cultural foundations and reflections (Van Manen, 2016). Accordingly, the community (all stakeholders) should support homes with the intention of strengthening reading literacy levels for sustainable learning. To achieve this, is not only to rely on individuals, but on the collective actions of the whole community. The knowledge that individuals in the community accumulated over the years comes from their real-life experiences. It is the community who knows the reality, and they know what needs to be done to transform that reality. This leads to them establishing what is appropriate to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. Eliastam (2015) affirms that Ubuntu is a collective value system and its core values include survival, cohesion, spirit, compassion, respect and dignity. The participants' embodied these values of Ubuntu as they were volunteers who did not expect anything in return. Imperiale and Vanclay (2016) concur that survival is displayed through personal obligation, duty, sacrifice, struggle and a sense of helping out to exist as a united community. Also, participants showed personal responsibility when they were told by the other members of the group to go and observe and write down their experiences to see what homes are doing to promote reading literacy. They showed accountability by fulfilling all their duties in the allotted time, hence sacrificing their personal time to meet every afternoon for the betterment of the community. Mulaudzi (2012) adds that Ubuntu is about harmony, distribution of obligations, and believing that "more hands make light work". Mati (2017) points out that Africans' actions are deeply rooted in a subculture where giving unselfishly without waiting for something in return, is the norm. The Ubuntu principle of respect for everyone was practised by all participants although there was an age-gap difference between them.

The participants' focus was on finding ways to promote reading literacy and this was based on the skills and knowledge they already had in terms of looking at assets being acknowledged as crucial for communal improvement work. Community assets are classified into three tiers. The primary tier involved the people at home like the parent. The secondary tier involved the participation of the local librarian and the locally-based NGO representative. While the participants were designing the plan, the concept of asset-mapping was utilised as one of the central techniques which identified aspects which promote reading literacy (O'Sullivan, Corneil, Kuziemy, & Toal-Sullivan, 2015). Concerning the home environment, participants were cognisant of exploiting

assets or skills within the family which could possibly contribute to achieving some degree of reading literacy proficiency (Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016).

In utilising PAR, the authentic participation and collaboration of all stakeholders became compulsory – this allowed others to invite questions, to generate and interpret information, correct mistakes and intervene when poor results were obtained. The four stages of the PAR cycle which outlined observation, reflection, planning and action, were followed (Quixley, 1997). Accurate observation entailed searching for what was presently occurring, and then describing this correctly. The intention was to provide a legitimate base for reflection by way of generating an extensively accepted comprehension of what truly occurred (Quixley, 1997). In this reflective stage within the cycle, time was spent to dissect and interpret the findings gleaned from the observations, then followed the negotiating of meaning with valued partners, and finally the construction of a shared knowledge system about reading literacy was envisioned. All stages were participatory and collaborative, and the planning stage was no exception. At this planning stage, stakeholders acted as a collective to deliberate on what they could do, and how to do it. It was also advisable at this point to include all those who were positively influenced by this research project. The main researcher (myself) and participants (co-researchers) designed a creative, effective, flexible, and collaborative plan which engaged all role players. Participants in the community were initially apprehensive in trying out a brand new technique (PAR) for this project. However, having a clear, unambiguous, mutually beneficial, and collaboratively agreed-upon action plan convinced and committed community members to implementing the proposed project plan. Having implemented the proposed strategy (action) which directed and determined what occurred, the research team was able to come up with answers to this study's research questions.

6.3 THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF READING

The current situation for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments indicates the following:

6.3.1 Lack of Initiative to Promote Reading Literacy at Home

The lack of a desire to promote reading literacy by family members was evident according to participants' observations. This finding is supported with empirical data by Caroso and Mota (2015) and Kim, Lee and Zuilkowski (2019) who state that there

is a lack of desire to promote reading literacy. This study found that the community believes that reading ends at school and should not be extended to the home as time for other activities such as doing household chores, and preparing and eating meals, take priority. This disconnection between the families, the community and the school disadvantages children's progress in education and perpetuates low literacy levels reminiscent of apartheid days. According to PIRLS (2017), historically Russian schools have been working closely with families in terms of reading and homework thus reinforcing the instruction received at school and the importance of reading (Light & Pearson, 2012). The informal setting at home enables the learner to be relaxed and ask questions from knowledgeable others, in addition to allowing them time to think about what they are reading rather than rushing into completing reading tasks without much understanding.

6.3.2 Parents' Lack of Knowledge to Help their Children to Read

Parents lack the expertise of helping their children to read hence they do not have the confidence to help and this makes their children to feel unsupported. Given the past regime of apartheid and its crushing oppressive organs, literacy was denied to most Black people. Studies support the notion that once parents are sure of their skills to help their children, they are more likely to be concerned about the education of their children. This would generally lead to learners' good results coupled with improved reading literacy levels and positive behavioural patterns (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015; Lau & Ng, 2019).

6.3.3 Homes View Reading as an Interference

Although families acknowledge that reading is not an event, but something one has to do continuously, this is viewed as an obligation and not a pleasurable task – a kind of interference to executing basic household chores. This shows how the community views their reality; however, they need to change this view if they wish to promote their children's academic performances through reading literacy. Wilhelm (2017) in his study confirmed that one should experience reading as a pleasurable activity and not a burden, adding that reading for pleasure is undoubtedly related to reading success, comprehension, vocabulary improvement, positive attitudes about reading, self-confidence in reading, and pleasure reading later in life. The engaging in reading for self-identification (to identify with a certain character in the book) is not only

pleasurable but acts as a stimulant to pursue reading as a hobby. Teenagers have to situate themselves in the social world they live in, and the level of literacy will determine one's status and place in society. The higher the level of literacy, the higher one's chances are of acquiring suitable employment (and being globally communicative) which moves one up the social ladder, thus possibly creating a platform to inspire others to also reach great heights.

6.3.4 Absence of Good Quality Language in Reading Materials

There is no doubt that reading takes place, but generally learners are reading mostly social media content. The use of language on these social platforms is mainly of low quality because of the use of colloquialisms and texting. Consequently, this negatively affects reading comprehension of written texts containing more formal content such as fiction or non-fiction. However, other scholars argue that social media facilitates communication between individuals across societal, cultural, ethnic and national boundaries, representing interplays of worldviews, values and concepts and offering new possibilities (Bouvier, 2015; Jaye, Lomax-Sawyers, Young, & Egan, 2019). Hence, parents now have reason to encourage the use of the local library to help with reading and not only rely on social media platforms. Parents who are aware that the social media mostly portrays "informal" language need to encourage their children to borrow books from the library and other institutions, and to make home a place where children practise reading to improve their bank of vocabulary and knowledge of grammatical structure and rules. When engaged in guided reading practice, parents provide a place with a welcoming atmosphere for the promotion of reading literacy (Ciping, Silinskas, Wei, & Georgiou, 2015). Parental involvement is crucial in the home-setting as it demonstrates support for their children's educational progress. Klemencic, Mirazchiyski and Sandoval-Hernandez (2014) confirm that adolescents are influenced by the perceptions of their friends and relatives about reading. A social circle that has a high level of literacy will no doubt rub positives on learners' desire to read - the cliché "you are who you join" is pertinent. The attitudes of one's own family, social, ethnic, and gender groups, made either through formal or informal discussions, have an impact on teenagers' perceptions of reading. Positive traits in individuals and groups which one comes regularly in contact with, help to develop a love for reading and this leads to making reading a regular recreational activity in the home.

6.3.5 Learners' Preoccupation with Social Media

When learners are at the library, they are mostly preoccupied with the internet and they do not borrow books to take home. However recent research has observed that libraries are evolving and the internet has been the reason for this. The conventional reference service has significantly shifted from print to online resources (Pandya & Boricha, 2019). However, having access to print resources early on in a child's life brings improvement as it assists in vocabulary acquisition, provides background knowledge when reading texts, and sharpens comprehension skills (Allington, McGill-Franzen, Camilli, Williams, Graff, Zeig, & Nowak, 2010). Children from destitute homes have low reading test scores because they have limited access to books, but if books were provided at nearby libraries, then they will possibly read as well as those from prosperous families (Krashen, 2014). Supplying more books can alleviate the impact of poverty on reading achievement, and that having access to print sources at home improves children's overall performance and encourages them to read more, and for prolonged periods. It has been assumed that the greater the number of books in the home, the greater the increase in vocabulary, information, reading, writing, and comprehension skills; and all these in turn impact positively on a child's learning at school (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012).

The current situation depicts a clear picture of the fact that there is little or no effort to promote reading literacy within the home environment because of the belief that it is the duty of the school to promote reading – ironically, the school in turn believes that homes should also be promoting reading literacy. However, this belief is perpetuated by the lack of knowledge; hence, teachers do not have confidence in parents to promote reading literacy at home. This leads to families viewing promoting reading literacy as a burdensome task rather than seeing it as a pleasurable and advantageous activity. This is compounded by minimal access to books, coupled by the effects of the legacy left by apartheid which prohibited the advancement of Blacks such that they remained illiterate and common labourers all their lives. Though families now have the advantage of social media, efforts to promote reading literacy within the home environments is still minimal.

6.4 THE NEED TO PROMOTE READING LITERACY

The need to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments exists and may be advanced for the following reasons:

6.4.1 Empowering the Individual to be an Active Participant in the Community

For one to stand a chance of being an active participant in one's community, requires one to be informed in order to acquire relevant information. Ross, Perkins and Bodey (2016) agree that people who are information-literate become prepared for lifelong learning due to the fact they have already the skills to find relevant statistics required for any venture. This leads to higher levels of self-confidence that would enable them to participate fully in community discussions and school debates. Levels of reading literacy have an impact on the learner's academic progress because being motivated normally results in sustained learning, thus improving results. Reading fosters critical-thinking skills which enable learners to develop an inquisitive mind to learn more about their circumstances and perhaps be motivated to change it (the environment). Educational institutions are responsible for teaching learners' values, skills and knowledge in terms of formal education - so essential to the promoting of sustainable learning. To be knowledgeable, someone must be able to understand when information is required and how to locate, compare, and effectively use that information in an environment of rapid technological advancement (Charge, Becker, Clark, & Collins, 2011; Ratcliffe & Boughton, 2019).

6.4.2 Curbing the Reliance on Schools

Parents rely too heavily on schools to promote reading habits in their children whereas they should be at the forefront in promoting reading literacy. Such parental involvement reduces the responsibility of institutions, including schools. Accordingly, parental investment in providing literacy-associated sources in their homes uplifts the level of literacy activities with their children - these are extra initiatives to support learners and boost overall performance (Compton-Lilly, Rogers, & Lewis, 2012; Ho & Lam, 2016). Parents know what needs to be done to promote reading within their homes, however they lack confidence as some are semi-literate. This ever-present literacy challenge, prompted the Government to launch a literacy-promotion-initiative called *Kha Ri Gude* (Let us learn) in 2007 with the assistance of different governmental

structures (McKay, 2015). The *Kha Ri Gude* campaign began changing the education sphere by using different language teaching-learning methods. Although *Kha Ri Gude* is geared for an adult literacy programme, parents' literacy levels normally determine the child's literacy levels. Hence, parents' literacy levels may have a direct impact on the child's home environment - informal literacy practices such as shared reading of books inside the home develops the comprehension skills required for literacy acquisition, thus encouraging future academic growth (Hamilton, Hayiou-Thomas, Hulme, & Snowling, 2016; Hartas, 2011).

6.4.3 Bridging the Disconnection between the Local Library and the Community

There is a lack of awareness from the library authorities of the needs of the community. Traditional practices for service delivery and improvement did not encourage librarians to know the literacy aspirations of community members who were previously excluded from the library-system during the pre-democracy era (Williment, 2019). This demonstrates the disconnection between the library and the community. This social injustice shows how poverty-stricken people are cut off from accessing the social and financial resources, lowering them to second-class citizen status. According to Janes and Ptacek (2013), this confirms that community participation is a dynamic topic in societies, often unearthing reactions that indicate that the previously marginalised is not part of the library-system. Public commitment is urgently required and may take the form of networks to put together local expertise, organising boards for young adults, or building teams of child-boomer volunteers (Ristau, 2010). Hart and Nassimbeni (2016) concur that extending the conventional literacy programme to include civic and political literacies, or turning libraries into centres for debate on current national problems, promotes democracy. All this indicates a shift from the passive function. Moving away from the traditional position of libraries, current innovations see libraries utilising modern technology to facilitate further opportunities that allow greater access in terms of reaching the under-serviced users (Nicholson, 2019).

6.4.4 Reading Literacy as a Catalyst for Change

Reading literacy is just not a tool limited to fighting poverty; it provides inexhaustible possibilities of changing people's lives. This is supported by Darder (2018) who posits that powerful discourses assist literacy as a remedy for social and financial inequalities. Despite the fact that discussions persist in associating low-literacy skills with levels of poverty, making choices to become literate is determined not only by the social environment, but also by the individual who is responsible for his or her very own progress to reach set goals to become internationally relevant. The possibility of people having control of their own emancipation is high, and reading literacy affords that opportunity for them as they discover new knowledge.

6.4.5 Establishing a Scholarly Culture within the Home Environment

It is particularly challenging in homes where poverty is rife to establish a scholarly culture as they have limited access to books (Krashen, 2014; Maharsi, Ghali, & Maulani, 2019). However, books can be made available by borrowing from a library as a book-orientated home environment stimulates children to inculcate aliteracy mind gearing them for productive learning at school. Notably, the availability of books, whether fiction or non-fiction (or both), establishes a scholarly tradition in homes where books are numerous and consulted to enhance a child's future prospects in terms of cognition. It has been established that the literacy environment of the home is measured through the number of books available (at home) as books are important tools of literacy. Children reared in homes with a variety of reading sources were more likely to progress at a faster rate in their schooling years than children in homes without books. Despite the level of education of the parents, their occupational status, and societal positions, children still need to access books and other reading materials at home to make academic gains at school. Certainly, each additional book introduced to the home library is beneficial to stimulate cognitive processes (Evans, Kelley, Sikora, & Treiman, 2010).

6.4.6 Changing the Attitude of People towards Reading

Parents' attitude towards reading is one of disconnection as this is evident when they prioritise household chores rather than setting time aside for reading. Having access to library sources is futile if it is not going to be utilised during operating hours of the library, more so when children are too busy with their chores at home. Hence, the

children will adopt this practice of not prioritising reading; once they have finished their chores they will now go and play and will most probably not make an effort to read. A person's disengaged attitude when it comes to reading will lead to negative practices which counteract any effort in promoting reading literacy. Kirmizi (2011) confirms this in his study when he researched the correlation between attitude to reading and techniques used in reading comprehension. A thousand three hundred and sixteen students (1316) from fifteen schools in Denizli, Turkey participated in the study comprising of girls and boys in fourth and fifth grades. The analysis illustrated that predicting students' standard of comprehension techniques and their mindset concerning reading plays a crucial role. Ozturk, Hill and Yates (2016) and Axelsson, Lundqvist, and Sandberg, (2019) also found children's attitudes towards reading as being influential factors in promoting reading.

6.4.7 Supporting Reading at Home and in the Community

Support needs to be given particularly to homes that are grappling with poverty (Krashen, 2014). One element of the home environment that can be affected by poverty is the access to books and other reading sources. It has been proven that access to books additionally enhances literacy capabilities. But in emerging economies, a larger percentage of the population living below the poverty line lack the ability to get books for children. The quality of the home environment has been proven to be influenced by economic and cultural factors (Mota, 2014; Mota, Baptista, & Amaral, 2014; Neuman, & Moland, 2019). However, books can be made available by borrowing from a library and this encourages knowledge-acquisition that improves school performance. Moreover, the presence of books establishes a scholarly lifestyle which can also have an even greater effect on children's academic future (Nag, Vagh, Dulay, & Snowling, 2019).

Indisputably there is a need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments where the individual is on a continuous journey of self-discovery particularly in communities that have been previously disadvantaged. Reading literacy becomes a foundation for the individual to build on which will lead to a better future. Books provide the information to emancipate the previously disadvantaged communities where family members progress to get out of the dependency mode. Schools, community leaders, NGOs, religious institutions and libraries are carriers of

information and should be tapped to gain knowledge, skills and values in order to improve one's quality of life as this will motivate the individual to take charge of his/her life as they will now know what is required when trying to find solutions to problems in life. When communities know what they need, they will verbalise what assistance is required, as information communicated correctly leads to expeditious action. In other words, those who want to offer help will interpret specifically what kind of help they need to provide. Improved reading literacy will affect the change the community needs as better communication decreases message "disruption". Simple but good language usage in communicative messaging empowers the previously disadvantaged communities who now play active roles in enhancing the quality of their lives. This leads to a scholarly culture within homes such that the family makes it a habit in looking for information to open doors of opportunities. Children in the house observe the behaviour of adults especially when they pick up a book to extract information to find solutions to their life problems. Once children see reading literacy being the norm at home, they will develop a positive attitude towards reading. However, access to information equals access to books, and without books how will one have access to the kind of information one requires? Therefore, it is imperative that home environments promote reading literacy for sustainable learning by making basic reading materials available to learners.

6.5 THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS IN PROMOTING READING LITERACY

The findings regarding the key elements in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments are discussed below.

6.5.1 Encouraging Children to Read

Children should be encouraged to read to conscientise them about the importance of acquiring knowledge. Children should be encouraged to read from the early years. However, encouragement should not be restricted to girls but the focus should be on both genders. Motivating only the girls to read can perpetuate the knowledge gap between the genders. Parents must not assume that it's the role of teachers to provide encouragement; and the teachers should not think that only parents are supposed to motivate children to read (Doherty & Dooley, 2018; Muntoni, & Retelsdorf, 2019). Teachers cannot assume that all parents are sufficiently knowledgeable and capable to offer this encouragement at home. Also, parents cannot expect teachers to offer

continuous encouragement in reading that will assist the learner to meet the demands of curricular needs – the home environment should also play its part (Merga, 2015).

6.5.2 Reading should be Goal-orientated

The reader needs to know what he/she is reading for. Hence, reading should be goal-orientated; whether it's for academic needs or purely for entertainment, it is still valuable, as long as it holds the reader's interest. When people read with specific targets in mind, it affects how they read. Sabatini, Reilly and Doorey (2018) concluded that reading activities need to encompass an overarching reason that defines what resources and knowledge are essential. If the goal of reading a text is to merely find a date, then one has to skim or scan for a date and not peruse the entire text. Complex reading goals require the use of multiple resources; reading activities require students to combine statistics from a variety of resources. Reading comprehension often calls for one to read, combine, synthesise, summarise, skim and scan for information. Reading targets may be multiple, and the answers may not be discovered in a single source or attempt. Learners need to interrogate each reliable source so that critical-thinking skills are exercised (Britt & Rouet, 2012). People of every age today must not only access traditional print materials, but also websites, emails, blogs, chats, videos, and audio-sources that might stand up in real time (synchronous) or finally in records (asynchronous). Educational and assessment conditions must include activities that test if learners can recognise mistakes and be able to correct them.

6.5.3 Introducing Reading Very Early in Life

Children should be exposed to reading from a young age. Russian scientists emphasise the importance of reading as an essential part of human growth as it contributes to the improvement of the complete intellectual person, capable of self-development and self-actualising (Valeev & Baranova, 2013). Naiditch (2016) asserts that it's vitally important in earlier years to get children to read books. All children should get early experiences in reading, and households with young children should provide such activities as reading from books, sharing folktales, or singing songs (Masseti & Bracken, 2010; Erickson & Wharton-McDonald, 2019). Parental belief concerning literacy is essential in order to facilitate activities in which parents interact with their children in terms of language and literacy skills (Masseti & Bracken, 2010; Erickson & Wharton-McDonald, 2019). Phillipson and Phillipson (2012) provide

evidence that parents influence their children's instructional achievement, particularly when they (parents) create opportunities for reading as this develops cognitive skills that cascade into all subject areas at school. The home environment is significant because children experience their first literacy encounters which includes access to reading resources, exposure to modelled reading behaviours, and participation in reading literacy activities (Hannon, Nutbrown, & Morgan, 2019). Ng and Graham (2017) confirm that reading to children especially in their early years not only develops reading skills, but also models positive behaviour by making reading a recreational activity in the home.

6.5.4 Developing a Love for Reading

The love for reading needs to be developed gradually. The habit of years of not reading is something that cannot be undone easily - a deliberate attempt from all interested parties is needed. The nature of reading is that it is mainly social as well as personal. The social nature of reading is reflective in the way learners develop inner-specific social skills. Traditional styles, values, norms, roles, and identities are significant elements that come into play as children read and make sense of what they are reading. Moreover, collaboration and interplay are important social strategies that are regularly at play in reading. From a social position, the extent to which reading provides the opportunity to measure, collaborate, and talk about what is critical from an educational perspective, is remarkable. Directing learners on the importance of reading and communicating motivates them to develop a passion for knowledge and skills (Ng & Graham, 2017).

6.5.5 Reading as a Recreational Activity

Reading should be treated as a recreational activity by forming book clubs where you sit and you discuss a book. Research studies have generally reported a positive relationship between time spent in recreational reading and academic achievement scores (Mol & Bus, 2011; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Li & Tan, 2016). Reading is considered as a social practice of literacy interest enacted in a contextually responsive way; an activity that may be advocated through more than a few influential social mediators and structures. Reading gives possibilities for dialogue/discussions about a multitude of topics, and it can improve the quality of the social environment. Younger people's perceptions of social reality can positively

change depending on their degree of engagement in reading, and this leads to character-building. Petrich (2015) and Kozak and Recchia (2019) confirm that treating reading as a recreational activity illuminates young people's attitudes that assist in making book-dialogue fun.

6.6 CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING READING LITERACY

The findings regarding the circumstances and conditions under which promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments may be implemented are discussed below.

6.6.1 Cooperation and Collaboration from all Parties

The home environment is an important catalyst, and conditions should be created through cooperation and collaboration involving all interested parties within the home to allow for effective reading to occur. It is therefore important for everyone in the home to be made aware that his or her actions will have an impact on the home environment, especially concerning reading activities. However, the home environment does require assistance from external parties like the library and the school, and cannot remain an isolated entity if it is to promote reading literacy. It requires the expertise of these institutions in order to assist it with its objective of sustaining learning which requires books and other reading materials. In a family context, this collaboration is a necessity as each family member will be contributing knowledge for the success of reading literacy in the home (Hughes & Jones, 2011; Epstein, 2011; Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013; Wilder, 2014; Sheldon, 2019).

6.6.2 Power Dynamics in Parent-child Relationships

Parents should not put pressure on their children by prioritising household chores as this has a negative impact on the time dedicated to reading for learners (Merga & Roni, 2018; Butler-Barnes, Leath, Williams, Byrd, Carter, & Chavous, 2018; Mwoma, 2019). As a family, such dynamics need to be negotiated to find the best way to handle issues of household chores such that the home environment becomes reading-literacy-friendly (Koerner, 2014). Families should be acceptable to a variety of attitudes and ideals, including uniqueness and independence of their own family members. Effective and democratic communication processes will stimulate beliefs within the family of equality; for example, children could be part of the decision-making

processes thus creating an atmosphere of cohesiveness in households (Young & Schrodt, 2016). This may encourage all-round growth of individual family members.

6.6.3 Listening to the Learners

The best condition for learners concerning literacy is to be in an environment where their voices can be heard, and where their learning needs are acknowledged and met by their home environments. This emphasis on listening to learners' opinions and voices offers a possible reinforcing element concerning reading commitment. Teachers as well as parents should adopt this valuable strategy to structure literacy activities by listening to learners' voices. Hence parents, guardians and teachers will eventually become highly knowledgeable when they attend to learners' said and unsaid communication. Ng (2018) states that it is essential to position learners as being able, informed, and agentic in their literacy learning journey which involves mostly searching for broader perspectives on issues of academic interest.

6.6.4 Order and Structure

There needs to be order in the home to counteract the challenging living conditions of some of the home environments. Through ordinary or daily interactions, parents socialise their children using methods that promote the internalisation of social and educational norms and goals (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy, & Mundt, 2013). Family routines (e.g. mealtimes and household chores) generally assist and guide the child's behaviour; so too can reading be added to this routine. Routines have been known to enhance biosocial elements for children as it decreases external pressures and improves self-control while promoting academic success and improving emotional health. During family mealtimes, parents or guardians should communicate one-on-one with children in order to model positive social behaviour which includes being warm, responsive, and sensitive to children's needs and questions (Fiese, Foley, & Spagnola, 2006). Outsiders should not interfere with the daily home organisation and routine as this will build instability in the home structure which may disturb the already-built conducive reading environment (Nine, 2018).

6.6.5 Parents Showing Support by also Reading

Parents should show support by reading as well. Merga and Roni, (2018) confirm that children are keenly sensitive to parental hypocrisy which affect their motivation to read,

thus highlighting the significance of parents modelling strong reading practices. Whilst parents wanted their children to read, they however did not read themselves, hence children were negatively affected by this contradiction. So, preferably, parents have to demonstrate positive reading behaviour, where possible. Parents who display good attitudes towards reading and who actively engage their children in literacy-enhancing activities are developing an environment of enthusiasm for gaining knowledge, skills and values. Parents who discussed the significance of reading to their children through modelling promote reading skills in their children who are more likely to perform better in school academic assessments (Clark, 2010; Pezoa, Mendive, & Strasser, 2019). When modelling reading, parents or guardians are also promoting reading as a pleasure and leisure activity, thereby inculcating enthusiasm or passion for reading. In other words, when parents or guardians themselves read, they are unconsciously showing that they are relishing the activity which their children observe, and they in turn adopt this behaviour as a form of routine home activity. However, modelling reading by parents does not necessarily suggest that they are teaching their children to read; it communicates a choice (which may become a hobby) for reading that may be shared by a parent and a child in the home. Modelling continuously demonstrates that reading isn't a one-time event, as it is a habit that is repeated over time for enjoyment and acquisition of knowledge (Ng & Graham, 2017).

6.6.6 Learners and the Type of Support they require

The “helplessness discourse” of waiting for help from others is common – we need to help ourselves and stop the culture of reliance on outside help. Effective communication concerning school matters between a child and a parent/guardian is connected to proficiency in reading (Patrick et al., 2011). While communication between teenagers and their parents may have importance for research, the quality of the communication is paramount as poor language usage may set barriers that may lead to distortion of messages. (Brooks, Magnusson, Spencer, & Morgan, 2012). Subsequently, this leads to tremendous shifts in children's self-control, self-esteem and interactions with others. Children benefit by possessing extra confidence to interact proficiently at home and at school when engaging in literacy activities. The more literacy is embedded in the routine of the home, the more proficient the child becomes in communication; this eventually leads to becoming a relevant citizen of the global society which definitely has untold advantages. Children who had formerly

exhibited behaviour problems, now also show a higher capacity to adjust to acceptable norms of behaviour. Overall, children reveal a higher degree of interpersonal competencies with its resultant greater degree of intellectual growth which is seen by using higher levels of critical-thinking processes (Scott, Sylva, Doolan, Price, Jacobs, Criminal, & Landau, 2010).

6.7 CONTEXTUAL BARRIERS

The findings regarding the barriers preventing the promotion of reading literacy programmes for sustainable learning through supportive home environments are discussed below:

6.7.1 Internal and External Distractions within and outside the Home

External distractions which sometimes one has little control over especially if not supported by the people in the home environment, tend to exacerbate problems related to reading literacy in the home. Minimising external distractions with the assistance of the people at home becomes a collective effort in promoting reading literacy at home. Once everyone understands the objective of literacy sessions within the family, they will limit their time on viewing television or being on the phone during reading time.

Internal distractions equally need to be addressed because one has to check oneself when engaging in a task such as reading as it is an individual task. The individual needs to be aware of his/her emotions and physical distractions to guard against the instances that hamper efforts to read. Self-motivation then becomes the vanguard of individualised efforts in being consistent and progressive in the task one has set out to engage in. If the individual is not motivated, then he/she can be easily be distracted by the environment one is in. When self-motivated one could come up with strategies within the environment to counteract any distractions that hamper self-initiated efforts to read (Hamer & McGrath, 2011).

6.7.2 The Hegemony of Technology: Parents' Powerlessness

The community is struggling with the dominance of technology as parents feel powerless when it comes to taking control when it comes to handling technological devices such as television sets, games, cell phones and iPads in the house (Deszcz-Tryhubczak, Huysmans, Barzillai, Thomson, Schroeder, & Van den Broek, 2018).

Because the internet, online technology and mobile gadgets have become common, there have been studies geared especially at exploring the use of internet in the home environments as current media sources are of paramount importance to assist home environments to be better prepared for the fourth revolution (Ghalebandi & Noorhidawati, 2019). However, the reluctance by some quarters to access modern technology for reading literacy in a digital sense is exacerbated by rash policy decisions by DoE regarding the facts and communication strategies at schools (Batorski & Jasiewicz, 2013).

6.7.3 Parents' Unrealistic Expectations

When parents expect too much then the task of reading becomes forced and not a voluntary task. The learners know their limit and parental expectation could exceed what the child is capable of. This in turn could cause resentment and total disdain for reading. Parents with high aspirations for their children's educational attainment are in all likelihood to be devoted to and incredibly involved to improve the learners' success levels in reading. But parental aspiration that exceeds realistic expectations may strain the child's inner cognitive resources (Murayama et al., 2016).

6.7.4 Limited Space in the Home for Reading

The restriction of space for reading in the home becomes an added burden of distraction as some stay in shacks and two-roomed houses. Gifford (2014) confirms that the concentration of a young learner may be diverted in terms of space, desire for the task, and time to be spent on the activity. One's residence is significant as a reading sanctuary as it provides wellbeing, safety, and desire. Graham, Gosling and Travis (2015) who used qualitative research to analyse space as a factor for the promotion of literacy confirmed that adequate room space for literacy activities created the best possible learning environment for students. Overcrowding, excessive noise levels, and a disorganised reading plan were listed as major barriers to literacy in the home.

6.7.5 High Parental Expectations but Little Support

Learners themselves have particular expectations about their parents; that is, they may know them but this is not totally possible where there is an absence of effective communication. Ignoring the voice of the child is a lost opportunity for parents to gain

insight into what they (learners) know about themselves and the outside world. Ng (2018) maintains that this is a lost opportunity because learners view this attitude of parents as being uncaring.

Parents or guardians who display authoritarian behaviour may elicit low levels of responsiveness among learners who become enormously stressful. This arises out of a desire to instil conformity and obedience but creates a less warm environment. Furthermore, authoritarian parents are less engaging with their children as they mostly discourage open conversation and manage their children's behaviour in a restrictive manner. It is maintained that an authoritarian parent is forceful, punitive and believes that a child needs to adhere to patterns of behaviour that exhibit strict obedience. Consequently, parents limit their children's autonomy, and in the process damage the parent-child relationship. This behaviour is normally prevalent in a traditional family structure where the child follows parents' orders without questioning; therefore, it can be argued that authoritarian parenting relies on regulations which are considered as inflexible. Therefore, authoritarian child-rearing which is related to low confidence (in the child) has deleterious effects on scholastic achievement (Chen, Major, Zhou, Bunge, Lau, & Chu, 2014; Coley, Lewin-Bizan & Carrano, 2011).

6.8 THE PROPOSED ACTION PLAN TO PROMOTE READING LITERACY

The summary of findings led to proposals to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. These are outlined below:

6.8.1 Family Working Cooperatively and Collaboratively

The family must be involved by working cooperatively, collaboratively and communicatively to effect a reading plan. Actions must be planned, implemented and directed towards promoting reading literacy. They must define the key objectives aimed at co-creating changes in family members in the direction of promoting literacy in the home. Also, the family should be involved in sharing information on strategies and best practice that they can use as a family to promote reading literacy and create a supportive home environment. Ogwo, (2013) states that families are the primary source of positive character improvement. Therefore, when all the family members are actively involved, it strengthens the family unit by providing the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks and support to create positive change among all

family members. Hence, Hughes and Jones (2011) claim that such contributions ultimately lead to success by creating an excellent end-product.

6.8.2 Creating Interest concerning Reading

Interest should be created around reading by preparing everyone's mind in some way for reading. This could involve anything to arouse their interest and enable them to see reading as beneficial. Allington and Swann (2009) concluded that awakening interest to read was a continuous enlightening process leading to teenagers' engagement in reading books which has the possibility of being accelerated. Guthrie, Wigfield and You (2012) found that when they considered how best to achieve this goal, they realised that reading can be utilised as a social practice and as a hobby. Communal connections help in the gaining of knowledge, and reading proficiency presents possibilities for dialogue around books and this may boost the social status of participants.

6.8.3 Flexible Reading Time

Families need to arrange time to read that is convenient for everyone. They must arrange a common time so that the family members can gather at the same time. Fiorini and Keane (2014) agree on the importance of time use, especially the time spent on instructional exercises for cognitive improvement. Being literate is associated with increased reading proficiency (Merga, 2014b) and the home is among the strongest agents to enhance reading; hence, time needs to be made available to promote reading literacy (Kremer, Brannen & Glennerster, 2013). This will also allow for the young ones in the family to be able to get some assistance from other knowledgeable family members. Vygotsky's social-constructivist concept insists that those capable of spreading knowledge must scaffold this during the child's learning process - and reading is no different (Berns, 2016).

6.8.4 Identification of Barriers

The family must identify any barriers within the home environment that will impede on reading. Some of the barriers that were more prominent included parents not getting involved in their children's reading, interruptions, and learners not having a say in their own reading (Marotta & Acquisti, 2017). A study which tested the strengths and weaknesses of parent-child relationships listed parental involvement in students'

educational activities as being paramount (Chen & Ho 2012). When the parent and child interacted cohesively, then children were much more likely to internalise good practices and values that enhanced school progress.

6.8.5 Overcoming the Barriers

Once the family identified the barriers, then they needed to plan to overcome them. Every home environment is different and the people within that environment needed to come up with unique strategies to overcome barriers that impede the progress of reading literacy. According to Lavie's (2010) load theory of attention, the better the cognitive load, the more inclined people are affected by new distractors; and the possibility of being more afflicted by inattention and hyperactivity becomes more real. As such, "strategies must be developed, taught, and modelled to minimize distractions and maximize concentration" (Hamer & McGrath, 2011, p. 34).

6.9 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE STUDY

The reality is that little is being done to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. South Africa had come out last out of all 50 nations who participated in PIRLS 2016. The member of the BRICS countries, The Russian Federation (top performing country) attained 260 points more than South Africa. Firstly, there is little support that learners are receiving from home as there is no time set aside for reading. Secondly, there is an absence of enlightenment on the significance of reading which should highlight the need to cascade knowledge into homes. Thirdly, it is the attitude and the participants' perception of reading which are viewed as obstacles. Fourthly, it is the minimal exposure to good quality of the language being read. The participants are in agreement that reading takes place but most learners are reading social media content. The use of language on these social platforms is of low quality because of the use of colloquialisms and texting. Subsequently, this negatively affects reading comprehension of formal written texts such as fiction or non-fiction books. However, social media content is easily available, hence the use of the local library becomes important to fill the gap that exists concerning the inaccessibility of books within the home environment. Lastly, learners are too preoccupied with the internet and do not bring books home to do conventional reading.

There is a need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments, particularly to empower the individual to be an active member of the community. However, there is a heavy reliance on schools to come up with strategies to fulfil this objective. Furthermore, there is a disconnection between the local library and the community and this creates a lack of information-sharing - something which the community desperately requires from the library. The community members understand the value of reading and how it is linked to academic achievement and the limitless possibilities it provides. Also, to establish a scholarly culture in their homes and to help change the attitude of people towards reading by not prioritising household chores, is significant. Finally, the lack of support for reading in the home environment and in the community is something that needs to be looked into incisively such that solutions are found to transcend this barrier.

The key element to promoting reading literacy is that children should be encouraged to read. Though efforts are made for learners to read, it remains their choice at the end. Reading should be goal-orientated and should be monitored to check progress. Learners who do not find reading tasks enjoyable would rather watch television, but if forced to do so they eventually end up being grateful for the “push”. Reading literacy should be done with children at a younger age to curb having to later force children to read. People have to develop a love for reading so that they can withstand whatever challenges they may face in order to become truly literate; thus, reading should be treated as a recreational activity.

The circumstances and conditions under which promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning to flourish involves cooperation and collaboration from all interested parties. However, there exists power dynamics among the families; the voice of the learner is silent but the parent’s voice is dominant. The best condition for the learner to progress is to be in an environment where he/she can be heard and where their learning needs are acknowledged and met by the home environment. The parent or guardian is in the position of power and can institute these changes in the home environment. Some of the home environments of the participants are disorderly due to inadequate living space. However, the space should be adjusted in a way that it promotes reading literacy by sharing books as a family and stimulating discussions on books. Parents who show support by reading and sharing with other family members promote family discussions. Learners need to be vocal about what they feel

needs to be done to support their reading literacy – they need to dispel the notorious “helplessness discourse” of waiting for help and not helping themselves.

The barriers of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments are within most of the homes. Internal and external distractions such as the lack of interest and unrealistic parental expectations stifle progress in reading literacy – this emanates from a lack of communication between parent and child. Additionally, the community struggles with the advent of technology as parents feel powerless when it comes to taking control of technological devices such as television, games, cell phones and iPads in the house. This becomes an added burden of distraction when there is already limited space as some stay in shacks and two-roomed houses.

To transcend most barriers at home, the family must be involved by working harmoniously and collaboratively and using effective communication to bring home the importance of the reading plan. In other words, actions of the family must be planned, implemented and directed towards promoting reading literacy. They must define the key objectives aimed at co-creating changes especially in the direction that they would like to see the family taking. Family should be involved in sharing the information on the best strategies that they can use to promote reading literacy and create a supportive home environment. Interest should be created in preparing each one to develop a reading mind. This will arouse their interest and enable them to see reading as beneficial in some way. Reading time should not be inflexible, and should not be forced. Families need to arrange time to read which is convenient for everyone. The arranging of a common time so that the family members can gather at the same time will also allow for the young ones to be able to get some assistance from the knowledgeable others. Sharing a book or a newspaper article with family members should be one of the activities. In addition, reading or discussing a school prescribed literature book can be beneficial. Drawings could be understood as stories that are told and later written to be read. Initially, the family should sit down to identify barriers that could impede their reading activity at home such as physiological barriers within or outside the home environment. Once the family has identified the barriers, they now needed to overcome them.

6.10 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Support structures in any given scenario gives a fighting chance of what needs to be supported. A number of homes find themselves being bombarded by a lot of information on how important reading is and what it can do for an individual, family and the community at large. However, this is not followed by how to support these home environments in promoting reading literacy. Parents understand that there must be commitment to making time for reading to reach the desired outcomes. Promoting reading literacy through supportive environments is about using the assets within the environment: these include encouraging children to borrow books, changing their negative attitude to a positive one, making reading a pleasurable experience by turning it into a recreational activity, cooperation and collaboration within the family, minimising the external distractions, involving the whole family, planning what needs to be done to promote reading, identifying physical barriers, and utilising strategies on how to overcome barriers which impede reading literacy.

Reading does not end at school or at home; it should be a continuous habit. The home provides the strongest reading environment, hence time needs to be made available for this (Kremer, Brannen, & Glennerster, 2013). Parents should reinforce the instruction received at school to assist the learner in realising the importance of academic work. This provides additional time to spend on the school task rather than relying on the subject-time allocated in school. The informal setting at home enables the learner to be relaxed in asking questions allowing time to think rather than being rushed into completing reading without much understanding. Learners, through reading frequently, will then develop a habit that improves their chances of critically understanding what is being read.

Parents who encourage their children to borrow books from libraries and other institutions, make home a place where children practise their reading and possibly receive guidance from other members of the family. When engaging in guided reading, parents provide a space with a welcoming atmosphere for the promotion of reading literacy development (Ciping, Silinkas, Wei, & Georgiou, 2015). Thus parental involvement is at the core as parents' supportive behaviour in the home-setting demonstrates a caring attitude for their children's educational progress. Klemencic, Mirazchiyski and Sandoval-Hernandez (2014) confirm that adolescents are influenced

by the perceptions their friends and relatives have about reading. Parents should engage in guided reading, as they provide a supportive structure and a positive emotional environment at home for the promotion of reading literacy. Parents cannot only have high expectations concerning their children's academic performances; their expectation must correspond with their commitment and support they have concerning their children's educational progress.

Parents should not have a disengaged attitude when it comes to reading literacy. Children are affected by this and may thus imbibe the attitude of disinterestedness towards reading from their parents or guardians. Prioritising reading but not accessing library sources is futile; if children are busy with their household chores then accessing library sources becomes difficult, then children may adopt an attitude of not prioritising reading as once they have finished their chores they will go and play and will not make an effort to read. Once a child is given an opportunity to read, this will improve their reading skills, and ultimately improve their results at school. Hence, they will associate reading with success and start to enjoy reading. Students can also read magazines to relax and avoid mental fatigue, and this will make them socially compatible and disciplined in school.

One should not feel obliged to read, but should experience reading as pleasurable and related to critical-thinking, the broadening of comprehension skills, vocabulary improvement, positive attitudes, self-confidence building, and life-skills. However, in order to engender a love for reading in learners, we need to establish what topics or subjects interest him/her before we can inculcate the love for reading. Do they like reading about their favourite soccer star or a recipe? The content needs to be interesting for the reader and this could be gauged by perusing the introductory pages or by skimming and scanning the text. Hence, parents and teachers need to meet this need as this will help the development of a reading habit that promotes reading literacy for sustainable learning. Whether a learner's curiosity is aroused through books or the internet, the home environment should be instrumental at least at the initial stage of promoting literacy.

Minimising the external distractions with the assistance of the people at home makes this a collective effort to promoting reading literacy. Everyone at home should understand the limits of viewing television or being on the phone during reading time.

One needs to be conscious of one's emotions and physical distractions to guard against instances or elements that hamper efforts to read. Self-motivation elicits strategies within the environment to counteract any distractions (Hamer & McGrath, 2011). Further, parents should align their expectations with their child's abilities. When parents expect too much then the task of reading becomes forced and not a voluntary one. The learner knows his/her limit and parental expectation should not be more than what the child is capable of. Therefore, parents' unrealistic expectations concerning their child's intellectual abilities may cause resentment and total disdain towards reading.

6.11 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORY, PRACTICE AND METHODOLOGY

This research study contributes to prior theoretical knowledge by applying, validating, and extending the theoretical objectives and principles of both Ubuntu and the asset-based approach. Although the asset-based approach is usually applied for developing the community, I extended it to the home environment (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2012). As such, I sought the wisdom of the community in supporting homes to strengthen reading literacy for sustainable learning. Ubuntu theory is about working as a collective; however, this study addresses a problem experienced by individuals, but a collective look into it. The individual does not live in isolation, but with other people. Hence, the problem experienced by an individual is a direct consequence of other people in the home or the community who make up the collective. As much as an individual may read alone, particularly if the individual is a learner who needs access to the books, being taught other reading strategies needs a collaborative environment that is conducive to reading which has the support of all the family members.

This study validated the theory of Ubuntu which can be used to dissect a phenomenon that is deemed individualistic. Ubuntu, together with the asset-based approach, can be used in various contexts. These approaches afforded us to analyse a phenomenon not as an individual problem, but one that affects the whole community. This includes the involvement of the learners, parents, guardians, educators, the librarian, the NGO, the councillor of the area, and all other interested parties. They all become contributors in a sense that they become enablers in the promotion of reading literacy. As contributors, we possess the assets to dissect the phenomenon, not from a deficit

thinking point of view, but by illuminating what assets we possess as individuals in a collective. To help the individual within the community to have a new perspective, we no longer look peripherally when communally assessing a phenomenon – we rely on the principle of *umuntu ungununtu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other people). One will not be able to realise one's humanness in the absence of other people. One cannot remain aloof in seeing the suffering of others, because their suffering is directly linked to us ("no man is an island, we are all part of the main"). We need to reconnect and become involved in others' struggles.

This study contributed to research methodology by using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) with a focus on group discussions, meetings and observation. This resulted in a flexible and coordinated action plan which actively engaged all the community partners. Participants included learners, parents, a representative from the local council, a DoE official who advised us on educational matters, a representative from the NGO, and the chief librarian from the community library; these participants were all part of the PAR-Ubuntu project. It was emphasised that participants must have a clear, well-organised action plan in addition to their commitment to its implementation. Having tried out the strategy (action), observed what happened, and reflected on its implications, we were able to find solutions to the research questions.

6.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was not devoid of constraints which ironically led to a deeper understanding of the problem being investigated. Firstly, the selected number of participants was too few and would not allow for generalisation. However, this study did not seek to generalise, but sought to attain credibility in dealing with this particular phenomenon. Methods which were utilised included focus group discussions, participants' observations, and free attitude interviews; but these were limiting because the study wanted access to the participants' homes, but this met with some resistance. Therefore, the creation of rapport during meetings was of paramount importance so that the participants could feel comfortable in giving us access to their homes. The educator-component pulled out citing time constraints. Family demographics (e.g. culture, socio-economic status, and the number of siblings) limited our capacity to get varied perceptions on the prescribed questions of the research study. However, having a family who agreed to assist (young widow and her son) gave the study an insightful

perspective at the way a single parent views the promotion of reading literacy through a supporting home environment.

6.13 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

My findings revealed a few aspects that I did not anticipate. As my research was on promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments, I was concerned by some of the barriers to support reading literacy, particularly access to reading materials. Future studies should look at collaborations with municipalities in supplying reading materials to promote reading literacy; for example, their monthly magazines and weekly newspapers should be distributed to all sections of the community, especially those that are found in the libraries.

Future studies could profit from researching more cultural and linguistically empowered families. Broadening the sample to consist of households representing a wider variety of home environments may permit richer findings concerning variations in reading experiences. Although the participants came from RDP houses and informal settlement dwellings, the type of families that participated were somewhat similar as they were living with both parents or had a single mother. Future research should unearth more varied results if participants came from child-headed households and those who lived alone with their grandmothers.

The same research could be conducted in a township or in a rural area. Townships and rural areas offer different contexts where diverse and complex dynamics may emerge. Townships generally have well-established cultures and it would be interesting to see what ideas such communities possess in promoting reading literacy in their home environments.

Future studies can expand on the tiers of the asset-based approach to include the mapping of assets in equipping the participants with additional skills. Also, creating a model that will look at a local problem that is adaptable in identifying the needs of the community, will be a further consideration. Additionally, dealing with local structures of communities where there is no or little access, requires much planning as bureaucracy generally acts as stumbling blocks concerning projects to help

communities. Lastly, an ideal model must be structured in such a way to be as financially feasible as possible.

6.14. A SUGGESTED PLAN FOR PROMOTING READING LITERACY FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING THROUGH SUPPORTIVE HOME ENVIRONMENTS

6.14.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present the proposed action plan of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The plan will involve stating the goals, actions, purpose of the action, responsibilities of the support agents, and observable changes.

6.14.2 THE GROUNDWORK OF THE READING PLAN

This action plan is proposed to support home environments in promoting reading literacy.

6.14.2.1 Goals

What we envision, plan and commit to achieve in promoting reading literacy through supportive home environments are indicated in the following sections:

6.14.2.1.1 Encourage children to read

Children should be encouraged to interact with books even past the early years of life. Encouragement should be given equally to both genders. Parents should no longer believe that it is the role of the educators to provide constant reinforcement concerning the provision of books. Conversely, teachers cannot realistically anticipate that parents are sufficiently knowledgeable, willing, and capable to offer this encouragement at home. Further, parents cannot assume that schools are meeting their full obligation in encouraging reading among learners in preparation for the challenging curricular demands.

6.14.2.1.2 Introduce reading at an early age

Children should be exposed to reading from a young age as reading contributes to the development of intellectual and emotional capacities. It is vital for young people to be immersed in books as early as possible in order to get the best in terms of cognitive development. Parental perceptions about literacy are critical as children's language

and literacy competencies are modelled around this. The home environment is significant as the children acquire their first literacy experiences by accessing reading resources. Reading practice during the early years of childhood not only develops cognitive potential in children but also models behaviour by making reading a recreational activity in the home.

6.14.2.1.3 Develop a love for reading

The love for reading needs to be inculcated as soon as possible to undo (to some extent) past literacy neglect. This is possible through a deliberate attempt from all interested parties. Social reproductions, values, norms, roles, and identities are significant factors that come into play whilst children read and make sense of what they read. The extent to which learners are given opportunities to impart, collaborate, and talk about their reading experiences is important for academic growth from a social perspective. Concentrating on learners' reading and speaking activities promotes motivation that enhances scholastic performance.

6.14.2.1.4 Reconciling the power imbalance concerning parent-child relationships

Parents should not put pressure on their children by prioritising household chores as this has a negative impact on the time dedicated to reading for learners. Effective communication will reflect beliefs in the equality of all who constitute the family (e.g. youngsters may be consulted in decision-making processes). This could inspire self-development in each family member.

6.14.2.1.5 Understand reading literacy as a catalyst for change

Reading is not limited to fighting poverty but it does lead to critical-thinking that dissects social and economic inequalities. Reading changes the person to not merely make correct choices, but to also encourage independent thinking. Reading stimulates cognitive processes which make us answerable to our own self. Reading affords the possibility of having control of our own emancipation as we discover new worlds of information.

6.14.2.1.6 Give support for reading at home and the community

Support needs to be given particularly to homes that are grappling with poverty. One entity of the home environment that can be altered even in the face of destitution is providing access to books which enhances literacy competencies which may in the future alleviate the challenges of life's burdens. In most emerging economies, a large percentage of the population living beneath the poverty line are possibly exposed to books. However, books can be borrowed from a library that will equip youngsters with knowledge. The presence of books in a home establishes a scholarly tradition and develops a love for reading which has a positive impact on children's futures. A child's vocabulary, information, reading, writing, and comprehension skills, are all promoted and this in turn has a constructive impact on a child's learning at school. Generally, children exposed to books at an early age are more likely to attain success in life.

6.14.2.2 Actions

These involve using effective strategies to promote reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

6.14.2.2.1 Work cooperatively and collaboratively as a family

Actions must be thoroughly planned, collaboratively coordinated, implemented and directed towards promoting reading literacy. The key objectives aimed at co-creating changes in family members' habits must be communicated effectively and unambiguously to obviate any perceived challenges. In addition, information must be shared on the best strategies to use as a family to promote reading literacy. This will strengthen family ties by providing the necessary opportunities, networks and support to create a literacy-friendly home environment.

6.14.2.2.2 Create Interest around Reading

The stimulating of interest to prepare everyone's mind to adopt reading as a leisure activity is crucial. This involves using strategies that encourage "non-readers" to see reading as being beneficial. They should consider reading as a social exercise (and as a pastime) such that its benefits filter into the community who become uplifted in terms of knowledge-acquisition. Book clubs, debating societies, and story-telling groups are some of the agents that create knowledge environments which boost learners' reading interest and skills.

6.14.2.2.3 Find time to read together as a family

Home is among the strongest agents that influences reading. Therefore the family has to arrange a common time to read such that younger members are also accommodated and assisted. This will foster cognitive development in all and this leads to increased reading proficiency.

6.14.2.2.4 Identify barriers that could impede reading

The family must identify any barriers within the home environment that will impede on reading. Some of the barriers that are most prominent are, parents not getting involved in their children's reading, no access to books, interruptions, and learners not having a say in their own reading.

6.14.2.2.5 Overcome the barriers that impede on reading time

Every home environment is unique and the people within will know the best strategies to use as to how they should go about improving it. The more complex the mental load, the more vulnerable family members are to new distractors. And by being more susceptible to distractions, people within the home may suffer from inattention and hyperactivity. Consequently, strategies must be developed, taught, and modelled to minimise distractions and maximise concentration that will lead to reading literacy activities being fruitful.

6.14.2.3. Purpose of the action

This explains why I have adopted such actions to promote reading literacy. The reasons are explained in the following sub-sections:

6.14.2.3.1. To create a home environment where learners' voices are heard

The best condition for one to progress as far as reading literacy is concerned is to be in an environment where one could be heard; that is, one's voice needs to be considered and one's questions need to be honestly answered such that a democratic home-learning environment is created. Educators, parents and other role players must acknowledge and recognise learners' rights. It is essential to position learners as having the potential to be successful, possessing critical-thinking skills, and that they hold certain viewpoints that may differ to those of adults. Learners' voices must be considered in order for reading literacy to be effective.

6.14.2.3.2 To promote reading literacy as a recreational activity

Reading should be treated as a recreational activity that elicits pleasure and engenders social discourse. For example, reading clubs at school and in the community are effective to promote literacy. Young children's perceptions of the social worth of reading can be founded on parental modelling in reading. Treating reading as a recreational activity or hobby brightens children's perspectives that assist in making books topics of discussion which lead to greater academic competency.

6.14.2.3.3 Learners must see parents modelling good literacy behaviour

Often learners are intensely conscious about the insincerity of parents who do not "practise what they preach". This influences their responses to imbibe reading literacy practices. Why ask their children to read when they do not read themselves? This anomaly confuses children and parents end up forcing them to read. Parents, who discuss the advantages of reading by reading and modelling this behaviour demonstrate the value of reading and the success factors thereof. While modelling reading, parents are, in effect, modelling entertainment and enthusiasm for reading which is transmitted to their children. Model reading by parents does not necessarily mean that they are teaching their children only to read, but it communicates a common and shared interest between the parent and child at home. Modelling consistently also demonstrates that reading is not a once-off event, but a continuous activity that could be enjoyed over time. Learners whose parents are absent due to work and other commitments, and learners whose parents are illiterate, can enlist the help of relatives or knowledgeable others in the community to initiate the process of reading literacy in the home.

6.14.2.3.4 Learners' input on the type of support they require

When learners communicate their needs to all the members of the household, it dispels the notion that they are helpless. They should be allowed to communicate with their parents about the obstacles they encounter within their home environment that impede on their reading activities. Good communication between children and parents is vitally important, not only for transparency, but also for social cohesion and bonding in the family – this promotes literacy and its concomitant success especially in the academic sphere. Moreover, this leads to improvement in the way the children take responsibility for their own reading. Both at school and at home, children gain more

confidence in socially interacting if they engage in literature activities. Children who previously exhibited negative behaviour now change by adhering to social norms. Therefore, children must reveal their inner feelings and voice their concerns in order to improve the home environment and make it supportive and literacy-friendly.

6.14.2.3.5. To find the best strategies to promote reading literacy

The home environment does require support from institutions like the library and the school to access books in order to assist with its objective of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning. The home cannot remain an isolated entity if it aims to promote reading literacy. It needs to also collaborate with other supportive agents such as NGOs, the local councillor, school teachers, potential sponsors, and the librarian to help overcome any impediments that parents and learners experience.

6.14.2.4. Responsibilities of the supporting agents

The duties and responsibilities of the support agents who will be included in the action plan are discussed below:

6.14.2.4.1 Maintain order and routine

There needs to be order and discipline in the home to counteract the challenging living conditions of some of the home environments. Routines can consist of mealtimes, chores, homework, and bedtime-preparation. Family routines are instrumental in facilitating communication with each other. Routines have been shown to enhance social and emotional cohesion among family members. Through family routines (e.g. set mealtimes), positives emanate such as warmth, responsiveness, and being sensitive to children's needs and answering their questions. Outsiders should not interfere with daily home routines as this will disturb structure to establish a conducive home reading environment for the learners.

6.14.2.4.2 To establish a scholarly culture within the home environments

The ultimate goal is to establish a scholarly culture in homes to promote literacy. However, in homes that are indigent, it is a challenge to establish a scholarly culture because of the limited access to books. Therefore, borrowing books and other reading sources from a library creates a book-orientated culture in home environments that equips children with literacy for learning at school. To situate a scholarly culture in homes is a process that needs the cooperation of all stakeholders; and although this

may take a long time, it is a vital component that will propel our learners to new doors of academic success.

6.14.2.4.3 Help change the attitude of people towards reading

Generally, parents' attitude is one of indifference which is evident when they prioritise household chores rather than setting time aside for reading. Having access to library is futile if it is not going to be utilised during operating hours. Children who are busy with their household chores miss the opportunity to borrow books from the library. A persons' disconnection when it comes to reading will counteract any effort in promoting reading literacy. This needs to change by knowledgeable agents and professionals informing parents about the untold benefits of reading.

6.14.2.4.4 To bridge the disconnection between the local library and the community

The library is unaware of the specific needs of the community. Librarians and their assistants seldom know the literacy aspirations of community members who have been previously marginalised. Most librarians are ignorant of the past injustices of the apartheid machinery and assume that the community is just not geared to receiving literacy assistance. This demonstrates the disconnection between the library and the community. This social injustice that cuts off the common people from accessing resources must not be perpetuated. Librarians, the DoE, NGOs, tribal authorities, and other interested parties must commit to serving the community. A vigorous literacy advertising campaign by the library, in conjunction with the help of local expertise and interested groups, may be a good starting point. Extending traditional literacy programmes to consist of civic and political awareness or turning libraries into centres for debate and discussion means a shift away from libraries being viewed as passive agents of disseminating information. However, libraries making use of recent technology add to outreach possibilities that allow for opportunities to promote reading on a wider scale.

6.14.2.4.5 To curb the heavy reliance on schools

Most parents do have knowledge on what needs to be done to promote reading within their homes; however, they lack confidence as some are semi-literate. Consequently,

this continuous literacy challenge, prompted the Government to launch a literacy promotion initiative called *Kha Ri Gude* (Let us learn) in 2007, which involved different governmental structures. The *Kha Ri Gude* campaign utilised integrated, different and innovative language methods to promote literacy; and this fostered the interest in reading. Parents' reliance on schools to assist with literacy activities should dissipate – they need to access agencies with information that help with literacy programmes at home.

6.14.2.4.6. Readers to account for their reading

The reader needs to account for what he/she has read in terms of relevancy, in addition to knowledge, skills and values acquisition. Hence, reading should purpose-driven, whether for educational needs or pure entertainment. When people read they have an idea what they are reading for and will inform the way they read. Depending on what information is needed, the learner has to skim and scan the textual content in order to glean the relevant information instead of reading the whole text. When intending to read for pleasure, the learner must consider what books or articles interest him/her – this can be done by reading the blurb or the first pages of the book. Also, using a number of resources is what constitutes complex reading; activities that are done for reading need students to mix facts with more than just one resource. Reading objectives may be multiple, and the answers to at least one enquiry may be gleaned from more than one text. Readers must access texts that exploit skills such as critical-reflection, writing texts, summarising, creativity, life-skills scenarios, knowledge acquisition, morals and values, and error analysis. Readers must measure their own progress and success rate in order to become self-accountable in terms of acquiring literacy skills.

6.14.2.5. Observable changes

As far as accomplishing the goals of this research project, this may be judged by observing positive changes within the home environments from the initial stages to the completion stage. The following are such changes:

- When families are working together in finding ingenious ways to promote reading literacy;
- Setting time aside for reading as done for chores and meals;
- When families have built a close connection with schools and libraries;

- When families emphasise that promoting reading literacy is not an individual process, but a collective effort;
- When help is readily available from all social agencies and structures that are concerned with promoting reading literacy in every home in South Africa;
- When the home environment enables the learner to be comfortable in asking questions and allowing them time to think about what they are reading;
- When information about promoting reading literacy reaches every home through the library, sponsors and other community-outreach programmes;
- When parents are reading together with their children;
- When the private sector from the emerging economies increasingly seek to recruit the South African talent;
- When reading is viewed as a pleasurable task;
- When learners have developed their vocabulary, language skills, positive attitudes, and self-assurance characteristics in reading;
- When learners are able to identify themselves with a certain positive character in the book; and
- When every home has access to books and print resources.

6.14.2.6 The overview of the action plan

The following table outlines the action plan of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.

Table: 6.1: Overview of the proposed action plan

Mission: Promoting reading literacy for sustainable through supportive home environment

Goals	Actions	Purpose of the action	Supporting agents' Responsibilities	Observable changes
Goals				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage children to read. ➤ Introduce reading at an early age. 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop the love for reading. ➤ Reconciliation of the power imbalance in parent-child relationships. ➤ Understand reading literacy as a catalyst for change. ➤ Give support for reading at home and in the community. 	
<p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work cooperatively and collaboratively as a family to promote reading literacy. ➤ Create interest around reading. ➤ Find time to read together as a family. ➤ Identify barriers that could impede on reading. ➤ Overcome the barriers that obstruct reading time. 	<p>Purpose of the action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To create a home environment where learners' voices could be heard. ➤ To promote reading literacy as a recreational activity. ➤ For learners to see parents modelling reading behaviour. ➤ To encourage learners to give input on the type of support they require. ➤ To find the best strategies to promote reading literacy.
<p>Responsibilities</p>	<p>Supporting agents' responsibilities</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain order and routine. Establish a scholarly culture within the home environment. ➤ To help to change the attitude of people towards reading. ➤ To bridge the disconnection between the local library and the community. ➤ To curb the heavy reliance on schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family, NGOs and Library ➤ Parents, library, community, & NGOs ➤ Family, NGOs, library, & local councillor
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6.15. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

A main objective for this research study was to develop an action plan of promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The purpose was to facilitate homes to take charge in finding ways to support their environments. Government has been trying to promote reading literacy through many documented efforts; however, the reading literacy levels had still not improved. In chapter two (2), this study shows that it was framed using Ubuntu and asset-based approaches. The primary premise of these two approaches is that in every community, no matter how poor, they still possess strengths, properties or influences that may make contributions to changing their state of affairs. The literature review (chapter 3) also indicated that in the developing BRICS countries, particularly Russia, how they turned things around in developing reading by making homes the centre of promoting reading literacy. This study integrated the goals of Ubuntu and the asset-based-approach, and in conjunction with PAR, highlighted the contribution of individuals or participants who gave yeoman support to the study.

To generate data, this study used focus group discussions, reflections and free attitude interviews. Participants were selected through invitations and the group of eight (8) participants contributed immensely in strategizing on how to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments. All the PAR goals were accomplished, as mentioned in chapter four (4). The data presentation (chapter 5) indicated that this research used CDA to reach conclusions which were presented in chapter six.

The findings from the research in chapter 6 concluded that little is done to support reading literacy through supportive home environments. There is also a need to promote reading literacy through supportive home environments to curb the heavy reliance on schools and this will bridge the disconnection that exists between local libraries and homes. Reading should be treated as a recreational activity, and the parent or guardian who is in the position of power can institute these changes in the home environment. The proposed action plan was presented which will be used in homes to support learners improving their skills in reading. Finally, it is understood that the proposed action plan will generate a lot of discussion on how best to support home environments to promote reading literacy.

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6.17. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



24 November 2017

Ms Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu 208502754
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Bhengu

Protocol reference number: HSS/2207/017D

Project title: Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environment

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 21 November 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr NP Mthiyane & Prof DJ Hlalele
cc. Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc. School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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APPENDIX B

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1041

Ref.:2/4/8/1393

Ms SS Bhengu
K845 Sakabula Road
KwaMashu
4359

Dear Ms Bhengu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“PROMOTING READING LITERACY FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING THROUGH SUPPORTIVE HOME ENVIRONMENTS”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 13 November 2017 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Siphesihle Secondary School

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 16 November 2017

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

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APPENDIX C

(letter to the school principal requesting permission for students, teachers and parents to participate in the research study)

K667 Sakabula Road
KwaMashu
4360

Attention: The Principal
Siphesihle Secondary School
191 Cotton Wood Drive
Verulam
4340

Dear Sir

LETTER TO THE PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

My name is Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu. I am a doctoral student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Registration number: 208502764. I am required to carry out research to complete my thesis. Your school has been selected to participate in this research project. The title of my research is: **Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.**

The importance of this study is as follows:

- The study will provide an understanding of strategies that may be used in order to promote reading literacy to sustain learning through supportive home environments.
- This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to other schools, the community, the Department of Education, the teacher-training institutions and the policymakers.

The study requests the participation of learners, teachers, and parents in interviews and focus group discussions (with learners). Participation is purely voluntary and participants will be at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wish, and they will not be disadvantaged in any way. I will observe maximum participants' anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study, as well as in the reporting of findings. Information will be made available to all participants before the publication of the study.

Yours faithfully

S.S. Bhengu (Ms)

DECLARATION

I (full name of the principal) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I give permission for the researcher to conduct research at this school.

I understand that the participants are at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should they so desire.

Signature of Principal: ----- Date-----

Signature of Witness/Research Assistant: -----Date: -----

Yours faithfully

M. R. Rangai
(Principal)

APPENDIX D
(CONSENT LETTERS TO THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS)

K667 Sakabula Road
KwaMashu
4360

Dear Participant

REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

My name is Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu (208502764). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. The title of my research is: Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The aim of this study is to propose the promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observation on the topic.

Please note that:

- The information you will provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating during the research process. You will not be penalised in any way for not continuing with your participation.
- Your views in the interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 40 minutes.
- The records of information as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only by my and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in keeping with the rules of the university, it will be disposed of by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration form which is attached to this letter (a separate sheet will be provided for the signature)
- If you are consenting (willing to be interviewed), please indicate (by ticking as applicable with an X) whether you are or you are not willing to allow the interview to be recorded using the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio-equipment		

Observations		
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I can be contacted at the School of Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. Email: teghele@gmail.com

Cell: 0714616208

My supervisor is Professor Dipane Joseph Hlalele who is located at the Department of Educational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Contact details Tel: 0312603858. Email: HlaleleD@ukzn.ac.za

My co-supervisor is Dr Ncamsile Mthiyane who is located at the Department of Educational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Email: Khanare@ukzn.ac.za

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee's contact details are as follows: Ms Phumulele Ximba, University of Kwazulu-Natal Research Office. Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za. Phone number +27312603587

Thank you

S. S. Bhengu (Ms)

(Main Researcher)

DECLARATION

I _____ confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at my time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Inqubo Mgomo Yesivumelwano Semvumo

K667 Sakabula Road

KwaMashu

4360

Kulowo emayelana naye

Kothatha iqhaza othobekileyo

ISICELO SEMVUMO KULOWO OZOTHATHA IQHAZA

Igama lami ngingu Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu (208502764). Mina ngingumfundi owenza iPhD ngifunda eNyuvesi yaKwazulu-Natali, Edgewood Campus, Ekhoneni lomgwaqo ka Marianhill no Pinetown. Isihloko sithi: Ukugqugquzela ukufunda ukuze kusimamise ukucosheka kolwazi ngokusebenzisa ikhaya njengendawo ezisesekelayo. Inhloso yalolucwaningo ukuphakamisa ukuququzeleka ukufunda ukuze kusimamise ukucosheka kolwazi ngokusebenzisa ikhaya njengendawo ezisesekelayo. Ngingathanda ukwenza nawe inkulumoluhlolo ukuze usabele ngesipiliyoni sakho ngokuqaphelisisa ngalolu daba.

- Sicela uqaphele ukuthi: Ulwazi ozosinikeza lona luzosentshenziselwa ulwazi locwaningo kuphela.
- Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza ngokuzikhethela ngokuphelele.
- Ungazikhethela ukuthatha iqhaza noma ungalithathi iqhaza noma ume ukuthatha iqhaza kulolu cwaningo. Wena angeke uhlawuliswe ngokuthatha lesi senzo.
- Imibono yakho kulohlolombono izovezwa ngokufihlekeleyo. Igama noma yini engakudalula ngeke ivezwe kulocwaningo.
- Inhlolombono izothatha imizuzu engaba wu40
- Loku okuqotshiwe nako konke okumayelana nalohlolombono izogcinwa kwisigodlo ekungeneka kuso ngokuba ube nesivumelwano ukuze ungene kuso okuzokwazi ukungena khona mina kanye nomphathi. Uma sekudlule isikhathi esingengeminyaka ewu 5, ngokomgomo wenyuvesi, kuphele ngayo ngokuyidabula mese iyashiswa.
- Uma uvuma ukuthatha iqhaza ngisacela ucikice isimemezelo esinamathiselwe kulesilandisi (iphepha eliseceleni uzonikezwa lokuthi icikice kulo)
- Uma uvuma (ukwenza inhlolombono) ngicela utshengise (ngokubeka uphawu oluka X) noma uyavuma noma awuvumi ukuba inhlolombono yakho iqoshwe ngalemishini:

	Ngiyavuma	Angivumi
Umshini oqopha okukhulunywe		

Ngiyatholakala eSchool of Educational Psychology, University of KwaZulu –Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. Email: teghele@gmail.com

Cell: 0714616208

Umphathi wami u is Solwazi Dipane Joseph Hlalele utholakalaka eEducational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu –Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Utholakala Tel: 0312603858. Email: HlaleleD@ukzn.ac.za

My co-supervisor is Dokotela Ncamisile Mthiyane utholakala eEducational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu –Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Email: Khanare@ukzn.ac.za

IHumanities ne Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee bona batholaka: Ms Phumulele Ximba, University of Kwazulu-Natal , Research Office, Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za Phone number +27312603587

Ngiyabonga ngegalelo lakho kulolucwaningo.

ISIMEMEZELO

Mina _____
ngiyaqinekisa ukuthi ngiyaqonda okubhalwe kulomshiqilo nokungesimo
salolucwaningo futhi ngiyavuma ukuthatha iqhaza kulolucwaningo.

Ngियाqondda ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuphuma kulona noma inini, uma ngifuna. Mina
ngiyaqonda inhloso yocwaningo. Ngiyavuma ukuthatha iqhaza.

Mina ngiyavuma /angivumi ukuthi inhlolombono iqoshwe (uma kudingakala).

Kucikica Othatha Iqhaza _____ Usuku _____

**APPENDIX E:
CHILD PARTICIPANT'S ASSENT FORM**

**INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION
(Child participant)**



Project Title: *Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments.*

Researcher's name: Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu

Name of participant:

.....

1. Has the researcher explained what she will be doing and wants you to do?

YES

NO

2. Has the researcher explained why she wants you to take part?

YES

NO

3. Do you understand what the research wants to achieve?

YES

NO

4. Do you know if anything good or bad can happen to you during the research?

YES

NO

5. Do you know that your name and what you say will be a secret?

YES

NO

6. Did you ask the researcher any questions about the research?

YES

NO

7. Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES

NO

8. Do you understand that you can refuse to participate if you do not want to take part, and that nothing will happen to you if you refuse?

YES

NO

9. Do you understand that you may pull out of the study at any time if you no longer want to continue?

YES

NO

10. Do you know who to talk to if you are worried or have any other questions to ask?

YES

NO

11. Has anyone forced or put pressure on you to take part in this research?

YES

NO

12. Are you willing to take part in the research?

YES

NO

Signature of Child

Date.....



**APPENDIX E:
CHILD PARTICIPANT'S ASSENT FORM**

**Isivumelwano semvumo ocaciselwe ngaso
(Ingane ethatha iqhaza kucwaningo)**



Isihloko Socwaningo:Ukuhlaziya igalelo lwesifundo iSexuality education ekunqandeni ukukhulelwa kwentsha esafunda isikole

Igama Lomcwaningi: SinikiweSanelisiwe Bhengu

Igama lothatha iqhaza ocwaningweni:

1. Usekutshelile umcwaningi ngokuzoba ukwenza futhi udingeka ukuthi wenzeni??

YEBO

CHA

2. Usekuchazelile yini umcwaningi ukuthi ufunelani uthathe iqhaza?

YEBO

CHA

3. Uyazi ukuthi ucwaningo lufuna ukwenzani?

YEBO

CHA

4. Uyazi yini kukhona okubi okungakwehlela kulolucwaningo?

YEBO

CHA

5. Uyazi ukuthi igama lakho nokushoyo kuzoba imfihlo kwabanye abantu?

YEBO

CHA

6. Kukhona yini imibuzo oke wayibuza umcwaningi mayelana nalolucwaningo?

YEBO

CHA

7. Umcwaningi uyiphendulile yini yonke imibuzo yakho?

YEBO

CHA

8. Uyaqonda ukuthi ungala ukuthatha iqhaza uma ungathandi futhi ngeke kwenzeke lutho kuwena uma unqaba?

YEBO

CHA

9. Uyaqonda ukuthi ungaphuma kucwaningo noma ininuma ungasathandi ukuqhubeka?

YEBO

CHA

10. Uyazi ekumele ukhulume naye uma kukhona okhathazeke ngakho noma oneminye imibuzo ofisa ukuyibuza?

YEBO

CHA

11. Kukhona okuphoqile noma okucindezile ukuthi uthathe iqhaza kulolucwaningo?

YEBO

CHA

12. Uzimisele ukuthatha iqhaza kulolucwango?

YEBO

CHA

Signature yeNgane

Usuku



APPENDIX F
(CONSENT LETTERS TO THE EDUCATOR)

K667 Sakabula Road
Kwamashu
4360

Dear Educator Participant

REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

My name is Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu (208502764). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. The title of my research is: Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The aim of this study is to propose the promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the topic.

Please note that:

- The information you will provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating during the research. You will not be penalised for discontinuing to participate.
- Your views in the interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form.
- The interview will take about 40 minutes.
- The records as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to me and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed of by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration form attached to this letter (a separate sheet will be provided for the signature)
- If you are consenting (willing to be interviewed), please indicate (by ticking in the appropriate space) whether you are or you are not willing to allow the interview to be recorded using the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
--	----------------	--------------------

Audio-equipment		
Observations		

I can be contacted at the School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. Email: teghele@gmail.com

Cell: 0714616208

My supervisor is Professor Dipane Joseph Hlalele who is located at the Department of Educational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Contact details Tel: 0312603858. Email: HlaleleD@ukzn.ac.za

My co-supervisor is Doctor Ncamisile Mthiyane who is located at the Department of Educational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Email: Khanare@ukzn.ac.za

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee's contact details are as follows: Ms Phumulele Ximba, University of Kwazulu-Natal Research Office, Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Yours faithfully

S. S. Bhengu (Ms)

(Researcher)

DECLARATION

I _____ confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in it.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at my time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

APPENDIX G
(CONSENT LETTER TO THE LIBRARIAN)

K667 Sakabula Road
Kwamashu
4360

Dear Librarian

REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

My name is Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu (208502764). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. The title of my research is: Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The aim of this study is to propose the promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the topic.

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	Willing	Not willing
Audio-equipment		
Observations		

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Cell: 0714616208

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Yours faithfully

S. S. Bhengu (Ms)

(Researcher)

DECLARATION

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I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at my time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

APPENDIX H
(CONSENT LETTERS TO THE NGO REPRESENTATIVE)

K667 Sakabula Road
KwaMashu
4360

Dear NGO Participant

REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

My name is Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu (208502764). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. The title of my research is: Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The aim of this study is to propose the promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the topic.

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- The interview will take about 40 minutes.
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- If you are consenting (willing to be interviewed), please indicate (by ticking in the appropriate space) whether you are or you are not willing for the interview to be recorded by using the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio-equipment		
Observations		

I can be contacted at the School of Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. Email: teghele@gmail.com

Cell: 0714616208

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The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee's contact details are as follows: Ms Phumulele Ximba, University of Kwazulu-Natal Research Office, Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za Phone number +27312603587

Yours faithfully

S. S. Bhengu (Ms)

(Researcher)

APPENDIX I
(CONSENT LETTERS TO THE COUNCILLOR)

K667 Sakabula Road
KwaMashu
4360

The Honourable Councillor

REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

My name is Sinikiwe Sanelisiwe Bhengu (208502764). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. The title of my research is: Promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments. The aim of this study is to propose the promotion of reading literacy through supportive home environments. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the topic.

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- The interview will take about 40 minutes.
- The records as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only by me and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration form attached to this letter (a separate sheet will be provided for the signature)
- If you are consenting (willing to be interviewed), please indicate (by ticking in the appropriate space) whether you are or you are not willing for the interview to be recorded by using the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio-equipment		

Observations		
--------------	--	--

I can be contacted at the School of Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. Email: teghele@gmail.com

Cell: 0714616208

My supervisor is Professor Dipane Joseph Hlalele who is located at the Department of Educational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Contact details Tel: 0312603858. Email: HlaleleD@ukzn.ac.za

My co-supervisor is Doctor Ncamisile Mthiyane who is located at the Department of Educational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu -Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Email: Khanare@ukzn.ac.za

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee's contact details are as follows: Ms Phumulele Ximba, University of Kwazulu-Natal Research Office, Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za Phone number +27312603587

Yours faithfully

S. S. Bhengu (Ms)

(Researcher)

DECLARATION

I _____ confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at my time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent/ do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

APPENDIX J
(INVITATION TO A RESEARCHER STUDY MEETING)

K667 Sakabula Road
Kwamashu
4360

INVITATION TO A RESEARCH STUDY MEETING

Dear Co-researcher

As one of the identified co-researchers in the study concerning promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environment, you are invited to a research study meeting. The details are as follows:

Date: 10 August 2018

Venue: To be announced

Time: 10:00

- Agenda:
1. Opening and welcome
 2. Research procedures
 3. Introducing the co-researchers
 4. Briefing on the research project
 5. Development of the research plan
 6. Sharing of responsibilities
 7. Closure

Your participation in this meeting will add great value to this study.

Yours faithfully

.....

S. S. Bhengu
(Main Researcher)

I can be contacted at the School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Pinetown. Email: teghele@gmail.com

Cell: 0714616208

My supervisor is Professor Dipane Joseph Hlalele who is located at the Department of Educational Psychology, CS102 Main Tutorial Building, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, Corner of Marianhill and Richmond Roads, Pinetown. Contact details Tel: 0312603858. Email: HlaleleD@ukzn.ac.za

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The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee's contact details are as follows: Ms Phumulele Ximba, University of Kwazulu-Natal Research Office, Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za Phone number +27312603587

APPENDIX K
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

OBJECTIVE 1: Collecting data on the current situation on promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1.1. What are your thoughts about reading?	
1.2. Is there any programme that your community has that promotes reading?	
1.3. Do you feel there should be more done to promote reading?	
1.4. As a family what initiatives have you taken to promote reading at home?	
1.5. What else would like to tell me about reading?	
1.6. What would it take to ignite passion for reading in our children?	
1.7. How do you feel about the current situation about reading?	
1.8. What would you like to see?	

OBJECTIVE 2. Establishing the need for promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?

2.1. Do you think reading is important?	
2.2. Is there any reading material at home besides textbooks from school?	
2.3. Have you ever purchased a book?	
2.4. What would you say is the attitude of your family about reading?	
2.5. Do feel that as a family or community that we put much emphasis on reading?	
2.6. Do you think that reading has any impact on us as people? Explain.	
2.6. What else would you like to tell me concerning the topic?	

OBJECTIVE 3: Ascertaining the key elements in promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?

3.1. Do you feel you willingly read?	
3.2. What makes people to read?	

3.3. What can be done to make reading enjoyable?	
3.4. Does reading impact on our academic success?	
3.5. What can be done to improve our attitude towards reading?	

OBJECTIVE 4: Establishing the circumstances and conditions under which promoting reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments may be implemented?

4.1. What can be done to keep people interested in reading?	
4.2. What can be done with those that are struggling to read?	
4.3. Do you think as people we make it possible for them to ask for help?	
4.4. What more can we do to support them?	
4.5. What do you think your support (or lack of it) will do to struggling readers' attitude about reading?	

OBJECTIVE 5: Confirming the barriers that impede reading literacy for sustainable learning through supportive home environments?

5.1. What would be some of the factors that would discourage a person from reading?	
5.2. What should we do that would encourage a person to read?	
5.3. Do you think that the way people think about their capabilities affects their willingness to read?	
5.4. Do you think their interpretation of success and failure further affect their willingness to engage themselves in reading?	
5.5. What else do you think prevents people from reading?	

APPENDIX M: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Category Appearance	Clothing, age, gender, physical appearance	Anything that might indicate membership in groups or in populations of interest to the study such as profession, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity.
Verbal behaviour and interactions	Who speaks to whom and for how long; who initiates interaction; languages or dialects spoken; tone of voice	Gender, age, ethnicity, and profession of speakers; dynamics of interaction
Physical behaviour and gestures	(at school, home, library) What people do, who does what, who interacts with whom, who is not interacting?	How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions; what individuals' behaviours indicate about their feelings?
Personal space	Do people have quiet time to be alone and read (at home, school)	What do individuals' preferences concerning personal space suggest about them?
Human traffic	People who enter, leave, and spend time (at, home and library.)	Where people enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); whether they are alone or accompanied; number of people?

People who stand out	Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others.	The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people consult them or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or are well-known by others present.
----------------------	--	---

APPENDIX N: WRITTEN REFLECTION PROMPTS

1. Pre-experience:

- 1.1. What brought you to this particular engagement experience, and why is it a good fit for you?
- 1.2. Beyond building friendships or networking, what do you personally hope to learn through this engagement experience?
- 1.3. How might your past experiences enhance this experience?
- 1.4. What concerns do you have regarding your ability to succeed in this engagement experience?
- 1.5. How might this experience relate to your own experience in reading?

2. During-experience:

- 2.1. What connections, if any, are you seeing between this activity of promoting reading literacy and your own understanding of reading?
- 2.2. Which part of the activities of finding ways to promoting reading literacy is your favourite at this point?
- 2.3. Which part of the activities of finding ways to promoting reading literacy are you finding the most challenging?
- 2.4. How is the whole experience of being actively involved in finding ways to promoting reading literacy impacting on your overall schooling experience?
- 2.5. How have you applied skills or abilities gained from previous experiences to solve problems or explore issues in this group?
- 2.6. What can you implement from what you have gained in this project to maximize your learning?

3. Post-experience:

- 3.1. Describe the experience (what did you hear, see, read, or do?).
- 3.2. How has this engaging experience enabled you to apply or transfer your knowledge and skills to a new setting or circumstance?
- 3.3. In what ways has this engaging experience increased your curiosity or awareness about new content or issues about reading literacy?
- 3.4. How do you see yourself now compared to who you were at the beginning of this engagement?

- 3.5. What did you learn about yourself and/or others as a result of your participation?
- 3.6. How has your participation enriched what you have learned from your educational experiences in the classroom?
- 3.7. What aspect of your participation contributed most to your learning, and why?
- 3.8. What new insights did you develop regarding your reading as a result of this engaging process?
- 3.9. How would you describe this engaged learning experience to another learner/parent in a way that succinctly explains the knowledge and skills you have gained?
- 3.10. Do you feel that you will stay connected with this experience, and why?

APPENDIX M
Turnitin Report

Turnitin Originality Report

- Processed on: 20-May-2019 10:35 SAST
- ID: 1133192258
- Word Count: 101112
- Submitted: 1

Thesis submission PhD by Maneli Bhengu

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[Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal on 2018-11-28](#)

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[Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal on 2017-11-01](#)

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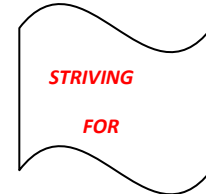
[Jesse J. Helton, Jill C. Schreiber, Janet Wiley, Rachel Schweitzer. "Finding a routine that works: A mixed methods study of foster parents", Child & Family Social Work, 2018](#)

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[Submitted to Laureate Higher Education Group on 2017-02-24](#)

590 Miami Road
Hibberdene
KZN
4220

PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE EDITING SERVICES



Brian Naidoo (BA Hons English; BA Hons TESOL; BEd;
BA- English major; Univ. Dip. In Ed.[English special];UCT Cert.in
Legal and Business Writing; UCT Cert. in Copy-Editing)

**SPECIALISING IN THE LANGUAGE EDITING OF THESES, DISSERTATIONS,
JOURNAL ARTICLES, PROPOSALS, POLICIES AND PUBLICATIONS.**

CERTIFICATE FOR LANGUAGE EDITING OF PHD

SINKIWE SANELISIWE BHENGU

University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate confirms that the above-mentioned student submitted her draft doctoral thesis to me for language-editing, which included the correcting of in-text citations and the list of references. This was duly edited by me and sent back to the student for corrections/revisions. I make no claim as to the accuracy of the research content. The text, as edited by me, is grammatically correct. After my language editing, the author has the option to accept or reject suggestions/changes prior to submission to the supervisor for checking of the content and for plagiarism.

B. Naidoo

DATE: 06/11/2019

Professional
EDITORS
Guild

Brian Naidoo
Associate Member

Membership number: NAI001
Membership year: March 2019 to February 202

0842648401
brian.naidoo25@gmail.com

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REPORT