

**EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATION AND SOCIAL  
INEQUALITIES ON THE EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF TEACHING AND  
LEARNING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
BLOEMFONTEIN, SOUTH AFRICA**

**By**

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**In the College of Humanities**

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## DECLARATION

I, Samson Nkesane Masoka, declare that this dissertation titled, *Exploring the Effects of Environmental Location and Social Inequalities on the Emotional Geographies of Teaching and Learning: A Comparative Analysis of three Primary Schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa*, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or cited have been indicated and acknowledged by means of comprehensive referencing. This research is not a replication of any published qualification nor has it been submitted at any other institution for any qualification.

.....

**S N MASOKA**

.....

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my Almighty God, who made it possible for me to come  
this far.

To my wife Nobengazi and my children Nomasonto, Nomalanga, Nkosazana and  
Mantombazana.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study explored the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in three selected primary schools. Accordingly, a comparative analysis was conducted in three schools located in the Motheo District in the Free State – a province of South Africa.

The research participants included principals, teachers, parents and learners from the selected Free State school communities. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews and observations. Given that the study sought to explore equity, democracy, peace and stability in the education fraternity, the critical paradigm was employed to interpret the data.

The findings cannot be generalized across the entire province or district. The findings come from three South African schools that are different in nature – public peri-urban, public rural and urban private – with special reference to Bloemfontein, South Africa. The findings revealed that Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School's teacher-learner ratios exceeded the Education Department's prescribed norm, and this impacted negatively on teaching and learning. However, the teacher-learner ratio of Groenvlei Urban Private School was below the Education Department's prescribed norm, and learners received the full attention of the teachers. The findings also indicated that Groenvlei Urban Private School's buildings met the basic infrastructure requirements and were much better than those of Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School, which were in a poor condition during the time of this research.

Regarding family structures, the findings revealed that most of the learners attending Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School did not stay with their parents. However, all grade 7 learners from Groenvlei Urban Private School stayed with their parents, who were able to assist them with their day-to-day needs. The research findings further indicated that the learners' attitudes towards learning was mostly affected by the circumstances in which they found themselves, which included walking long distances to school, the school buildings and the school environment, which had little or no effect on the part of Groenvlei Urban Private School. The findings also showed that parental

involvement at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School was poor, while it was good at Groenvlei Urban Private School.

Implications for the school community were tabled, whereby it was suggested that the Education Department should work together with the School Governing Body (SGB), principals, community leaders, church leaders, and all stakeholders to mobilise parental involvement in school activities. This could be done through workshops, church services, awareness campaigns, and community meetings. It was also suggested that a system of grade representatives be introduced at schools to oversee the daily activities of the learners and teachers in and outside the classroom. This would ensure that the school community and the community as a whole worked together for a better level of education in South African schools. On the part of the government, it was suggested that the government worked closely with all schools (including private schools) in order to bridge the gap that existed between them. The government should also reduce class sizes in public peri-urban and public rural schools to enable effective teaching and learning to take place. Moreover, the government should co-operate with non-governmental organisations to assist with maintaining school buildings and undertaking renovations.

Regarding economic inequality, it was confirmed as an obstacle to conducive teaching and learning (the inequality refers to learning resources poverty and unemployment). The government should play a pivotal role in changing the situation in schools. In conclusion, the government has to ensure that the inequalities revealed by this study are addressed in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in South Africa.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSSN	Canadian Safe School Network
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FEE	Foundation for Environmental Education
FSDoE	Free State Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
NSNP	National Schools Nutrition Programme
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PAC	Parent Advisory Committee
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African State Agency
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SGB	School Governing Body
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNISDR United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction

WLAN Wireless Local Area Network

# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study sought to explore the effects of environmental location and social inequalities of the emotional geographies of teaching and learning: a comparative analysis of three primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

This chapter aims to present a background of the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in three Bloemfontein (South Africa) primary schools that differ in nature (public peri-urban, public rural and urban private). Gallo (2020) states that despite the efforts undertaken by the government to provide all public schools with equal funding as part of its “pro-poor” policy, it has not been successful in addressing the continued resource inequalities between different types of schools. Furthermore, Roberts (2016) argues that equality of opportunity in education is more important than school context (the geographic and social characteristics of the school) because it is reliant on the community’s social, economic and health systems. It is said that environmental location and social inequalities reflect the standard of teaching and learning, not only at a certain school, but also in schools in general (Mege, 2014; Memela, 2019; Opoku-Asare & Siaw, 2015; Ravenelle, 2015). In this study, some of the troubling issues in the researched schools are the learners’ attitudes to learning, family structure’s influence on academic performance and parents’ literacy levels, as well as parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling.

Ravenelle (2015) indicates that there are inequality gaps (social inequality, educational inequality) that exist between different types of schools due to their geographical locations. Ravenelle (2015) supports this statement by stating that students in lower income communities receive inferior education compared to their counterparts in wealthier areas because of socio-economic inequalities. However, Arendse (2020) asserts that the post-1994 public education system reproduced the same pattern of inequality, primarily based on race and class. “In terms of quality of education, South

Africa has one of the most unequal school systems in the world.” This is according to Amnesty International (2020, p. 18).

This study adopted a qualitative research approach located within the critical paradigm. Interviews and observation tools were used to examine the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in three different types of primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Data were analysed and the results showed that there were challenges relating to education inequalities (environmental location and social inequalities).

Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. This introductory chapter provides the background to the study, the aims of the research, the research objectives and the research questions, the location of the study, rationale and motivation for the study, significance of the study, and key foci of the study. It concludes with a chapter summary.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The study examined the effects of environmental and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. This was done by analytically comparing the three schools in Bloemfontein, in the Motheo District of the Free State Province. The study sought to compare how environmental location and social inequalities influence teaching and learning experiences in, and educational disparities between, one rural (Jahman Public) and two urban (Kganya and Groenvlei) primary schools.

In the study, the term *social inequalities* is understood to include differences between social status, resources, income and power within, and between, different societies (Crossman, 2020; Koh, 2020). Factors such as poor quality teaching and learning, poor infrastructure, lack of resources, social status and income inequalities are some of the factors that influence educational inequality in South African public schools (Khumalo, 2014; Langa, 2013; Petersen, 2010). Correspondingly, these factors also profoundly influence differences in classroom experiences and outcomes within schools, and

differences when schools are compared. For example, a study conducted by Mathonsi (2012) indicates that there is a fundamental continuity regarding the lack of basic services in rural communities and schools. Mathonsi (2012) further states that the lack of basic services in rural communities affects rural schooling and impacts negatively on access to quality schooling. Spaul (2015) states that high levels of inequality can be seen when comparing student performances concerning the geographical location, language, race, as well as their socio-economic status. A study by Hlalele (2012) likewise showed how inequalities, which existed between better-resourced urban communities and neglected rural areas, continued to impact on the provision of, and access to, education in the respective areas.

Nkambule et al. (2011, p. 342) state, "Education in rural areas continues to face a unique set of challenges due to, among other factors, the diverse environmental location of the schools, diverse learner's backgrounds and diverse learning styles". Education in rural areas must not operate in isolation; hence, it is important to bridge the gap that exists between rural and urban schools for the betterment of education in South Africa.

Moreover, the phenomenon of education inequalities between rural and urban areas has caused a negative perception, whereby societies think urban schooling is better than rural schooling (Opoku-Asare & Siaw, 2015). People living in marginalised contexts, such as rural, peri-urban and township contexts, continue to be denied quality education (Moletsane, 2012). Khuluse (2017, p. 21) posits, "Education is not equally accessible for everyone but instead it is determined by one's level of wealth and the education of high quality is for those who can afford it. Therefore, children from wealthy families receive better education while the poor receive second grade education." The diverse socio-economic status between rural and urban communities makes it difficult for schools to operate equally and effectively. Rowell et al. (2015) refer to persistent inequalities in education expectations, associated with the relationship between socio-economic statuses.

In line with such works, the study sought to explore the socio-economic differences that exist in the rural and urban regions of Bloemfontein, South Africa, and how these affect school communities within the respective areas. As previously indicated, the socio-

educational inequalities that exist within and between three Bloemfontein (one public peri-urban, one public rural, and one urban private) primary schools were also explored.

A literature review on the subject however suggests that in each environmental context not much has been done to investigate, from the communities' perspectives, how environmental location, social status and social identity jointly affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in their schools (Miller & Donlan, 2014). The study therefore went beyond merely identifying what inequalities exist in and between schools and their impact on teaching and learning. It sought to consider the communities' unique individual and collective shared experiences of how location, social status, and social identity impact on the schooling experience.

### **1.3 AIMS/OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study sought to unpack the environmental and social factors that give rise to educational inequalities between one public peri-urban school, one public rural school and one urban private school; to explore how such inequalities affect teaching and learning experiences within these contexts; and, to seek strategies to create a harmonious scholastic environment for teaching and learning in South African schools.

Hence, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To determine which environmental and social factors contribute to educational disparities in, and between, three (a public peri-urban, a public rural and an urban private school) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.
2. To establish how economic inequalities affect teaching and learning in three different schooling environments.
3. To explore the ways in which environmental and social factors influence *the emotional geographies of* teaching and learning within these schools.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The fundamental questions that this study seeks to explore are the following:

1. What environmental and social factors contribute to the educational disparities in, and between, three (public peri-urban, public rural and urban private) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa?
2. How do economic inequalities affect teaching and learning in three different schooling environments?
3. How do environmental and social factors influence *the emotional geographies of* teaching and learning within these schools?

## 1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The educational inequality legacy created by the previous apartheid government has existed beyond the historic regime change of 1994 (Arendse, 2020). “The strong legacy of apartheid and the consequent correlation between education and wealth have meant that, generally speaking, poorer South African students perform worse academically” (Spaull, 2013, p. 436). Spaull (2015) further states that due to South Africa’s two-fold schooling systems, historically disadvantaged schools remain dysfunctional and unable to produce quality student learning, while historically advantaged schools remain functional and top class. However, Liwane (2017) contends that after 20 years of democracy, the South African system of education remains troubled with enormous challenges in many township and rural schools. The challenges include poor quality of teaching and learning and a lack of resources. Similarly, in a study conducted by Janak (2019), it was established that some schools in South Africa have excellent infrastructure, while most of them (especially disadvantaged schools) lack basic services such as water and sanitation.

The core business of schools is to provide quality education for all people regardless of the type of schools they attend (Liwane, 2017). Much of the research conducted into the South African education system confirms that a smaller, better-performing system caters for wealthy South African learners, while a much larger, less efficient system,

accommodates the majority of learners who come from poor backgrounds (Amnesty International, 2020; Arendse, 2020; Moses et al., 2017; Spaull, 2013). The history of educational inequality in South Africa began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of rural, district schools providing primary education and some of the elite private schools that remain to this day (Amnesty International, 2020). The categorisation of schools (public, rural, private) within South Africa's school education system seems to have created inequalities in terms of, amongst others, lack of infrastructure and poor performance (Prammoney, 2018).

Only a few studies have been conducted that relate to environmental location and social inequality's impact on teaching and learning in different types of schools within the South African context. Amnesty International (2020) states that two schools' worlds exist within the South African schooling systems, which has led to inequality gaps in schools. Very few studies, as recorded within the South African context over the last two decades, have focused on the implications of the school's environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. This study will endeavour to initiate such discourses within the current school education systems, with the purpose of exploring how the environmental location and social inequalities affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in a comparative analysis of three (one rural and two urban) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

## **1.6 LOCATION OF THE STUDY**

The focus area for this study is on the Motheo District in Bloemfontein. Motheo is located in the Free State Province of South Africa. From the Motheo District, three primary schools were selected.

Below is an outline of the gender, racial demographics, environmental location and economic status of each school on which this study will focus. Pseudonyms are used to refer to the schools.

### **1.6.1 Kganya Public Peri-Urban School**

Kganya Public Peri-Urban School is located in the township of Mangaung in the city of Bloemfontein. It is located approximately eight kilometres away from the Central Business District (CBD). The children who attend the School all come from the same township. The grade 7 learners comprised 60 boys and 58 girls, totalling 118 grade 7 learners. All the learners were Africans. The School is dependent on the budget allocation from the Department of Education. The parents do not pay school fees, as it is a so-called “no-fee” school.

### **1.6.2 Jahman Public Rural School**

Jahman Public Rural School is situated outside the city of Bloemfontein. It is located approximately 15 kilometres from the CBD. At the time of research, the children who attended the School were mostly from neighbouring farms. The grade 7 learners consisted of 31 boys and 27 girls (58 learners). All the learners were Africans. In terms of the economic status, the School is dependent on the budget allocated by the Department of Education, as it is a “no-fee” school.

### **1.6.3 Groenvlei Urban Private School**

Groenvlei consists of smallholdings, located outside the city of Bloemfontein (approximately five kilometres from the CBD). At the time of this research, the children who attended there came from different towns and cities in South Africa, as well as from outside South Africa’s borders. The School had 18 boys and 13 girls in grade 7; thus, a total of 31 learners. All the grade 7 learners were Africans. It is one of the most expensive schools in the Free State Province. The school fees ranged from R2 000 to R3 900 (Grade R to Grade 12) per month. Its fees increase by 7% per annum.

## **1.7 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

The orientation and motivation of the study emanated from the researcher's personal experiences and self-reflections, having worked as a principal of a public rural school where most of the learners came from poor backgrounds. The researcher observed the school's environmental location and the social inequalities that occurred between learners. These environmental and social inequalities included the following:

- Learners with and without school uniforms,
- Learners walking long distances, while some used transport, and
- Learners who received money or a lunch box to take to school, while some had nothing to eat when they came to school.

The researcher further observed that some of these learners did not feel accepted in their peer groups because of the social inequalities that existed between the different communities. The factors mentioned above were some that were found to have an effect on teaching and learning in the school community where the researcher was a principal.

The public rural school where the researcher was employed as a manager was later adopted by a peri-urban school, which assisted the school with the teaching and learning resources. It also assisted with the transportation of learners when they had to attend extramural activities, which were far from the school. The researcher then realised how well equipped the peri-urban school was in terms of resources. The researcher also had an opportunity to visit different types of schools with equal resources at a later stage when he was appointed at the University of the Free State as the recruiting officer for prospective undergraduate students and later for graduate students. This background motivated the researcher to conduct research on the environmental geographies of teaching and learning by comparing three different types of schools in Bloemfontein, in the Free State Province.

The relationships that the researcher built in the selected schools paved the way for him to conduct this study. Access to these schools enabled the researcher to gather information from participants and to complete his research. The researcher believes that the timing for this study was appropriate due to his experience as a principal of a public

rural school and as a recruitment officer of the University of the Free State. It is believed that this study could contribute to the eradication of educational inequalities in the South African school context.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is significant in different ways. It may offer an in-depth understanding of how environmental and social inequalities between rural and urban primary schools affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning, with special reference to three primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Furthermore, it is important because it will shed light on the issues that are researched and offer direct evidence of inequalities that take place in three different schooling environments (public, rural, private). The study will provide insights for the Department of Education and policy makers on the consequences of educational inequalities caused by different schooling environments and how such inequalities affect learner performance. The study is further significant as it may contribute to the body of knowledge on how environmental location, social inequalities and emotional geographies influence teaching and learning at schools and how all of these interact within the educational setting. Lastly, the study will highlight challenges and provide positive suggestions on how disparities within and between different schooling environments may be eradicated.

## **1.9 KEY FOCI OF THE STUDY**

### **1.9.1 Emotional Geographies of Teaching and Learning**

The study focusses specifically on education inequalities between three selected (one public peri-urban, one public rural and one urban private) primary schools in Bloemfontein, as well as between schools within each environmental region respectively. Hence the title: Exploring the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning: a comparative analysis of three primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

The emotional geographies of teaching and learning affect the way learners participate in classrooms, the way they learn, the way teachers prepare their lessons and teach, and much more. Hargreaves (2000) states that teachers' emotions are influenced by the changing conditions of their work and, therefore, affect their interactions with students, parents and the community at large. The effects could be negative because of the community's emotional outlook. According to Knudson (2016), teacher quality is linked to emotional understanding, whereby successful teachers engage in relationship building, which allows effective teaching and learning to take place, while it often does not happen in regards to ineffective teachers. Hargreaves (2001) emphasises the fact that teaching and learning must not only be viewed in the context of knowledge, cognition and skills, but also in the context of emotional practices. Hargreaves (2001) further points out that teaching as an emotional practice activates and expresses teachers' feelings and their actions towards those they influence. They can enthuse or bore their students, be approachable or unfriendly with parents, as well as trust or be suspicious of their colleagues.

The environmental or geographic location of schools plays a very important role in effective teaching and learning; hence, a comparative analysis between rural and urban schools. According to Thu Le and Booth (2014), the emotional geographies of teaching and learning refer to the major contributory factors that affect teaching and learning in schools. The emotional geographies shape the children's knowledge, perceptions and experiences in places and spaces (Fegter & Mock, 2019). Moreover, the emotional geographies of teaching and learning are associated with the teaching practices perceived to manipulate emotions and reproduce certain social orders that can affect student experiences (Miller & Donlan, 2014). Furthermore, it relates to the relationship between teachers' emotions and aspects of classroom life, such as the learning environment, students' emotions, student-teacher relationships, teachers' abilities to manage uncertainty and change, and student engagement.

This examination of environmental location and social inequalities was done by analytically comparing Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, Jahman Public Rural School, and Groenvlei Urban Private School. In order to ensure effective teaching and learning,

factors such as educational inequality, educational transformation and social inequality must be taken into account.

### **1.9.2 Educational Inequality**

According to Moses et al. (2017, p. 30), “Early school and home environment inequalities persist into the labour market where poor employment and wage prospects for the poor deterministically could assign future generations to the same fate as their predecessors”. Moses et al. (2017) further state that this shows that inequalities occur because of people’s positions (rich and poor). Morlino (2020) views individuals’ positions compared to other citizens’ positions as a fundamental principle in analysing inequality. Equality and freedom as constitutive principles – and as far as the community is concerned – condition one another reciprocally. Equality is a conditional freedom in human relations. This simply means that if we do not treat one another as equals, we exclude freedom from the relationship. Freedom also conditions equality. As Waghid (2002, p. 1) states, “[a]n attempt to achieve freedom without equality, or to achieve equality without freedom, [is] therefore self-defeating”.

Children in rural and urban schools are profoundly affected by the plight of their parents and the circumstances they find themselves in, which is not of their own choice. Such inequality has been brought about by politics to marginalise a certain group of people from another. To this end, Parker et al. (2016, p. 1) recognises the following:

*[P]ersistent inequalities in educational expectations across societies are a growing concern. Recent research has explored the extent to which inequalities in education are due to primary effects (i.e., achievement differentials) versus secondary effects (i.e. choice behaviours not of achievement). Educational inequality is the difference in the learning results, or efficacy, experienced by students coming from different groups.*

The South African education system, pre-1994, was well known for its racially segregated institutions and its unequal provision. The apartheid education systems openly marginalised African people. Le Roux (2000) states that even though the process of transformation is legitimate of *inter alia* equality and equity, difficulties have been

encountered to reach the goal of a non-racial, equitable and democratic education dispensation. Learners are still not taught in an equal fashion in rural and urban primary schools. Most qualified teachers are found in predominantly urban schools, while there are still more unqualified and under-qualified teachers in rural schools. The democratic government, given the history and legacy of apartheid, has to pay critical attention to the inequalities that exist between rural and urban schools, which were caused by the apartheid government.

### **1.9.3 Educational Transformation**

The change and transformation from the apartheid era to democratic rule in South Africa had an impact on society in general. Mamabolo (2002) stated that the transformation and reconstruction of schooling received considerable attention in an attempt to redress the inequalities or injustices, which occurred in the apartheid education system. Higgs and Higgs (2001) indicated that the transformation had far-reaching implications for educational thought and practice and especially for educational discourse and the role that it could play regarding the laying of the foundations of a critical society. However, South African society faces many challenges, for example unemployment, illiteracy and poverty, which affect learners' academic achievements. These social domains make it difficult for learners to cope with their studies. Learners do not come from the same backgrounds and environments; hence, this investigation is based on different schools (public rural, public peri-urban and urban private), different environmental locations or environments, different numbers of teachers, and different school buildings, among other factors.

### **1.9.4 Social Inequality**

*Some researchers claim, on the one hand, that educational inequality is due to social class and family background. Others argue that inadequately managed schools bear most of the responsibility for low student achievement (Russel Sage Foundation, 2000: Online).*

Neighbourhoods, families, labour markets and the environment around a school are some of the variables that affect the school's outcomes. Socio-economic status, family structure, school type, teacher profile, teaching and learning resources, and the climate and/or environment at the school are some of the main variables in this study. These social domains have an effect on what and how much children learn. Moreover, children growing up in low-income neighbourhoods are likely to experience repeated stress from violence and crime that may inhibit their cognitive development.

According to Delpont and Mangwaya (2008), research has shown that learners' academic achievements are affected by numerous factors, including the intrinsic motivation of the learner, the learner's attitude to learning, the learner's cognitive abilities, the socio-economic background of the learner, the family structure, parents' literacy levels and their involvement in the learner's schooling, the school type, the teacher profile, the teaching and learning resources available, the climate at the school, how the school networks with other institutions in society, as well as the underpinning philosophy, which guides the curriculum. Many scholars (Barrs, 2005; Blatchford, 2005; Hubbard, 2005; Marks, 2006; King et al., 2005; Klem & Connel, 2004; Leigh & Mead, 2005; Livaditis et al., 2003) echo this view in their findings. The present study intends to investigate different types of schools: public rural, public peri-urban, and urban private. It intends to compare the inequalities and to formulate strategies that will help bridge the gap that currently exists in order to create a stable environment for learners to be able to perform well in terms of their scholastic achievements, to curb their stress levels, and to prohibit violence and crime that inhibit their cognitive development.

## **1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter offered an orientation of the study, and provided background to the research problem. It also provided the problem statement, rationale and motivation of the study, significance of the study and key foci of the study.

The next chapter will mainly focus on the literature review of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This previous chapter provided the introduction and background to the study. The chapter covered aspects such as aims of the research, the research objectives and the research questions, the location of the study, and the outline of the study. It further provided the rationale and motivation for the study, significance of the study, and it concluded with a chapter summary.

This chapter will offer a review of the literature on the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in three different types of primary schools – a public peri-urban, a public rural, and an urban private school. The literature review will concentrate on the environmental and social factors' impact on teaching and learning in different schooling environments. The literature review will further investigate how the physical environment and location affect teaching and learning at schools. Moreover, the literature review will focus on social and economic inequality in rural-urban schooling. Lastly, it will offer a perspective on the South African context in terms of the rural, public and private school expenditure gap in education.

#### **2.2 STRUCTURE OF THE REVIEW**

Books, journals and local and international scholars will be reviewed to define or describe how environmental and social inequalities influence teaching and learning in schools; then, it will proceed with a discussion on how environmental and social factors influence the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. Thereafter, it will highlight the effects of the physical environment and location on teaching and learning. Moreover, the social and economic inequalities between rural and urban schooling will be reviewed as the literature demonstrates a rural, public and private expenditure gap in education.

Furthermore, the historical emergence of social inequality in schools will be explored. Finally, the effects of the emotional geographies of teaching and learning at schools will be highlighted.

### **2.3 HOW DO ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCE THE EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

This section deals with the environmental and social factors that influence the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. The research question that this addresses is: How do environmental and social factors influence the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within the schools?

Research conducted by Delpont and Mangwaya (2008) has shown that learners' academic achievements are affected by numerous factors. These factors include the following:

- intrinsic motivation of the learners,
- the learners' attitude to learning,
- the learners' cognitive abilities,
- the socio-economic background of the learners,
- the family structure,
- parents' literacy levels and their involvement in learners' schooling,
- the school type,
- the teacher profile, and
- the teaching and learning resources available.

Considering that this study focuses specifically on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning, of these, the factors selected for this study and which are discussed in detail below are:

- learners' attitudes to learning,
- family structure, and
- parents' literacy levels and their involvement in their children's schooling.

### **2.3.1 Learners' attitudes to learning**

Learners' attitudes can change and they can be motivated towards school and learning (Siraj & Mayo, 2014). However, learning motivation cannot take place at schools where teachers disregard educational efforts for quality teaching and learning due to circumstances beyond their control (Topala, 2014). It is, therefore, important to analyse educational circumstances within dominant social relations and the current system of political economy (Chapter 3).

According to Topala (2014), attitudes towards learning that are considered favourable become objective in statements indicating that learning is essential of itself. When you are learning, you feel you are doing something important; thus, when you want to learn something, you become involved. "Favourable attitudes towards learning and towards oneself lead to an increased level of engagement in the learning process, associated with a deep approach to it" (Topala, 2014, p. 229). On the other hand, research conducted by Candeias et al. (2013) revealed that pupils with lower performance and a higher rate of school failure have negative attitudes towards school. The authors (2013) further stated that pupils' feelings about school and their reaction to school life could change if the school provided interesting activities and if the school allowed pupils and their families to participate in school decisions.

Additionally, from the reviewed literature for the study, it became apparent that there are determinant factors of students' attitudes towards learning. The determinant factors, according to Anghelache (2013) include involvement, purpose and achievement. Anghelache (2013) further highlighted that academic performance is determined by classroom factors, such as size, space and the relationships in the classroom. According to Anghelache (2013), when factors such as classroom size, space and student-classroom relationship are taken into consideration, student performance changes significantly.

The contents of attitudes, such as learning, competence, motivation, a content variable like space or the kind of environment (rural/urban), and the socio-economic level and parents' instruction level, which were revealed by existing studies, as indicated by Candeias et al. (2013), seem to have been ignored by education authorities.

### **2.3.1.1 *Involvement of Learners in the Classroom***

Regarding involvement as one of the determinant factors of student attitudes, a study conducted by OECD (2004) found that engagement in the class and in real-life could be regarded as the driving force of learning. It affects students' quality of life during their adolescence and labour market opportunities. Regarding achievements, it is difficult or impossible to achieve quality education or a high degree of academic achievement if the atmosphere is not conducive for effective schooling (Masitsa et al., 2004). Accordingly, research conducted by Drajea (2015) concluded that the practical involvement of parents contributes positively and directly to children's achievement. It was also established that components such as beliefs, attitudes and values were indirectly influenced by parents' education on their families, including the child. It is of critical importance for the children to develop positive attitudes towards learning, since education is regarded as one of the most crucial constitutional rights that promotes economic and social well-being (Chürr, 2015). Even though learners go to schools to be taught (Chapter 3), it does not imply that they must be involved in school activities. However, involvement will help them to do well in their studies.

### **2.3.1.2 *Learners' purpose to learn***

In research conducted by Anghelache (2013), purpose relates to improving the efficiency of the learning process. Anghelache (2013) added that purpose is one of the strongest factors correlated with the ways of thinking about learning. If students do not have a purpose to learn or are unwilling to learn, they will not get involved in school activities. According to Dağgöl (2013), research has shown that unwilling students hesitate to get involved in classroom lessons.

### **2.3.1.3 *Learners' academic achievement***

Factors that contribute to academic achievement include regular study, self-motivation and punctuality. Drajea (2015) is of the view that it is through a conducive and literate

environment that learners' academic achievement could be realised, which is lacking in disadvantaged schools. Learners cannot do well academically if variables, such as social class, family background, neighbourhoods, families and labour markets, as well as the environment of schools, are not attended to by those involved in education. In research conducted by Abaidoo (2018) it was concluded that students' personality traits, goals, self-motivation, studying and punctuality are factors contributing to academic achievement. This is supported by research conducted by Nako (2015) whose study investigated how 214 students' academic engagement and achievements, including performance, were affected by school-based socio-emotional experiences.

### **2.3.2 Family structure's influence on academic performance**

Delport and Mangwaya (2008) state that several studies have been conducted to demonstrate the effects of certain factors, including family income and parental involvement, on a learner's school achievement. These factors, including family structure, according to Delport and Mangwaya (2008), were found to have an effect, especially at remote rural schools where learners' academic achievement tends to be low compared to those who attend urban schools. The education authorities (according to the Critical Theory) need to formulate an alternative model or strategy that will help to eradicate or overcome the socio-educational inequalities that exist between institutions of schooling.

There are different types of family structures such as nuclear, extended and grandparent families. Single parents and stepfamilies are common family structures in Africa. According to research conducted by Nato (2016) on the analysis of family structure's influence on the academic performance of students in Kenya, any type of family structure (including nuclear, extended, grandparent or child-headed) contributes to a student's academic performance. The findings of his study revealed that the nuclear family attributed to good performance more than other family structures because of its influence on family background, which offered economic support, family support, parental motivation and a stable home environment (Nato, 2016).

In their research conducted among larger and smaller families, Delport and Mangwaya (2008) found that learners who come from stable and small families, whose parents are highly qualified, encourage their children to obtain qualifications and, as a result, they perform well. Likewise, Sayed and Ahmed (2015) indicate that equity and equality are central to the education quality agenda; therefore, they need to be exercised in all schools, regardless of a learners' parental status. Social justice emphasises that people must be treated equally, regardless of their status. It is therefore important that differential treatment be considered to achieve fairness and equal outcomes. Families differ regarding various factors, such as socio-economic status, size, level of education, cultural background and parental involvement in academic and extra-curriculum activities, which affect students' academic performance. Olaitan's (2017) findings concur with Nato's (2016), in that the children in a two-parent family (nuclear family) perform better than other family structures, because they enjoy more potential support financially, socially and otherwise from both parents, as their parents have better access to employment, income and savings than single parents do.

### **2.3.3 Parents' literacy levels and their involvement in their children's schooling**

Parents' literacy levels and involvement are social factors that affect children's schooling.

#### **2.3.3.1 *Parents' literacy levels***

Studies have revealed that pupils' home background has a considerable influence on how well they perform in school. This implies that there should be interventions by stakeholders in the pattern of reforms in the education system.

Ardila et al. (2005) conducted a study in Columbia and Mexico about the influence of parents' educational level on the development of executive functions. The aim of the study was to analyse the relation of parents' educational level and the type of school a child attended (private or public school) to the child's executive functioning test performance. Executive functions refer to behaviours such as problem-solving, planning, inhibiting

responses, strategy development with implementation, and working memory. More than 600 participants took part in the research, aged between five and 14 years. It indicated that most of the children's test scores, especially verbal test scores, correlated with the parents' educational level. Their results suggest that the differences in the test scores between public and private school children are dependent on conditions existing outside of schools, of which one is the parents' literacy levels.

“A body of studies has identified parents as probably the most single influential factor in the life of their children, including concerns about how well their children achieve in schools” (Drajea, 2015, p. 34). In this regard, Drajea (2015) conducted a study in Moyo District (Uganda) on the influence of parental education and literacy skill levels on children's achievement in primary school from across three sites, namely, urban, semi-rural and rural. The study revealed that pupils' home background has a considerable influence on how well a child performs in school. However, the research conducted in Zimbabwe by Pufall et al. (2016) in twelve (four subsistence farming areas; four large-scale commercial estates; two small towns; and two roadside settlements) geographical distinct sites revealed that children of parents with higher levels of education led to positive outcomes. The study concurs with Drajea's (2015), because it also reveals that children of more educated parents or families are consistently more likely to become educated themselves. That is the result of the influence of parental education and literacy skill levels. Another social factor, which has an impact on a student's academic achievement, is parental involvement.

### **2.3.3.2 Parental involvement**

There are different types of parental involvement:

- Communication
- Parenting
- Volunteering/supporting
- Learning at home

- Decision making
- Collaboration (collaborating with the community)

### **a) Communication**

Drajea (2015) is of the view that parental involvement, defined in terms of parents' aspirations for their children and their communication with their children about school activities, yields good results in terms of performance. "Parents and community members play an important role in their children's education and a strong partnership between parents and schools enriches the learning experience" (Queensland Government, 2013, p. 1). However, Manilal (2014), whose research concerned comparing parental involvement in education between privileged and unprivileged schools, found that parental involvement in South Africa is a problem, and the government's intervention is needed in this regard. This can be seen in parents' poor attendance of meetings, poor matric results, and the lack of interest in learners' schoolwork and homework.

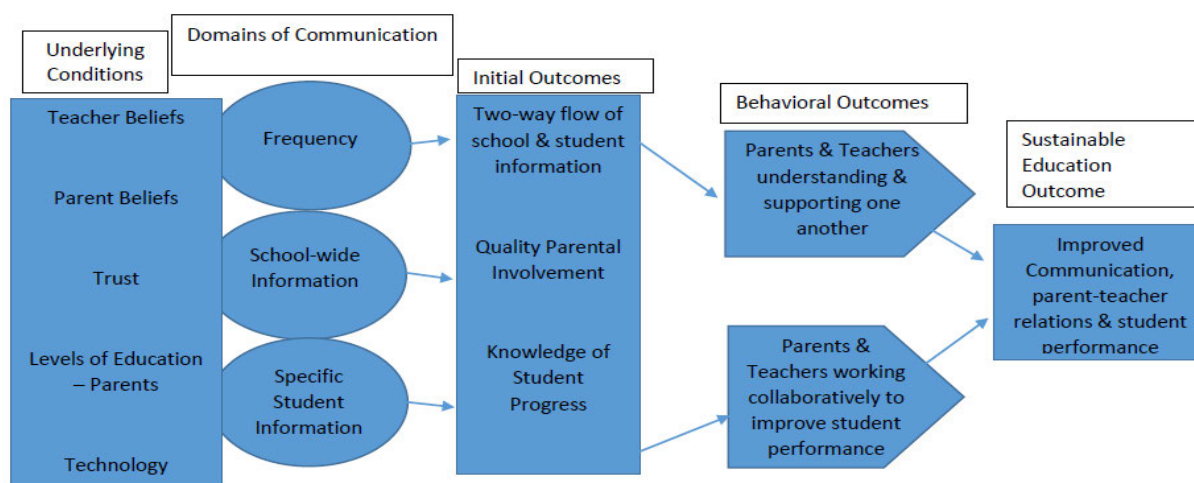
Some schools meet with parents occasionally when there is a need; namely, when money is required or when there are problems at school. An example is the research conducted by Ozmen et al. (2016) with 514 teachers to investigate the effectiveness of communication between teachers and parents, in terms of student achievement and attendance. The results showed that given the physical distance between home and school, the school decided to meet parents only when money was (occasionally) required. This view is supported by research conducted by Lipscomb (2015) in two schools in Virginia on parents and teachers' perceptions of effective communication. The findings of Lipscomb's study revealed that both teachers and parents perceived that effective communication occurred occasionally. The teachers and parents were of the view that teachers occasionally planned meetings and that parents occasionally attended planned meetings.

According to Ozmen et al. (2016), there should be training by education authorities for school administrators, teachers and families on communicating effectively. However, in South Africa this does not always happen. Some schools also lack resources, particularly

rural and public schools, which have been marginalised and overlooked since the apartheid era. The inheritance of inequalities by the current government from the previous government continues unabated.

The reviewed literature also indicates that communication differs in public, private and rural schools in South Africa. Haines (2012) avers that poor telecommunication networks in rural areas and the lack of resources negatively affect the level of communication between parents and schools. However, Haines (2012) suggests that an effective way to remedy the previously mentioned could be informal parent-educator gatherings or one-on-one parent and teacher get-togethers. Similarly, research conducted by Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) concluded that since rural areas are generally underdeveloped, there is a lack of physical resources, basic infrastructure such as water, roads, transport and electricity, as well as information and communication technology. This leads to a lack of resources in some schools, particularly in rural and public schools.

According to research conducted by Hoffman et al. (2015), communication in American society is more digitally focussed and many schools use digital technology for school-home communications. Many schools and teachers disseminate information to students' parents using e-mails, Twitter, Facebook, text messages and other applications like Edmodo or Class Dojo across the whole country. Figure 2.1 below indicates the effective communication pathway for teachers and children in schools:



**Figure 2.1: Effective communication pathway for teachers and parents in schools (Source: Lipscomb, 2015)**

The figure above shows the effective communication pathway in schools. The pathways are very important for communication between teachers and parents. The underlying conditions are important for the teachers and the parents of a school. They must work hand-in-hand to improve the quality of teaching and learning through communication channels at schools. Schools and parents have to use the domains of communication for effective communication to occur. Initial outcomes will be attained if the domains of communication are used correctly. Behavioural outcomes will improve communication between parents and teachers and result in improved student performance.

Moreover, Haines's (2012) research findings on communication revealed that a lack of communication between parents and schools resulted in little or no parental support, which leads to learners' poor performance. According to Lipscomb (2015), cultural and social factors could challenge communicative measures, especially in disadvantaged communities where children are left behind. According to Paulo Freire (Chapter 3), the emancipation of people is critically important in order to eradicate the imbalances between schools.

### **2.3.3.3 *Involvement through Parenting***

According to Morin (2019), children who have authoritative parents are most likely to become responsible adults who feel comfortable expressing their opinions. Morin (2019) states that an authoritative parenting style is one of the three types of parenting styles. The other two are permissive and uninvolved. Authoritative parenting rules include putting a lot of effort in creating and maintaining a good relationship with a child, clarifying rules as a parent, as well as enforcing them and giving consequences if need be, and taking the feelings of a child into consideration. In Rezai and Rahimi's (2013) research on comparing the effects of parenting style on self-concept (psychological health and quality with special focus on authoritative, permissive and authoritarian parents), a parenting style questionnaire was administered to 180 parents of high school students in Tehran (Iran). It was found that children raised in an authoritative parenting style had better self-esteem than children raised through in an authoritarian and permissive parenting style.

When children's upbringing differs in many ways, they will respond differently to certain matters (in this case in the involvement in school matters). Moreover, learners should be encouraged to engage in practical action to solve the problems of their daily lives (Chapter 3).

#### **2.3.3.4 *Involvement through Volunteering***

Van den Berg and Van Noort (2011) view empowerment as the acquisition of skills that leads to the opportunity for people to play an active and participating role in their own environment. Since poor children are affected by their parents' socio-economic status, it suggests that South Africa's education system is failing to create mechanisms that would enable the school system to play a role in overcoming challenges like income inequality (Van der Berg et al., 2011).

Watson (2015: Online) recognises that "a growing body of evidence suggests that people who give their time to others might also be rewarded with better physical health". Studies have shown that volunteering helps people to feel socially connected and improves their mental health (ibid). However, volunteering has positive implications that go beyond mental health. Volunteering in schools is designed to promote and maintain a good and supportive relationship between students, teachers, and parents. Brown (2015) suggests that volunteers could be instrumental in helping millions of children to read proficiently. Public schools have long relied on volunteers to manage bake sales and to chaperone field trips (ibid.). Maluleke (2014), whose research was conducted in Limpopo Province, explored parental involvement. In the study, 12 people (three principals, four educators and five parents) were interviewed. From the findings, it was clear that one of the barriers that inhibit some parents from involvement and volunteering was their economic status. Maluleke (2014, p. 74) quoted one of the principals saying: "Most of the parents are too poor to provide their children's learning supportive material. That is why they dare not set foot on the school yard." Thus, it would appear that the economic status of the parents hinders them for volunteering to be involved in their children's education (Maluleke, 2014).

Van den Berg and Van Noort (2011) highlight the fact that parents' low socio-economic status, limited educational background, and negative school experiences influence parental involvement negatively. The Child Trends Data Bank (2013) also conducted research on parental involvement in Washington DC. The Child Trends Data Bank (2013, p. 5) established the following: "Parents of students living in a household with income above the poverty level are more likely to be involved in school activities than parents of children living in a household at or below the poverty line".

Another factor to take into consideration is that it could be difficult to involve parents when they do not have the required knowledge, skills and means. The reason is that they do not have the knowledge or skills to do activities like repairing or assist with activities like coaching in different sport, for example soccer and cricket. Their involvement could also simply be through their presence to show support.

If parents feel that they lack the skills or knowledge to become involved, they distance themselves from school activities. Schools must empower their communities, in order for them to be able to participate in the school's affairs and activities. Van den Berg and Van Noort (2011) view empowerment as the acquisition of skills that leads to the opportunity for people to play an active and participating role in their own environment.

### **2.3.3.5 *Involvement in Homework***

According to the Child Trends Data Bank (2013, p. 2), "Involvement allows parents to monitor school and classroom activities, and to coordinate their efforts with teachers to encourage acceptable classroom behaviour and ensure that the child completes their schoolwork". However, very little has been done by the government to deal with educational inequality issues related to literacy skills, particularly for parents who come from poor communities, to be able to monitor their children's schoolwork (Mojapelo, 2018). Parents who come from poor communities are affected by different variables that occur in their daily lives.

Moreover, parents play a critical role in providing learning opportunities at home and in linking what children learn at school with what happens elsewhere (Emerson et al., 2012). It is of the utmost importance for parents to help their children with homework.

According to Drajea (2015), parents with adequate education and skills seek employment in urban areas, while those with low levels of education and those with no skills often remain in rural areas where public infrastructure is poor. This indicates that most parents with low levels of education are found in rural areas where rural schools are situated. This justifies the fact that there is inequality between rural and urban schools regarding learning at home (Van den Berg & Van Noort, 2011).

In research conducted by Van den Berg and Van Noort (2011) on parental involvement and learning at home, it was found that some parents reported that they helped their children with their homework or that they asked relatives or neighbours to help. The Child Trends Data Bank (2013, p. 2) states, "Involvement allows parents to monitor school and classroom activities and to coordinate their efforts with teachers to encourage acceptable classroom behaviour and ensure that the child completes schoolwork".

#### **2.3.3.6 *Involvement in decision-making***

Reasons for the lack of involvement in decision-making were highlighted as a lack of transport and illiteracy. Albertson (2012) argues that most schools do not have effective strategies to attract parents and involve them in the decision-making process because they see parents as people who serve the school, rather than as partners.

Concerning decision-making, the literature reviewed for the current study suggested that the decision-making process should not only be done by the teachers. Parents should also be allowed to participate in the decision-making process at school at the highest level. Schools have a SGB that looks after the affairs of the school. There are also parent-teacher associations and other committees and advisory groups, which take part in the activities of these committees to ensure the smooth running of the school. Dladla (2013) states that SGBs are endowed with the decision-making authority, to determine the policies and rules by which schools are organised and controlled. Parent-teacher

associations are bridges between schools and parents (Committee on Home-School Cooperation, 2012). They work hand-in-glove with the school. The SGBs of different schools do however differ in rural, public and private schools because the number of SGB members determines the number of learners at a school. This causes inequalities, as there are fewer SGB members in rural schools than in public and private schools.

Haines (2012) research findings on decision-making indicated that parents' participation in decision making provides them with opportunities to get to know the educators and support each other in various educational endeavours. Bringing parents into the decision-making process for school planning is another general strategy for promoting parental engagement in the school (Thompson et al., 2014). This will allow them to take ownership of the school and it involves them actively in school matters. In South African schools, parents voice their concerns through SGBs. Efforts to organise and empower parents, as decision-makers should be strengthened to ensure that they contribute fully to the improvement of schools and communities. Furthermore, it could be argued that decision-making by parents in urban, rural and public schools differ from one type of school to another.

According to a study conducted on a diverse set of strategies to involve parents in decision-making by the Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Centre (2014) among urban schools, it was found that rural school parents are not fully involved in decision-making, governance and advocacy. This was done by using strategies of including parent focus groups to assist in the shaping of school policies; parent surveys to gauge satisfaction; planning activities; and having parents on the school board where the decisions are taken. This implies that the parents of rural schools do not participate fully in decision making for their children.

### **2.3.3.7 *Parents' Collaborative Involvement***

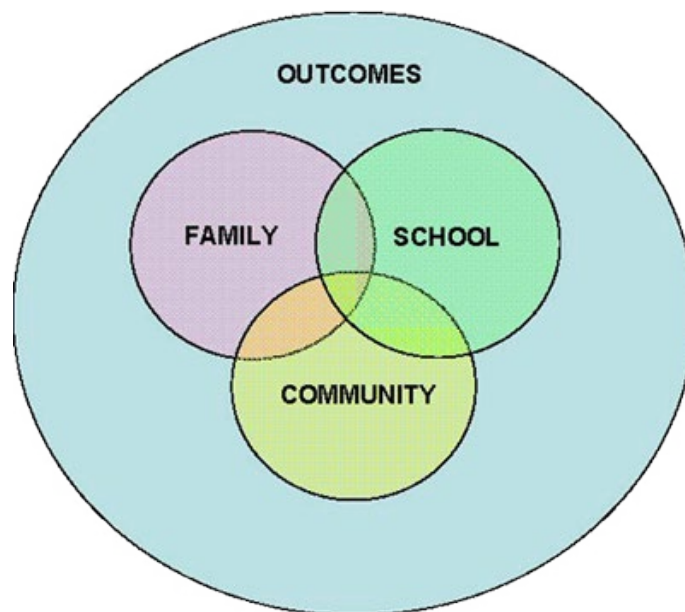
Relating to collaboration and how it affects parental involvement, Phori (2016) is of the view that collaboration's essence is identifiable by the ambition to work together; being motivated by co-operation, co-ordination and consensus; and taking shared risks, as well

as responsibilities. Collaboration has to do with the contributions to schools and families by the community. The researcher's understanding of the concept of involvement includes collaborative contributions, communications, resources and engagement (Dladla, 2013).

Razak et al. (2016) see collaboration between schools and communities as a major factor in the achievement of a school's goals. "Schools enjoy the informed support of families and communities to contribute to their children's education, and communities look forward to an educated, respectable work force" (Leaders for Tomorrow's Schools, n.d.). The aforementioned forces and actors collaborate and interact with each other to achieve a common goal. Communities are able to provide schools with an environment that can both complement and reinforce its values and a culture and environment conducive for teaching and learning.

According to Siraj and Mayo (2014), teaching involves appropriate strategies and interaction with learners to enable a conducive environment for learning to take place. There is an overlapping sphere of an influence model, indicated in Figure 2.2 below (Emerson et al., 2012). If schools, families and communities work together, they can prepare their children for a better future.

The model for overlapping spheres is represented below:



**Figure 2.2: Overlapping spheres of influence (Model adapted from Emerson et al., 2012)**

Figure 2.2 above shows the overlapping of the three different types of components (family, school and community) working together in support of the development of the child. Here, education is represented as a shared responsibility between families, schools, communities and other stakeholders (Emerson et al., 2012). This model recognises that students become successful when home, school and community work together and play collaborative, complementary and supportive roles to enhance learning and development. Schools that are likely to face collaboration challenges (marginalised schools) are those who face environmental and contextual deficits, such as poverty and financial limitations (Skanson, 2016).

#### **2.4 THE EFFECTS OF PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND LOCATION ON TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Research conducted by Mege (2014) in Kenya on the influence of school environmental factors on teaching and learning clearly shows that the school environment is an important aspect of educational planning. The environmental factors in the research are referred to as those aspects that are within the pupil's surroundings that have an effect on the process of teaching and learning. Mege (2014) states further that the study recognises physical facilities, instructional materials, class size and school location as some of the factors within the school environment that were found to have an influence on the process of teaching and learning. The parties affected by these variables are learners, teachers and parents.

Moreover, Kausar et al. (2017) investigated the effects of a classroom environment on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Pakistan. The results indicated that the classroom environment had a deep effect on students' academic achievement, regardless of their intellectual status. This bears testament to the fact that environment plays a pivotal role in teaching and learning.

#### **2.4.1 Effects of school location on learner academic performance**

According to Mhiliwa (2015, p. 10), “Numerous studies link teachers’ poor academic performance in specific with the walking distance which the learners travel to reach their schools”. While people in urban areas take their children to school by car and enjoy minimum travelling distances to receive education, some people in rural areas cover large distances to reach schools (Ezeudu et al., 2014). These are some of the restraints of the capitalist system, which need intervention by those involved in education.

The extent, to which pupils’ learning could be enhanced, depends on the location of the school. In a study by Mege (2014), conducted in Nairobi, it was found that when a school is built near a market, the noise from the market will distract the learners; thus, affecting the process of teaching and learning. Alternately, regarding urban schools, it was found that most learners live closer to their schools and those who are far from school make use of public transport to get to and from school (Khalil, 2013). A problem arises when learners’ parents are unemployed and are unable to pay for transport. Hence, the gap between rural and urban learners must be bridged to ensure equal and quality teaching and learning.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) Emerging Voices (2005) compiled a report whereby the recommendations state that social justice depends on policy and programme responses that provide quality education environments in all schools, including rural schools, so as to ensure children’s wellbeing, as well as the communities’ social progress and political participation (DBE, 2017). Karagiannopoulou and Milienos (2015) state, “[t]he indirect effect of experiences of the teaching-learning environment on achievements, acting through approaches to learning, shows those approaches as a dynamic construct that varies in line with experiences of the teaching-learning environment, and so influences achievement”.

In addition, a study conducted by Mhiliwa (2015) in Tanzania on the effects of school location on learners’ academic performance in secondary schools indicated that long walking distances to schools affected student performance when compared to those who stayed closer to schools.

The study further revealed that many students stated that longer distances exhausted them and they were therefore unprepared for classroom and private studies.

Langa's (2013) research on school under-performance in the context of rurality indicated that a poor physical environment in a school did not only influence the schooling processes, but had a negative impact on teaching and learning, which resulted in poor learner performance. However, in a study conducted by Nkanzela (2015) on the performance of South African schools, it was found that teachers' poor working conditions and an adverse school climate or environment were more of a determiner of learner performance. Similarly, Mhiliwa's (2015) study indicated that the location of a school and its facilities impacted upon children's academic performance. The researcher further stated that locating a school at a place, which created a poor learning environment, contributed to irregular attendance and school dropouts. Moreover, it led to absenteeism on the part of the teachers and an inability to be engaged in the teaching and learning process.

#### **2.4.2 Effects of school location and distance on parental involvement**

"Involving parents in school activities may have an important community and social function," according to Emerson et al. (2012, p. 8). Moreover, "Research suggests that parental involvement appears to affect all levels of academic achievement" (Maluleke, 2014, p. 13). Hence, it can be said that parents play a crucial role in the development of a school. Communities can provide schools with a context and environment that can either complement or reinforce the values, culture and learning that the schools provide for their students or negatively affect everything the school strives to accomplish. Schools do however differ in terms of their environment and location. "Socio-economic status has been recognised as an influential factor concerning parental involvement" (Maluleke, 2014, p. 20).

Making a critical analysis of locational factors, Boussauw et al. (2014) state that people prefer to procure their central functions at the nearest available location. They are of the view that the availability of a range of schools in a suburb or a large city will increase the

likelihood of residents not sending their children to the city centre for their schooling. According to Wakiuru (2016), parents with a low economic status are not able to participate in their children's education or go to school to assist in terms of activities, more especially if they have to walk long distances. In South Africa, there are few or no strategies used by some schools to enhance the level of parental participation in their children's education, and no job creation for unemployed parents to boost their level of participation at school (Wakiuru, 2016). Michael Apple regards the absence of strategies in education as an educational crisis (Chapter 3).

## **2.5 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY: RURAL AND URBAN SCHOOLING**

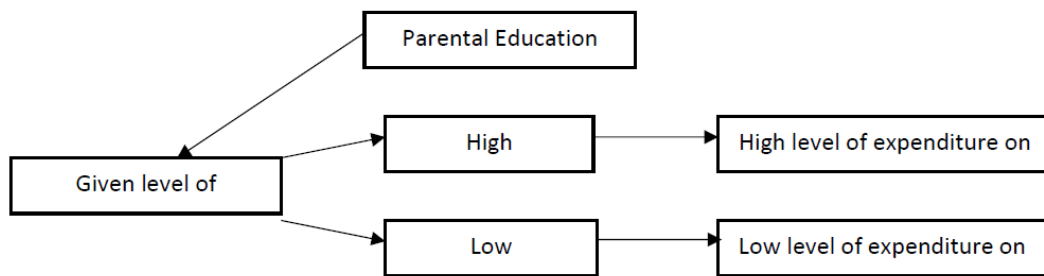
A focus of this study is on the social and economic inequalities that affect teaching and learning in three schools, namely Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, Jahman Public Rural School and Groenvlei Urban Private School. Concerning social and economic inequality, the literature reveals that there are educational inequalities between schools. According to Ndimande (2016), the educational inequalities have a huge impact on the economic and social lives of children and the lingering poverty they will endure when they reach adulthood. He (2016) further states that even though the new democratically elected government had good intentions in their education reform policies, the school choice policy has perpetuated educational inequalities in poor black communities, where children attend township schools. Ndimande (2016) also referred to the unequal resources between township and urban schools. A question arises in support of Ndimande's (2016) statement: Why is it that after the demise of apartheid, South Africa and its education system are still plagued by seemingly insurmountable challenges, with no change in sight for those who need it most, especially those who live, work and learn in rural, informal and other marginalised communities? (Moletsane, 2012, p. 1) It must be said here that the current government inherited some of the inequalities from the former apartheid education system.

Zhang et al. (2015) conducted a study in the People's Republic of China (PRC) to compare the education performance of rural children, children of rural-urban migrants, and urban children. The results showed that the education performance of rural children

and migrants' children was lower than that of their urban counterparts. The authors (2015) articulated that income disparity was one of the barriers regarded as a potential cause of education inequality. However, Onwuke et al. (2017) also conducted a study in Nigeria on the influence of parents' socio-economic status on the academic achievements of school students in Owerri Imo State. The results showed that students from low socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to attend public schools than those from high socio-economic backgrounds. The results further revealed that students from low-economic backgrounds achieved less academically than those from high socio-economic backgrounds did. The recommendations from this study included that governments should encourage students from low socio-economic backgrounds by equipping public schools with the necessary facilities.

The findings from research conducted in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa on challenging educational injustices (Tooley, 2013) indicated that low-cost private schools, growing rapidly in poor areas, serve a majority or urban and peri-urban, or the minority of the rural poor, including a small portion of the poorest of the poor. Pedroza Flores et al. (2015) state that in Mexico, the number of poor (extreme and moderate) and vulnerable people, in terms of income and social need, have dramatically increased from 2008 to 2010. This puts poor communities in a disadvantaged position. "Gaps between the educational attainment of pupils from higher and lower income families are widespread and persistent. Teacher quality is among the most important school-based determinants of pupil attainment, making the allocation of teachers to pupils a potentially important reason for this attainment gap" (Allen & Sims, 2018, p. 9). These authors (2018) also used a range of well-evidenced indicators of teacher quality from the so-called School Workforce Census and the Teaching and Learning International Survey to investigate the extent of social inequalities in access to teacher quality in England. The findings indicate that teacher allocation between schools differs in that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to have unqualified, inexperienced, as well as teachers who teach outside their area of expertise. However, the findings from research conducted in South Africa by Taylor (2010) on the performance of South African schools revealed that South African classes tended to be larger in schools specifically serving poor communities because of their low socio-economic status; hence, the lower level of educational performance. Taylor's

(2010) findings are supported by research conducted by Sibanda (2016) on the factors associated with high school learners' poor performance in physical science, which revealed that the low socio-economic status of parents affects the entire family and adversely affect the performance of their children. The above-mentioned points on social and economic inequality, as evidenced by international and local studies, show that low parental status affects the academic performance of learners in the global context. Allen and Sims (2018) refer to this from an international perspective and Taylor (2010) from a local perspective, whose research equally revealed that disadvantaged pupils perform poorly because they are placed in poor performing schools due to their parents' low socio-economic status (SES). It is further asserted that people living in marginalised contexts, such as rural, peri-urban and township areas, are still denied the right to basic education (Moletsane, 2012). Hence, it can be stated that the South African government is not doing enough to attend to issues of oppression and marginalisation.



**Figure 2.3: The influence of parental education and literacy skills (adapted from Drajea, 2015)**

Figure 2.3 above shows how parents' educational inequality influences their children's education (high- and low-level education influences high- and low-level expenditure).

The economic status of parents plays a pivotal role in the development of a child in general. The most important factor, which determines the future of the child, is education. Drajea (2015, p. 29) refers to the so-called "Internal features of the family environment" when he alludes to the immediate influencing variable or factor, which influences the child in the family context. Moreover, parents' education level influences their economic status.

As the diagram above shows, parents whose education level is higher, experience higher expenditure. This means that their children will have more opportunities than those whose parents are at a lower level of expenditure. This is because their economic status enables them to spend more money on their children, for example assisting in their children's education by paying for extra lessons, while those with a low level of expenditure cannot afford to pay for extra lessons for their children. Fan (2012) indicates that the SES of a family influences a child's academic achievement. The inequality in terms of the SES of parents plays a prominent role in the education of the children. Pufall et al. (2016) emphasises this, stating that during the Zimbabwean economic turmoil in the 2000s, children whose parents were more educated continued to have better outcomes at the population level and helped to maintain the upward education trend. The statements by Fan (2012) and Pufall et al. (2016) are in line with the Bureau for Economic Research's (2011) report, which revealed that low quality tuition is offered in schools in poor communities; as a result it entrenches exclusion and marginalisation.

Some schools admit children based on their academic performance, their income, and the social status of parents. This also falls under education inequality. Pöder et al. (2017, p. 10) indicate, "Family background effect is defined as the dependence of student achievement on family background characteristics, such as parental education, income and social status".

## **2.6 THE RURAL, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL EXPENDITURE GAP IN EDUCATION**

According to Parker et al. (2016, p. 1), "Persistent inequalities in education's expectations across societies are a growing concern". This quote emphasizes the existing inequalities across society in relation to schooling environments. There is a big gap between different types of schools regarding expenditure. The types of schools referred to are rural, public and private schools. Expenditure revolves around the budget. Thus, public and private school funding should be analysed. The distinction between public and private schools, in terms of funding, is that public schools depend primarily on government funds, while private schools usually are supported by tuition payments and sometimes by funds from

other non-public sources, such as religious organisations, grants, charitable donations and fundraising projects (Peterson, 2017). In public schools, tuition differs from one grade to the other, starting from grade R level. Private school attendance is by choice, and wealthy people's children attend through the choice of their parents. Scheper (2013) states that the types of families who send their children to private schools usually belong to a higher SES. Some private schools are selective in terms of the admission of children. Learners attending public schools in the Free State or South Africa at large do not pay school fees. Most schools are called "no-fee schools". Moreover, there is a big gap in expenditure between public and private schools. No comparison can be made between these schools in terms of expenditure because private schools pay for everything, including the teachers' salaries. Public schools do not pay the salaries of teachers. The expenditure of these schools is mostly concentrated on resources.

According to the OECD (2013, p. 2), "In fact, schools in urban areas tend to be different than schools in rural areas and towns". Rural schools receive the smallest budget allocation from the government; hence, this amounts to educational inequality. This is related to the National Norms and Standards of School Funding. For example, many learners will receive more money than a few learners will even though the amount allocated per learner is the same. This needs to change by turning around the situation, which is of critical importance, according to Critical Theory (Chapter 3).

The inequality in education, especially in rural areas, leaves much to be desired. "Rural education was a huge part of South Africa's history and in recognizing the progress the country has made, not enough attention had been given to rural education and this needed to change" (Gina, 2015, p. 1). The enrolment, or the number of learners, determines the budget. Children with a lower SES attend rural schools. Moreover, no school fees are paid in rural schools. Furthermore, most rural schools are under-resourced, because they do not generate income.

The expenditure gap between schools is a big concern for society and causes inequality. The funding of schools must be done in line with the Constitution, which guarantees equal access to quality education for all. This requires more funding to be allocated by the state for poorer and historically disadvantaged schools, in order to bridge the gap, which has

existed for many years (McLaren, 2017). “The equitable share formula that divides revenue between the provinces needs to take account of the relative poverty and unequal costs of providing education in rural and urban settings” (McLaren, 2017, p. 72).

## **2.7 HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN SCHOOLS**

The emergence of social inequality in schools is analysed in general and in the South African context.

### **2.7.1 General context: Social inequality in schools**

Social inequality exists in all walks of life; hence, it exists even in schools where it is not supposed to be. Social change, according to Moletsane (2012, p. 4) generally is caused by the disregard of the socio-political context of schooling.

A school must be regarded as an agent of change. It must change the lives of the people for the better. Children go to school for the first time not knowing how to read and write. When they finish their schooling, they are able to read and write, and they have acquired different skills and positive behavioural patterns. Moreover, school is where they learn how to socialise.

Social inequality has no place in the school environment if we are to build an equal, caring and responsible society. Noltemeyer et al. (2012) state that President John F. Kennedy took education very seriously and described it in the United States as the foundation and unifying force of the people’s democratic way of life. They (ibid.) further indicate that it is also the most profitable investment society can ever make and it can offer the richest rewards.

Social inequality originated from unequal societies; for example, rich and poor, and low-income families and high-income families. Shoji et al. (2014, p. 30) state, “Scholars suggest that racial/ethnic and class disparities in school-based social capital contribute to education inequalities”. Social inequality occurs in different ways. People tend to neglect or undermine others because they think they are better than others are. The

“haves” think they are better than the “have nots”. Keeton (2014) substantiates this statement by indicating that rich people are selfish and unwilling to share what they have gained at the expense of the poor, which holds back economic salvation. Social inequality can also be linked to economic inequality, which is described based on the unequal distribution of income or wealth. It is called social inequality because it is a frequently studied type of social inequality.

Environmental location or people’s status are factors that influence social inequality. “Origins of inequality in Human Societies begin with a critical assessment of classical explanations of inequality in the social sciences and of the political and economic environment in which they arose” (Baldus, 2017, p. 1). Baldus (2017) examines the interaction and unforeseen consequences in the emergence of social inequality, where he traces the irregular historical path in different societies. Baldus (2017) also explores issues of distributive justice and focusses on equality in modern societies. Social inequality goes hand-in-glove with cultural evolution, social issues, economic history and social theory. This is how social inequality came into being and exists in people from all walks of life; hence, we also have it in schools.

### **2.7.2 South African context**

In the South African context, social inequality emerged in schools – the ‘haves’ and the ‘have not’, the rich and poor. The South African government failed to meet its obligation under the Constitution to address the social inequality issues brought about in schools by the apartheid regime (Amnesty International, 2020).

The historical development of social inequality in schools can be effectively evaluated against the backdrop of the educational history of the country. South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world.

Historically, there was a limited mixing of races before 1948. According to Mpisi (2010, p. 30), “The official and formal segregation of schools along racial and ethnic lines commenced in 1948 when the Nationalist Party came to power”.

The Nationalist Party's policy of separate development played a critical role in separating schools in terms of race and colour. The racial, ethnic and geographical separation gave birth to social inequality in schools.

Even though South Africa has made progress since the end of apartheid (Amnesty International, 2020) in broadening access to schools, this has not translated into quality education for all pupils. The current system continues to be dogged by stark inequalities and underperformance, which was inherited from the Bantu Education System of apartheid. The current government is not effectively tackling the inequalities. Crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and poor educational outcomes are rooted in the apartheid legacy, through the Bantu Education Act and other laws that governed South Africa during that era.

The Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953), later renamed the Black Education Act (1953), was a law in South Africa during apartheid. Its aim was to marginalise the black community by enforcing racially separated educational facilities. "The focus on inequality received new impetus with the onset of the global financial crisis in 2007/08," states Keeton (2014, p. 27). The aim of Bantu Education was to provide black people with an unskilled labour market, while white's education was to provide them with a skilled market. White education was superior to inferior Bantu education. Dr Hendrik Verwoerd stated, "There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour – what is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?" (Bantu Education Act, 1953). It is in this context that social inequality emerged in schools.

## **2.8 THE EFFECTS OF THE EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AT SCHOOLS**

Emotional geography plays a critical role in the teaching fraternity. There are circumstances in the teaching environment that make a school community (teachers and learners) feel differently; for example, caring, joy, anger, and frustration (Knudson, 2016).

This is a result of the type of school environment in which learners or teachers find themselves (Knudson, 2016).

The relationship between people, others, the world or the environment needs to be healthy for effective teaching and learning to take place. The way in which an organisation is structured is a key component to human environments (Miller & Donlan, 2014). Some of these circumstances start at home or along the way before one reaches the school environment. Some of them crop up within the school environment. The school community needs to be cautioned of these circumstances, because they retard the progress of teaching and learning. Hargreaves (2001, p. 1058) says, “The emotional practice radiates through the person’s body and streams of experience, giving emotional culmination to thoughts, feelings and actions”.

Emotions are natural and occur in every sphere of life, whether it be at home, school, work or church. The important aspect is to be aware of the emotional geographies and to be able to take control of them. “Emotional understanding in teaching results from what we term emotional geographies of schooling and human interactions” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 815). Emotional geographies differ from one school to another, depending on the circumstance(s) the school finds itself in. The school community should be mindful of the fact that this concept of emotional geographies assists us in identifying support and threats to the basic emotional bonds, as well as the understanding of schooling distances or closeness regarding people’s interactions or relationships.

## **2.9 STRATEGIES THAT COULD BE USED TO ERADICATE THE DISPARITIES WITHIN AND BETWEEN SIMILAR SCHOOLING ENVIRONMENTS**

A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim. Correspondingly, it is a goal of the present study to bring about change regarding the inequalities within and between similar schooling environments. Therefore, the literature review included studies that considered strategies that would bring about change in schooling environments. In this regard, the problem relates to disparities in schooling environments.

The Department of Basic Education has strategies in place for the betterment of education in South African schools. These strategies are found in the policy document called the South African Schools Act: Regulations: Safety Measures at Public Schools (Government Gazette, 7 July 2006). Some of the strategies regarding the schooling environment are good, but not well implemented and monitored.

The eco-school programme, which is an international programme, deals with the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). According to the South African Yearbook 2015/16, it was developed to support environmental learning in the classroom. The programme is active in 58 countries across the globe and has been implemented in South Africa since 2003. It is aimed to create awareness and action around environmental sustainability in schools and their surrounding communities, as well as supporting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the national curriculum. However, the implementation of the WESSA eco-school programme appears not to be working or is not implemented correctly and equally in all schools.

Passmark (2018) indicates that a five-year old child fell into a school pit toilet and died in March 2018. The school is located in the rural area of the Eastern Cape. A similar tragedy occurred in 2014 to Michael Komape of the same age in Limpopo. Many school environments and their surrounding communities, in particular, are not addressed by the DBE and the Eco-School Programme. "That means that one in every four of the public schools in the Eastern Cape has only pit toilets. Two-thirds of these are primary schools and all of them are in low-income, mostly rural areas. Around 300 000 children attend these schools" (Passmark, 2018). The shocking part is that there are schools without any toilets. This is substantiated by Passmark (2018), indicating that 37 schools in the Eastern Cape do not have toilets. The environment is not conducive for teaching and learning. Passmark (2018) provided the following statistics for schools with no toilets in 2011:

Eastern Cape	=	551
KwaZulu-Natal	=	160
Free State	=	80
North West	=	37
Limpopo	=	36

Mpumalanga	=	35
Gauteng	=	6
Western Cape	=	5
Northern Cape	=	3

According to Passmark (2018), the statistics for schools with pit toilets were as follows in 2011:

2011			
11 450 schools with pit toilets			
Eastern Cape	Limpopo	Kwazulu-Natal	Rest of SA
28%			
3,160 schools	25%	25%	22%
	2,857 schools	2,834 schools	2,599 schools

**Figure 2.4: 2011: schools with pit toilets (Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and other provinces)**

2018			
8679 schools with pit toilets			
-40%	-12%	-8%	-37%

**Figure 2.5: 2018: schools with pit toilets**

Figure 2.4 indicates that nearly half (11 450) of South Africa's 24 793 public schools had pit toilets in 2011, while 78% of those schools were located in three provinces, namely the Eastern Cape (28%), Limpopo (25%) and KwaZulu-Natal (25%).

Figure 2.5 shows that by March 2018, the number of schools with pit toilets had been reduced by about a quarter to 8679. The biggest decline was in the Eastern Cape, where the number of schools with pit toilets dropped by 40%. This means that the progress in Kwazulu-Natal and Limpopo has been much slower. Since 2011, pit toilets have been eradicated at a much slower pace of about 343 schools in Limpopo and 227 in KwaZulu-Natal. The two provinces account for two-thirds of the country's schools with pit toilets.

The number of schools with pit toilets dropped by 2771 over the past six years, which averages 462 a year, or one school per day. Even though there is a decline in the number of schools with pit toilets, the fact remains that inequality still exists, which is hampering teaching and learning in some of the schools that are not catered for. Passmark (2018) is of the view that the current rate suggests that it will take 19 years to eradicate the pit toilets in the remaining 8679 schools.

Another crucial point in South African schools is environmental safety for teachers, principals, learners and the community around the school. Weeks (2012) states, "The educational needs of the twenty-first century pose fundamental challenges for educators and educational practice". One of the challenges is a safe schooling environment. Teachers are being attacked and killed in schools. Thus, how can we regard the environment as safe and conducive for teaching and learning? Govender (2015) is of the view that teaching and learning will be more effective if the school environment is safe, with no threats from learners and the community at large. Moreover, the quality of teaching and learning will improve drastically, and learners will be assisted in terms of their aggressive behaviour (ibid.). Some schools have facilities that detect a person who is in possession of an illegal substance or a weapon. However, these strategies or security measures are implemented in very few schools. Masitsa (2011, p. 163) states, "Research overwhelmingly suggests that effective teaching and learning can occur only in a safe and secure school environment. However, despite the plethora of law and acts protecting teachers and learners in South African schools, scores of them are still unsafe." He (2011) further asserts that a school, which is regarded as safe, is one where teachers teach, learners learn, and non-educators do their work harmoniously in a warm and research welcoming environment, free of intimidation and the fear of violence, ridicule, harassment and humiliation, where everybody is physically and psychologically safe. This statement by Masitsa (2011) is an indication of the negligence of the South African government to implement effective protective environmental safety measures for teachers and learners in all schools.

The DBE introduced various strategies to be used in schools for the safety of the teachers, learners, non-teaching staff and the school communities. The security strategies or

measures proposed by Van Jaarsveld (2011) include CCTV, a control room, and guard patrols. If all these security measures are integrated, schools will be safe (ibid.).

Moreover, there are school rules and regulations dealing with safety in schools. Some of the rules and regulations for safety at public schools include the following: no person may enter the school premises while under the influence of drugs or alcohol; and illegal substances such as weapons and knives are not allowed on the school premises.

Additionally, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993, provides for the health and safety of a person at work (Masitsa, 2011). Section 10 of the Constitution (Bill of Rights) indicates that all people have a right to have their dignity respected and protected.

Ndabeni (2013) states that weak infrastructural facilities affect access to health and education facilities. Ndabeni (2013) is supported by Amnesty International's (2020) report on the lack of a healthy, hygienic and safe learning environment, especially in rural and peri-urban South African schools. According to Amnesty International (2020), the safety imbalances regarding different types of schools are overlooked when formulating strategies. Education authorities need to be critical about the imbalances that exist between different categories of schools.

Many issues could be mentioned regarding the strategies that can be used to eradicate disparities in school communities. An example refers to safety in schools, highlighted in the South African schools' context, which can be compared to other countries. The world has different strategies in dealing with disparities between similar schooling environments. Safety in schools in other countries is a priority. The United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) has formed an organisation called A Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector and a Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (Wannous & Valasquez, 2017). It is a comprehensive school safety initiative, comprised of four pillars, namely:

- Protect students and educators from death, injury, and harm in schools;
- Plan for continuity of education through all expected hazards and threats;

- Safeguard education sector investments; and
- Strengthen risk reduction and resilience through education.

In this study, safety is viewed in the context of equality or inequality across the spectrum of schools; for example: public rural, public peri-urban and urban private schools, as inequality regarding safety in schools must be addressed. The rationale is that schools with enough money will have better security systems than those with small budgets. Hence, Masitsa (2011) asserts that good education can only occur if a peaceful environment is provided where teaching and learning takes place, in order to prepare people for the world of work, nation building and citizenship; to teach the values of society; and to develop individual people.

Canada came up with a strategy called The Canadian Safe School Network (CSSN) to ensure safe schools. CSSN is a national, charitable organisation dedicated to reducing youth violence and making schools and communities safer (Canadian Safe School Network, 2018). It was formed in 1997 and grew out of the Ontario Safe School Task Force. It works with representatives from different departments and organisations; for example, the police, education department, the government and the business community across Canada to find solutions to the problem of youth violence. The main aim is to ensure that safety in schools take place in its totality. It works against all odds that hamper quality education. This initiative caters to all stakeholders, including the government, which is not the case in South Africa.

In South Africa, Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) conducted a study in four South African high schools with a sample of 100 people (80 learners and 20 educators) on the nature, causes and effects of school violence in South African high schools. The study discovered that bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, non-discipline, intolerance, and corporal punishment were prevalent in schools. The study revealed that school violence is escalating, regardless of the measures put in place to address the problem by the Department of Education and schools themselves. The study also found that teachers and students feared for their own safety.

South Africa needs good strategies to deal with this dilemma. Ferreira (2015) indicates that research has shown that some countries are ahead of South Africa regarding safety

in school environments. She (2015) further states that research has found that South Africa can benefit by learning from other countries. Using the good strategies that are working in other countries could remedy the situation, depending on the circumstances faced by the schools. Moreover, School's Public Safety Education should be introduced, emphasised or well monitored (if it is in existence) for learners and staff's self-protection. It has been introduced in many countries, and its content is based on the main risk that students face; for example, the security education of American schools focuses mainly on the prevention and treatment of schools' violence (Fei & Ying, 2016). The introduction of public safety education, as mentioned by Fei and Ying (2016), is needed in all South African schools irrespective of their geographical location for quality teaching and learning to take place.

Another strategy could be to form an organisation consisting of representatives from different departments and organisations, such as the police, education authorities, the government and the business sector across South Africa to eradicate imbalances and to protect learners, teachers and communities around schools. This organisation must deal with all issues related to education, including disparities within and between similar schooling environments. The parents must be at the forefront because their children experience a variety of educational challenges. McDonald et al. (2015, p. 2) assert, "Policy makers should note that building social capital in disadvantaged communities through partnerships with parents and schools can result in decreased disparities in health, social care and education".

## **2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, studies were reviewed that inform this research on the environmental, social inequalities and emotional geographies of teaching and learning in schools. The chapter commenced by analysing the aim of the study, which is to compare how environmental and social inequalities influence teaching and learning experiences in, and educational disparities between, three (public rural, public peri-urban and urban private) schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa. The review of literature and theory relevant to the study were also explained.

Hence, it could be concluded that environmental location and social inequalities in schools have a huge impact on teaching and learning. The emotional geographies, if not taken care of, affect teachers, learners and the community at large. The performance of learners will deteriorate; teachers will be demoralised; and the community will be demotivated and will not give support to schools. All the loose ends need to be tightened to ensure that they fall into the framework of environmental location, social inequalities, as well as the emotional geographies of teaching and learning.

The next chapter will focus on the theoretical framework of the study.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH PARADIGM

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a review of literature on how social inequalities influence teaching and learning experiences in primary schools in the South African context. This chapter provides a brief overview of Critical Theory, as it offers a suitable theoretical framing for the present study. Critical Theory will provide a framework for performance analysis; it will also offer a better understanding of the social conditions.

#### 3.2 CRITICAL THEORY: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Mamabolo (2002, p. 33) states:

*In philosophy of education, a pluralistic approach problem-centred approach identifies a number of theoretical frameworks that influence the way educational researchers could approach their research projects. These theoretical frameworks are identified as: logical empiricism, critical rationalism, Critical Theory, feminism, African philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics, systems theory and postmodernism.*

From the theoretical framework indicated above, this research drew from Critical Theory. Bronner and Kellner (1989, p. 58) state, "From the beginning, the Critical Theory of society was constantly involved in philosophical as well as social issues and controversies. At the time of its origin, in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century, philosophy was the most advanced form of consciousness, and by comparison real conditions in Germany were backward." Critical Theory is regarded as an essential element in the historical effort to create a world that satisfies the needs of the society. The social issues are of paramount importance and need to be addressed in a manner that satisfies anybody. Higgs and Smith (2002) describe Critical Theory as a deeply cynical philosophy that invites people to ask one fundamental question, namely, *Who gains from this version of the truth?* Critical theorists believe that all human societies comprise certain power relationships. The relationship then dominates the production of all forms of knowledge. Critical theorists would like to see all human beings free from all forms of oppression and

rule. They are of the view that knowledge and truth, for example scientific truth, moral truth and historical truth, should be compared to everyday life and not be separated in any way. Critical Theory has greatly influenced all the human sciences, including education. Thus, critical theorists have caused educationists to re-think education and its curricular efficiency (Higgs & Smith, 2002).

The figure below provides a diagrammatic representation of Critical Theory:



**Figure 3.1: Critical Theory: truth unmasking**

The main ideas of Critical Theory (adapted from Higgs and Smith, 2002) are as follows:

- Critical theorists claim that we create and uncreate the truth.
- Critical theorists believe that there is no such thing as objective truth.
- Critical theorists challenge rather than accept what authority tells them.
- Critical theorists respect neither human tradition, nor social status.
- Critical theorists place a great deal of emphasis on ethics.

### **3.2.1 Critical Theory in Education: a Brief Overview**

Education comprises different critical theories. According to Ainsworth (2013), these theories are philosophical, political and pedagogic responses to real world circumstances. They attempt to shift the purposes, scope, aims and delivery of education, by enabling cultural and social transformation through the progressive growth of individuals. Their key focus is based on the oppressed and marginalised groups and contests the ideologies of dominant social relations and established needs, which proponents view as key to the reproduction and neutralisation of current social global inequalities. Agger (1991, p. 20) states, “Critical Theory, post structuralism and post modernism are intellectual traditions most familiar to people who work in philosophy, aesthetic theory, literary criticism and women’s studies”.

It is of critical importance to find the most appropriate Critical Theory that could work towards socio-educational inequalities. In order to arrive at an appropriate method, the researcher had to examine variables, like social class, family background, neighbourhoods, families and labour markets, as well as the environment around schools. The researcher had to look at the variables that affect the school outcomes, since one of the key variables in this study is to look at the scholastic achievements or educational attainment, namely, what are the variables that affect the school outcomes? The research question is addressed by Modern Theory, whereby the changes must take place to turn the situation around in eradicating or minimizing the socio-educational inequalities that exist in schools. The link between Modern Theory and Critical Theory is that modernity accepts that modern political formations, like the state, need to be criticized – such as in the case of Critical Theory. They are supported by the Frankfurt School regarding their cultural radicalism and contempt for totalitarianism. The relationship between the three theories (Modern, Social, and Marxist) is that their sociological and philosophical traditions have resulted in accusations of revisionism by classical, orthodox, and analytical Marxists.

What socio-educational inequalities exist between rural and urban schools? Social Theory addresses this issue because it is a framework of empirical evidence used to study and interpret social phenomena.

What are the effects of SES on student achievement? Marxism is the theory relevant to Critical Theory, as it is more concerned about economic, social and political philosophy, based on ideas that view social change in terms of economic factors. The most appropriate theory or theories must be able to address all the above-mentioned questions.

According to Crossman (2019, p. 1), “Critical Theory is a social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole”. As the researcher in this study, I opted for Critical Theory, influenced by two broad frames of thought, namely Marxist and Modern Theory. These theoretical concepts will help to understand how socio-educational inequalities affect learners in different types of schools, how these variables differ from one school to another, and how to bridge the gap that affects learners due to the type of school they attend.

The researcher’s own epistemological position and educational inequality is heavily influenced by Critical Theory, in the context of Marxist and modern frameworks. Critical Theory explains the social world in terms of how learners are viewed or handled in terms of the principle of equality or inequality in their respective schools – whether they are treated equally or unequally or whether they have been affected by different variables that occur in their daily lives. The assumption is that learners are affected by socio-educational inequalities that exist in their daily lives. One of the variables, as highlighted by Lucas (2001), is social class background, which has a major impact on educational inequality.

The discourse regarding the chosen frameworks refers.

### **3.2.2 Critical Theory in Education: Marxist Critiques**

Marxist critiques of ideology are central to the critical theories of education. Education is central to shape and form fully realized human beings. Thus, it is important to analyse education within dominant social relations and the current system of political economy. Ainsworth (2013, p. 165) states, “From a Marxist perspective, the assumptions of the established system are systematically criticised so that an alternative model of

educational theory and practice can be constructed that aims to overcome the oppression, inequalities and limitations that existing institutions of schooling support". The Marxist critique contains the radical element in terms of the examination and restructuring of the models and education ideologies, in order to free every person from the restraints of the capitalist system. This means that every person can contribute creatively to democratic human nature and society. This is in line with the research problem that the researcher wants to pursue, whereby he should contribute freely in building education for a better future. Another important fact that links this research with Marxist ideology is in relation to coming up with an alternative model or strategy that will help to eradicate or overcome the socio-educational inequalities that exist between the institutions of schooling. Schools are social entities that are created for the purpose of pedagogy. Critical pedagogy, as stated by Higgs and Smith (2002), is of critical importance in dealing with the critical theories of education.

What happens in schools is that the learners are there to be taught, which is one of the basic beliefs of critical pedagogy. The schools however do not educate learners. Teachers educate learners. Why then does inequality exist in schools? It is a known fact that inequality is brought about by people. Ainsworth's (2013, p. 453) articulation on critical pedagogy refers:

*Marx realized that the starting point for reform must be the actual circumstances that we face rather than an idealized situation. This is most clearly borne out in the field of critical pedagogy, where Marxist ideas about praxis, political reform, and social analysis are brought together by educators in order to develop approaches to teaching and learning that attempt to overcome the ideological hegemony of the dominant class. This is achieved through showing the value-laden nature of knowledge, where teachers work together with learners to alter their perceptions of the established order of social inequalities and encourage them to engage in practical action to solve the problems of their everyday lives.*

The core idea of the above phrase is that Marxism influences the critical pedagogies that will bring about a radical change in the way that education is organised, the way that educators and students think, and the kind of world they are able to create. This is the

underlying philosophy around the issue of socio-educational inequalities from a Marxist pedagogical perspective - which is also a key focus in this study.

### **3.2.3 Critical Theory in Education: Modern Theory**

Modern Theory is the integration of valuable concepts of the classical models with the social and behavioural sciences. Critical Theory posits that an organisation is a system that changes with the change in its environment, both internal and external. Michael Apple is a critical scholar who attended the University of Wisconsin in the USA, and he is an activist who reflected on the educational crisis. He was concerned about the politics surrounding school reforms. Ainsworth (2013) indicates that Michael Apple is of the view that sustained efforts to impose a neoliberal agenda in schooling, which follows the logic regarding business, capital, the market and industry, have had a deeply negative effect on education. Ainsworth (2013, p. 165) further alludes to the fact that:

*...such critical theorists contend that dominant trends, such as the standardizing of the curriculum and teaching toward tests, have done nothing to cultivate learning, a sense of community, strengthen individuality, promote democratic participation, or improve social justice.*

Social justice is a focal point whereby people must be treated equally regardless of their colour, race, religion, creed or any form of discrimination, in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This study is in line with equality where the people should be seen as equal agents in the democratic country; hence, this study deals with the socio-educational inequalities that exist in schools, due to different circumstances.

The different variables retard scholastic achievements or attainment of education. In Critical Theory, some of the dominating variables are family background, neighbourhoods, and the environment surrounding the school. These variables contribute to the injustices that prevail in schools. Some children attend state schools, which are called “no-fee schools”, while others go to private schools because their parents can afford to pay higher school fees. The so-called “private schools” are able to employ highly qualified teachers who are specialists in their subjects, because they are paid higher

salaries than state and rural teachers are. This is another form of inequality that exists in schools.

The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory was developed by scholars, such as Herbert Marcuse, who built on and adapted the theories of Karl Marx (Ainsworth, 2013). The developments continued and the engagement of the incorporation of the pragmatist philosophies of John Dewey and the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire in order to face and challenge the realities of societies today. Using Critical Theory means to go beyond description and historical context. It means that the researcher will have to move from the general to the specific and back to the general with impact. This study will go beyond Freire's critical pedagogy and other critical theorists by being critical of the imbalances that exist between different categories of schools, regarding environmental and social inequalities. The emphasis on the work of Freire (2005) relates to critical consciousness as a vehicle of cultural emancipation. His earlier work is concerned with Cultural Action for Freedom and Pedagogy of the Oppressed. In this study, the researcher will provide a solution to the problem of social inequality by providing strategies that could be used to curb the disparities that exist between rural and urban primary schools. The researcher chose Critical Theory to compare the variables of the different schools for effective teaching and learning. Critical theorists did not compare the variables of different categories of schools, scrutinize them, and develop strategies for equality. These variables include social class, family background, neighbourhoods, the environment, and scholastic achievements or educational attainment.

Critical Theory also touches on critical pedagogies, whereby Ainsworth (2013, p. 165) argues, "Instead of the logic of market capitalism, critical pedagogies engage in issues like overcoming differences between cultures while developing an unsettled and open form of democracy that will be more adept at incorporating marginalised groups and solving conflicts between cultures". Ainsworth (2013) also argues that for a strong democracy to work, everybody must have access to education, in order to equip them with the skills that will enable them to participate in social and political processes and to contribute as a good person and competent actor in democratic life. Critical Theory regards education as the key to every person's life. In this regard, my study would like to

analyse the socio-educational inequalities between rural and urban schools to enable justice to take its course.

### **3.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has established the rationale for the choice of a suitable theoretical framing to underpin the study. The next chapter will focus on the research design and methodology that was adopted to conduct this study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework that underpins this study. This chapter presents the research design and methodological aspects employed to explore the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. Thereafter, it discusses the sampling and data collection and selection of participants and schools. In addition, it presents ethical considerations, trustworthiness and validity. The chapter concludes with the issues related to the limitations of the study.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study employed a qualitative design. Qualitative research informed the framework that would guide an exploration on how environmental location and social inequalities affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within the researched contexts.

Qualitative research describes the route taken for the research project. In this regard, Daniels (2017, p. 93) says, “The system through which data are retrieved in a qualitative research approach is regarded as being unique. The reliance on the collection of non-numerical primary data such as words and pictures by the researcher, who serves as an instrument himself, makes qualitative research well-suited for providing tactical and descriptive formation.” Ary et al. (2010, p. 420) describe qualitative inquiry as “a generic term for an array of educational research approaches, such as ethnography, naturalistic inquiry, narrative research, case studies, interpretive research, fieldwork, field studies, and participant observation”. Certain features mentioned here are typical of qualitative research, for example fieldwork, field studies, and participant observation.

The qualitative approach reveals human and social behaviour the way it is lived by participants in a particular social setting. This explanation posited by Johnson and

Christensen (2008) falls within the present research project since the researcher studies a phenomenon in an open-ended way (see Chapter 1). I (as the researcher in the present study) am also mindful of the explanations and interpretations of what I see or observe, because qualitative research approach is associated with the interpretive and/or naturalistic approaches. “Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting” (University of Utah, n.d.: Online). Likewise, Johnson and Christensen (2008, p. 388) state, “Qualitative researchers prefer to study the world as it naturally occurs, without manipulating it (as in experimental research).” In keeping with this, the participants in the present research were allowed to talk in a way that was not planned or controlled. This was done to make them free to air their views without any fear of contradictions or consequences. The researcher was mindful of the ways that enabled him to represent the participant’s actual words or views in the research. By so doing, it shows a true reflection of what the participant(s) had said.

It is important to note that the participants in the present study include parents (SGB), principals, teachers and learners. In the features mentioned above by Ary et al. (2010), the researcher opted for fieldwork and participant observation. Fieldwork helps with the interviews and observation of what occurs in the social environment, for example late coming, transport, teaching and learning. “Participant observation is one of the methods that qualitative researchers employ when they go into the field to obtain information in the form of data” (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015, p. 209). Accordingly, in this study, the researcher drew on the continuous involvement with the natural setting of the participants. The researcher was also mindful of the fact that in order for him to obtain first-hand information relating to the school environment, teaching and learning, he needed to observe people, events and situations. The approach used was in line with what Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) identified, where they described two types of observation, namely overt observation and covert observation. The researcher opted for “overt” observation, which is open to the knowledge and understanding of everyone in the environment where the research project takes place. This allowed the researcher to reveal his identity as a researcher, and the objectives and processes of his research activities to everyone who is involved in the research. The intention of using “overt” observation was to make the research and

the underlying activities known to most of the components of a particular school. The components in each school comprised parents, the principal, the deputy principal, teachers and learners.

The fieldwork method, as pointed out by Ary et al. (2010), involves schools and participants. Likewise, in the present study, schools were identified at which to carry out the research project. These schools differ in their geographical settings, such as rural and urban areas. The urban areas involve public and private schools, while rural areas involve rural schools only. Moreover, the social behaviour of participants in different settings seems to differ from one place to another, looking at social inequalities (Chapter 1). Ary et al. (2010, p. 420) state, "Qualitative inquiry seeks to understand and interpret human and social behaviour as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting." This clarifies the point that human behaviour is always bound to the context in which it occurs. Accordingly, in this study the researcher employed the types of methods that are relevant in collecting qualitative data during the fieldwork, which could not be reduced to quantification and measurement.

Interviews were used in this study, as it was one of the gathering tools. It was a face-to-face conversational engagement between two parties. Questions were asked by the interviewer to elicit responses that could be analysed qualitatively in the research situation. This approach was in line with what the present study initially intended (see Chapter 1), in that the principal, teachers, parents and learners were participants in the interviews. Semi-structured interviews were recommended for this study because they allow for probing and the clarification of answers. Furthermore, Thomas (2017) points out that a semi-structured interview needs an interview schedule, which comprises a list of issues that should be covered. This enables the researcher to get the best of both worlds afforded by the semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, in the present study the researcher drew on research data relevant to the research project in terms of environmental location, social inequality and the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. This is discussed in more detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, which concerns the data presentation and a discussion of the findings.

There are several approaches to qualitative research to choose from. According to Thomas (2017), the approach is not only about using a particular type of approach, but about how you think about the social world as a researcher. Education and the social sciences are hugely varied and complex in terms of people's interest, which range across different kinds of individual and social behaviour.

Diverse approaches to qualitative research methods include phenomenology, ethnography, case study, grounded theory, life history, narrative analysis, oral history, discourse analysis, action research, heuristic enquiry, and biography (Ary et al., 2010; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015). One has to make a choice from one of the aforementioned approaches. Of all the approaches, Johnson and Christensen's (2008) explanation of phenomenology best described what this study entailed regarding methodology. It therefore went hand in glove with the approach that the researcher has chosen. Johnson (2005) states that when a researcher conducts a phenomenological research study, he/she attempts to know or understand how one or more people experience a phenomenon. "The key element of a phenomenological research study is that the researcher attempts to understand how people experience a phenomenon from the person's own perspectives" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 48).

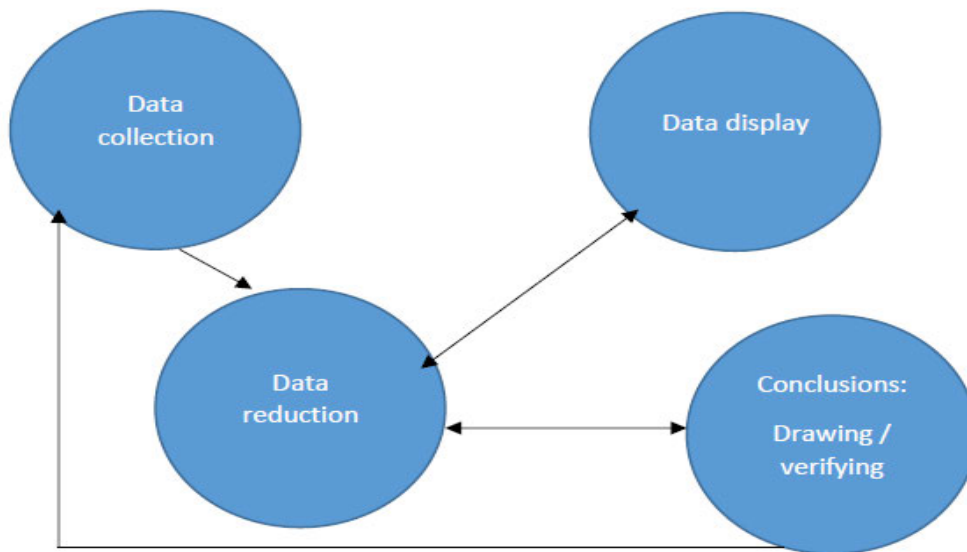
The key reason for the researcher to choose this approach was to conduct a phenomenological study of elementary school students, teachers and parents with a view to unpack the environmental and social factors that contribute to educational inequalities between urban and rural schools. The goal was to enter the inner world of each participant and understand his or her perspectives and experiences regarding the phenomena.

As indicated above, the participants of the present study come from different (geographical) locations – that is, urban and rural. In South Africa, there are different types of schools, namely private/independent, public and rural schools.

### **4.2.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research employs a number of methods to collect data. According to Okeke and Van Wyk (2015), the methods include interviews, participant observations and focus groups, indicating an overlap in both analysis and data collection. Schutt (2018) states that participant observation, intensive interviewing and focus groups are the major methods of qualitative research used to analyse data. The process of data analysis involves scrutinising the data to identify key factors and to establish the interrelatedness of the themes (Baijnath, 2008). Ary et al. (2010) refer to data analysis as revolving and reviewing data while being collected, and attempting to synthesize and make sense of what was observed. Schutt (2018, p. 192) states, “Good qualitative data analyses focus on the interrelated aspects of the setting, group, or person under investigation”. In this regard, the social context of events, thoughts and actions becomes essential for examination. The essential element of this study is to investigate the effects of inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning.

In this study, data analysis began during the process of data generation and continued after the process was completed. Lichtman (2013) sees data analysis as an ongoing process throughout the life of a research project, whereby it begins as the researcher begins collecting data. Analysing data can be regarded as an interesting phase in the research process because it relies on creative engagement by the researcher in the production and analysis of ideas (Wilson, 2013). Below is a diagrammatic representation of data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusions:



**Figure 4.1: Components of data analysis: an interactive model (adapted from Wilson, 2013)**

Wilson (2013) describes the process of data analysis in cyclical terms. It is seen as containing three interlinking sub-processes; that is, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. Data collection and analysis are not always separate (Wilson, 2013). Accordingly, collection and analysis are seen to be a simultaneous process in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) concur with Wilson (2013), stating that data analysis consists of three flows of activity, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction happens throughout the process of a project. It is a process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, as well as transforming data that appear in written-up field notes or transcription (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In this study, the researcher decided on what detail of data would be collected even before the data were recorded. Data were collected within the boundaries of the research question (The effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning: a comparative analysis of three primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa).

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) describe data display as organised and sifted information that makes the researcher draw conclusions and take actions. They (2014)

further indicate that conclusion and verification is the last stream of analysis. Accordingly, conclusions are drawn from the beginning of data collection. They are to be finalised when the analysis is completed. In terms of the diagram above, it is important to note that analysis does not always follow collection. It can occur at different points of the research project (Wilson, 2013). According to Naicker (2014), to analyse data earlier is important to select the best elements for later attention in order to prevent data overload. Data collection and analysis are evident on different levels. The level of research strategy, collection and analysis activities feed off each other. In the research, the analysis results of one set of data inform subsequent data collection activities (Wilson, 2013). That is why the process is cyclical because of the interlinking sub-processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and/or verification. The interaction between data collection and data analysis is apparent at a local level.

Qualitative data may consist of many pages of text (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). It is therefore the researcher's duty to find ways to reduce the pages so that it becomes easier to make sense of them. Ary et al. (2010, p. 530) state, "Data analysis involves reviewing the data while they are being collected and attempting to synthesize and make sense out of what is observed". However, Naicker (2014) emphasises the main purpose of data analysis as making sense of the data gathered by theorising it after completion of fieldwork. Accordingly, Merriam (2009) describes making sense of data as the process used to answer the research questions. In the present study, inductive and deductive approaches were used for data analysis. This was done to address the key research questions of the study. The researcher mainly employed inductive analysis to address the key research questions. Deductive was only compared to inductive to see the differences.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) describe the inductive approach as a process of organising data into categories and the identification of patterns (relationships) among the categories. Regarding this process, the themes, categories and patterns emerge from the data. This method is also known as inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning starts with the observations and measures. Inductive reasoning works specifically from observations to broader generalisations and theories. Therefore, the researcher started with the raw data that he collected. He then began to detect patterns and regularities in

the data and formulate some tentative hypotheses to be explored prior to the development of general conclusions. A clear theoretical framework (in this instance, Critical Theory) is necessary to analyse the data, as it is the case with the deductive approach. Deductive reasoning works from the more general to the more specific (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Regarding the inductive approach, the researcher needed to have a clear theoretical framework or a set of concepts beforehand. The framework was used to analyse the data. Since the researcher used observations and interviews for the research project, inductive and deductive reasoning were applicable for data analysis. The researcher had to establish general conclusions based on the facts gathered through direct observation. Regarding deductive reasoning, the researcher had to work from the more general to knowledge that is more specific. Ary et al. (2010) describe deductive reasoning as a thinking process in which one proceeds from general to specific knowledge through logical argument. In its usage (the inductive approach), an open-minded approach is taken to the data and it uses themes emerging from data as tools for data analysis.

*The key difference between these approaches is that in inductive reasoning, the categories emerge from the data, while in deductive reasoning, the researcher starts with a set of categories, which are then used to categorise and organise the data. These two methods of reasoning have a very different 'feel' to them when analysing data. Inductive reasoning, by its very nature, is more open-ended and exploratory, especially at the beginning. Deductive reasoning is narrower in nature but thereby often also more theoretically informed and focused (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 117).*

Regarding inductive data analysis, the first step is to reduce the data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The same occurred in this study, followed by the organisation of data to enable the researcher to start seeing the emergence of patterns and/or themes. The researcher then started looking for categories in the data, followed by coding. A coding framework was developed in order to apply it systematically to analyse the qualitative data. It helped the researcher to classify data accordingly. The researcher then looked for relationships between the categories. The categories, according to Wilson (2013), reduce the total mass of data elicited in order to focus on the information revealed about the identified themes. Wilson (2013) adds that the process will enable the researcher to

identify evidence links in the data to the different categories, organise and inspect evidence, and use the process of informing and developing the themes as arranged by the categories. In terms of the people's situations, the researcher became aware of the effects of social inequalities on a daily basis in the different categories of schools regarding teaching and learning, after the processes were finalised. Moreover, all data files were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in a secure building.

#### **4.2.2 Critical Paradigm**

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) and Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) concur that choosing a particular paradigm is important to determine the researcher's choices regarding the following:

- The type of questions to be asked;
- Observations and investigations;
- Data collection;
- Methodology to employ; and
- Interpretation of the findings.

Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) and Bertram and Christiansen (2014, pp. 21-22) similarly define a research paradigm as "a sort of 'camp', to which a researcher belongs in terms of assumptions, propositions, thinking and approach to research". It is therefore very important to choose an appropriate research paradigm in order to determine the kind of questions to be asked, what can be observed and investigated, how to collect the data, the methodology to employ, and how to analyse the findings. It is important to note that largely the above-mentioned points reflect a particular worldview. This can include natural philosophy; fundamental, existential, and normative postulates; or themes, values, emotions and ethics. In the context of this study, the above questions reflect a particular belief about the social world, what is known about it, and how people can come to know this. These are known to be the basic beliefs taken to define the paradigm (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The way in which we see the world influences the way in which we research the world. A paradigm directs attention to science as having questions, methods

and procedures that underlie and give direction to scientific work. The explanation and analysis of the critical paradigm by Bertram and Christiansen (2014) convinced the researcher to situate this study therein. I also came to realize that the critical research paradigm is one of the emerging research paradigms in educational research, which aims to promote democracy by making changes in different social, cultural, economic, ethical and other society orientated beliefs and systems.

This study focuses on socio-educational inequalities. Correspondingly, critical researchers today aim to transform society to address inequalities, particularly in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and other parts of society that are marginalized. Critical research seeks to explain social inequalities to ensure that individuals take action to change the injustices that occur on a daily basis. Okeke and Van Wyk (2015, p. 61) state:

*As its name suggests, critical research aims to be critical in that it seeks to find out what cannot be accepted as socially or politically responsible in our world and what we can do to change it. The word 'critical' has its origins in the Greek word krinein, which means to discern, reflect and judge. Used in research, it means taking a set of ideas and questioning them, making them problematic by subjecting them to analysis, in order to identify ways of changing them without distorting their essence or meaning.*

Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 29) assert:

*The critical researchers aim to critique and transform society to be more equal and fair. They often use the dialectic method to bring this about. An important aim is that participants must be assisted towards emancipation. Sometimes this takes the form of revealing hidden power relations.*

Therefore, this study is located within a critical paradigm, in order to promote equity, democracy, peace and stability in the education fraternity. From the above explanations, it can be deduced that there is a connection between the critical paradigm and the nature of this qualitative research, in that the researcher's intention is to deal with socio-educational inequalities. Qualitative paradigms help a researcher to find a way of understanding and interpreting the meaning of human interaction or human views (Lichtman, 2013). In the light of what these theorists have articulated and written about

research paradigms, for this study, the researcher realised that what these authors stated about the critical paradigm best matched the purpose of this research study.

According to Cohen et al. (2007), knowledge reflects the interest of the community of scholars operating in particular paradigms. The authors (2007) further indicate that the definition of worthwhile knowledge and modes of understanding are built around the following interests:

- Prediction and control (technical);
- Understanding and interpretation (practical); and
- Emancipation and freedom (emancipatory).

The researcher will only focus on the emancipatory concept as it matches the critical paradigm that is in line with the research study. “The emancipatory interest subsumes the previous two paradigms; it requires them but goes beyond them,” according to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 28). Emancipatory interest deals with praxis, which is an action informed by reflection regarding the aim of emancipation. The main purpose of this interest is to expose the operation of power and to bring about social justice. This interest works together with Critical Theory itself, in restoring consciousness to those suppressed and repressed, and submerged determinants of unfree behavioural patterns.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) indicate that critical paradigm is critical in terms of the unequal and discriminatory ways in which the social world is organised. It can be seen as an umbrella term for a set of different orientations to research, called a “value-determined nature of enquiry”. There are similarities between critical research paradigm and critical literary theory. Higgs and Smith (2002) state that one of the claims of Critical Theory is that people begin to become liberated from all forms of social oppression once they become conscious of how this oppression operates – people learn to ‘spot’ this oppression in action and resist it. “The critical paradigm regards reality as being shaped by social, political, cultural, economic and other dynamics”, state Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 27).

The critical paradigm appeared to be a suitable choice for the present study when the above descriptions were considered in the light of addressing the social inequalities that

exist in different types of schools. The social inequalities originated from the apartheid ideology in the 1940s when the Nationalist Party government came to power. The nature of reality is that human beings are all equal, according to the Constitution of South Africa. It is therefore unfair to treat them differently because of the environmental locations of their schools (rural and urban areas) or their social status. The researcher's ontological stance regarding this study therefore is that schools are centres of education. There should thus not be inequalities between schools in terms of teaching and learning. In the light of this research, the aim of the present study is not only to describe or understand the social inequalities that exist in different schools, but to change the society to become more just or to be more equal and fair, as pointed out by Bertram and Christiansen (2014). The research aims to investigate the environmental and social factors that give rise to educational inequalities between three (one public peri-urban, one public rural and one urban private) schools and how such inequalities affect teaching and learning experiences within this context. This study focusses on the nature of reality based on the real-life situation, for example parents and children in their home setting, and teachers and children in the school context. The reality is that some schools' environments are conducive for teaching and learning while others are not; hence, the research is necessary to highlight the existing inequalities that result in unequal learning for learners from differing socio-economic contexts.

Caputo (2017, p. 504) is of the view that "the driving force dearth of social work research aimed at social justice or social inequality might be more appropriately attributed to social work practice not research methodology". Bowleg (2017, p. 678) states, "Epistemology, the justification of knowledge, shapes methodology and methods, and thus is a vital starting point for a critical health equity research stance, regardless of whether the methods are qualitative, quantitative, or mixed." The epistemological aspect is more concerned about the way the research arrives at knowing the world under investigation by eliciting views, experiences, feelings, opinions, attitudes, as well as the behaviours from participants (Drajea, 2015). The researcher's epistemological ideology regarding the study seeks the answer to the questions: "How, and what can we know?".

Data were obtained from the respondents after conducting research on the environmental and social inequalities that exist between three primary schools (public rural, public peri-urban and urban private). It is important to be aware of the differences in their environments, financial status, distances to school, and other variables that contribute to the inequalities.

The research has uncovered all the inequalities that hamper effective teaching and learning in different types of schools and it has come up with the strategies that could eradicate the inequalities in the affected schools. The researcher was of the view that the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions of the critical model would encourage him to conduct the study in a way that would give a voice to the experiences of people whose voices are usually not heard (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

From this viewpoint, it can also be pointed out that the critical research paradigm is part of educational research. It deals with oppression and inequalities in a society. It attempts to emancipate individuals as well as certain ethnic groups to gain power and be free from the different social, political, economic, ethnic and other barriers that exist within a society. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that critical researchers aim not to just analyse, describe or understand the situation, but rather to change society, to become more just. Adding to this, the authors (2014) indicate that the critical paradigm is critical in terms of the unequal and discriminatory ways in which the social world is organised. It is in this context that the critical paradigm was chosen to analyse the socio-educational inequalities between rural and urban primary schools, in order to show the judgements and changes to society in general.

### **4.3 RESEARCH METHODS**

Cohen et al. (2007) describe research methods as the various techniques and procedures used in the process of gathering data. According to Schutt (2018), qualitative methods refer to a variety of research techniques that share some basic features. Johnson and Christensen (2008) highlight the fact that researchers have to decide on the methods of data collection to be employed to obtain research data from their research participants.

“Any research design may collect both qualitative and quantitative data, but qualitative methods emphasize observations about natural behaviour and artefacts that capture social life as participants experience it, rather than in categories the researcher predetermines” (Schutt, 2018, p. 647). The question that could be asked is whether the data collection methods employed could match the research questions, as stated by Bertram and Christiansen (2014). The researcher’s data gathering techniques match the research questions because they are qualitative in nature and emphasize observations regarding natural behaviour, as referred to in paragraph 4.3.2.

The following data collection methods are employed in this study:

#### **4.3.1 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews**

A data gathering technique employed in this study is interviews. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008, p. 203), “An interview is a data-collection method in which an interviewer (the researcher or someone working for the researcher) asks questions of an interviewee (the research participant).” Ary et al. (2010, p. 379) describe interviews as “some form of direct contact between the people in the same group and the interviewer (the researcher or someone trained by the researcher), who presents the questions to each person in the sample group and records their responses.” Thomas (2017) highlights the three basic sub-types of interviews, namely structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. Each one involves the interviewer in face-to-face contact or telephone contact with another person who is the interviewee. This study opted for semi-structured interview as the only data-gathering tool to be used after careful consideration of the other processes. The rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews is that it provides the best of both worlds regarding interviewing. It combines the structure of a list of issues to be covered, together with the freedom of following up on points, if necessary. This combination makes it the most common arrangement in most small-scale research (Thomas, 2017). “Semi-structured interviews are often favoured where the research is small-scale, since this approach allows the data collected to be manageable in analysis” (Wilson, 2013, p. 68). However, this study is based inside and outside the schools’ classrooms. It relates to the environmental location, social

inequalities and the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. Semi-structured approaches are therefore more suitable for this research. The people involved in the present research include teachers, learners and parents. Only three learners, three teachers, one principal and one parent were selected to participate in each of the three schools selected for the research project. This is a qualification for a small-scale research because of its limited size or extent.

Qualitative interviews are interviews consisting of open-ended questions and they provide qualitative data. They are called depth interviews since they can be used to obtain in-depth information regarding participants' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations and feelings regarding the questions or topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The researcher opted for using open-ended questions to allow the participants to elaborate in terms of their knowledge and/or feelings regarding the phenomena. Open-ended questions require more thought and more than a simple one-worded answer, for example, the school was chosen because the school community (learners, teachers and parents) suits the research project.

Moreover, "In most interview situations, but particularly with younger children, there are a plethora of issues to be considered. Generally, the interviewer is an adult, so the practical issues relate to:

- Establishing trust
- Overcoming reticence
- Maintaining informality
- Avoiding assuming that children 'know answers'
- Overcoming the problems of inarticulate children
- Pitching the question at the right level
- Choice of vocabulary
- Use of non-verbal cues
- Unquestioningly receiving what children think the interviewer wants to hear

(Adapted from Wilson, 2013, p. 68)

Intensive or depth interviewers expect the participants to respond to questions in their own words. This is in line with this study because the researcher wanted them (respondents) to provide their experiences, thoughts, and feelings about the phenomena under investigation. This enables the researcher to listen attentively to lengthy explanations and enables him (researcher) to ask follow-up questions.

Thomas (2017, p. 206) advises that “[i]n order to get the best of both worlds afforded by the semi-structured interview, you will need an interview schedule which is a list of issues which you want to cover”. The interview schedule that the researcher drew up before the interview was a frame of possible questions that led to possible follow-up questions, which also led to probes. Probes are good in the sense that they encourage interviewees to elaborate on their answers. The schedule of questions provides guidance whereby one can deviate a bit to gain more information from the respondents. It allows one to feel free to ask different questions or supplementary questions, if needed. Merriam (2009) is of the view that most interviews in qualitative research are semi-structured. Moreover, interview guides contain several specific questions that the researcher would like to ask everyone, together with open-ended questions that could be followed up with probes (*ibid.*). This is the kind of interview process employed in this study, which allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity to probe and expand on the interviewee’s responses.

Another advantage of the semi-structured interview is to put the researcher in control of the process of obtaining information from the respondents. In this study, the researcher was concerned with obtaining data about the school environment, transportation of the learners to and from school, social inequalities that take place in the classroom and outside, and the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. Therefore, a frame of possible questions, based on the literature review, provided a framework for examining the phenomena to be investigated. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the learners, parents and teachers with a view of curbing social inequalities that are hampering teaching and learning in schools. This enabled all the selected participants to answer open-ended questions and elaborate more if the need arose. The interviews were conducted at locations, which were identified by the participants, and were feasible for both the participants and the researcher.

### **4.3.2 Observation**

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), observation refers to the site of the study, such as a school, a classroom or a community meeting space, where the researcher observes what happens. Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) describe observation as one of the data collection methods used in qualitative enquiry across various research fields, including the social sciences, education, business and health care. The authors (2015) further highlight that the researcher is obliged to use different senses to record what is happening in order to obtain a clear picture of the phenomena investigated in their context. The researcher had to use an observational technique (naturalistic observation) to understand the participants' actions, roles, and behaviours as they occurred in a natural setting with no interference by the researcher.

In line with the above explanations, the site of this study is based in the schools. The researcher decided to select the schools within Motheo District because of their accessibility to him as the researcher. The researcher selected three different types of schools, namely a public rural, a public peri-urban, and an urban private school. They were purposively selected based on their geographical areas and in accordance with the research to be conducted. The researcher decided to employ the observation method as follows:

To observe what was happening at the school and in the classroom where the researcher was able to observe certain things that the teachers and learners might not mention in interviews (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The researcher also decided to observe the physical infrastructure of the classroom; for example, the researcher probed whether the classroom offered adequate space for the teacher to walk around and interact with the learners. Another crucial point that was observed at the schools was the physical environment in which the various schooling contexts were situated; this is primarily because the present study explores the effects of environmental location on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in specific schools. Doing research on the environment includes observing the school's equipment, grounds, as well as the state of the building (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The researcher also observed the physical setting of the school, the educational environment (how the classroom is arranged for

teaching and learning), and the atmosphere or ethos of the school. The rationale for observing all the above-mentioned aspects was to gather information about a wide range of phenomena.

To gather evidence in relation to the above discussion, the researcher visited the site of the study, including the school environment, the classroom and the staffroom. It was important for the researcher to gather first-hand information. Drajea (2015) describes observation as a data-gathering tool, which entails the gathering of data through visually observing. The evidence collected relied solely on the researcher's ability to gather data by using all his senses (Wilson, 2013). The researcher used an observation book to record his observations regarding the physical environment, social interactions, verbal and non-verbal communication, physical activities, and all activities that took place in and outside the classroom. The researcher started observing the children in the morning outside the classroom when they arrived at school. That was done to address the question of the transport they used to and from the school. It was followed by the playing field and then inside the classroom (Lichtman, 2013). However, the researcher's observations started during the briefing session that the researcher had with them, in the classroom, as well as during interviews. During the interviews, observation was in the form of taking notes of facial expressions, body language and gestures. The researcher also took note of their tone of voice as they answered his questions. All that the researcher observed was recorded on the observation book. The type of observation used in this study was unstructured observation. The researcher wrote only what was observed in the playing field, inside a classroom, staffroom, office and the school surroundings. The rationale for using this method was that the researcher wrote a free description of what he observed. However, it was not possible to record everything that was happening. The researcher focussed on the main occurrences related to the research project. For this study, the focus was based on social inequalities, environmental location and the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. This is substantiated by Johnson and Christensen (2008, p. 212) who say, "Researchers record what they believe is important in their field notes (notes written down by observer during and after making observations)."

#### **4.4 SAMPLING**

Okeke and Van Wyk (2015, p. 226) define sampling as “a set of respondents or participants selected from a larger population for the purpose of conducting a survey”. Furthermore, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state, “Sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, events or behaviours to include in the study”. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007), Johnson and Christensen (2008), Schutte (2017) and Springer (2010) define the concept of sampling in almost the same way. Their definitions are intertwined and interrelated.

The researcher's decision regarding the selection of his research participants, as well as the process of selection that he employed correspond with what the authors above have indicated on the subject of sampling. Cohen et al. (2007), Johnson and Christensen (2008), Schutte (2017) and Springer (2010) further identify the kinds of sampling, for example random sampling, purposive sampling, stratified sampling and convenience sampling. Regarding the different kinds of sampling, the most appropriate one for this study was purposeful sampling because it falls within the framework of qualitative research that the researcher chose for his research project. As a qualitative researcher, the research purposefully selected participants and settings. Qualitative researchers, according to Ary et al. (2010), select purposive samples they believe to be sufficient in providing maximum insight and understanding of what is being studied. They have experience and knowledge in selecting a sample of participants they believe could provide the relevant information regarding the topic or setting.

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 60), purposive sampling means “the researcher makes specific choices about which people, groups or objects to include in the sample”. As its name indicates, the sample is chosen for a specific purpose (Cohen et al., 2007). Accordingly, Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) indicate that the concept of ‘purposive’ shows that the research is conducted by a researcher with his/her intention and purpose in mind. An advantage of purposive sampling is to choose small groups or individuals who will be representative of the topic of interest. Purposive sampling requires particular criteria that the participants possess and information that the researcher requires.

Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) are of the view that the researcher selects a purposive sample based on the knowledge of the population and the purpose of the study. This makes it possible for the researcher to choose his own sample, considering his own knowledge of the population, following the aims of the research. Cohen et al. (2007) highlight the fact that the questions regarding sampling usually arise directly out of the issue of defining the population on which the research will focus. These authors (2007) also allude to the fact that as a researcher, you need to be able to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population in a way that ensures that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study. Purposive sample needs to identify, considering the key sampling factors like the size of the sample, accessibility, representativeness, and the sampling strategy to be used. However, the correct size of the sample is determined by the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny (Cohen et al., 2007).

In view of the above statements, in the present study, the researcher decided to employ purposive sampling to select his research participants. Ary et al. (2010) point out that there is no general rule about the number of participants to include in a qualitative study. Of course, practical considerations such as “time, money and the availability of participants influence the size of the sample” (Ary et al., 2010, p. 429). For the present study, the researcher chose a research sample of 24 participants. This was done intentionally from within the research site knowing that they were the key informants who were able to provide insight on the research questions. The size of the sample was determined by the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under study. The participants were chosen to match the study undertaken in a school context, as the research was based on schools. The researcher firstly looked into the situation, which is essential to the study of the problem. This study focusses on the effects that the environmental location and social inequalities have on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in three different types of primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa. The researcher then decided on the people to interview, including principals, teachers, parents and learners, and the settings to observe, that is classrooms, playgrounds and the environment as a whole (Ary et al., 2010). The participants reassured the researcher of their participation in the research project. They were able to

provide their views and their willingness to interact with the researcher, which is evident in the interviews, as indicated in the analysis chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). As a researcher, I selected schools and participants who provided information regarding the social inequalities that hamper teaching and learning, and the techniques to be employed to eradicate the inequalities in the school system.

Table 4.1 hereunder shows the sampling.

**Table 4.1: Sampling profile (school profile)**

<b>Category of school</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>	<b>Number of participants per school</b>	<b>Type of participants</b>	<b>Total number of participants</b>
Public Peri-Urban	1	8	Principal Teachers [HODs] Parents [SGB chairperson] Learners [Grade 7 prefects]	1 3 1 3
Grand total	1	8		8
Urban Private	1	8	Principal Teachers [HODs] Parents [SGB chairperson] Learners [Grade 7 prefects]	1 3 1 3
Grand total	1	8		8
Public Rural (farm)	1	8	Principal Teachers [HODs]	1 3 1

			Parents [SGB chairperson] Learners [Grade 7 prefects]	3
Grand total	3	8		8

The above table indicates the selected sample at school level. The participants were directly involved in the school environment; thus, they were well informed about the factors that affected the school system. Hence, it was the overarching rationale for choosing the above-mentioned participants (Ary et al., 2010).

**Table 4.2: Sample composition**

Category	Number of schools	Number of participants per school	Total number of participants
Public Peri-Urban	1	8	8
Urban Private	1	8	8
Public Rural	1	8	8
Total	3	24	24

#### **4.5 DATA COLLECTION**

There are many instruments that can be used by a researcher to collect data (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015). The instruments help the researcher to gather information, as guided by the research design. Achieving the aims of the research project is dependent on careful consideration of the research tools. Regarding this study, data gathering tools were chosen to fulfil the objectives of the study. The two suitable research tools selected for this study were observations and interviews. The researcher used a tape recorder with the permission of research participants to document the interactions between the interviewer and interviewee. The major objective was to enable the researcher to measure what the interviewees said in order to capture the information and to analyse it

in the research analysis (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015). For the present study, the recording of the interviews took place after school hours, which was from 2 pm to 3 pm. This was done to allow the children's rights to education. A suitable venue was chosen by the participants to allow them to speak more freely in the interview. However, the type of interviews used in this study was semi-structured individual interviews, as stated in Paragraph 4.3.1. It was preferable because it obtains descriptions of the life world of the interviewee to interpret the meaning of the phenomena being investigated (Drajea, 2015) and it is a flexible tool that allows for the probing and clarification of answers. It helps the researcher to discover what he/she was not aware of or what he/she does not know. This tool was also chosen to allow the researcher to continually monitor the progress of the interview, and/or make adjustments or adaptations to the questions, if deemed necessary. Semi-structured interviews were also used to give the participants (principals, parents, teachers and learners) the opportunity to provide more information regarding the subject under study (the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning).

For the present study, the researcher chose semi-structured interviews for the following reason: to guide him and keep the topic in focus. This helped him by ensuring that he (as a researcher) sticks to the topic of the phenomena, which is under investigation. This concurs with Wilson's (2013) statement by indicating that semi-structured interviews are favoured, as it helps to maintain the focus during data collection. Regarding the questions, the researcher had the option of using open-ended or closed questions. According to Schutt (2018, p. 129), "Intensive or depth interviewing relies on open-ended questions". Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that questions for a semi-structured interview be framed considering the prompts and probes. This is done to enable the interviewer to clarify questions or ask the respondents to elaborate. Regarding this study, not more than ten semi-structured interview questions were formulated for the principals, parents, teachers and learners.

#### **4.6 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND SCHOOLS**

The schools were purposively selected. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select the 'best' schools (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015). The schools were chosen based on accessibility and convenience. The phenomena of education inequalities between rural and urban schooling play a critical role in this study. Based on this phenomenon, the selected schools were schools where there was an anticipated willingness of the participants to take part in this research project. The anticipated participants were the principals/deputy [1], teachers [3], parents (SGB members) [1] and learners [3]. However, as pointed out earlier, the schools were also selected based on locality and status. Purposively chosen schools were therefore a public peri-urban school, a rural public school, and a private urban school. These schools are situated in different parts of the city of Bloemfontein and its surrounding. The principals were selected to take part because they were the managers of their schools and had insight into what was happening in schools, generally. A deputy-principal only replaced a principal if he/she was unavailable for the interview. Teachers who are HODs were selected as they work closely with the parents and learners. A teacher was selected if an HOD was unavailable for an interview. Thus, in the interviews, they were all called teachers. They were selected because they had privileged insights into the relevant school policy. Parents who were selected to participate in the interviews were the chairperson of the SGB or a SGB member, if the chairperson was unavailable. The researcher considered them to know about the inner workings of the school. In the interviews, they were called SGB members. The prefects represented the learners of each school, as it was impossible to engage all the learners in the research project. The prefects were all called learners in the interviews, as they represented the learners of the schools. Groenvlei Urban Private School was the only school without a SGB component, which represented the parents. The principal recommended that Buhle, who was the Parent Advisory Committee member and handled parental issues such as parents' meetings and learner discipline, should fulfil the role of SGB member. Buhle also chaired parents' meetings at Groenvlei Urban Private School.

Within these contexts, the target group comprised of principals, teachers, parents and learners. The representation of the population was achieved through appropriate

sampling procedures (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The researcher selected eight participants per school for this study (eight participants' x three schools = 24 participants). The composition of the participants was as follows:

**Table 4.3: Composition of the participants per school**

Type of participants	Number
Principal/Deputy	1
Teachers [HODS]	3
Parents [SGB Chairperson]	1
Learners [Grade 7 Prefects]	3
Total	8

As indicated in the table above, the target participants comprised school principals, teachers, parents and learners in the selected Free State schools. The learners were included in the population, as they experienced the inequalities in schools due to various reasons that will be elaborated on as the research project unfolds.

Furthermore, the Free State Department of Education comprises a large number of public peri-urban, rural and private urban schools. It was therefore impossible to cover the entire province, due to financial reasons. It would also have been a time-consuming exercise. The representation of the population was achieved through an appropriate sampling procedure.

**Table 4.4: Interview order**

Principal	SGB	Teachers	Learners	Total
1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	4 hours

An hour was allocated for each of the above-mentioned groups per school. The total time spent in each school was four hours. Therefore, the total time for data collection was four

hours x three schools (4 hours x 24 participants) = 96 hours. This indicates that it was two days per school, whereby the four hours were broken into two days in order to ensure that the interviews were achievable.

#### **4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics is an essential part of the research process in regard to all aspects of the study. Akaranga and Makau (2016) define ethics as a branch of philosophy dealing with people's conduct and guiding norms or standards of people behaviour and their relationship with each other. "The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be the primary consideration in any research study", according to Stevens (2013, p. 11). Stevens (2013) further states that the ethical considerations of qualitative research are empirical, theoretical, and permeate the qualitative research process. The ethical issues that cropped up during the process of fieldwork was addressed. The issues related to preserving the anonymity of the informants (the respondents), the schools, as well as the issues related to confidentiality. In a study among schoolchildren, Gaillard (2012) recognised that it is not possible for the researcher to guarantee that all group members will treat the information of other persons with the respect that it deserves. It was the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that group members were alerted to the importance of confidentiality (ibid.). Participants were therefore encouraged to maintain confidentiality and were made aware of possible confidentiality risks that might crop up, as well as the immediate and long-term consequences thereof.

Outlining some of the major principles associated with ethical conduct (Drajea, 2015, p. 140) includes issues such as:

- No harm to participants;
- Privacy and anonymity of participants;
- Confidentiality of information gathered from participants;
- Informed consent from participants;
- Rapport and friendship initiated by researcher;
- Appropriate behaviour by researcher;

- Data interpretation by researcher; and
- Data ownership and rewards.

The principles common to qualitative research, according to Okeke and Van Wyk (2015), include informed consent, confidentiality, autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence. It was important for the researcher to conduct his research in an ethically responsible way. In line with the policy on conducting research, the researcher first applied for an ethical clearance certificate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal before the study commenced. The researcher obtained a signed ethical clearance certificate issued by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (sees Appendix 11[K]) to ensure that the above principles were adhered to. It is the duty of researchers to protect participants from harm and to respect their autonomy and uphold their wellbeing (Kang & Hwang, 2021). In this study, the findings were not used to harm the participants. The researcher also had to be conscious of the ethical issues that pervaded the research process and examined his personal philosophical orientation towards those issues. As indicated by Kang and Hwang (2021), the well-being of research participants was a top priority in this study. The research question was always of secondary importance. This is emphasized by Steven (2013), who states that the research aims of any study ought to benefit society and minimize social harm. The researcher prioritized the ethical consideration of the participants.

Researchers are obliged by ethical conduct to uphold privacy and confidentiality during research (Kang & Hwang, 2021). The participants were assured of their privacy, anonymity and confidentiality regarding the information gathered from them. Since the participation was voluntary, the participants could withdraw from participation at any stage and they were given the option of commenting or not commenting on particular issues. The researcher was aware of the participants' identity, and therefore took the necessary steps to protect their identity (confidentiality) (Kang & Hwang, 2021). Akaranga and Makau (2016) define anonymity as not identifying participants' cultural background or ethnicity and not using their real names in the research project. In this study, pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' real names and the information given by them.

According to Kang and Hwang (2021), it is the responsibility of researchers employing observation and interviews to inform participants of the nature of the study. The researcher formulated consent forms (see Appendix 7[G]) and wrote to the parents seeking permission for their children to participate in the research project. This was done to abide by upholding informed consent. Stevens (2013) reminded researchers to ensure that the reporting and dissemination of information or results ought to be carried out in a responsible manner. The reporting and dissemination of research findings must be done in a responsible manner. It is, therefore, important to note that if certain ethical steps are compromised, the study could likely produce results that include some degree of bias (Springer, 2020). All the steps to ensure ethical conduct were followed in this study.

Gatekeeper permission letters were also addressed to the principals and SGBs of the sampled schools, requesting access to schools to interview teachers and learners (Appendix 2[B]). A detailed letter of consent for anybody who was selected to participate in the research was also issued (Appendix 8[H]). It was only after the letters were read, understood and a participant consent form was signed by the relevant parties (see Appendix 10[J]) that the researcher proceeded to conduct his study. He had to ensure that the selected respondents treated all circumstances carefully while encouraging meaningful participation. He had to act in ways that benefitted the participants and at the same time promoted their safety and welfare (Kang & Hwang, 2021). Furthermore, the researcher had to ensure that the participants were not ethically compromised (Springer, 2020). Moreover, the participants were assured that the data gathered would be used for the sole purpose of research. Finally, the participants were assured that the data would be kept in a safe cabinet at the University and would be destroyed after five years.

#### **4.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Lemon and Haynes (2020) indicate that trustworthiness criteria were found to be a means to evaluate qualitative research. They (2020) further state that the intricacies to ensure the validity of qualitative research are not a weakness, but rather rest upon the investigator's extraordinary power to picture and question the complexity of the social reality investigated. Memela (2019) views trustworthiness as the level of assurance,

which researchers in the qualitative approach should have in their data generation and analyses. However, Thabede (2017) adds that since qualitative researchers opt for trustworthiness, qualitative studies should be achieved by paying attention to the study's credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. This is supported by Pramoney (2018), who states that Thabede's (2017) model, comprising four criteria, is good for ensuring trustworthiness. The model of Thabede (2017) was used in this study to ensure trustworthiness. Firstly, the researcher ensured credibility by observing ethical practice such as confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation. An example of this is that the researcher assured the participants of the anonymity of their contribution. The researcher further informed them that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions that were asked (Kunene, 2020). The independent status of the participants was also emphasised. The participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time without disclosure of an explanation to the researcher was clarified. This resulted in them talking freely about their experiences and contributing ideas without fear of losing credibility in the eyes of the researcher. Credibility determines the qualitative researcher's confidence in the truth of the research study's findings (Statistics Solutions, 2022).

However, it is of paramount importance for the researcher to know that his/her findings are true. In this study, the researcher used triangulation to indicate that the study's findings were credible. Furthermore, the researcher kept field notes, accurately and detailed, to check if there were variations in responses over the course of time (Kunene, 2020).

On the one hand, Cope (2014) defines dependability as data constancy over similar conditions. This means that the researcher's process and descriptions would determine the study's dependability based on the findings replicated with similar participants in similar conditions (Cope, 2014). In this study, dependability issues were addressed by providing all the processes of the study in details, to ensure that the readers gained an understanding of all the steps undertaken to reach the findings.

Confirmability refers to the quality of the results produced by an inquiry, and how well they are supported by informants (participants) involved in the study (Williams, 2018). Confirmability in this study was addressed through the member checking (informant

feedback) technique to ascertain if the participants agreed with the recorded version of the interviews. This was done at the conclusion of the study when the informants were given the opportunity to check the authenticity of the work. Triangulation was used to promote confirmability (Prammonee, 2018). In this context, it (confirmability) was used to reduce the effects of the researcher's bias.

#### **4.9 VALIDITY**

How accurately a method measures what it is intended to measure is referred as validity (Middleton, 2019). Middleton (2019) further states that research with high validity produces results that correspond with the characteristics, properties and variations in the physical or social world. Okeke and Van Wyk (2015, p. 461) assert, "The research design of the study and data collection need to attend to the validity of the results thoroughly, otherwise the whole work will be in vain". To obtain useful results, it is important to use validity methods to collect data (Middleton, 2019). In order to ascertain validity, the researcher decided to use two different types of data collection tools – observations and interviews. These tools were used to gather data from a sample in three selected primary schools (one public rural school, one urban private school, and one public peri-urban school) in the Free State Province. Regarding the observations, the researcher visited the site of the study, a school and a classroom, to observe what was happening there. That gave the researcher first-hand data (participants' actions, roles and behaviours). The principals granted permission for the observations. In this regard, Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 84) state, "In educational research this might be a school and a classroom where she will see things that the teachers and learners might not talk about it in the interviews". The researcher chose observation as a technique because according to Ross (2018), it provides the most accurate information and data regarding people, their tasks and their needs. Furthermore, in this study the researcher used this method naturalistically to gain better ecological validity (Bhasin, 2020) and to supplement and collaborate the research findings (Jamshed, 2014). Observational research findings are regarded as strong research techniques in validity because they help the researcher to collect in-depth of information on a particular behaviour (Prammonee, 2018). In this study,

the researcher was able to use observation techniques to collect in-depth information regarding variables that include learner transport, schooling infrastructure, the ratios, and the school environment. Validity reflects on the true findings that represent the phenomenon that the researcher endeavours to measure (Janak, 2019). Bosman (2015) states that validity and reliability establishes the truthfulness, credibility and believability of findings. In this study, the researcher had to be faithful and truthful in dealing with the data for the purpose of analysing and presenting the findings.

The second tool used in this study was interviews:

*An interview is a face to face conversational engagement between two people where questions are asked by the interviewer in order to elicit responses that can be analysed within qualitative research (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015, p. 297).*

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 409) state, “[t]he interviews is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard”. The researcher opted for semi-structured interviews as another data generation instrument after careful consideration of the other processes. Maree (2007, p. 87) says, “[t]he semi-structured interview is commonly used in research projects to corroborate data emerging from other data sources. The semi-structured interview allows for the probing and clarification of answers. Its interview schedule defines the line of inquiry. It needs the researcher to be attentive to the responses of the participants in order to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that we are directly related to the phenomenon being studied.” In this study, the researcher was attentive to the responses of the participants. It is therefore clear, according to Naicker (2014), that the semi-structured interview is a tool, which is used by the researcher if he/she is not aware of what he/she does not know.

Data gained from literature were analysed, synthesized and placed within the context of the research problem. As this research study adopted observations and interviews, the instruments were triangulated to facilitate the collection of valid data. An accepted method of ensuring validity, according to Bosman (2015), is to use the triangulation data collection method to enhance confidence in the validity of the findings. The aim of using triangulation in this study was to increase confidence in the findings by confirming the proposition using two or more independent measures or approaches (Heale & Forbes, 2013). The

researcher in this study was a principal at a rural school in the Motheo District for 16 years. Drawing from that experience, working particularly with parents in rural areas, he observed that parents are more willing to talk than to write. Therefore, the parents were also interviewed. The interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the interviewees. The parents, teachers and learners were in a better position to interpret the situation and were readily available. The Statistical Consultancy Service of the University of KwaZulu-Natal was approached for assistance in the analysis of the transcribed data. The information received was summarized in tables, with clear descriptions and an analysis of the results. Thematic analysis was used, as it is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research.

#### **4.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The limitations of this study are related to its focus regarding the following specific areas: the approval of the application to conduct a research project at the selected schools by the Free State Department of Education, the participants, the area where the study was conducted, the type of primary schools engaged, the rural versus urban and private divide, as well as the duration of the field of study.

The study only focused on the principals, teachers, parents and learners of the three selected schools in the Free State Province. Since the study encountered limitations, attempts were made to overcome them. Firstly, teachers could not be interviewed during school hours due to the policy of the Department of Education. As a result, we agreed to hold interviews during breaks or after school hours.

However, often times the interview schedule was disrupted by school meetings that were held during breaks and after school hours. At other schools, especially the public rural school, the teachers use private transport, which they organised to transport them to and from their school. The interview schedule was disturbed because when the transport arrived (after school hours), we had to stop and postpone the interview to a later date.

The third limitation was the issue of parents (i.e. SGB chairpersons). The parents did not arrive on time and some did not arrive for the interviews due to transport problems. For those who could not make it for interviews, they were postponed.

The fourth limitation related to the learners. The learners were interviewed after school hours because of the policy of the Free State Department of Education. The interview schedule in this regard was disrupted by the learner transport, which was organised by the Department of Education for public rural schools. When it arrived, the schedule had to stop. Similarly, those who were fetched by their parents had to leave as the parents had to go back to work and could not wait for interviews to be completed. To resolve this matter, we had to postpone and re-schedule for a later date in order to complete the interviews.

The fifth limitation of the study was the issue of financial constraints. The Free State Province is rural in nature, and the schools located far apart, which increased the travelling costs to conduct the research. However, my budget was established in such a way to accommodate unforeseen expenses and it came to my rescue. For example, a public rural, a public peri-urban and an urban private school were part of this study.

The sixth limitation was the issue of school principals. As heads of educational institutions, they had many commitments and could not make it for the interviews. To remedy the effects of this limitation, the researcher requested that the interviews be conducted during the holidays or after school hours.

The seventh limitation that was of great concern was the approval of the research project by the Free State Education Department. The project took almost six months to be approved by the Education Department. Therefore, time constraints to conduct research at schools were considered as a limitation. The engagement of the supervisor by the researcher became a solution to that effect.

#### **4.10.1 Duration**

The time spent in the field was more than five weeks, starting on 28 January 2019, of which not all the days were utilised for the research. Weekends did not count as people liked to be with their families, and they needed a break. Sometimes, the researcher came across so-called 'unannounced visits' by officials of the Education Department and his appointments had to be cancelled and postponed until further notice.

#### **4.10.2 Bias**

According to Cohen et al. (2007), bias arises because of the informant, the researcher, and the interactional encounter. Various scenarios surround the issue of bias in qualitative research. In this study, a tape recorder was used to record all the information. The whole spectrum of the population was not considered and the results could be considered illegitimate. The study only focused on primary schools.

### **4.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, research issues such as methodological aspects and the design (namely, the involvement of participants, data analysis and methods) employed in this study were highlighted. Ethical issues were also considered. Moreover, observation and interview techniques were discussed and explained.

This methodology chapter (Chapter 4) also provided criteria for the purposive selection of the schools. Furthermore, the interview and observation techniques were considered, especially interviews, whereby the interviewee was enabled to engage in the phenomenological enquiry about the effects of social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning: a comparative analysis of three primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

The chapter that follows (Chapter 5) will deal with the presentation and discussion of the findings.

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE THREE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented the research design and methodology that underpins this study. In this chapter (Chapter 5), as well as in Chapters 6 and 7, the researcher will further discuss the themes and sub-themes as outlined in Chapter 4. These chapters are guided by the three primary research questions, and they are arranged as follows:

Chapter 5 is based on the first research question, which is about the environmental and social factors that contribute to educational disparities in, and between, three (public peri-urban, public rural and urban private) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

Chapter 6, which is the second of three data analysis chapters, is based on the second research question on how economic inequalities affect teaching and learning in three different schooling environments.

Chapter 7 is the third of the three data analysis chapters and is based on the third research question on how environmental and social factors influence the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within these schools.

#### **5.1.1 Organization of Chapter 5**

In this chapter, the research data is arranged and discussed under the following themes and sub-themes:

## Theme 1: Teaching and learning environments

### Sub-themes:

- (i) Classroom sizes
- (ii) School buildings

## Theme 2: Social factors

### Sub-themes:

- (iii) Family structure
- (iv) Learners' attitudes to learning
- (v) Parental involvement

## Theme 3: Management Structures

### Sub-themes:

- (i) School management structures
- (ii) Policies
- (iii) Meetings

## **5.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

A school environment must be conducive to teaching and learning. According to Stadler-Altman (2015), the physical environment of the classroom can influence the way teachers and students feel, think and behave. The physical learning environment further influences the nature of learning and interactions between the student, teacher, content, equipment and technologies (Sithole, 2017). Some of the factors that influence the teaching and learning environment in the researched sites are discussed below.

### **5.2.1 Classroom Sizes**

Consistent with Anghelanche's (2013) research, in the present study it was similarly found that factors such as classroom size, space and student-classroom relationships have a

negative effect on student performance. Classroom size plays a vital role in teaching and learning at school level. The desks in the classroom must be arranged in such a way to encourage students' interaction with one another, in order to enable them to contribute to active learning (Sithole, 2017). Moreover, the ratio of learners to teachers is very important to ensure good performance of the learners. Modisaotsile (2012) highlights this point by indicating that the ratio of learners to teachers is sometimes too high and that it makes it difficult for them to accomplish their tasks. Teachers in small classes pay greater attention to individual learners. There is more one-on-one interaction in smaller classes where teachers are able to attend to learners individually (Kornfeld, 2010).

Resonating with the above, in the present study, Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School added to this debate when she said the following on the pupil-teacher ratio:

*1:48 is too much because there is no individual attention.*

Modisaotsile (2020) is of the view that 25 to 35 learners in a classroom are too many for a teacher; thus, some of them fall through the cracks in the system. A classroom environment, which is spacious and conducive, could contribute to effective teaching and learning, and could enhance effective interaction between students and teachers (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2015).

Pulane, also a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, accentuated the above point by saying:

*According to the Department of Education it has to be 1:30, but here you find it is 1:48, some of the classes are 1:58. It depends on the grade. Grade 7 is 1:48 (Pulane).*

Evident in the above statement is that in Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, the pupil-teacher ratio exceeds the Education Department's prescribed norm by almost 100 percent. This negatively affects the teaching and learning experience in that the higher learner numbers in the classroom lower the morale of teachers and have a negative effect on teaching and learning. Kornfeld (2010) contends that teachers in small classes have higher morale, which creates a supportive learning environment (Kornfeld, 2010). Bakasa (2011) similarly indicates that small classes are important for increased achievements by

pupils. Bakasa's view was supported by Alex, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School:

*Numbers? You are talking about number-wise? The grade 6's are our biggest group. They are about 25 in a class and Grade 5's – 14. That definitely makes a difference, the sizes of the class, because you have more time to get to children that are struggling; that let's say in a class of 25, you have a 50/50 percent chance – you have 50 strong learners still with 12 learners that are struggling. To give 2 to 3 minutes to each learner that is struggling, then you are sitting with 36 minutes gone. And with the smaller class obviously there is 14. Let's say you still have a 50/50, let's make it 7; it's a lot easier to give 7 children three minutes each, then you are on 21 minutes, closer to 30 mark. So, there is more time to give individual attention.*

Nic, who is also a teacher at Groenvlei Urban Private Schools, shared the same sentiments:

*We are lucky here. If I can say we have about an average 25 learners per one teacher. We have classes that have got 16/17 kids in; so we are very fortunate at this stage still to have not that many learners in a class. The individual attention is better. In my subject in Robotics; it's one robot – two children. Last year we had the grade 5's, which were 27 in a class. Then you have to put three or four in a group; then it gets difficult, because who will do the work and stuff like that. I have to give one-on-one attention, so in a group it becomes difficult if it is more learners (Nic).*

Staff Writer (2018) argues that ratio is one of the selling (marketing) points for private schools, as they boast that smaller class sizes allow for individual attention and innovative methods of teaching. Kieschnick (2018) adds to this debate by stating that a smaller class size allows the teacher to interact with students on a one-on-one basis and small group instruction. In order to make sure that teachers attend to all the needs of all students, it must be possible for them to work with small groups and individuals (Long, 2011).

It is evident that Groenvlei Private School's classes have a manageable number of learners. This is emphasized by Lydia, a teacher from the private school, who said:

*The grades 7's at the moment are 15 and 16, so 15:1, 16:1. The class is manageable, and we are only allowed to go up to 25. That's our policy.*

Adding to the above, Buhle, a member of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) of Groenvlei Urban Private School, had this to say:

*When you get inside the classroom, there is nothing dangerous for the learners and it's conducive, even the numbers. They are 15 in class. It is not overcrowded (Buhle, PAC, Groenvlei).*

In Bloemfontein, the province in which the research was conducted, there are rural schools that experience challenges regarding class size because of a lack of schools in the area where they are located. Teachers find it difficult to monitor learners' behaviour and manage the activities occurring in overcrowded classrooms (Muthusamy, 2015). A teacher from Jahman Public Rural Primary School gave evidence to this effect:

*Mine is 1:30. It is not bad. It is manageable. That is why it was divided. Earlier in January, it was one class consisting of 60 learners. It was difficult for us to control, monitor or supervise (Kalawe).*

Muthusamy (2015) further argues that large classes have the following constraints:

- Limited space for movement around the classroom;
- The workload of teachers;
- Restricting learners from participating actively in the learning space; and
- Limited chances to meet learners' individual needs for self-activity, motivation, and socialization.

The above statement is in line with Stadler-Altmann (2015), who stresses that classroom conditions, how teachers position themselves in a classroom, how they move through a classroom, and how their body language is expressed therein have an influence on the lessons being taught.

Mege's (2014) argument is that the class size's influence has a great impact on the process of teaching and learning. Emphasising this, Mege (2014) states that while smaller classes are easy for the interaction between a teacher and the learners, it is not easy for the teacher to move freely to assess learners' work when they do exercises in large classrooms. Comments made by Kalawe, (a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School) regarding class size (the number of learners in the classroom) was supported by Sylvia

(a member of the SGB from the same school), who commented as follows:

*Grade 1 learners are more than 50 in a class and their teacher is nearing retirement. We do not have extra classes to divide this grade into two classes so that an extra teacher can be allocated to the school.*

The above statements show that there is an evident challenge regarding the classroom sizes in both the rural and public primary schools that were researched. As a result, it affects the performance of the learners. If class size is increased, it impacts negatively on student achievement (Keil & Partell, 2019). This statement supports Sithole's (2017) findings that the learning space and the school environment affect students' learning. It is evident that the learning space is inadequate to cater for grade one learners because Sylvia (a SGB Member from Jahman Public Rural School) added that the school did not have extra classes to divide the grade 1 learners into two classes. Thus, the abovementioned findings are reinforced by the situation in Bloemfontein schools. Moreover, Muthusamy (2015) indicates that research has shown that overcrowded classrooms are still a serious challenge in South African schools. This is supported by Pulane (a teacher from Kganya Public School) who said that there were 58 learners in some of the classrooms at the School. This supports Sithole's (2017) earlier findings that students' learning is affected by the learning space and the school environment.

The classroom environment plays a critical role in teaching and learning. The ratio of learners in a class relates to the environment in which teachers teach and learners learn, which results in the good or poor performance of learners. Critical Theory indicates that the way in which education is organised (Chapter 3) determines the way educators and learners think. However, the ratio between the three different types of researched schools, as indicated above, differed from one school to the other. The ratio of Kganya Public School ranged from 1:48 to 1:58 and Jahman Rural School Primary School with 1:30 to 1:50, as opposed to Groenvlei Private School with its ratio ranging from 1:15 to 1:25 learners in a class. This indicates inequality in the public and the rural school under study, which negatively affects the learners and the teachers. Moreover, departmental authorities have not turned around the situation, as recommended by Critical Theory.

## 5.2.2 School Buildings

Lesiko et al. (2010) assert that the physical condition of a school has an influence on student achievement. Adding to this view, Kate, a SGB member of Kganya Public School explained:

*...the conditions are not good; because it's not good, we have tried our level best, like we had leaking ceilings, broken lights, etc.*

Elaborating on the classrooms, Kate had the following to say:

*There are other classrooms with cracks because it is an old school, but if you compare it with the past, it was worse than what you saw. The doors were also broken. So, we are trying as an SGB to fix it. Like now, there is a class with a broken door and we have requested a quotation for it. The problem, which is beyond us, is the electricity for another block of classrooms. If it is cold like it is now, we feel bad because there is no way that heaters could be used and it is the competency of the Department of Public Works. We have been promised for a long period of time (Kate, SGB member, Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

Moreover, a Department Head at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said:

*Vandalism is rife. I've got copies of my office which was vandalised. They break doors and windows. Our cupboards can't be closed, because they are always broken. They also break the burglar bars. You can't keep anything valuable in your office (Tsamai, HOD, Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

The aforementioned statements made by the participants support Mege's (2014) findings that the physical facilities, instructional materials, class size and school location are some factors within the school environment that were found to have an influence on the process of teaching and learning. The parties who are affected by these variables are learners, teachers and parents.

Arshad et al. (2019) argue that school infrastructure is an integral part of effective teaching and learning in schools, and it ensures successful education. Zainuddin and Subri (2017) further state that the design features and components of the building, such as adequate classrooms, as well as the age of the building, have an influence on the student-learning

process. One of the participants, the SGB member at Jahman Public Rural School, said:

*Our buildings meet the basic infrastructural requirements, but they are not adequate. We have recently been provided with two mobile classes, but they do not have electricity. In winter, teachers teach these learners in the sun. Some of these classes have doors and lights, but others do not. Plugs are not working to light heaters. These mobile classes are sub-standard structures, and are made of asbestos. There seem to be lease agreement between the pastor and the Department of Education as this site belongs to the church. This seems to be a lease agreement and therefore the Department cannot build here (Sylvia).*

Sylvia's argument above adds to Thabede's findings that inadequate infrastructure retards the progress of learning if the learners' needs are not addressed in the classroom. On the same issue, Lesiko et al. (2010) say that school facilities have an impact on teaching and affect student learning. The idea is also supported by Alhaggass (2015), who says that the physical conditions of the learning venue (the classroom) can greatly affect learning. Moreover, it is common knowledge that private schools are better off in terms of the availability of physical facilities than public schools (Sabitu et al., 2012). This view was reinforced by Buhle, a member of the PAC at Groenvlei Private School, who said:

*They are conducive because you can even check here. When you get inside the classroom, there is nothing dangerous for the learners and it is conducive, even the numbers. You can't say you are afraid to take your son to this school (Buhle, Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

It is evident from this statement that most of the resources in the researched urban private school (Groenvlei) are in a better condition than most of the public and rural schools. According to Awan (2015), parents make the choice of a school, based on their observation regarding the condition of the school building and the knowledge offered at the school. Regarding the difference in terms of the physical resources between private and public schools, Isaacs (2020) argues that private schools are well constructed, including their sports facilities; however, public schools are lacking in terms of their physical resources, with no developed sports fields. This means that public and rural schools are and have been marginalised for long regarding their physical resources.

An organisation is a system that changes with the times in its environment, both internally and externally (Chapter 3). In this instance, the research findings regarding the school buildings indicates that nothing has changed in the researched public and rural schools; hence, the status quo remains. According to my observations at the three schools, only Groenvlei Urban Private School was well resourced, including in regard to its school buildings. The school buildings of Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School were dilapidated and not in a good state compared to Groenvlei Urban Private, which had attractive buildings, which were well maintained.

### **5.3 SOCIAL FACTORS**

Social factors are the variables that influence a person's attitudes, personality and lifestyle. According to Betts (2016), social factors refer to things that affect an individual's lifestyle, which include education level, wealth, family size and structure. Abdelhak and Ladi (2019) indicate that some of the social factors adversely affecting teaching and/or the learning environment are students' attitudes, cultural background, and a lack of motivation. Additionally, organizations and clubs, sports activities and romantic relationships have been found to have an effect on the academic performance of students (Umar et al., 2010).

According to this study, the social factors cumulatively contributing negatively to the performance of the learners are:

- Family structure,
- Learners' attitudes to learning, and
- Parental involvement.

#### **5.3.1 Family Structure**

Panico (2012) indicates that most people regard the classic nuclear family structure as a family. Daniels (2017) describes family structure as a number of responsible adults staying together with their children and performing their parental duties towards them.

Family structure and family changes affect the performance of learners at school. The involvement of parents is very important in supporting the academic success of their children, regardless of their age (Daniels, 2017). This is supported by a learner from Jahman Public Rural School who said:

*I'm no longer staying with my mother as she is staying in Fauresmith and she is staying alone. My father has passed on. My sister works at Protea Hotel in Bloemfontein. We are three: myself, my sister and the other lady staying together. I'm staying at a shelter called Bolokanang near Uitkoms School (Norma).*

Another learner from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School shared the same sentiments:

*At our home, we are six. I stay with my sister, grandmother, uncle and two small children (Nthabi).*

Marripedia (2020) argues that children who do not live with both biological parents perform at a lower level than their counterparts because of a lack of support. This is in line with my observation and the information I gathered as a researcher. This is substantiated by Olaitan's (2017) research, which investigated the extent to which family structures, specifically single parent families and two-parent families, affect academic performance. The statements of the two learners above (Norma from Jahman Public Rural School and Nthabi from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) support Marripedia's (2020) argument that children who do not live with both biological parents perform at a lower level than their counterparts.

Bernardi and Boertien (2017) concur with Marripedia (2020) saying that children growing up without biological parents are associated with poorer educational outcomes. These living arrangement patterns have negative implications for the well-being of the child (Brown et al., 2015). The present research found that all the children interviewed from Groenvlei Urban Private School stay with their biological parents. This is evidenced by a learner from Groenvlei Urban Private School, who said:

*Sir, I stay with my whole family. My mom and my dad, my little brother and my older brother. The boys in the house are Swati and my mom is Zulu and Sotho (Saby).*

Pale, who is also a learner at Groenvlei Urban Private School, shared the same sentiments:

*I have an older sister and an older brother. And I have a younger brother; he is in grade 1 here at the school. My older brother is in boarding school and my older sister is at university doing her last year. I stay with my mom and my dad and younger brother at home.*

Similarly, Moss who also attends Groenvlei Urban Private School said:

*I stay with six at home. My mom, my dad, my three sisters and I.*

The above statements show that the learners stay at their homes with both their parents. Marripedia (2020) argues that children from single parent families and cohabiting families are likely to achieve lower scores than children who stay with their biological parents.

When asked about the percentage pass rate of the class, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, responded as follows:

*In March (2019) learners performed well, but now the pass rate is 50%, because my class has increased to 28. Fourteen learners passed and fourteen failed. Some of the learners really need to be in grade 4, though I can't remember the number. Only 20 learners can perform at the expected level. Our performance is also negatively affected by a high level of absenteeism. When formal tasks and examinations are administered, learners just don't come to school; they literally run away (Happy).*

In answering the same question, a teacher from the same school had the following to say:

*As a whole, learners are not performing well. They obtain between 20 and 30%. But in December they perform fairly well, because they are assisted by promotion guided by the policy of moving with your age cohort. So, this practice pushes the pass percentage up to between 60 and 70%. There are no interventions during the year to assist learners from the district office; hence, the application of this policy of moving with your age cohort (Cathy).*

Similarly, another teacher from the same school said:

*How do we calculate this because I've got one learner passed in my class? In other classes, it is three. I am not sure about the percentage pass rate, but Mme (clerk) has got the evidence (Kalawe).*

It is clear from these statements that the learners from Jahman Public Rural School are not performing well. According to Latu (2018), a non-traditional family structure dominates at this school because most of the learners live with single parents, while some stay with relatives: hence, the low scores. Latu (2018) further argues that for the young generation to be successful in all facets of life and to survive all adversities, their life must be built on solid rock.

Alluding to the percentage pass rate of her class, Pulane, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say:

*For the grade 7's the pass rate is 50% or less for obvious reasons because the requirements are for learners to pass maths and two languages. Most of them they come short. Most of them can't read and write in grade 7. Even if they increase we expect them to read and write; unfortunately, that is not the case. Mostly you find them passing creative arts, the technologies, but when it comes to Maths they fail. So, those are the facts for the pass rate (Pulane).*

Khathi, who is a teacher from the same school, said the following:

*I go according to the learning areas. They are failing social sciences because of the language barrier. The foundation was Sesotho. When they get to the higher grade, they cannot construct a sentence (Khathi).*

Similarly, Tsamai, another teacher from the same school, added:

*The pass rate is 47% (Tsamai).*

It is evident from the above discussions that at the time of research, learners from Jahman Public Rural and Kganya Public Peri-Urban Schools were not performing well. Rong'uno (2017) argues that academic performance in private schools is much better than in public schools. This view is supported by Adeyami (2014), who stated that children in private primary schools perform much better than those attending public schools.

Commenting about the percentage pass rate of his class, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School had the following to say:

*...100% at this stage, grade 7 especially, my subjects are not like other subjects, robotics and IT are not compulsory on teaching with tests, and I am teaching them life skills, with using computers. With technology, I had last term one learner that failed, but that's only for the term; it's not for the year mark (Nic).*

Lydia, who is a teacher at the same school, shared the same view:

*It's normally ... last year it's a 100%. I imagine this year, there might be ... maybe at the end of the year ... they are allowed to, if they pass all their other subjects, you have to pass them even if they get 25% for maths. I have to give more than 25%, so I think the pass rate is so low; it's not easy for the grade, especially in senior phase, it's not a grade you like to keep them back in, so if there's potential we see potential. It is preferable to keep them back in grade 6 as opposed to grade 7. Because you know, going over into high school, the whole end year function in the grade 7's life is so huge; so we like to work in our grade 7 class towards a 100% pass rate, unless it is really a child that comes in during the year that we really can't assist. But, maths is a problem (Lydia).*

Alex, who also teaches at the same school, had the following to say:

*In my class, more or less 95%.*

The findings about class percentages expressed in the discussion by the three teachers above showed that the learners at Groenvlei Urban Private School performed better than those at Jahman Public Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School did. This supports Adeyami's (2014) findings that the type of schools attended by learners had a huge influence on their academic achievement. Nato (2016) adds to Adeyami's (2014) argument by saying that family structure has a profound influence on academic performance as students rely on their family for emotional and material support. This is supported by the findings during the time of this research, which revealed that all interviewed grade 7 learners at Groenvlei Urban Private School stayed with their parents, and therefore relied on them for whatever they needed. Drawing from the above discussion, it can be argued that family structure affects the academic performance of learners due to the following factors:

- It determines the type of school attended by the child; and
- It influences the academic performance of the child.

In support of the abovementioned factors, Marripedia (2020) argues that intact biological families tend to earn bigger incomes than their counterparts (non-intact families) and are able to afford the quality and resources of the schools attended by their children. As indicated above, the findings revealed that all Groenvlei School's grade 7 learners stayed with their parents. Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public School learners came from different family structures. This is also evidenced in the performance of the learners from the three different types of schools whereby Groenvlei Private School appeared to be the best performing school compared to Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public School. This is in contrast with Critical Theory's focal point that people must be treated equally, regardless of their colour, race, religion, creed or background. This phenomenon (according to Critical Theory), reflects not only as inequality, but as an educational crisis, which does not receive the attention it deserves from the education authorities.

### **5.3.2 Learners' attitudes to learning**

The attitude of students towards learning is one of the critical issues considered to be important in education today (Borja, 2016). Sen (2013) similarly argues that attitudes towards learning is an important factor that influences learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in the process of learning, their ability to solve problems, their beliefs towards learning, and all other academic performances. The attitudes of learners toward learning determine the achievements of the child. According to the Digest of Education Statistics (2016), the ability and willingness of students to learn is determined by their attitudes to learning. Furthermore, the Digest of Education Statistics (2016) states that in order to change the negative attitudes of students towards learning, factors driving their attitudes must be investigated. Zainuddin and Subri (2017) argue that factors such as environment, convenience, attendance, physical facilities, attitudes and behaviour can have an influence on students' achievement. In support of the above statements, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School said:

*I am passionate about teaching. I have been teaching in Botshabelo for ten years. By then I was enjoying my teaching because during those times discipline was at the required level. Learners were disciplined and I really don't get it because by then you would find that most children in Botshabelo stayed alone, as the parents were working here in Bloemfontein so they only went home during the weekends, but most learners were staying alone and the schools did not have this feeding scheme, but they were eager to learn. I enjoyed teaching very much when I was in Botshabelo. So, in the year 2000, I came here in Bloemfontein. I thought things were going to change, more especially, I thought that Bloemfontein is a city, maybe learners are more at an advantaged position, maybe they have got televisions at home, the resources are there, but to my surprise, Bloemfontein is worse than Botshabelo. Most learners live in shacks, they don't have biological parents, and they stay with their grannies. It's terrible (Tsamai).*

Similarly, here is what a teacher from the same school had to say:

*I love teaching, I love the kids, but this year these kids are very naughty; they are not listening, rowdy, disrupt classes, you scream at the top of your voice and it is terrible. We took some of them to the principal, especially the grade 7's. They are smoking marijuana and whatever. They are unruly. Some sit in the classroom, not writing (Khathi).*

In the same vein, another teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) said:

*The other day the other learner was telling me that he didn't come to school because there was no electricity and so, there was no warm water for bathing and it is winter and the water is cold. Some of them will be absent from school because of sanitary towels. We try by all means as teachers to buy and provide. There are abusive families in most cases; the abuse of alcohol by the families affects the learners a lot. Some of them when you interview them, they start crying, I think the social status affect them a lot. If you are unemployed and you are not working, what can you do? You end up drinking alcohol. The child comes to school to be happy for a few hours and goes back to that environment. I was talking to my colleagues, suggesting if there can be somebody wealthy enough and build enough classrooms, a safety fence around the school so that they can sleep here. They only go home during the school holidays. It would be much better because they will be happy here (Pulane).*

What was said above is the points of view of public school teachers. It could be argued that rural schools are worse, if not the same as public schools, regarding learners' attitudes towards learning. Academic achievement relates to a student's attitude towards learning and school, as it provides better performance through intrinsic motivation (Verešová & Malá, 2016). However, Mapingire (2016) argues that negative attitudes occur because of school structure, the family, teachers' methods, and the students themselves. Here is what a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School had to say regarding learners' attitudes towards learning:

*When we are informed that the learner at home is not staying with the biological parents, we look at the issue of abuse. That is where we identify the learner coming to school untidy. One discovers that the learners of this nature are not treated well by their foster parents. They are being abused physically, emotionally and otherwise. You can identify them easily because of the lack of concentration while you are teaching in the classroom (Kalawe).*

The statement above shows that a learners' attitude can be affected by the circumstances in which they live. This is highlighted by Getie (2020), who argues that social factors do have strong and traceable effects on learners' attitudes towards learning. A teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School) shared the same sentiments:

*Learners travel long distances on foot and arrive at school tired. As such, it's difficult for them to concentrate and others even develop the stubbornness attitude. They even refuse to tell why they are late when asked (Happy).*

She (Happy) added to the above statement:

*Learners whose backgrounds are well grounded socially and economically tend to be disciplined at school. Those with socio-economic problems conversely tend to display various forms of ill-discipline. They display psychological outbursts like anger tantrums and even fight with other learners. Others develop into bullies and make the learning environment uncomfortable for other learners.*

Similarly, Cathy, another teacher from the same school said:

*There's bullying and learners do not respect each other and there are learners who feel they are not recognised by others. Others want to show off their presence and impress*

*upon others to be recognised. Sometimes this behaviour is influenced by the home background, as some parents do not allow their children to raise their opinions. This forces some learners to force recognition and to be listened to by hook or by crook at school. This behaviour by such learners does not end only with fellow learners, but it even extends to teachers, as they also do not respect their teachers. So, bullying is a serious challenge at our school (Cathy).*

The above views shared by the participants in this study are in line with Li and Qiu (2018) who argue that children's learning behaviours are greatly affected by their families, as they are exposed to their surroundings. However, Mapingire (2016) argues that the factors that lead to negative attitudes towards learning include school-based factors, such as school type and teacher characteristics, which entail their qualifications, methods of teaching, teaching aids, and motivation. Regarding Groenvlei Urban Private School, the attitudes of learners are interpreted as follows. This is what a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School had to say:

*Interesting, regarding social status we work with a lot of kids who come from parents who work for government, so they do well and you can say some of them are very spoilt and in that case a bit lazy when it comes to work, but when they start working, they go for it. Then we have learners that if you hear about their background, YouTube, working for government and they travel and all that stuff, they lash out in the sense that they don't get attention at home. I'm sitting with a problem child, but actually the problem comes from home, because he wants attention from home, but there is no love and support from home. Now you have him in class, and when he gets that in class, then he works. We have wonderful and privileged learners. Actually they have food on the table every night (Alex).*

Nic, who teaches at the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School) said:

*(Teacher laughs) I try to adjust my ear because talking for the children are talking there. It's not talking I have a problem with; it's the level of the noise that gets loud. So you just now and then ... OK, OK, because you keep on telling them to keep quiet, they can't. I know that, but it's just trying to tell them that OK, let's just try to keep the noise level back down, either talk softer or we stop it at all. To 20 seconds, then it will just go, so we have to spend a lot of time on handling the social issues.*

Lydia, who teaches at the same school, said the following:

*We have had kids that are either, I am not sure if its estates that have paid out or whatever, they live with other family members. You know sometimes you know they haven't got their packed lunches ... jaaaa, so but I don't know, these kids are so resilient as well. And I suppose, they don't get all the cool things like the other kids, and I would imagine that those, that it must affect them. But, we really don't have much of that at all here (Lydia).*

A member of the SGB, Buhle, of the same school added:

*There was a problem concerning the behaviour whereby they were not doing the schoolwork, etc. Yes, the grade 7's and we were called. We were called for that and as parents we discussed. We came up with different views about the situation. There are rules that are supposed to be followed by the children. The learners know that there are do's and don'ts. What we wanted to know is that for example, with us we know that .... Like as an educator, I know very well that if I do this, there must be something that has to be done. I know if I'm always absent from school, if my children are always failing, I have to do A, B and C. I know there are consequences. So, with learners, you find .... What I discovered myself was that with learners here, it is like a parent and a child. There must be a boundary. I am from the location in terms of the school. There must be a boundary between a teacher and the learner. The learner cannot say whatever he/she wants. You find that the teachers are so close to the learners in so much that the learners sometimes forget and when there is a problem regarding discipline; it ends up being a problem. But, if the learner knows his/her boundary, he knows that if I do this, there are consequences. But, you find that they used to be so lenient to them for a long time and now things become bad this year because of that but when it comes to unity I can say that because we came up and then we said they must check the rules and everything concerning the school. If the learner does this, they know what is going to happen. If it is something that is a misconduct, it's a serious one, maybe the learner brought some stuff like dagga to school, there are because they know very well what is going to happen at the end of the day. So, I saw that unity when we were there because the parents did not like what the children did (grade 7's). There were few parents who complained about their children who were bullied by others and they indicated that they have been reporting the matter to the previous principal several times and nothing was done. According to the*

*way they did not like what those learners did, they were so united during that period* (Buhle).

Critical Theory's view is that learners should act in a way that enables them to transform their societies through emancipatory education. For learners to act negatively towards education is a great concern for the community and leads to poor academic performance. The attitudes of learners, according to the research findings above, are caused by different social factors including abusive families, unemployment and dysfunctional home backgrounds. My observation regarding learners' attitudes to learning at disadvantaged schools suggests that not enough action was taken by the education authorities and stakeholders to assist and encourage learners to engage in practical action to solve the problems they face in their everyday lives (Chapter 3).

### **5.3.3 Parental involvement**

Parental involvement's effects on a child's school performance are positive because it serves to integrate the child's experiences at home with those at school. This supports Haines (2012) findings that parental involvement includes home-based activities, such as discussions on school events, homework assistance and school-based activities, like attending school events and volunteering at school. This view was reinforced by Hanover (the principal from Groenvlei Urban Private School), who stated that the parents and the teachers at their school shared any issues related to the school by using meetings and WhatsApp group, in particular. The principal (Hanover) also highlighted the fact that the parents are very involved and interested in school affairs. This supports Toldson and Lemmons (2013) findings that children's favourable results, such as increased academic achievement and social competence, are positively associated with parental involvement in their education. Adding to this, the present research's findings show that Groenvlei Urban Private School's performance ranges between 95 and 100 percent pass rate compared to Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural Schools with poor performances, which might be caused by poor or no parental involvement. Increased

academic achievement occurs among learners whose parents are involved in their education (Wakiuru, 2016).

There are different areas where parents could be involved, according to Haines (2012):

- Child care and welfare – Learners’ needs, care, and safe keeping;
- Home environment – Assists with homework, reading and spelling;
- School management structures – Helps with management, expertise, finances, and drawing-up of policies;
- School services – Minor repairs and renovations;
- Human capital – Ensures that the school has resources to participate in extramural and co-curriculum programmes.

From the aforementioned areas, this research associates itself with two areas of parental engagement or involvement, namely child care and welfare, as well as home environment.

### **5.3.3.1 Child Care and Welfare**

It is the duty and responsibility of all the parents to be engaged in taking care of their children, in order for them to perform well at school. Emerson et al. (2012) argue that the purpose of parental engagement is not solely for academic achievement, but rather to enhance student wellbeing. This is in line with what a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School said:

*The learners come from poor backgrounds. Some don't even have lunch boxes. No pens, their books are torn. If you are asked to submit, you check good books. Some of the books are not covered. The child cannot do anything because the parents are not involved; they don't care. They say children must go to school; the teachers will see (Khathi).*

The SGB member from the same school shared the same sentiment:

*Uniforms are also a problem. Some of the kids don't have school shoes. So, we are trying to assist them. Every year the Department of Social Development assists us in terms of*

*school uniforms for such kids. I need birth certificates in order to assist them. For some of the parents, it is a challenge to make copies of the birth certificates for their kids. As a result, some don't have access to the uniform donated by the Department of Social Development. We, as teachers, donate some money to buy school uniforms, shoes, etc. when we recognise this situation. The kid will then feel part of the other learners. I know most of the learners' parents and I do communicate with them individually to assist where possible. Some of the parents have many kids. You also find a young parent who was born in 1994 having four children. The parent is unable to take care of them. I had to come to her assistance and give advice for the kids to survive. Some of the parents enjoy alcohol because of the stress caused by their children. When the social workers take the kids for their safety, it becomes painful for the parents. There was a case whereby a young woman was pregnant with her sixth child. We had to take away the other kids. One of those kids was in my class. The social worker dropped the kids at another place for safety. The kids were also not well taken care of in that new home, although the family was benefiting from the grant. We then contacted the social worker to rescue the kids. The social worker was able to sort out that problem. The kids were transferred to another family to take care of them. The kids were recommended to stay with their grandmother. They then started living a better life. Those are the type of kids we have at this school (Kate).*

From the above explanation, one can see that there is minimal parental involvement at this school regarding child care and welfare. Only the teachers try their best to assist the learners.

In the same vein, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School had the following to say:

*There is a very serious poor family background on the part of the learners. Firstly, you are able to identify the child by looking at the untidy clothes (attire) the child is wearing. You are able to see that they don't have anything to buy (Kalawe).*

Kalawe further stated:

*They can't even comb or cut their hair because money is needed. They also can't wash properly to show that there is a problem at home. We are been assisted by donors to help the learners with regards to clothing (Kalawe).*

Another teacher who is from the same school added:

*There are those learners who visibly become lonely, especially like now when food is not served at our school, only to find out that these learners are hungry. It becomes even more conspicuous when you are eating and they are looking at you. For such learners I bring extra food for them from home or buy fat cakes for them at school. For those without uniform, I do buy for them when I can afford to. Some learners do not have birth certificates, but the principal contacted SASA officers to come to the school to assist parents to get IDs so that they can have access to social grants and learners to be registered with Home Affairs for birth certificates. Unfortunately, some parents misuse these grants as their children do not benefit from them (Happy).*

The SGB member from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School) said:

*What I can say is that our SGB is not yet independent and I can say this with certainty, because I'm a SGB member. I initiated donation requests to assist learners as I see them every day; hence, soliciting donations like shoes from volunteers. Learners themselves will attest to the fact that indeed Me Sylvia is doing sterling work to assist us. Shops do not normally accede to our requests for foodstuff, but do not donate clothing like shoes (Sylvia).*

The views expressed above by the participants regarding parental involvement in a child and welfare situation show that public and rural primary schools are in the same boat and therefore share common challenges. Maluleke (2014) argues that socioeconomic status has a great impact on parental involvement.

The principal from Groenvlei Urban Private School referred to parental involvement regarding child care and welfare in the following manner:

*We have a system in place. I call it the f...child. When a child starts and there is a problem, the teacher in the class is number 1. She sees the child does not behave well, or can't concentrate or whatever, then she starts there, saying, listen, the child can't see well. Right, so is it physical, psychological or is it social? And then we go to the management team and they involve others. 'Do you have the same problem in your class with that child?' So then, you get a picture of that child. Is it only in the one class? Or, is it in the grade? The different teachers come then say, 'No, we've got the same problem', then we involve the management team and the parent, then you say "OK, let's see if it is physical'.*

*Maybe the child can't see well. Test the eyes or move the child to the front. You know, those normal things, then you pick up no-no-no... social problem. So we follow that procedure to help and then we also have anti-bullying programmes; we had one before the school closed for the primary schools; specifically a show that they helped them to identify the bully. So, we are all very much involved and especially in the primary school, our teachers are, the headmistress here is qualified, she has got a master's in Psychology. And I've got people here with remedial degrees. They use all of those skills together as a team to help with inequalities. So if it is something like social, the parents get involved; we normally talk to them to say there's a problem here. You know first thing there is denial, then blame-shifting, the whole of the country does that. Then say, let's talk about it, let's find the root cause of the problem, and that is my personal vision also, is to teach people, stop denying, stop blame-shifting. Because what they do in the school, people will ask you, what is happening in your school? I see that is what is happening in your school? I see that is what is coming from the root. So let's solve the problem there. We work on honesty. You know, many parents have cried in my office because I've got a way to work with them. You say listen, that is now true, but where's the problem? So, how often are you at home? Ask them, how do you help your child? No, I give them money. They will take the money because it's nice, but that's not what they want. In his heart, he wants his dad. I think we do well with that. It's a huge challenge – the country's broken. So we do what we can and it is a challenge.*

However, Buhle (a member of the PAC at the same school, Groenvlei Urban Private School) had the following to say:

*You know, I can see it. It might be now that there is a new principal because I can see the involvement of parents. He does make sure that the parents are being involved or whatever they are doing; before that, they are being informed, but before that, there wasn't involvement. You know here at this school, you will find that they would call the parents and deal with the issue at that time, about whether there is unity, according to the way I see things, each parent does whatever they understand, neh? It is not that like you find out that the... But when there was something, they used to call the parents and inform them that there is this A, B, C. Some of the things they do them, they used to do them on their own, but we never saw any problems with that, but it's not about unity and staff whereby you can or even unity whereby you can sit down and discuss about matters.*

*It's only this year whereby we were called when there was a problem concerning the grade 7's about behaviour (Buhle).*

School children needs care and support from their parents in order to perform well at school. The findings revealed that learners from Groenvlei Urban Private School received full support from their parents; hence, their performance was good, compared to Jahman Public Rural and Kganya Public Peri-Urban Schools. These two schools did not perform well because (according to the findings) they did not receive full support from their parents. The parents could not support the schools due to various reasons, including unemployment, lack of resources (cell phones, transport and others) and financial difficulties. The learners' poor backgrounds contributed to poor scholastic achievements at the two schools (Jahman and Kganya) as pointed out by the participants. However, parents from Groenvlei had enough resources including cell phones whereby WhatsApp group and meetings were used to share school-related news and issues. Child care from the parents of the two disadvantaged schools was impossible due to the various reasons mentioned above. The Health Department together with other government departments were not doing enough to care for the disadvantaged learners and to promote social welfare. This was evidenced by learners, and was not limited to the following needs: stationery, birth certificates, school uniforms and food. This was in contrast with Groenvlei Private School, which had all the necessary tools/equipment at the School. This indicates that the government is not doing enough to address or satisfy the needs of the society. All the above discussions/statements regarding child care and welfare contradict one of the fundamental principles of Critical Theory, which states that it would like to create a world that satisfies the needs of the society.

#### **5.3.3.2 Home Environment**

One of the critical points, which is argued by many people, is that the home environment is a critical area for parental involvement. This argument is entrenched by Ntekane (2018) who states that parental involvement is a significant element in education because it can be achieved through home-based parental involvement, such as assisting learners to complete their homework, and helping them with reading skills and other school-based

activities. Haines (2012) argues that learning at home provides information and ideas to parents as to how students could be assisted concerning homework, curriculum matters, decisions, planning, and other related school activities. The involvement and the basic obligations of parents in the daily routines of the school and at home is referred to as parental involvement (Van den Berg & Van Noort, 2011).

A teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School supported the views expressed above by stating:

*Another thing which affects teaching is parental involvement. Even if the learners are not doing their work, since they are not punished, we invite the parents, but they don't come to school. What is worse is the Departmental Policies because they allow learners to be promoted to the next grade even if they do not meet the requirements because of age (age-cohort). This is problematic, because they can't grasp anything and they use this defence mechanism, knowing that they cannot comprehend anything. Most of them are old; some of them come from other schools where they failed (Pulane).*

Khathi, who is a teacher at the same school, had the following to say:

*The parents expect us to give the learners school materials. The learners get a package in the beginning of the year. The parents are not cooperative. They are staying in squatter camps. If there is something here at school, they are not coming. Some are staying nearer to the school. There is no parental involvement.*

Tax, the principal of Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, stated:

*Financially, the parents are not strong, but poor. Education wise, in terms of learning, it is maximum. There are very few parents who do not support the children regarding schoolwork (Tax).*

The SGB member of Jahman Public Rural Public School expressed the following view:

*Some parents have no interest in their children's education at all. Support for any fundraising activities is no exception. They are just happy as long as their children get food. Parents here need serious engagement as their unacceptable behaviour disadvantages their own children (Sylvia).*

Alex, who is a teacher at Groenvlei Urban Private School, responded as follows to the issue of parental involvement:

*Once again, it is going to come down to the parents now. Some do struggle or are behind with payments and stuff like that. Some have financial struggles that we do not always know about, but then you also get those parents who are not involved. The parents who want their children to achieve, make a plan and they buy the tablets and all that type of stuff, where another parent, they are not involved, but here is a problem with the child's marks, then they all of a sudden want to come and see us, and then we say where's the tablets, where's all that? Then all of a sudden, they want to get involved. So we know the tablet is an expense, but it's also an investment because you keep on using it from grade 4 and if you take care of your stuff, it will last. So, but there are parents who here and there struggle with finances or may be a month late or whatever, but usually in my class I have an extra handbook so that they can work from the hard copy. The children are very sharing. As soon as I ask them let's help because the tablets are going in for repairs, they'll share. So we try not to penalise, but it makes it difficult when a child is a term without a device and we know... oooohhh mamma, we have to make up now because your child is behind. We are trying our best to keep them up-to-date (Alex).*

Regarding home environment, there were parents who were willing to assist their children with schoolwork, while there were others who did not show any interest. The findings further indicated that two teachers from Kganya Public School and an SGB member from Jahman Rural School indicated that some parents did not show interest in their children's education, as they (the parents) did not provide support and assistance to their children regarding homework. They were not cooperative, did not come to school when they were asked to come, and did not support school activities. In terms of Groenvlei Private School, the findings revealed that there were very few parents who did not support their children's education. Those who were involved, and wanted their children to achieve, bought equipment such as tablets and other devices needed by the School. The difference between the three schools is that Groenvlei Private School's learners did not struggle financially when it came to resources. However, Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School learners struggled in terms of resources. This was caused by the inequalities in regards to parental status and others factors. Some of the parents from disadvantaged schools were not able to

go to the schools due to financial difficulties, as indicated by the participants. What is happening in South African schools is not going beyond the historical context (as one of Critical Theory's basic beliefs) by the government and stakeholders being critical of the imbalances that exist between the different categories of schools (Chapter 3). This is evidenced by the socio-educational inequalities in the two schools, namely Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School.

#### **5.4 THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The findings in this study relating to the School Management Structures (SMS) is discussed in detail under the following emergent sub-themes:

- Management Expertise
- Policies
- Meetings

##### **5.4.1 Management expertise**

Nyathi and Bhebhe (2020) argue that a proper organised structure could boost learners' academic performance and enhance teacher performance. Regarding this statement, the SGB member of Kganya Public Peri-Urban School said the following:

*I wouldn't say there is unity amongst the parents. Why I say that is because you see it when we have activities or donations. In the meetings, the parents will indicate that they will do, but you find that the groups differ. You see unity by experiencing how things are been done. There will be smooth running of things if there is unity. They are pulling in different directions because others feel that they can't afford it. They think others can afford it; hence, they can't (Kate).*

However, the principal of Jahman Public Rural School said:

*You will see that I have amended my timetable whereby everyday learners have 30 minutes reading period and I asked the educators to do the basics like in mathematics,*

*they should emphasise tables. The learners must also do the alphabet and prayer. The learners do not know those things. The problem at this school is that most of the learners' parents abuse alcohol. The parents can't take care of their children (Bothma).*

The principal of Groenvlei Urban Private School had the following to say:

*Our ethos is Christian principles, our slogan is 'Walk in the light', so we apply that. We have diversity in our school, we appoint teachers from all race groups, we have a diversity committee that also drives diversity, not only colour, also sometimes we have a topic like diabetes or anything like that makes a person stand out from the rest. So, we have that in place, programmes for diversity, and I think our parents can testify that we treat everybody the same. I don't have challenges with people confronting us with racial ... as far as possible (Hanover).*

#### **5.4.2 Policies**

Clair (2014) argues that education policies and the practices they inculcate in schools increase the effects of schools on children's subjective well-being. However, Fekadu (2019) argues that students who do not abide by school rules and regulations tend to drop out.

One of the teachers from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School's commented:

*I have so many learners from Botshabelo that I can tell you about that I have taught them from grade 1. They are something in life here in Bloemfontein. They have made it in life, but here in Bloemfontein, until now we are only producing dropouts (Tsamai).*

The principal of the same school had the following to say:

*Yes, it (policy) covers broad things, for example religion, physical disabilities, inequality from different homes like closing the gap between the rich and poor. Gender equality is also important because girls and boys must respect each other and no harassment should take place at all (Tax).*

The principal of Jahman Public Rural School said the following on the same point:

*Currently, you will see that I am busy revisiting all the school policies because I have seen that there is some shortcomings in the policies and I'm just waiting for the Department of Education. I have taken policies from other schools and combined them to address our situation. I still have to take it to the SGB for approval (Bothma).*

Similarly, Hanover, the principal of Groenvlei Urban Private School said:

*Ja, that's not only the school, also the group. That's where your diversity comes from; we get trained nationally. There's a well-known lady, I think her name is Thandi, she trains the staff at all the Curro Schools with diversity and how to handle that. The whole group has policies in place for diversity. The Sechaba Foundation gives bursaries to previously disadvantaged children who can't afford it (Hanover).*

### **5.4.3 Meetings**

Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif (2017) argue that the significance of school meetings is to achieve success in the educational process. Martinez (2015) adds that parental involvement includes attending parent-teacher conferences, extracurricular activities, and other school-related activities.

The principal of Kganya Public Peri-Urban School articulated on school meetings as follows:

*The majority of them are those who are not committed. Thereafter, most of the parents will say they do not have the transport and some of them would say they do not have money to attend meetings (Tax).*

Similarly, the SGB member of Jahman Public Rural School said:

*There is no unity amongst parents at our school. Parents request a joint meeting with teachers and when they are given information, they accuse me, Sylvia, and the principal of abusing school funds. So, these types of meetings are just a waste of time as there's no order. There are two parents in the SGB who get wrong information from teachers and in turn use such to attack the principal. So, there's no unity in the SGB. It cannot operate independently (Sylvia).*

In contrast, Hanover, the principal of Groenvlei Urban Private School, stated:

*Whenever we have meetings, they come, they attend very well, so we don't have those challenges, and the one thing is because we are so far out, we are also lenient towards that and don't expect them to come for anything to school (Hanover).*

## **5.5 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

This chapter dealt with the first research question, which addresses the environmental and social factors that contribute to educational disparities in, and between, three (public peri-urban, public rural and urban private) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Sub-themes emerging from themes, such as the teaching and learning environment and social factors, were discussed in the following order: classroom sizes, school buildings, family structure, learner attitudes to learning, and parental involvement.

The findings on classroom size indicated that Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School's ratios exceeded the Education Departments' prescribed norm, and therefore had a negative effect on teaching and learning. However, Groenvlei Urban Private School's ratio was below the Education Department's prescribed norm. Regarding the school buildings, Groenvlei Urban Private School's buildings met the basic infrastructural requirements and were much better than those of Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School, which were in a poor condition at the time of the research.

In terms of family structures, the findings revealed that most of the learners at Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School did not stay with their parents. However, at Groenvlei Urban Private School, all grade 7 learners stayed with their parents who were able to assist them in whatever they needed.

According to the research findings from this study, learners' attitudes towards learning was affected mostly by the circumstances in which they lived, which included walking long distances to school, the school environment and school buildings, which had little or no effect at Groenvlei Urban Private School. The findings also revealed that there was a serious problem regarding parental involvement at Kganya Public School and Jahman

Public Rural School, while on the other hand, parental involvement was found to be good at Groenvlei Urban Private School.

The following chapter discusses the themes and sub-themes emanating from the research questions, which deal with the economic inequalities that affect teaching and learning in public, rural and private schools.

## **CHAPTER 6**

# **THE WAYS IN WHICH ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES AFFECT TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THREE SELECTED SCHOOLS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, which addressed the first key research question (see Chapter 1), the focus was on the intersections between the teaching and learning environments and social factors and how this jointly contributed to educational disparities between public, rural and private schools. Addressing the second key research question, this chapter focuses on how environmental and social factors influenced the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within these schools. The research data in this chapter is arranged under the following theme and sub-themes:

#### **Theme**

- Economic Inequalities

#### **Sub-themes**

- Finances
- Learning Resources
- Poverty
- Unemployment

### **6.2 ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES**

Economic inequalities have an impact on teaching and learning at schools. Roth (2018) indicates that wealthy people have a lot of money compared to poor people with little or no money. However, Surbhi (2016) argues that there is a difference between the two aspects because income has to be generated, while wealth needs to be created.

Income relates to a stream of money a person gets from sources such as a salary, profits, and rent helping to create wealth; therefore, wealth is the total value of all assets an individual owns (Surbhi, 2016).

Nau (2011) asserts that even though wealth and income are seen as two separate variables, the reality is that they are interconnected because income can eventually be saved and added to a person's stock of wealth. Petersons (2017) is of the view that both income and wealth are included in economic inequality, and thus are positively related to the inherently valuable attributes of education, good health and happiness. Some of the factors that are influenced by economic inequalities in the researched sites are discussed below in the following order:

- Learning resources
- Poverty
- Unemployment

### **6.2.1 Finances**

Shonubi (2012) views financial management as an essential component that enables schools to meet their fundamental educational obligations. Here is what the SGB member of Kganya Public School had to say regarding parental involvement in finances:

*They think that those who speak, they speak because they can afford, for example, at some stage, the parents proposed a donation of 20 rand to assist the school. Some indicated that they received grants from the government and therefore could not afford to donate the 20 rand per month. They then withdrew from the school meetings (Kate).*

The principal of Jahman Rural School shared the same sentiments:

*There is no support from parents. I even struggle to get the SGB for meetings. The parents will only come to school to complain or when I call them. What happens is that the school is not benefitting from the parents because they are not paying school fees. They have no financial contribution in any way. We are dependent on the grants that we receive from the Department of Education (Bothma).*

Private schools have a different view when compared to public and rural schools regarding finances. Mushtaq (2014) argues that the school management of these schools ensure that they acutely satisfy the investors' expectations, in order to generate enough revenue. This is in line with what the principal of Groenvlei Urban Private School had to say:

*In our case, the one thing is we don't have all these fundraisers like public schools because there are investors who has got programmes. You find your parents who are very eager, and you find those that say listen, I'm paying a lot, I drop my child and I go. So I think, to be fair to the parents, they are very much involved and interested (Hanover).*

Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School battled in terms of finances. Most of the parents received state grants, as articulated by the SGB representative of Kganya Public School. Therefore, fundraising was not possible at this school. The School was assisted by grants received from the government. The same applied to Jahman Public Rural School whereby parents did not assist the School in any way, and it had to depend on the grants they received from the Department of Education. Groenvlei Urban Private School differed from Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School because of investors who donated money to the School. The School, therefore, did not experience financial constraints.

The facts above show the inequality between the three schools. Groenvlei Private School was better off than the other two schools (Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School). Hence, Groenvlei was had better resources than the two other schools and was able to provide quality teaching and learning.

Critical Theory's aim is to turn the situation around in education if there are obstacles that are hindering progress or promoting inequality in teaching and learning. The turnaround strategy regarding finances in schools is not being attended to by those in charge of education; that is why some schools are financially weak while others are financially stable.

## 6.2.2 Learning Resources

Learning resources are an integral part of effective teaching and learning. Usman (2016) asserts that learning resources are an integral prerequisite, which must be put in place for the actualization of educational goals and objectives. This view was emphasized by Pulane (a teacher from Kganya Public School) who said that learning resources, such as pens, pencils and rulers, play a pivotal role in teaching and learning because without them learners cannot do anything.

However, Bušljeta (2013) describes teaching and learning resources as instruments used in presenting and transmitting prescribed educational material, which include:

- Textbooks
- Maps
- Photographs
- Audio-visual materials
- Internet communication
- Educational television shows
- Written material

Similarly, the Eberly Center (2020) lists learning resources as the following:

- Textbooks
- Relevant materials
- Recordings
- Videos
- Software

Some of the items listed by the participants in this study as learning resources are sometimes referred to as physical resources. They are unpacked and grouped into the following categories:

### 6.2.2.1 Learning aids/stationery

- Pens
- Pritt
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Textbooks
- Reading materials
- Teaching aids

Learning aids or stationery are sometimes called learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). They are core fundamental aspects of teaching and learning. This view supports Milligan et al.'s (2019) findings that textbooks, as well as other learning and teaching materials (LTMs), contribute immensely to learning outcomes. This is in line with Manqele (2012), who argues that the inadequacy of resources, such as textbooks, teaching aids and other relevant resources, hampers effective teaching and derails a mode of self-discovery learning. Phakathi (2015) concurs with Manqele (2012) that a lack of LTMs, such as textbooks, teaching aids and stationery, greatly affects the academic performance of learners.

Giving evidence in this context, Happy (a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School) said:

*So, the provision of stationery is a challenge as learning materials like textbooks and reading materials are provided by the Department of Education (Happy).*

In contrast, when asked about the inadequacy of textbooks, Kalawe, a teacher from the same school said:

*No, textbooks are covered (Kalawe).*

Cathy, who is also a teacher at Jahman Rural School, said:

*As a teacher I become exemplary by showing them my teaching aids and tell them that I'll be ready to lend all learners who are serious about their work my teaching aids. I'll further go on to say to them that they should also lend me their learning aids when I make a request. I encourage learners from affording families to share with those learners whose*

*families cannot afford. Learners should learn to work together and share resources. In this way, learners will learn the principles of ubuntu at an early age. It is still encouraged to advise learners to inform their parents about their school needs to avoid unnecessary dependence on other learners (Cathy).*

Bothma, the principal of Jahman Public Rural School, similarly said:

*You know that I must tell you, the first thing is the financial implications because the school has to see to it that the kids do have a school uniform, stationery; they have to eat every day (Bothma).*

A teacher from Kganya Public School shared the same sentiments:

*The environment itself is not conducive for learning. We are really struggling. You buy teaching aids on your own, you try to put them on the wall, you can't stick them there because walls are dilapidated; they just fall off. It's really a very serious problem. We used to do teaching aids, to draw, we loved teaching by then, but nowadays, we are teaching but the passion is no longer there and teachers are not committed (Tsamai).*

In view of the above findings provided by the participants, Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School experience challenges regarding learning resources. Participants from both schools gave evidence that teachers struggled in regards to learning resources.

A Groenvlei Urban Private School teacher said the following regarding LTMs (for example books):

*But usually in my class I have an extra handbook so that they can work from a hard copy. The children are very sharing, as soon as I ask them to help (Alex).*

Nic, who teaches at the same school, responded differently:

*We teach with e-books, not textbooks, e-books, not handbooks (Nic).*

Nic further emphasized the above point by saying:

*Because our learners have e-books, they don't need handbooks.*

LTSM includes materials such as pens, Pritt, pencils, rulers and other scholastic materials. Bizimana and Orodho (2014) argue that physical or tangible resources are

essential for the operational core of teaching and learning. In the same vein, Mege (2014) says that the availability of teaching-learning resources is instrumental to the core determination of the successful implementation of the curriculum. This view was reinforced by Pulane (a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) and Happy (a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School) who shared their frustrations regarding learners who do not have LTSM, and pens in particular:

Giving evidence of the above statement, Pulane, who is a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had this to say:

*I would say with regards to the social status, I think 80% of the challenges that we have in our classrooms are because of the social status in our communities. For example, my daily challenges are such that you get into a class and you expect a child to have a pen and the learner does not have one. Now you have to use your own mind to buy pens so that each time when the learner claims not to have a pen you must help with a pen. Most of the resources in class, they don't have. Parents are not taking responsibility (Pulane).*

Pulane commented further:

*I always talk to my husband about our budget to put a certain amount aside to buy resources for the kids, for example Pritt, a pencil, a ruler for those who do not have, because if they do not have a pen there is nothing they can do and as a teacher I have to continue with my work. For the sake of peace of mind, I try to teach them that at least there is somebody who cares. I try to provide with the little that I can (Pulane – Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

Similarly, Happy, who is a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, said:

*More than often learners will go out to borrow pens from other learners before classes commence. They come from home without pens (Happy).*

The views raised by the teachers above are from public and rural schools. It shows that there is an inequality gap between Kganya Public School, Jahman Rural School and Groenvlei Urban Private School. The issue of resources is different in rural schools when compared to urban or private schools. This is emphasized by Gina's (2015) findings, which revealed that most rural schools are under-resourced because they do not generate income; hence, inequality arises. Consequently, the OECD (2012) argues that

private schools' likelihood to attract advantaged students would decrease, if state schools could offer better resources. Green et al. (2019) concur with the OECD (2012) by indicating that the differences in resources between private and state schools make it difficult to close the academic inequality gap that exists between them.

Other learning resources fall into the category of facilities or equipment. They are called co-curricular infrastructure. These resources include playgrounds, laboratories, computers/tablets and electricity.

A participant from Kganya Public School (Pulane) raised the issue of communities' social status, which is a daily challenge for most learners who attend the School. This also applied to Jahman Rural School, whereby the principal (Bothma) indicated that the School was obliged to see to it that learners had stationery, uniforms and other school necessities, since the parents could not afford to buy uniforms, learning aids or stationery. Critical Theory, together with Marxism, indicates that the aforementioned inequalities, resulting from differences in monetary status or economic inequalities retard the progress of teaching and learning in marginalised groups (Chapter 3). The social class background of the learners, highlighted by the teacher (Pulane) above, has a huge impact on educational inequality. The government is not doing enough to free South Africans from all forms of oppression and inequality.

Below, are some of the facilities/equipment mentioned by the participants in this study:

#### **6.2.2.2 *Facilities/Equipment***

- Playgrounds
- Laboratories
- Computers/Tablets
- Electricity

It is believed that a sportsground is one of the learning resources that complement education. Mokaya (2013) argues that if the co-curricular and curricular activities are not balanced, the purpose of education cannot be realized. Mokaya (2013) further argues

that extracurricular activities need to be well organized and supported by the school, in order to promote students' academic performance. Aloyo (2015) similarly argues that high quality playgrounds and indoor facilities improve educational standards. In the same vein, Arshad et al. (2019) pointed out that sports material and playgrounds, drinking water, toilets and educational material are some of the basic requirements for learners' motivation and academic performance. Pulane (a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) who argued that the lack of playgrounds and other resources affected many things, including the academic performance of the learners, supported Arshad et al.'s (2019) view.

Adding to the above discussion, Pulane (a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) had this to say:

*Resources are a big issue. I am a firm believer in sport that creates a very huge role in disciplining a child. If a child plays sports, he/she knows you have to come to the practices, arrive on time, and there are rules. If you play netball, there are rules and that shapes a child. The lack of playgrounds and other resources that a child can use to play, affects many things. Discipline is a foreign language. For some of them there isn't any person who instils discipline in them. They find discipline here and it ends here. There is no discipline at home. The shortage of sport grounds and others affect the discipline of learners (Pulane).*

A laboratory is another key school-learning resource or school support facility. It provides a base for quality teaching and proper learning. Arshad et al. (2019) argue that school facilities, such as a laboratory and library, contribute in influencing teachers' level of performance and students' academic achievement. In the same vein, Zainuddin and Subri (2017) assert that a laboratory and library are key physical facilities that increase students' interest to learn in different ways.

In line with the above discussion, this is what a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School had to say:

*As a science teacher myself, I would love for these kids to have a laboratory whereby, when they enter my class, they should see and feel that this is a science class. They will*

*be able to see the microscope and many other things. So, currently we try to draw many things with our hands like photosynthesis, which is not clear to the learners (Pulane).*

The statement by Pulane is in line with Bello (2012) when stressing that the use of adequate and suitable laboratory equipment in teaching physics will greatly improve the academic achievement of learners. Anderson (2017) also supports this view, by arguing that laboratory work gives students opportunities to develop their ability to plan, conduct, interpret, and to present the results. Anderson (2017) further argues that a special discourse created by physics laboratory work enables a student to become an actor, while the teacher becomes an organiser and observer respectively. This is in line with Hofstein (2017), who states that laboratory science enable students to interact with equipment and materials, in order to observe and understand the nature of the world.

Another learning facility or equipment, which was mentioned in some of the researched schools as a learning resource, is a computer or tablet. Teaching tools have changed from traditional to high technology facilities, which include laptops, netbooks and tablet computers (Wang, 2013). This view is supported by Barroso (2019), who asserts that computers serve many useful functions and are currently regarded as the most valuable resource used in classrooms.

In view of the above, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School said:

*If the computers were enough, they could address the social inequalities because even those learners, who do not have cell phones, could manipulate them (computers). They will know how to use computers. It's unfortunate because we don't have them (Tsamai).*

In the same vein, a teacher from the same school said:

*We are using one computer in the staff room. Our children don't even know how to press the computer features. The parents do not come to school when called to resolve matters related to their children (Khathi – Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

A teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School had the following to say:

*Robotics and IT are not compulsory on teaching with test, and I am teaching them life skills with using computers. With technology, I had last term one learner that failed, but that's only for the term, it's not for the year mark. (Nic).*

Nic further commented:

*If we have learners, especially in the beginning of the year, they don't always have a computer to work on, we just make photocopies for the time being (Nic – Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

Learners at certain schools use tablets instead of computers as they perform the same functions. Nield (2016) argues that a tablet is a hugely versatile tool in regards to children's education and entertainment. Martin (2019) similarly states that tablets can bring the real world into the classroom (even though expensive).

In line with the above statements regarding tablets, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School had this to say:

*Because I mean they (parents) want the best in education for their children, and it comes at a price. I think the tablets are definitely, besides the school fees, an issue for a few parents (Lydia).*

The statement above was confirmed by the principal from the same school:

*We have children from all walks, so the part that has the effect, is the social part before they come to school. Once they're in the school, they have got tablets, they got exam opportunities (Hanover – Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

The principal emphasized the issue of tablets by stating:

*For instance, we use tablets from grade 4 to grade 12. So, what we do is, if the learner hasn't got a tablet, we give him a loan tablet until the parents can afford one. We have got programmes; there are bursaries. So if we pick up a problem, we try to help from the school side. And then involve the parents and then see whether the child can be helped through a bursary or we give them a loan device (Hanover – Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

Based on the above discussion, it can be argued that there is an inequality gap regarding computers or tablets at certain schools. This is caused by social economic inequalities. Janisse et al. (2014) assert that there is substantial disparity regarding technology access between different socioeconomic statuses. This coincides with the researched schools in this study. The findings of this study emphasized that teaching and learning was severely

affected at Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School, when compared to the well-resourced Groenvlei Urban Private School.

According to the data presented above, Groenvlei Urban Private School's learners used computers or tablets for their learning and teaching. Hanover (the principal of the private school) evidences this:

*We use tablets from grade 4 to grade 12 (Hanover - Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

This indicates that most parents were able to buy tablets, even though they were expensive. There was a very small percentage who struggled somewhat to buy tablets. A Groenvlei Urban Private School teacher confirmed this point of view:

*I think the tablets are definitely, besides the school fees, an issue for a few parents (Lydia).*

Even though a few parents could not afford to buy tablets, the school assisted them; this helped the learners to be on par with their peers.

The principal of the School added:

*If the learner hasn't got a tablet, we give him a loan tablet until the parents can afford one (Hanover – Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

The above statement shows that the School was resourceful; hence, it was able to support needy learners (even though there were only a few of them). Hanover's view supports Johnson et al.'s (2016) view that external barriers like access to technology must be addressed at the level of the institution. Bulman and Fairlie (2016) indicated that a substantial amount of money was spent by families and schools on computers, software, and other technology for the purpose of education.

Bhakta and Dutta (2016) state that most schools cannot afford to purchase IT facilities. According to Olaore (2014), due to the high cost of ICT equipment, such as computers and tablets, poorer students and schools end up being disadvantaged; therefore, it results in a digital divide. Both Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School were affected by the lack of new technology, and as such, Kganya Public School expressed this view through a teacher:

*It's unfortunate, because we don't have them (computers) (Tsamai – Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

The view of Tsamai supports Pholotho and Mtsweni's (2016) earlier findings that the majority of public schools did not have computer technology because of their environmental location, poor service delivery, and poverty. Pholotho and Mtsweni (2016) further argue that the shortage of computer technology has a negative impact on the teaching of practical subjects, such as music, science and drama. Khathi who teaches at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School added that there was only one computer in the staffroom (Khathi).

The evidence, provided above by Kganya Public Peri-Urban School participants, indicates that the School did not have computers. This was confirmed by Khathi (a teacher at the School), who indicated that their learners did not know how to use computers' features because the School did not use computers for teaching and learning.

Iskrenovic-Momcilovic (2018) argues that the use of computers is another way of improving teaching. The author (2018) further argues that a computer is the main resource in modern times. This is supported by Hanimoglu (2018), who states that the use of computer technology at school does not only benefit the school community, but the whole community. Beldiga-Vasilache et al. (2019) support the view by indicating that computers play a pivotal role in teaching and learning, since the world is in a state of continuous modernization. Hence, it is the duty of developing countries to provide schools with computers to foster a variety of ways in which teaching and learning can be integrated (Bhalla, 2013).

Bhakta and Dutta (2016) argue that technology has to bring changes in people's lives across the globe. Chisango and Lesame (2017) further assert that even though the South African government has implemented an ICT policy in addressing universal issues such as access and service, the implementation of this policy remains questionable in regards to rural areas. Mathevula (2015) agree with these views by stating that disparities in South African society also occur in terms of ICT integration into education.

The arguments raised above correlate with a statement made by a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, who said:

*Regarding technology, it is about the project whereby they design a cell phone tower in creative arts. They do practical work whereby they draw (Kalawe).*

This indicates that there was no ICT technology equipment at the School's disposal, and therefore no access to computers. When asked whether the School had resources such as books, pens, computers, laptops and chairs, Kalawe (a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School) indicated that they only had textbooks. This bears testimony to the fact that the school did not have ICT facilities.

Moreover, Mireku (2016) argues that ICT's play a fundamental role in the field of education. The author (2016) further states that ICT has been fully integrated in many schools in the urban areas of South Africa, but not in rural areas. This argument is supported by Du Plessis and Mestry (2019), who state that even though the South African Schools Act of 1996 requires that all schools be developed on an equal footing, the circumstances of rural schools are overlooked and, as a result, rural schools are excluded from school improvement plans.

It can further be argued that the teachers at Jahman Public Rural School used a traditional way of teaching, due to an unavailability of ICT. This is what Cathy, who teaches at the same school, said:

*As a teacher, we need to give our best to these learners. I enjoy spending time with them and imparting knowledge to them to the best of my ability, to have patience even in the face of challenges we face in the classrooms during teaching and learning. With the advent of OBE, group work was introduced and it came with its share of challenges as it created serious challenges for the learners, as other learners depended solely on other learners. So, you as a teacher need to use your own discretion to circumvent these challenges. The issue of classifying learners according to different cognitive levels in the formation of groups is also a real challenge. As a teacher, I had to be innovative, take some elements of OBE and old teaching methods techniques (Cathy).*

The statement by Cathy (a rural schoolteacher), is in line with Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) when they stress that ICT's role in schools is to assist teachers in replacing traditional

teaching methods with technology-based teaching and learning materials. Bhakta and Dutta (2016) concur with Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) when stating that new technology has largely brought about changes by replacing traditional ways of teaching and learning in education. The same view is offered by Beldiga-Vasilache et al. (2019) when emphasizing that traditional and modern techniques can be intertwined to develop the thinking of students. In the same vein, Bhalla (2013) argues that the use of a computer is to complement teaching and make it joyful, interesting and easy to understand. Bušljeta (2013) supports this view by emphasizing that today's learners are different from those of the twentieth century because they need education, which is fun, dynamic and different, such as the use of digital platforms.

Happy, a teacher of Jahman Public Rural School, also raised challenges regarding the traditional teaching approach:

*The approach of teaching a language is functional, namely, if you teach comprehension or story; this is not done in isolation as you also need to integrate language structures. These language structures should not be presented in isolation, but be based on the story you have chosen. You need to formulate questions based on the story, irrespective of any language activity, whether it's reading, poetry teaching or any other language activity. Questions should be based on what the CAPs document prescribes. This is a serious challenge as this means more work on the part of the teacher (Happy).*

Regarding the above statement by Happy, it could be argued that teachers experienced challenges regarding teaching at the aforementioned school, due to the unavailability of ICT tools. The traditional methods of teaching and learning make it difficult for teachers to achieve their objectives. This argument is supported by Khobo (2015), who stresses the point that the challenge faced by teachers is to find new teaching methods that can make their subjects more interesting and appealing to learners; this can only be achieved by using computers.

Cathy, who is a teacher at the same school (Jahman Public Rural School) experienced another challenge regarding the teaching of learners in the School. This is what the teacher said:

*Their (the learners) performance is poor as they forget even subject content presented a few minutes ago (Cathy).*

Cathy's challenge could be addressed only if the school could use ICT for teaching and learning, as pointed out by Hennessy et al. (2010), who argue that the use of technology creates a learner-centred approach, which will motivate learners in combining aspects such as sound, text, images, and content for easier learning. Hennessy et al. (2010) further argues that a huge challenge faced by the teachers is the way ICT is integrated with the role of teachers in the teaching and learning process, which shows that teachers who do not develop technologically, are under threat. Mireku (2016) states that most rural schools do not have access to ICT and teachers have not received professional training to enable them to integrate ICT in their lessons.

Drawing from the discussions above, it can be argued that one of the major contributory factors regarding the unavailability of ICT materials is the socio-economic status (SES) of a school. However, Critical Theory is more concerned about the economic philosophy, based on ideas that view change in terms of economic factors, as a solution, which was not the case regarding Kganya and Jahman Schools. Olaore's (2014) argument is that the large costs of ICT tools make it difficult for poorer students, together with their educational institutions, to purchase them. This is in line with Falck et al.'s (2018) view, who argue that the effects of using computers tend to be larger for high SES students. This coincides with Mathevula (2015), who argues that the Department of Education acknowledges that the challenges regarding the provision of technologies to schools, in order to enhance quality teaching and learning, requires financial and human resources and investment. Similarly, Du Plessis (2014) argues that SES puts learners and schools at a disadvantage regarding resources such as ICT, transport, electricity, roads and sanitation, which form part of basic infrastructure. On the same issue, Bulman and Fairlie (2016) argue that some schools and families spend a lot of money on computers, internet connections, software and other technological tools to enhance quality education.

In view of the above statements, it can be argued that most rural schools cannot afford to buy computers, as pointed out by Mireku (2016), and there is no financial support from

the South African government, particularly to rural schools (Chisango & Lesame, 2017). The principal of Jahman Public Rural School evidenced these views:

*What happens is that the School is not benefiting from the parents because they are not paying school fees. They have no financial contribution in any way (Bothma).*

Bothma's view coincides with Falck et al.'s (2018), who argue that parents with a high SES are the ones whose children will mostly benefit from ICT. This is in line with Hennessy et al. (2010) who state that some schools are supported by parents to acquire ICT infrastructure. The parents at Jahman Public Rural School, as stated by the principal (Bothma), did not make any financial contribution to the School.

Kalawe, a teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), added to the issue of economic barriers. This is what the teacher said:

*Ja, we will dig deeper to find out how the learner is living at home because we have SBST (School Based Support Team). It deals with social issues and health. It is where we identify problems, which learners encounter, like learning barriers, socially, economically and academically (Kalawe).*

Regarding SES, the principal (Bothma) added:

*We have a lot of social and economic problems due to the fact that the majority of the kids' parents are farm workers (Bothma).*

Sylvia, who is the SGB member at Jahman Public Rural School, supports this:

*The majority of the learners' parents are staying here at the plot where the School is situated and they are staying with their children though they do not originate here (Sylvia).*

The views expressed by the teacher (Kalawe), the principal (Bothma), and the SGB member (Sylvia) showed that the SES of the parents of this school was low. This evidence indicated that the parents could not afford to assist the School to purchase computers or ICT materials, like Groenvlei Urban Private School, whereby the principal (Hanover) indicated that the parents were able to buy tablets for their children, and if a learner did not have a tablet, the school gave him/her a loan tablet until the parent could afford one.

All the views expressed above, showed economic inequalities between Jahman Rural School and Groenvlei Urban Private School. This point is supported by Scheper (2013), who argues that the SES of people who send their children to private schools is higher; hence, they can afford the money needed for tuition and other things. This situation needs to change (according to Critical Theory) to rectify the imbalances that were caused by the apartheid regime. Moreover, there needs to be change, in terms of economic factors regarding parents with low SES, to ensure that learners receive equal treatment (Chapter 3).

Moreover, electricity was one of the fundamental resources mentioned by the participants in this study. Electricity is needed to allow the follow machines, technology and equipment to work:

- Photocopy machines
- Overhead projectors
- Heaters
- Telephones/cell phones
- Computers
- Tablets

All the items above use electricity to perform their function. Furthermore, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (2014) states that some of the benefits of educational electricity access are the following:

- Lighting and extended studying hours
- ICT facilitation
- Enhanced staff retention and teacher training
- Better school performance
- Enablement of community co-benefits

According to the participants of the study, the focus on the educational benefits of electricity access is based on the following:

**(i) Lighting and Warmth**

Without light (electricity), especially when it is dark due to weather conditions, teaching and learning would not be possible. Mathevula (2015) argues that electricity is a basic infrastructure that must be put in place at schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pholotho and Mtsweni (2016) further states that a lack of electricity also hampers ICT infrastructure and therefore impacts negatively on teaching and learning.

The views expressed above are in line with the SGB member from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, who said:

*So, we are trying as SGB to fix; like now, there is a class with a broken door and we have requested a quotation for it. The problem, which is beyond us, is the electricity for another block of classrooms. If it is cold like it is now, we feel bad because there is no way that the heaters could be used and it is the competency of the Department of Public Works. We have been promised for a long period. Those things that are within the SGBs control will be attended to our best potential (Kate).*

In line with this view, Sylvia, the SGB member of Jahman Public Rural School, said:

*We have recently been provided with two mobile classes, but they do not have electricity. In winter, teachers teach these learners in the sun. Some of these classes have doors and lights, but others do not. Plugs are not working to light heaters. These mobile classes are substandard structures, and are made of asbestos (Sylvia).*

Buhle, who is a member of the PAC, expressed Groenvlei Urban Private School's view regarding resources:

*Regarding teaching, they (teachers) do have the resources for the learners. If they discover that there is a shortage of the resources for the learners, they make the point that they get them immediately (Buhle).*

What the SGB member from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School shared did not differ from the SGB member from Jahman Public Rural School. Their schools struggled with electricity and, during winter, the teachers and learners were cold. The argument is that if the teachers and learners are cold, teaching and learning will be negatively affected. This is supported by UNDESA (2014), which stated that electricity provided students with

light, heat, comfort, and the ability to learn properly. According to the evidence given above, Groenvlei Urban Private School did not have any issue related to electricity; hence, the School operated smoothly, as indicated by Buhle, who is the PAC member of the School. Cobbold (2020) argues that private schools' resources are far better than those of public schools are. Du Plessis and Mestry (2014) argue that rural schools are marginalised and under-resourced. Marginalised and oppressed groups of society need to be attended to in order to eradicate the imbalances that were inherited from the apartheid system (Chapter 3). Critical Theory, therefore, is opposed to any forms of inequalities (e.g. learning resources), prevalent at Kganya Public School and Jahman Public School; while Groenvlei Private School was the exception. Critical Theory is a proponent of equality in all schools.

## **(ii) Better School Performance**

School performance is determined by various factors. A resource like electricity is one of the major factors determining school performance. Schools that do not have electricity are likely to perform badly.

There is a gap between different types of schools. This gap causes inequality. This is in line with Garcia and Weiss's (2017) argument that the SES gap is attributable to the differences in family characteristics.

A teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School spoke about learners' performance:

*We don't produce quality learners until now; we are only producing drop-outs (Tsamai).*

A teacher from the same school deliberated as follows:

*Most of them can't read and write in grade 7; even if they increase we expect them to read and write, unfortunately that is not the case (Pulane - Kganya Public School).*

Khathi, who is also a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said the following:

*When they get to the higher grade, they cannot construct a sentence (Khathi).*

A teacher from Jahman Public Rural School had the following to say (regarding school learners' performance):

*Yes, I've said social science, history they master, they struggle with concepts in geography (Kalawe).*

Kalawe's colleague stated:

*Only 20 learners can perform at the expected level. Our performance is also negatively affected by high levels of absenteeism. When formal tasks and examinations are administered, learners just don't come to school; they literally run away (Happy – Jahman Public Rural School).*

Similarly, Cathy, a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, said:

*As a whole, learners are not performing well. They obtain between 20 and 30%. But, by December they perform fairly well because they are assisted by promotion guided by the policy of moving with your age cohort (Cathy).*

Regarding Groenvlei Urban Private School's learners' performance, a teacher said:

*100% at this stage, Grade 7 especially; my subjects are not like other subjects (Nic).*

Similarly, another teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, had the following to say:

*It's normally ... last year it's a 100%. Because you know, going over into high school, the whole end-year function in the grade 7's life is so huge, so we like to work in our grade 7 class towards 100% pass rate unless it is really a child that comes in during the year that we really can't assist (Lydia).*

Subsequently, Alex, who teaches at Groenvlei Urban Private School, indicated that the learners achieved approximately 95%.

For the school to perform well, resources play a pivotal role. This view is supported by Bušljeta (2013), who argues that the purpose and role of resources are not only to make the educational process attractive and interesting, but also to encourage active learning. UNDESA (2014) states that to benefit from electricity for better school performance, results in less truancy and absenteeism, and the achievement of good results. In line with absenteeism, evidence came from Happy, a Jahman Public Rural School teacher who

indicated that learners' performance was affected by high levels of absenteeism and they were truant when examinations were to be conducted.

Regarding the results or performance, Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School were not performing well, as evidenced by the teachers. On the contrary, Groenvlei Urban Private School did experience challenges with regards to the absenteeism of learners. In terms of performance or results, Groenvlei Private School also performed well. The School's teachers (Nic and Lydia) pointed out that the performance of learners was always 100%. Only one teacher (Alex) said that the percentage pass rate was more or less 95%. As UNDESA (2014) indicated, schools with electricity perform better, as it provides multi services in the classroom and improves the learning outcomes at a school. According to evidence given by Groenvlei Urban Private School teachers above, it was a well-resourced school, without an electricity issues. Economic inequalities play a prominent role in this regard. This inequality gap between the two marginalised schools (Kganya Public School and Jahman Public School) and the privileged school (Groenvlei Private School) needs to be critiqued so that an alternative model of practice can be constructed, which aims to overcome the inequalities that occur at the two schools (Chapter 3).

### **(iii) Enhanced teacher training**

Teachers work more effectively if the school has electricity because they can use electrical resources, such as computers and tablets. UNDESA (2014) states that teachers are reluctant to work at schools that lack basic facilities like electricity and health care. Moreover, Beldiga-Vasilache et al. (2019) argue that computer training for teachers and students is critical for the interaction of teaching and learning. Similarly, Pholotho and Mtsweni (2016) argue that ICTs play an important role in providing teachers with new skills.

In relation to the above arguments, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School said:

*I have been teaching maths since I started teaching. If you look at things now, every time every year we have teachers who come to our school for practicals or observations, but*

*I'm questioning one thing: we do not have maths teachers. When they come here, they observe Sotho, English and History. What about maths, what about science? How are we building our nation? I wonder whether the Department has observed that, because we are really going to encounter problems. I'm about to retire. We are wondering what is going to happen. I'm struggling with maths teachers at our school. We do not have maths teachers. We just place teachers because we do not have teachers to teach maths (Tsamai).*

The statement by Tsamai is in line with what UNDESA (2014) has said, that teachers are reluctant to work at schools, which do not have basic facilities like electricity. Maths and science teachers are needed by schools all over the world.

Moreover, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School said:

*I have some experience as a teacher. It was at the time of the introduction of OBE (Outcomes-Based Education) and I was a bit not clear about what I was doing, but with the introduction of the streamlined CAPS (curriculum and assessment policy statement), despite the fact that it has many challenges, it's much more clearer. We are expected to administer 26 classwork activities per week. This is just too much. According to the pacesetter for oral work and other activities and the system employed, I find this system having more challenges (Happy).*

The above statement shows that ICT (such as computers) is important to assist teachers in making their work easier, as mentioned by Pholotho and Mtsweni (2016), who emphasized that teachers needed ICT skills to do their work.

In addition, Cathy from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), said the following:

*With the advent of OBE, group work was introduced and it came with its share of challenges as it created serious challenges for the learners, as other learners depended solely on other learners. So, you as a teacher need to use your own discretion to circumvent these challenges. The issue of classifying learners according to different cognitive levels in the formation of groups is also a real challenge (Cathy).*

In contrast, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School said:

*We moved to Cape Town in 2009, my husband got work there and I'm from the banking industry – banking background. Secretariat Diploma, that's where I started. Then I got*

*bored at home and I started helping out, going on school trips. Then they asked me if I don't want to be a teaching assistant, because I was in a British school. So I did a course for a teaching assistant, and two and a half years in I shadowed an autistic child and then they asked me don't I want to stay... teaching and I did a 6 week course, which ended up in 12 weeks, which ended up in 9 months, which ended up in two years and I got my Diploma through Eddie XL PSA. So that's when my teaching career at 40 started there and then we had to move back here, I sent my kids to this school and then I started helping out again, because I love teaching. In the bank, I was teaching adults with credit card machines and stuff like that. The teaching is just changing your age group and, of course, because I have an IT background they put me in the IT Department with robotics and teaching computers for the children and I'm stuck here (Nic).*

The above statement by Nic indicated that the teacher worked at a well-resourced school, which offered IT and robotics.

In line with the above statement, another teacher from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School) shared the same sentiment:

*I started with psychology, and then I went on to do my PGC, and that started about 12 years ago. I started teaching 12 years ago. I've taught just about every grade in intermediate phase from grade 4 to grade 7. At the moment, I am teaching grade 7 English; so, I don't teach as much as I'd like to (Lydia).*

This indicated that the teacher was well equipped with qualifications at a well-resourced school. In support of the above view, the principal of the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School) had the following to say:

*So, we are all very much involved and especially in the primary school, our teachers are... the headmistress here is qualified, she has got a masters in psychology. And, I've got people here with remedial degrees. They use all of those skills together as a team to help with inequalities (Hanover).*

Drawing from all the discussions above, it can be said that Groenvlei Urban Private School differed from the other two schools (Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School) because it was well resourced and the teachers were highly skilled. These differences between the schools could be attributed to economic inequality. Most poor

children in South Africa receive poor education, which places them in a disadvantaged position compared to those who attend better performing schools (Van der Berg et al., 2011). Critical Theory views the trend (as expressed by Van der Berg et al., 2011) mentioned above as oppression, which needs the restructuring of education in order to free every person from the restraints of the capitalist system.

### **6.2.2.3 Network (electronic communication)**

- **Wi-Fi and Internet**

Wi-Fi is an abbreviation for Wireless Fidelity. It sends signals between devices through radio frequency. It is also called WLAN, which means “Wireless Local Area Network” (Escobar, 2015). Rouse (2019) defines the internet as a system of networks, where users on any computer can obtain information from another computer. Costley (2014) argues that the internet and computers are an integral part of our daily lives. Additionally, Costley (2014) states that the internet improves the daily lives of people by communication, personal interaction, and expanding educational services. However, Johnson et al. (2016) argue that teachers, whose schools do not possess computers and an internet connection, will not be able to implement educational technology. Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2016) assert that an internet connection is a fundamental requirement in the improvement of education at schools. Mireku (2016) further argues that the use of the internet enhances learning, and supports the delivery of skills and knowledge. Drawing from this discussion, it can be argued that the internet or Wi-Fi enhances the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

This was evidenced by a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, who said:

*If you buy a good device, you have some parents that buy the minimum requirements; then of course, it's not only the books, but the folders that we as teachers use, because the resources, we don't need to photocopy, and using... and Microsoft on the computer, if they don't have W-Fi at home, they can still do offline things on the computer, and as soon as they get connected to school Wi-Fi, it's there. So, we try to teach them if you don't have this, we have the stuff at school. So although there are inequalities, if they*

*don't have the money for that, we have the steps in place to make sure that they don't feel, oh no, I don't have this or I have no Wi-Fi, no data, I couldn't do this. You can still do this offline because the school has the licence for Word and Excel and PowerPoint. You can do it at home and as soon as you are in school, you connect to the Wi-Fi and it uploads it, and you put it in the teacher's folder. So, technology is amazing. The learners pick it up quickly, on how they learn to talk to one another at school, using things like that (Nic).*

Similarly, Hanover, the principal of the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School) emphasized this point:

*Once the children are inside (the school), they all have the same opportunities. Wi-Fi, everything is here. In our scenario, it is more a question of where do they come from, where they stay, and how they come to school (Hanover).*

The learner from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School) also supported the importance of internet or Wi-Fi. When asked about socialization with friends, the learner said:

*At school, I would probably talk to them and when I get home that's when we use the other networks like WhatsApp and all that (Moss).*

These comments show that the discussion above only applied to Groenvlei Urban Private School only – the reason being that the School has computers, Wi-Fi and Internet. Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural Schools do not have computers and there is no internet or Wi-Fi available. This links up with Bhakta and Dutta's (2016) findings that computers and the internet can only revolutionize the field of education.

Bulman and Fairlie (2016) regard the issue of some schools having computers while others do not, as disparities, which lead to educational inequality. Chisango and Lesame (2017) state that the redressing of imbalances has received attention from the South African government since the advent of democracy.

The above statements show that disparities in schools regarding internet access leave much to be desired, as all communities need quality education. To achieve quality education, according to Critical Theory, all the variables contributing to injustices,

including Wi-Fi and the Internet, need to be scrutinised and interrogated to enable social justice to take place in marginalised schools, such as Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School. The South African government must ensure that school infrastructure must be delivered equally to all schools, irrespective of their geographical area. This is supported by Pholotho and Mtsweni (2016), who argue that the lack of service delivery and poverty, as well as the geographical landscape, are the major causes of limited ICTs in rural public schools.

### **6.2.3 Poverty**

In this study, poverty is divided into two categories, namely hunger/starvation and the lack of basic services.

#### **(i) Hunger/Starvation**

Walker (2020) states that poverty in South Africa is still prevalent in previously disadvantaged areas. Mojapelo (2012) says that there are schools with a lack of educational facilities and high levels of poverty. This was not found to be true in the case of Groenvlei Urban Private School. The participants, including the principal (Hanover), indicated that the School had all the resources and facilities, including Wi-Fi, while public and rural schools did not have adequate facilities. In support of the presence of poverty in public and rural schools, the following came to the fore.

A teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School said:

*Poverty is rife, and our learners are experiencing very serious social problems. They come to school hungry. They come here hungry, not well clothed and do not have a uniform. Every day we try to assist them, we also pop out money to buy them something. You can imagine if a child is hungry, he/she won't concentrate (Tsamai).*

Similarly, a teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) had the following to say:

*You as a teacher must find a way of managing some of these problems and refer those that you are unable to manage. If they don't have food, clothes to wear, pens are manageable (Pulane).*

Khathi, who teaches at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said:

*There are squatters around the school. It is not easy to be here. Sometimes you can even cry when you ask the child about the home and the happenings. Some are fainting because of hunger. If you ask them when last they had food, they will tell you it is the previous day when they were at school. There is nothing at home to be eaten (Khathi).*

Similarly, the principal of Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said:

*At some stage we select the number of learners who have a serious problem like those who are ill or have sickness and help them, but at some stage we give those who do not have, but because the school has a feeding scheme, most of them eat from the school as provided by the Department of Education (Tax).*

The principal added:

*The school is communicating with the parents on how to assist the learners and assist the learners for the parents to apply for social grants and teachers donate uniform for others and give food for those who have serious problems in terms of disease or sickness. Some of them coming from poor families at some stage do not have food or supplements and we as the school try to get a sponsor from outside for the uniform (Tax).*

Consequently, the SGB member from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) said the following:

*Let me start with the example of food. The learners come from different family backgrounds. As the SGB, we were not assisted with regards to the feeding scheme. We made sure that for the benefit of the learners who come to school with empty stomachs, we get a feeding scheme for them. We have a problem of the children who did not eat the previous night because of their backgrounds. Our school learners come from poor family backgrounds. I am one of the teachers who reside in their area. I always visit and check the conditions in their homes as the SGB member. I encourage the parents to cook early in the morning for such kids because some will come to school after eating Weetbix or Kelloggs for breakfast, and what about other ones. That will be a breakfast for them to*

*be like other kids. This will help them to concentrate in the classroom. Others faint because of hunger. The kids are now willing to come to school because of the feeding scheme. The kids are now attending school well because of the feeding scheme (Kate).*

This indicated that most learners at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School were affected by famine. They were so severely affected by hunger (as indicated by Khathi, a teacher) that they fainted. In this regard, Votruba-Drzal et al. (2016) stated that the academic achievement of poor children was compromised due to poverty.

Regarding Jahman Public Rural School, a teacher from this school said the following (about children's hunger):

*Many learners walk long distances to and from school. They sometimes come to school on empty stomachs and this impacts negatively on their performance. There are learners coming as far as "the phase" – far flung informal settlements. When SADTU has time off, they leave school as early as 10:00. However, some parents still send learners to school despite the fact that it's official that SADTU teachers will leave early. Their parents send them to get food provided in terms of the National Schools Nutrition Programme. Currently, learners are not provided with food at our school. The majority of parents at this school are unemployed. Learners who are provided with something to eat perform better (Happy).*

The teacher (Happy) added:

*This state of affairs has a negative impact on these learners' academic performance. There's one learner who failed grade 6 last year and he is repeating ... only started coming to school again yesterday. This learner is not coping with schoolwork, has little interest in his books, because of the social-economic background he finds himself in (Happy).*

When asked about eating before coming to school, a learner from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School) said:

*No, because I wake up early to be punctual. Sometimes there's food, sometimes not (Jerry).*

The principal of Jahman Public Rural School stated the following:

*Ja, you know my choir won in the Free State. When I took the kids for lunch, I realised that it was their first time to sit in the restaurant eating food that they are not used to. They even asked me to buy them ice cream because it was luxury for them. Some don't have breakfast in the morning before they come to school. That is why we feed them. These learners are not exposed to the developments taking place in the townships and city schools (Bothma).*

Bothma, the principal from Jahman Public Rural School, further stated:

*Transport, hunger, if there is no food at home. Maybe they didn't eat last night. Another reason is that some parents allow their children not to come to school (Bothma).*

The research findings above concurred with Walker's (2020) findings that poverty was found mainly in disadvantaged schools or areas. Only the Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School participants alluded to poverty or hunger as one of the huge obstacles that hindered progress at the schools. Since only two schools in this study were affected by poverty (Groenvlei Private School was not affected), Critical Theory states that educational authorities and all stakeholders in education need to face and challenge the realities of societies today.

## **(ii) Lack of basic services**

Another line of argument is based on the basic services required for effective teaching and learning and good performance. According to this study, basic services are referred to as resources, such as accommodation, uniform/clothes, electricity, water and income. Van der Berg et al. (2011) argue that there is a close relationship between a school's SES and where the learners live. Mojapelo (2018) concurs with Van der Berg et al. (2011) by indicating that the situation where the majority of disadvantaged communities reside leaves much to be desired.

In view of the above arguments, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School had the following to say:

*Most learners live in shacks; they don't have biological parents, and they stay with their grannies. It's terrible (Tsamai).*

Tsamai added:

*Learners are very brilliant. They can see that this one is better than me. They then try whatever they can do to get attention, so that they can also be seen as better because the ones that look better, like they have a uniform, they come from wealthy families. The ones that are struggling, they bully and tease them. It is how they defend themselves and because of the inequalities, they even steal their things in classes (Tsamai – Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

Similarly, Pulane, a teacher at the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) said:

*The other day the other one was telling me that he didn't come to school because there was no electricity and so, there was no warm water for bathing and it is winter and the water is cold. Some of them will be absent from school because of sanitary towels. We try by all means as teachers to buy and provide (Pulane).*

Pulane added:

*Inequality means there is no balance, neh? For them the social status is almost the same. Most of them do come from poor families. Their families are not parents. Honestly, I would say the majority of them come from the families where there are no parents, child-headed families, their parents are not staying with them, etc. (Pulane – Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

Khathi, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, articulated as follows:

*We are one in the classroom. We are sisters and brothers. That is how I keep it. We help one another. We teach them that those who have must give those who don't have. We as teachers also bring our children's old clothes for assistance. The parents do not appreciate it because they can't even write a thank you letter to the teachers. The kids help each other. They bring clothes and other things for help (Khathi).*

The principal from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) commented as follows (regarding basic services):

*This is externally. Some of the learners are coming from better families. You find them wearing a proper school uniform. Those who are coming from poor families are not wearing a school uniform or wear torn clothes. Sometimes they have social problems regarding learning itself and some of them do carry lunch boxes and some not. Some do have pocket money and some not. Some have a problem in travelling and stay away from school, but those who have, have an advantage of coming to school (Tax).*

Tax emphasized the above point by saying:

*In terms of learning, those who have better communities learn better than those who do not have, but it depends on individuals because some of these learners will not come to school because of the home challenges and thus the most important thing is learning and teaching; it actually affects the learners because of 'the have' and 'have nots'. It does not balance at all to say the learners are able to learn equally because of the provided opportunities in the communities at home. I think those are the 'have' and 'have nots' – parents with a better income and parents with middle or no income at all. You find it for instance, where learners sometimes come to school with dirty uniforms. So, you can see that this learner comes from a certain group of parents who are not having money. A learner will explain that they do not have money to buy soap and they do not have electricity and other things. Those who are better off, you will find them clean and dressed up well and responding well in terms of learning and teaching. The social inequality sometimes causes a learner to be ashamed because they are not at the same level as others (Tax).*

Views raised by the participants regarding learners' needs at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School were complemented by those from Jahman Public Rural School. This is what one of the learners from Jahman Public Rural School said:

*Some fellow learners are good to me. Others have a negative attitude towards me. They sometimes look down upon those of us who stay at the shelter (Norma).*

However, the principal of Jahman Public Rural School had the following to say:

*They are coming from plots. What happens is that in the first place, the parents are illiterate. Secondly, some of the kids don't even have the necessary lights to study. They stay in shelters. I also accommodated street kids here at the school. They are kids who are about 11, 12 up to 17 years old (Mr Bothma, principal, Jahman Public Rural School).*

The principal added:

*We make use of a lot of private donors to give our learners school uniforms, sanitary towels for girls, and others. A lot of people are asked to assist because the School is open for help (Bothma).*

Bothma further stated:

*If I see that the learner does not have a school uniform, I ask the donors to come and donate so that they all look the same. That is how I treat the learners. I treat all the learners equally. If there is a case that needs my attention; for instance, if a learner does not have a school uniform, I just go out and look for sponsorships for assistance. I make sure that all the learners look the same here at the School (Bothma – Jahman Public Rural School).*

A teacher at the same school supported the principal:

*We are being assisted by the donors to help the learners with regards to clothing (Kalawe).*

The views expressed by Kalawe and the principal above concur with that of Sylvia, who is an SGB member at the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), who said:

*I initiated donation requests to assist learners as I see them every day, hence soliciting donations like shoes from the volunteers. Learners themselves will attest to the fact that indeed Me Sylvia is doing a sterling work to assist us (Sylvia).*

Groenvlei Urban Private School differed from Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School regarding learners' needs. Most parents could afford anything required by their children and the School because of their high SES. Chisesi (2012) argues that better performing schools are situated in higher income neighbourhoods; which supports the aforementioned views. Chisesi (2012) further states that a private school attracts wealthier families because of the school's higher performance. In similar vein, Scheper (2013) states that people, who send their children to a private school, are of a higher SES because they can afford the money needed for tuition. To show that the issue of affordability was minimal in Groenvlei Urban Private School, only one teacher pointed out a challenge regarding school clothing, saying:

*But the main thing, one thing I can say, especially on school clothing, winter time they don't have the full uniform, they put on a PE kit and an extra shirt underneath, and then they put on all different colours and not strictly school uniform. That's the one thing that challenges me (Nic).*

Two teachers from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School) differed from Nic. Alex had the following to say:

*Interesting, social status, we work with a lot of kids who come from parents who work for government, so they do well and you can say some of them are very spoilt and in that case a bit lazy when it comes to work, but when they start working, they go for it (Alex).*

Lydia, a teacher from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), concurred with Alex:

*I think especially with the grade 7's, it really becomes a huge issue with what you have and what you wear and what your parents do, maybe more so because it's an independent school and you find the majority of the parents are reasonably well-off. Despite the fact that the majority of them are well-off, you get parents that are stricter and believe that kids must work towards something that they don't just get, opposed to other kids that get whatever they want, but you certainly see for the first time in grade 7 that it starts to affect the children, they starting to ... compare themselves. It does definitely influence their ... (Lydia).*

All the above arguments show that SES played an important role in the choice of a school (public, rural or private school), as argued by Chisesi (2012) and Scheper (2013). Arising from the views of the participants above, it can be said that Groenvlei Private School's parents could afford all the school necessities for teaching and learning. However, Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School could not afford most of the necessities required by the schools for effective teaching and learning. This, is according to the findings, was a result of the high SES versus the low SES of the parents. The fundamental importance of Critical Theory regarding the issue of status (high or low) is to seek to emancipate disadvantaged people from hegemonic practices. All humans ought to be freed from all forms of oppression and oppressive rule.

## 6.2.4 Unemployment

Regarding unemployment, the discussion is based on the unemployment of parents and the effects thereof on the learners. There is a connection between unemployment and poverty. This is supported by Chibba and Luiz (2011), who argue that there is interconnectedness between poverty, inequality, and unemployment in societies. People who are unemployed are greatly affected by poverty. Haataja (2013) avers that unemployment is regarded as one of the greatest risk factors of poverty. Regarding the present study, unemployment has an effect on teaching and learning. It has created the following issues:

1. Abuse
  - Alcohol abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Bullying
2. Psychosocial factors
3. Lack of financial support

The abuse, which is rife in the context of this study, is alcohol abuse, sexual abuse and bullying, as pointed out by the participants. The study further illustrated that these abuses have negative effects on teaching and learning. Sango and Chiinze (2015) argue that whether abuse takes place in a school or within the community, it has serious implications for education.

Regarding the discussion above, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School spoke about alcohol abuse in the following manner:

*There are abusive families; in most cases, the abuse of alcohol by the families affects the learners a lot. Some of them, when you interview them, they cry. I think the social status affects them a lot (Pulane).*

Pulane added:

*Most people are poor; not working ... abuse alcohol. So, the school is situated in that environment; therefore, you can imagine what happens (Pulane – Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

A learner from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) had the following to say:

*After the passing away of my father, my mother was stressed; she was always drinking. So, I started staying with my sister and she took me to this school (Nthabi – Learner – Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

The SGB member concurred with Pulane (teacher) and Nthabi (learner) from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School):

*Some of the parents enjoy alcohol because of the stress caused by their children (Kate – SGB - Kganya Public Peri-Urban School).*

In similar vein, regarding sexual abuse, Pulane (a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) had the following to say:

*The other thing is there are those cases that you can see that there is a serious problem here. You can see that this one has been abused at home. We have a committee at school, which is dealing with such issues. There are cases that we can solve and others that we refer. When it comes to social issues, parents don't come when they are called at school because some of the parents do know why they are called, especially in cases of abuse, for example, sexual or otherwise (Pulane).*

Bullying is an issue that falls under abuse, and which affected teaching and learning, according to participants in this study. One of the participants, who teaches at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said:

*The ones (poor learners) who are struggling, they bully and tease them (wealthy ones). It is how they defend themselves and because of the inequalities, they even steal their things in classes (Tsamai).*

Similarly, Khathi, a teacher from the same school, had the following to say:

*Boys are bullying girls; as a result, the behaviour of the girls changes because they try to fight for themselves. Sometimes the learner uses vulgar language in order to defend herself and the teacher intervenes (Khathi).*

In the same line of thought, when asked about the attitudes of other learners, this was what a learner said:

*They talk to me. They sometimes bite me (Amo).*

Another critical issue, which hampers teaching and learning, and which results from unemployment are psychosocial factors. The psychosocial factors related to this study are loneliness, bereavement and social disruption.

Regarding loneliness, Pulane, who is a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say:

*Honestly, I would say the majority of them come from the families where there are no parents, child-headed families, their parents are not staying with them, etc. (Pulane).*

Pulane listed bereavement as one of the critical points of psychosocial factors, saying:

*But some of them with abuse, counselling, the mother passed away, family members passed away; we refer them. There are a lot of social issues here. As a teacher, you try that these issues be dealt with so that teaching can go on (Pulane).*

Tax, the principal from the same school (Kganya Public School), concurred with Pulane (teacher) by stating:

*Most of the learners come from unemployment homes where few mothers or fathers are employed and some of the learners do not have both partners as parents and some of them do not have parents at all (Tax).*

The principal of Kganya Public Peri-Urban School added:

*Those who are better, you will find them clean and dressed up well and responding well in terms of learning and teaching. The social inequality sometimes causes a learner to be ashamed because they are not at the same level as others (Tax).*

The views raised by Pulane (a teacher) and Tax (the principal) from Kganya Public School above were complemented by those of Kalawe, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School. This is what Kalawe said:

*Like you mentioned, the high, middle and lower class, they are not equal. We try by all means to treat them equally. We don't make them feel that they can't make it*

*academically. Some of them are child-headed families. Some don't know their fathers. Most of the learners here come from Lesotho (Kalawe).*

Social disruption is another variable emerging from the psychosocial factors, which in turn emanates from unemployment. It affects teaching and learning greatly, even when one looks at its connotation. Russ (2020) argues that social disruption appears to be a moment of social change in its extreme form.

Khathi, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, evidenced the above. When asked how discipline was affected by the social inequalities between the different learners, the teacher responded as follows:

*The disruption of classes by learners. They fight each other (Khathi).*

Happy, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, supported Khathi's views. This is what the teacher said:

*Those with socio-economic problems conversely tend to display various forms of ill-discipline. They display psychological outbursts like anger tantrums and even fight with other learners (Happy).*

In similar vein, Cathy, a teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), said:

*Sometimes this behaviour is influenced by the home background, as some parents just do not allow their children to raise their opinions. This forces some learners to force recognition and to be listened to by hook or crook at school (Cathy).*

Lack of financial support also emerged from unemployment, having a negative effect on teaching and learning. A learner from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School supported this view. When asked if her parents were employed, the learner responded as follows:

*They are not employed and the school is a no fee school (Nkhethi).*

In view of the statement above by a learner from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, the School's SGB member had the following to say:

*Firstly, most of my neighbours are not employed. For fundraising, we use the method of the civvies where they (learners) bring five rand, whereby they dress casual. As most of*

*the parents are unemployed, we use that method and the kids are asked to pay only two rand once a month (Kate).*

When asked about the parents' ability to pay the money, Kate said:

*Some yes, and some not, like the question that is asked, is the method working well? It does not work very well because most of the parents are unemployed (Kate).*

Norma, a learner from Jahman Public Rural School, had the following to say regarding lack of financial support. When asked if her parents working, she said:

*No (Norma).*

When asked about the payment of school fees, she responded as follows:

*This is a no-fee paying school. For those of us who are staying at the shelter, we do not pay any money. The Department is paying for us (Norma).*

Similarly, Jerry, who is a learner and a member of the RCL at the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), said:

*Only my father is employed and is doing a painting job in town. If school fees were compulsory, I would really struggle. Our school is a no-fee school (Jerry).*

In the same vein, Sylvia, the SGB member from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), supported the above views by stating:

*Even in this fundraising activity, some parents pay, but others do not pay, claiming that they are not working, and even if they receive social grants, this is too little (Sylvia).*

Drawing from the above discussion, it can be said that only public and rural schools were affected greatly by unemployment. It appears that Groenvlei Private School was not affected by unemployment. This was illustrated by the discussion above, as there had never been an incident of unemployment of parents affecting teaching and learning at Groenvlei Urban Private School. This indicated that most parents who took their children to a private school were wealthy, as emphasized by Scheper (2013). This is in line with what Alex, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, said:

*Interesting, social status, we work with a lot of kids who come from parents who work for government, so they do well and you can say some of them are very spoilt and in that*

*case a bit lazy when it comes to work, but when they start working, they go for it (Alex – Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

Lydia, a teacher at the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), concurred with Alex:

*Despite the fact that the majority of them are well off, you get parents that are stricter and believe that kids must work towards something that they don't just get; opposed to other kids that get whatever they want (Lydia – Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

Similarly, the principal from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School) supported the aforementioned teachers, stating:

*I would say most of the learners are from idle-income and government, municipality and professional people like doctors, contractors, we even have the Premier's grandchild (Hanover).*

The principal (Hanover) was supported by learners from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School). When asked whether their parents were employed, this was what one said:

*Yes, my parents are employed. My dad is the CEO of his company called Trading, which is into construction and my mom is a model at Ruby Red and she also does catering [Saby, learner, Groenvlei Urban Private School].*

Similarly, Pale, another learner from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), added:

*My dad owns his own company and my mom works for the company (Pale – learner, Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

It is evident that Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School's experiences were similar with regard to poverty and unemployment. According to the findings, the learners came from poor family backgrounds and their education was negatively affected. However, the family background of learners from Groenvlei Urban Private School did not affect them negatively, as this research indicated that their parents were employed. This formed a gap between private schools and rural and public schools, as articulated by Pedroza Flores et al. (2015), who stated that the gap put poor

communities in a disadvantaged position. The bridging of the gap regarding family backgrounds is a Critical Theory's concern. In order to resolve the above issue (different backgrounds), Critical Theory suggests that whoever is responsible for education, should go beyond description and historical context. This means looking at the specifics, and back to the general, with impact.

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

This chapter focused mainly on the second research question, which dealt with the economic inequalities that affected teaching and learning in Kganya Public School, Jahman Rural School and Groenvlei Urban Private School. Economic inequalities were identified as a theme. However, sub-themes emerging from economic inequalities were learning resources, poverty and unemployment.

The findings regarding learning resources indicated an inequality gap between Kganya Public School, Jahman Rural School and Groenvlei Urban Private School. Groenvlei Urban Private School was well resourced compared to Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School, which had little or no resources at all.

Regarding poverty, the findings revealed that most of the people who sent their children to Groenvlei Urban Private School belonged to a higher SES than those who sent their children to Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School.

The findings of the study further revealed that Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School were greatly affected by unemployment. Most parents were unemployed; however, there has never been an incident of unemployed parents at Groenvlei Urban Private School.

The next chapter will mainly discuss the themes and sub-themes emerging from the research questions, which deal with the physical environment, environmental location and distance travelled to school, and how these factors influenced the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within the three sites.

## **CHAPTER 7**

# **HOW ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCE THE EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The discussion in the previous chapter focussed on how economic inequalities affect teaching and learning in different schooling environments. In this chapter, the discussion is based on how environmental and social factors influence the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within the schools under study. Race/Ethnicity (7.3) is included in this chapter to evaluate its impact on educational inequalities.

### **7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATION**

Regarding this study, environmental location is referred to as a place where different schools are situated. It is argued that the environmental location of a school influences teaching and learning. In this study, the effects emanating from the environmental location, according to the participants, and which are discussed, are grouped in the following order:

- School location
- Transport and distance
- Teachers' emotions

#### **7.2.1 School location**

It has been argued that school location has an influence on teaching and learning. Essien (2017) argues that location has an influence regarding the academic achievement of a specific school. Adding to that, Owoeye and Yara (2011) assert that the community's location, in which the school is situated, has an effect on pupils' academic performance.

In this study, the effects that emerged because of school location are as follows:

- Late-coming of learners
- Absenteeism of learners
- Enrolments of learners

### **7.2.1.1 Late-coming of learners**

As pointed out above, late-coming is one of the variables caused by the school location and therefore affects teaching and learning at a school. To provide evidence of this, Happy, from Jahman Public Rural School, had this to say:

*Others (learners) even develop the stubbornness attitude. They even refuse to tell why they are late when asked (Happy).*

In this regard, Alex, from Groenvlei Urban Private School, expressed this view:

*I think because the parents are busy, a lot of them come with transport and I think that is one of the problems, they come late and you can't take that out on a child; that's the parents' fault, bringing your child late because now you are teaching them that it is fine (Alex).*

Lydia, a teacher from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), supported this view:

*We don't have much absenteeism. We do have a lot of kids, late-comers (Lydia).*

In the same vein, Lydia further explained:

*The fact that kids come late is just due to a 'don't care attitude...' (Lydia - Groenvlei Urban Private School).*

Hanover, the principal from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), added:

*Children come late because they stay on the other side of Bloemfontein, and once they are on this side of Bloem, they still travel six kilometres to get here. So, that's challenges for parents and children and teachers (Hanover).*

As stated above, learners from Jahman Rural School arrived late and developed what was called a “stubbornness attitude”. However, late coming at Groenvlei Private School was sometimes caused by a “don’t care attitude” of the parents because (according to the research findings) they drove their children to school. The negative attitudes of learners from Jahman Rural School had a negative effect on their education. That was why some of the learners ended up not listening to the teachers due to a stubborn attitude. Critical Theory describes this tendency of stubbornness as one of the socio-educational inequalities that exist in the daily lives of some learners (especially from disadvantaged schools) and it needs to be stamped out.

### **7.2.1.2 Absenteeism of learners**

Absenteeism is one of the variables caused by the school location. Sahin et al. (2016) argue that absenteeism does not only affect academic progress, but also influences teachers’ class planning, as well as the motivation of other learners in the class. In this regard, Tax, the principal from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say:

*‘Absenteeism’, which the parents do not account for at some stage, there are different reasons why learners do not come to school. Some of the parents tell their children not to come to school. If you ask the learner, they will tell you that their parents told them not to come to school. They are playing ignorance (Tax).*

The above view is shared by Kalawe, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, who remarked:

*Yes, meneer the impact does happen. We have the learners who absent themselves from school for no apparent reasons. We also get genuine reasons. Genuine in the sense that learners don’t have money to pay for the busses, which travel from places like Phase 6, 7 and Dinaweng Township (Kalawe).*

In support of Kalawe's view, Cathy, a teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), had the following to say:

*High level of absenteeism. Learners' time is wasted and curriculum coverage suffers, learners cannot attain expected levels of achievement, and those who are promoted to the next grades still have knowledge gaps (Cathy).*

Sahin et al. (2016) indicate that absenteeism is one of the basic indicators, which show the extent to which students' educational needs are met by schools, and we need to ask ourselves about the problems we have regarding our system of education. According to the participants, Kganya Public Peri-Urban School and Jahman Public Rural School experienced this challenge. Groenvlei Urban Private School did not experience any challenge regarding absenteeism.

The discussion regarding absenteeism above indicated that the schools most affected were Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School. Critical Theory views Marxist ideology as an alternative model that could be used to help eradicate or overcome the socio-educational inequalities (including absenteeism) that exist between different types of schools.

### **7.2.1.3 Enrolments of learners**

School enrolment is one of the fundamental factors caused by the location of the school. The geographic condition of a school determines the enrolment of the learners (Dzombo, 2015). Newberry (2020) concurs with Dzombo (2015), arguing that the location of a school has a significant impact on the enrolment of learners. Sylvia, the SGB member from Jahman Public Rural School, added to this view:

*Most of the parents have their own dwellings in the informal settlements. Sometimes parents deregister their children from this school once the owner of the farm dismisses them (Sylvia).*

The above opinion is shared by Nic, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, who remarked:

*We don't have a lot of learners because parents say we are so far (Nic).*

Deliberating on how school enrolment is affected, Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public School, had the following to say:

*Our school is surrounded by people who are not attending school. They come from initiation school and it's really affecting us because they bully these ones who do not come from initiation school. At the ultimate end, these ones who have never been to initiation school tend to go to initiation school without the consent of the parent. Peer pressure takes its course (Tsamai).*

A similar view on how school enrolment is affected by school location was echoed by Tax, the principal from the same school (Kganya Public School). This is what he said:

*We are in a place, which is more or less advanced in such a way that they (learners) can be graded to a standard, which we can say it is a better living, but most of the parents are referring the learners to town schools (Tax).*

According to the findings, Jahman Rural School's enrolments were affected by parents' dismissal by farmers, while Kganya Public School's enrolments were affected by the distance to school (the School is located far from where the learners live). Thus, it can be said that radical change is necessary in the way that education is organised to overcome the obstacles stated above, which hamper teaching and learning in schools (Chapter 3).

### **7.2.2 Transport and distance**

Distance and transport are interconnected. In order for a person to get to a certain place, which is far, transport is needed. South African learners use different transportation modes to get to and from different school destinations. Consumer Reports (2015) identified the modes of transportation for schoolchildren as follows:

- School busses
- Walking to school
- Bicycles

- Driving in a car

Vafeiadis and Næss (2012) listed the transport modes for learners as follows:

- Public transport use
- Car use
- Walking to school
- Bike use
- Cycle use

Moreover, this study's modes of transportation were identified by the participants as follows:

- Walking to school
- Public transport (taxi, bus)
- Learner transport (bus)
- Private transport (own car)
- School bus

The distance between home and school determines the mode of transportation used by the learners. The nearer the school is for the learners the advantage is that they can walk to school, and the further the school, the greater the need for transportation. Distance and the mode of transport have an effect on learners' educational well-being. It has a negative impact on teaching and learning, especially when learners have to walk or travel long distances. This is argued by Portwig (2018), who states that factors, such as lack of transport, the high cost of public transport, poor roads, and risks and safety along the roads, are some of the negative factors that affect learners' abilities to learn, participate and attend school effectively and efficiently. In the same line of thought, Mugoro (2014) argues that transport tensions, late-coming, and tiredness lead to learners learning at different levels, such as high, moderate, low, or no learning at all. Therefore, modes of transport have a negative affect and they affect teaching and learning severely. According to my observation, Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School learners struggled with transport to go to school. However, Groenvlei Private School's learners did not struggle in terms of transport. The basic beliefs of Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy

are that learners go to school to be taught. They should not suffer when they go to school due to transport and distance issues. Since the study is a comparative analysis of three primary schools in Bloemfontein, in the Free State Province, the mode of transport was divided into two categories. They are transport for disadvantaged learners versus transport for privileged learners.

Transport for disadvantaged learners:

- Walking to school
- Public Transport (taxi, bus)
- Learner Transport

Transport for privileged learners:

- Private Transport (own car)
- School bus

### **7.2.2.1 Walking to school**

In this study, the participants identified walking as one of the modes of transport because it related to the distance to travel or go to school. Walking long distances to school has a negative effect on learners' performance and teaching and learning. The Urban Institute (2017) argues that walking or biking to school has a high negative effect on health and safety issues, when compared with the use of other modes of transport. Gašparović (2014) states that walking to school creates absenteeism, late coming and other factors, which affect a learner's academic success. In support of the above view, Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public School, said:

*They (learners) walk long distances to school. I have seen learners coming from Bloemspruit, which is far away from our school (Tsamai).*

In line with what Tsamai (a teacher) had to say regarding school distance, this is what Tax, the principal from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), had to say:

*Some (learners) have a problem in travelling and stay away from school, but those who have an advantage of coming to school (Tax).*

Emphasizing the above point, Tax added:

*Some of the learners do not come to school because of distance (Tax).*

Similarly, Kalawe, who is a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, said:

*Other learners are walking via the road called the N8, which is not safe. Cars are over-speeding in that direction. We are having small kids who are doing grade R and they are walking to school on foot (Kalawe).*

In the same line of thought, Happy, a teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), had the following to say:

*Many learners walk long distances to and from school. There are learners coming as far as 'the Phase', a far-flung informal settlements (Happy).*

Happy further said:

*Learners travel long distances on foot and arrive at school tired. As such, it's difficult for them to concentrate and others even develop the stubbornness attitude. They even refuse to tell why they are late when asked (Happy).*

The principal, Bothma, from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), had a similar view:

*Yes, you know what happens is that the school is in a rural area. Some of the learners are walking long distances to school (Bothma).*

Bothma further emphasized the issue of distance as follows:

*You see what happens is that we cater for the learners here in the plots, but then we also have learners from the locations, such as Phase 6, 10 Bergman, Khayelitsha, etc. I haven't even met some of those parents whose learners come from those places. There are learners that are passing ten schools and come here. I don't know the reason behind that (Bothma).*

Alex, who is a teacher at Groenvlei Urban Private School, concurs with Bothma regarding distance. This is what the teacher said:

*But the school is a bit far, but that means you have to get up a bit earlier and that's discipline that comes from home (Alex).*

Elaborating on school distance, Buhle, a member of the PAC from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), said:

*More or less (the learners) stay at Woodlands because the School is not far from that place (Buhle).*

Hanover, the principal from Groenvlei Urban Private School, added:

*You are out in the rural area but on the other hand, it still contributes to the challenge. Children come late because they stay on the other side of Bloemfontein, and once they are on this side of Bloem, they still travel six kilometres to get here. So, that's challenges for parents and children and teachers (Hanover).*

Walking to school was a challenge for most learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School. This resulted in some learners not coming to school, as mentioned by the principal of Kganya Public School. Groenvlei learners' late coming was caused by parents with "a don't care attitude", as stated by participants. Critical Theory aims to develop a mode of consciousness that encourages individuals to view 'don't care attitudes' as the product of historical backgrounds, which can be changed. This means that a change in society can change society's actions. Those who lead the education sector in South Africa could also address the issue of learners walking long distances to school.

#### **7.2.2.2 Public transport (taxi, bus)**

Powell (2013) argues that one of the disadvantages of public transport is that disadvantaged populations live in areas where transport is not easily accessible or is unavailable. Powell (2013) adds that some learners would not be able to pay for transport services, even if they were available, due to economic reasons.

In support of the above view, Nthabi, a learner from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say:

*I use my own transport and it is a taxi (Nthabi).*

Nkhethi, another learner from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), similarly said:

*I come here with a taxi (Nkhethi).*

Kalawe, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, spoke about public transport in regard to the learners, saying:

*We have the learners who absent themselves from school for no apparent reasons. We also get genuine reasons. Genuine in the sense that learners don't have money to pay for the busses which travel from places like Phase 6, 7 and Dinaweng in the township. I am not sure about the distance in kilometres from those places to our school (Kalawe).*

Two of the schools under study (Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School) used public transport, such as taxis and busses. Groenvlei Private School learners were not affected in this regard. This inequality gap only affected the learners from the two disadvantaged schools (Kganya School and Jahman School). Hence, the transformation of education is needed in South Africa, as Critical Theory is open to educational challenges and modifications thereof.

### **7.2.2.3 Learners' transport (bus)**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) transport, also known as learner transport or scholar transport, assists with the transportation of learners to and from schools. According to a media release by the DBE (2018), the Departments of Basic Education and Transport work together to provide a learner transport function. Masinga (2018), however, says that DBE has insufficient funds to accommodate all vulnerable learners; hence, there are still learners who walk long distances to school.

There was a variety of challenges regarding learner transport, as pronounced by the participants in this study. Kalawe, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, had the

following to say:

*Some (of the learners) are using a bus provided by the Department of Education. The only challenge the kids face is that the bus does not drop them nearer their places. They are supposed to walk to their places (Kalawe).*

Cathy, who teaches at the same school, concurred with Kalawe:

*Learner transport poses a serious challenge despite the fact that it is provided by the Department of Education. Learners staying outside the prescribed radius have to provide their own transport and late coming is unavoidable (Cathy).*

Cathy further argued:

*Unfortunately, this bus ferries learners of all grades offered at the School. You will find that five learners of your class are absent for the whole month. These learners are at home. Sometimes when these learners come back to school, you have already forgotten them (Cathy).*

This indicates that some learners used DBE transport to go to school and travel back home. The learners themselves evidenced this. Norma, one of the learners from Jahman Public Rural School, had the following to say:

*I'm using Melaphi bus transport, belonging to the Department of Education (Norma).*

In the same vein, another learner, Jerry, from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), said:

*We are provided with transport from the Department of Education (Jerry).*

Even though the DBE assisted learners from poor backgrounds with transport, it did not accommodate all vulnerable learners. Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School learners were affected by this phenomenon. Learners staying outside the prescribed radius (according to the findings) had to provide their own transport; therefore, late coming was unavoidable (as alluded to by Cathy from Jahman Rural School). Hence, one can say that social justice is not addressed by the DBE, as it is a focal point whereby people must be treated equally regardless of their colour, race, religion, creed, or any other form of discrimination.

#### **7.2.2.4 Private transport (own car)**

Private transport also has its pros and cons. According to Anwar (2009), private transport is used sometimes, according to the choice or the lifestyle patterns of individual people. Regarding learners, in most cases the parents make the choice for them. This is also dependent on economic status, as pointed out by Anwar (2009). Some of the learners in this study opted for private transport because of a lack of public transport in their areas; this posed a serious challenge for them. Cathy, who is a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, had the following to say:

*Learners with their own private transport pose a problem for us as teachers because sometimes parents cannot afford to pay for it. This state of affairs further adds to a high percentage of absenteeism (Cathy).*

In the same line of thought, Lizzy, a learner from the same school (Jahman Rural School), said:

*I am using Mr Mphatsoanyane's transport to and from school because there's no transport to Semajan. My parents pay the owner of the transport (Lizzy).*

Similarly, Alex, who teaches at Groenvlei Urban Private School, said:

*I think because the parents are busy, a lot of them come with transport and I think that is one of the problems they come late and you can't take that out on a child. That's the parents fault, bringing your child late, because now you are teaching them that is fine (Alex).*

Lydia, a teacher from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), holds a similar view as Alex:

*But just being dropped off by your parents every morning and waltzing in here at quarter to ... is just basic ill-discipline ... I think.*

Most of the learners from Groenvlei Urban Private School used private transport to travel to and from school. The learners themselves evidenced this. When asked about the transport to travel to school, Saby (a learner from Groenvlei Urban Private School) had the following to say:

*Sometimes I get to school with transport in the morning at 07:00 and sometimes my mom takes me to school when I'm late (Saby).*

In the same view, Pale, a learner from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), said:

*My mom or my dad drop me off (Pale).*

In the same line of thought, Moss, a learner at Groenvlei Urban Private School, said:

*My mom drives me to school (Moss).*

Based on the evidence above provided by Groenvlei Urban Private School learners, it could be argued that most of the learners were taken to and from school by their parents, using their own vehicles, versus Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School whose learners were mostly dependent on learner and public transport. Scheper (2013) argues that most parents who take their children to a private school are wealthy; hence, they prefer to use their own transport to take their children to school, as mentioned by the learners from Groenvlei Urban Private School.

In line with the above statement by Scheper (2013), Lizarraga et al. (2011) argue that learners, whose parents experience transport disadvantages, are those with low incomes. In this study, most learners whose parents earned a low income or were unemployed, attended rural or public schools; hence, they walked or used learner transport provided by the DBE. In support of the above statement, Kalawe, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, said:

*Some of the learners are using a bus provided by the Department of Education (Kalawe).*

Regarding public schools, public transport, such as taxis and busses, are useful. Nthabi, who is a learner from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, evidenced this:

*I use my own transport and it is a taxi (Nthabi).*

Drawing from the above discussion, it could be concluded that the modes of transport used by Groenvlei Urban Private School learners differed from those used by learners of Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School. Most of the learners from Groenvlei Private School were driven to school because their parents owned cars. This

is supported by my observations at the three schools. Groenvlei School (according to my observation) was the only school where the majority of parents used their own cars to take their children to school. Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School learners used other modes of transport. This dilemma was caused by the imbalances that occurred between the communities in regards to economic inequality, which is a concern for Critical Theory, and needed to be addressed.

#### **7.2.2.5 School bus**

School transport is a bus used in transporting learners to or from school. There are schools that own a school bus and those that do not own a school bus. Mugoro (2014) argues that a school bus has a very important role to play in learners' lives. School buses are regarded as the best option when referring to safe modes of transport because they are designed for the protection of the passengers (Sakellariou et al., 2016).

Only one school in this study owns a school bus for its learners, and it is Groenvlei Urban Private School. When asked about the impact the environmental location has on teaching and learning at the School, Nic (a teacher at Groenvlei Urban Private School) responded as follows:

*The one good thing we have is that we have busses that can transport children from wherever they are if they are too far. Because parents, when they work in the city, then yes, it is a far way to drive, out here and then go back to work (Nic).*

Hanover, the principal from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), concurred with Nic, by saying:

*If this was a no-fee school, I see Bains because their children walk; I see them walking very far. Our children don't walk; they get delivered by the school. So, you understand, there is a different ball game here. But, there are still social circumstances (Hanover).*

In emphasizing the above point, Hanover said the following about the school bus:

*But we also have transport available, which the parents pay for. We pick up their children in different suburbs (Hanover).*

According to this study, transport has an impact on teaching and learning. It affected teachers' emotions when learners arrived late in classes, even those learners who used a school bus as the mode of transport, according to Lydia (a teacher at Groenvlei Private School). Only Groenvlei Private School provided a school bus for its learners, while Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School did not own school busses. This shows the inequality that existed between the three schools. School type, socio-economic status and other factors are described by Critical Theory as the social domains that have an effect on learners.

### **7.2.3 Teachers' emotions**

Miller and Donlan (2014) argue that the social circumstances that occur in the teaching environment make teachers bored, proud or frustrated. Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, evidenced this:

*Inside my teaching experience, what I can tell you is that teachers have lost interest in teaching. They are demotivated. We are teaching, but the passion is no longer there and teachers are not committed (Tsamai).*

The participants from this study revealed various factors related to teaching and learning that affected teachers' emotions, especially in their respective classrooms, which included the following:

- Discipline (learners' behaviour)
- Lack of resources/facilities
- Teachers' workload
- Environment
- Learner-teacher ratio
- Social issues
- Parental support/involvement
- Absenteeism
- Curriculum challenges

### **7.2.3.1 Discipline (learners' behaviour)**

Tiwari and Panwar (2014) contend that learners' behavioural problems influence teachers' abilities and competence to do their classroom tasks, and therefore affect teaching and learning. Similarly, Nic, who is a teacher at Groenvlei Urban Private School, had the following to say:

*They always say that discipline starts at home and if there is no discipline at home, we have to put discipline in place here. We do more discipline than teaching (Nic).*

In the same vein, Alex, a teacher at the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), said the following:

*I think if you know the background of the learners, let's take the two situations – one learner, the parents aren't here, and the other learner, it's a lot easier to discipline the child with the parents that are here, because they will go home and tell the parents. And the other learner with the parents who are not here, you have to address differently, you have to approach them differently, otherwise he is going to feel the same here as he feels at home – nobody cares. So you have to have a type of ... the discipline is going to be the same, the consequence, but you have to approach it differently (Alex).*

However, Jacobsz (2015) is of the view that learners who are disruptive, bullying others, talking during lessons, and require discipline from the teacher can have a negative effect overall on the class. To show that disruptive learners can have a negative effect on a teacher's ability to teach effectively, as pointed out by Jacobsz (2015), Khathi, who teaches at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said:

*I love teaching, I love the kids, but this year these kids are very naughty, they are not listening, rowdy, disrupt classes, you scream at the top of your voice and it's terrible. We took some of them to the principal, especially the grade 7's (Khathi).*

In addition, deliberating on learners' discipline or behaviour, Tsamai, a teacher at the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), commented as follows:

*I have been teaching in Botshabelo for ten years. By then I was enjoying my teaching because those times discipline was at the required level. Learners were disciplined and I really don't get it because by then you would find that most children in Botshabelo stayed*

*alone. The parents were working here in Bloemfontein, so they only went home during the weekends, but most learners were staying alone and the schools did not have this feeding scheme, but they were eager to learn. Bloemfontein is worse (Tsamai).*

Being disrespectful to teachers, frustration, attention-seeking, failing to complete academic tasks and being physically disruptive are some inappropriate behaviour patterns (Cymru, 2012). In this regard, Cathy, a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, had this to say:

*Some learners force recognition and to be listened to by hook or crook at school. This behaviour by such learners does not end only with fellow learners, but it even extends to teachers, as they also do not respect their teachers (Cathy).*

In the same line of thought, Hanover, the principal from Groenvlei Urban Private School, articulated on learners' frustration:

*So, in our case, behaviour is the biggest problem because some of the learners don't always know how to conduct themselves because of frustration at home (Hanover).*

Regarding learners' failure to complete their academic tasks, Buhle, a member of the PAC at the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), had the following to say:

*There was a problem concerning the behaviour whereby learners were not doing the schoolwork (Buhle).*

The behaviour of learners was a great concern for all the teachers in the three schools under study. The findings revealed that teachers' abilities and competence to do their work were influenced by learners' behavioural problems. Being disrespectful to teachers, failing to complete academic tasks, and being physically disruptive were some of the unacceptable behavioural patterns that caused frustration for teachers and affected learners' academic performance. Most participants in this study stated that the behaviour of learners originated from their homes. Learners' behaviour was affected by different variables that occurred in their daily lives (Chapter 3). This could be changed by turning the situation around in eradicating or minimizing the socio-educational inequalities that existed in South African schools.

### **7.2.3.2 Lack of resources/facilities**

Yusuf et al. (2015) view a lack of job satisfaction and inadequate school facilities as major causes of stress among primary school teachers. Adding to this view, Tsamai, who is a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, explained:

*We are really struggling. You buy teaching aids on your own, you try to put them on the wall, you can't stick them because walls are dilapidated (Tsamai).*

Pulane, a teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), concurred with Tsamai:

*My daily challenges are such that you get into a class and you expect a child to have a pen and the learner does not have one. Now you have to use your own mind to buy pens so that each time when the learner claims not to have a pen, you must help with a pen. Most of the resources in class, they don't have (Pulane).*

To indicate the serious lack of resources at the School (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), Pulane added:

*I always talk to my husband about our budget to put a certain amount aside to buy resources for the kids, for example, Pritt, pencils, rulers for those who do not have, because if they do not have a pen there is nothing they can do and as a teacher, I have to continue with my work. For the sake of peace of mind, I try to teach learners that at least there is somebody who cares. I try to provide with the little that I can (Pulane).*

It could further be argued that private schools also have challenges. Aydin and Kaya (2016) contend that private school teachers' sources of stress originate from school facilities and supervision. Nic, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, supported this view:

*Because our learners have e-books, they don't need handbooks. If we have learners in the beginning of the year, they don't always have a computer to work on, we just make photocopies for the time being. But the parents are aware from grade 3 that when the learner comes into grade 4, they need a very good device, so we have parents' meetings and things beforehand to tell the parents; you put your child in this school, so you have to be aware... (Nic).*

A lack of job satisfaction and inadequate school facilities were major stressors among primary school teachers, as indicated by the findings of this study. The most affected schools were Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School. Groenvlei Private School had ample resources and used technological devices like computers and tablets, which the disadvantaged schools (Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School) did not have. The teachers in the disadvantaged schools were frustrated by this phenomenon because they were unable to do their job effectively. Critical Theory could resolve these issues if society was constantly involved in addressing philosophical and social issues and controversies (Chapter 3).

### **7.2.3.3 Teachers' workload**

Some of the teachers' frustrations were caused by their workload, as it affected their performance regarding teaching. Wakoli (2013) emphasizes this point by indicating that occupational stress, related to the workload among teachers, is not only evidenced by many studies, but also from the number of programmes and workshops developed to assist teachers to cope with their workload and reduce work-related stress. Adding to this view, Tsamai, who teaches at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said:

*Teachers are demotivated because they attend workshops but they don't produce quality learners (Tsamai).*

Wakoli (2013) further states that paperwork, which teachers deal with and have nothing directly to do with classroom teaching, has become burdensome in recent years. Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say in this regard:

*Teachers have lost interest and are demotivated, because of too much paperwork, which they are doing instead of teaching (Tsamai).*

Another point, which was raised by the teachers in this study regarding workload, was the number of subjects that a teacher was expected to teach. The ever-increasing learner population and the expansion of subjects in the curriculum have resulted in crippling workloads, and then teachers are blamed for the poor performance of learners (Ayeni & Amanekwe, 2018). In line with this view, Kalawe, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural

School, said:

*I am taking three subjects, the other teacher takes two subjects, and another one is taking four subjects like natural sciences, Sesotho, English and maths (Kalawe).*

To show his frustration, Kalawe added to the above view by saying:

*I asked the principal why he gave me three learning areas because they confuse the learners. They sometimes confuse the terminologies like artist, artisan or architecture in geography, but when you go to technology, it is another different explanation of terminologies or definitions (Kalawe).*

Only two of the schools under study (Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School) were affected by teachers' workload. The workload led to frustration among teachers, which led to poor performance in regard to teaching. However, Groenvlei Private School was not affected at all by the teachers' workload. This dilemma falls under the education crisis, as pointed out by Michael Apple, who has expressed concern about the politics surrounding school reforms (Chapter 3).

#### **7.2.3.4 Environment**

To enhance teaching and learning performance, the environment should be considered and be well managed (Usman & Madudili, 2019). Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, voiced the following sentiments:

*If you look at our school, it is dilapidated, there are safety hazards everywhere you go. Look at the walls here, they can fall at any time. The environment is not conducive to learning (Tsamai).*

In the same vein, Kate, the SGB member from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say:

*If it was in the past, I would say the conditions are not good because it was not good, but now we have tried our level best, like we had leaking ceilings, broken lights, etc. As far as the holes are concerned, I think it is only one class that I know of. There are other walls with cracks, because it is an old school (Kate).*

Adding to the physical facilities, the environment where the school is located affects teachers and learners' performance. School location is one of the fundamental environmental factors that influence the teaching-learning process (Mege, 2014). Pulane, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, concurred:

*I think the environmental location, and the impact it might have, I think is gangsterism because they live in an area where there is more gangsterism. The area whereby most people are poor, not working, like around here. Most people are poor, not working, abuse alcohol, so the school is situated in that environment; therefore, you can imagine what happens (Pulane).*

Similarly, Tsamai, a teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), said:

*Vandalism is rife. I've got copies of my office, which was vandalised. They break doors and windows. Our cupboards can't be closed because they are always broken. They also break the burglar bars. You can't keep anything valuable in your office. Our school is surrounded by people who are not attending school; they come from initiation school and it's really affecting us (Tsamai).*

In addition, Khathi, who is also a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, stated:

*There are squatters around the school. It is not easy to be here. Sometimes you can even cry when you ask the child about the home and the happenings (Khathi).*

The environment at Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School was not conducive to teaching and learning. This was informed by the observations undertaken at the two schools. Kganya Public School Schools' buildings were dilapidated with cracks in the walls of some of the classrooms. Some of Jahman Rural School's classrooms had holes in them and they had no doors, while Groenvlei School's environment was good and conducive for teaching and learning. This clearly indicates that the disadvantaged schools were neglected by the DBE and by other education stakeholders. Some of the participants regarded their school environment as a safety and health hazard. According to Critical Theory, school situations of this nature have a deeply negative effect on education and they need to change.

### **7.2.3.5 Learner-teacher ratio**

Learner-teacher ratio has a direct impact on teaching and learning. Muthusamy (2015) argues that overcrowded classrooms put more stress on teachers and affect learner performance. Adding to this view, Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had this to say:

*The ratio of 1:48 is too much because there is no individual attention (Tsamai).*

Pulane, a teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), concurs with Tsamai. This is what she said:

*According to the Department of Education it has to be 1:30, but here you find it is 1:48; some of the classes is 1:58. It depends on the grade. Grade 7 is 1:48 (Pulane).*

Similarly, Kalawe, a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, commented as follows:

*The class was divided. Earlier in January, it was one class consisting of 60 learners. It was difficult for us to control, monitor or supervise (Kalawe).*

Overcrowding had a negative impact on teaching and learning at schools. Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School were affected by the learner-teacher ratio and their classrooms were overcrowded. The teachers were unable to apply the principle of individual attention. The ratio in these two schools exceeded the Department of Education's norm, which is 1:30. Regarding the two schools (Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School), the DBE failed to rectify the school curriculum in line with the required standards, failed to strengthen learner individual attention, and failed to improve social justice in education (Chapter 3).

### **7.2.3.6 Social issues**

Parents have heightened teachers' emotional disorders and antisocial behaviour by shifting their duties, such as interpersonal relationships and moral values, to them (Becirovic & Akbarov, 2015). Nic, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, said the following:

*You just now and then... ok. ok, because you keep on telling them to keep quiet, they can't. I know that, but it's just trying to tell that ok, let's just try to keep the noise level back down, either talk softer or we stop it all. To 20 seconds then it will just go, so we have to spend a lot of time on handling the social issues (Nic).*

Adding to Nic's views, Happy, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, stated:

*Learners with socio-economic problems conversely tend to display various forms of ill-discipline. They display psychological outbursts like anger, tantrums and even fight with other learners. Others develop into bullies and make the learning environment uncomfortable for other learners (Happy).*

Becirovic and Akbarov (2015) argue that teachers' stress and frustrations are caused by increased responsibilities and obligations. Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, confirmed this:

*Learners come here hungry, not well clothed and do not have a uniform. Every day we try to assist them, we also pop-out money to buy them something. You can imagine if a child is hungry, he/she won't concentrate (Tsamai).*

Kate, the SGB member from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), concurred with Tsamai:

*For some of the parents, it is a challenge to do copies of the birth certificates for their kids and hand them over to Social Development to assist learners with school uniforms. As a result, some don't have access to the uniforms donated by the Department of Social Development. We, as teachers, donate some money to buy school uniforms, shoes, etc. when we recognise this situation (Kate).*

In addition, Pulane, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say:

*There is a lot of social issues here. As a teacher you try by all means that these issues be dealt with so that teaching can go on. People are poor, people are not working, but life must go on (Pulane).*

Similarly, Khathi, a teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), supported Pulane's view, by stating:

*We as teachers also bring our children's old clothes for assistance. The parents do not appreciate it because they can't even write a thank you letter to the teachers (Khathi).*

In the same vein, Hanover, the principal from Groenvlei Urban Private School, articulated as follows regarding social issues:

*We have a system in place. When a child starts and there is a problem, the teacher in the class is number 1. She see the child does not behave well, or can't concentrate or whatever, then she starts there, saying, listen, the child can't see well. Right, so is it physical, psychologic or is it social? And then we go to the management team and they involve others. 'Do you have the same problem in your class with that child?' So, then you get a picture of that child. Is it only in the one class? Or, is it in the grade? The different teachers come then and say, 'No, we've got the same problem.' Then we involve the management team and the parent, then you say, 'Ok. let's see if it is physical?' Maybe the child can't see well. Test the eyes or move the child to the front. You know, those normal things; then, you pick up no-no-no ... social problem. So, we follow that procedure to help (Hanover).*

The findings revealed that teachers' stress and frustrations were caused by increased responsibilities and obligations from parents. Learners' social issues, such as hunger, clothing or uniforms, and anger and frustrations, have to be handled by teachers and not by their parents. This retards the process of teaching because teachers use more time handling issues than teaching learners. Critical Theory's belief is that schools are social entities that are created for the purpose of pedagogy, and nothing else. This means that teachers are not obliged to focus on social issues, but rather on teaching and learning.

#### **7.2.3.7 Parental support/involvement**

Parental involvement is key to boost the self-esteem of teachers and to achieve learner success. The disinterest of parents in school activities damages the self-esteem of both the teacher and the student (Delgado, 2019). Adding to this view, Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, commented as follows:

*Another thing which affects teaching is parental involvement. Even if the learners are not doing their work, since they are not punished, we invite the parents, but they don't come to school (Tsamai).*

Moreover, Tsamai said:

*Parents don't come to school when invited. Most of the time, instead of us teaching, we are solving problems (Tsamai).*

Pulane, another teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, shared the same view:

*There are cases that we can solve and others that we refer. Parents don't come to school, because some of them do know why they are called, especially in cases of abuse, for example, sexually or otherwise. You will send letters, but they will avoid you (Pulane).*

Similarly, Khathi, a teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), had the following to say:

*The learners get a stationery package in the beginning of the year. The parents are not cooperative. They stay in squatter camps. If there is something here at school, they are not coming; some are staying nearer to the school. There is no parental involvement (Khathi).*

Adding to the above, Tax, the principal at the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), said:

*The only time we have parents is when we do not have parents' meetings. It does not balance at all because the majority of them are those who are not committed (Tax).*

Bothma, the principal at Jahman Public Rural School, shared the same sentiment:

*Some of the parents are involved, but the majority not. You see what happens is that we cater for the learners here in the plots, but then we also have learners from the locations such as Phase 6, 10, Bergman, Khayelitsha, etc. I haven't even met some of those parents whose learners come from those places (Bothma).*

Alex, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, added to this view by stating:

*I'm sitting with a problem child but actually the problem comes from home because he wants attention from home, but there is no love and support from home. And now you have him in class and when he gets that in class, then he works (Alex).*

It could be argued that parents and teachers should work together to meet the needs of the child for better performance at school. According to Khajehpour (2011), the best way to meet the needs of the child is to form a partnership between family, school and community. This indicates that teachers alone cannot assist learners with their needs, as mentioned by Khajehpour (2011). This view is in line with what Khathi, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, said:

*Some of the children don't even have lunch boxes. No pens, the books are torn. If you are asked to submit, you check good books. Some of the books are not covered. The child cannot do anything because the parents are not involved; they don't care. They say the children must go to school, the teachers will see (Khathi).*

Pulane, a teacher at the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), shared the same sentiments:

*My daily challenges are such that you get into a class and you expect a child to have a pen and the learner does not have one. Now you have to use your own mind to buy pens, so that each time when the learner claims not to have a pen you must help with a pen. Parents are not taking responsibility. We try as teachers to buy and provide (Pulane).*

Adding to this view, Bothma, the principal of Jahman Public Rural School, commented as follows:

*The problem at this school is that most of the learners' parents abuse alcohol. The parents can't take care of their children (Bothma).*

The comments above illustrated that some parents were not involved in the education of their children. This was further evidenced by the findings, which indicated that parental involvement was lacking in the schools. The participants indicated that parents did not show support for the school and their children. Some of the learners needed extra love and support, which they did not get from home, while others came

to school without pens and with uncovered books. This was the burden that the teachers had to carry, forgetting that one of the basic beliefs of Critical Theory is that learners are at schools to be taught and not to resolve their home issues.

#### **7.2.3.8 Absenteeism**

Absenteeism of learners causes poor teacher performance and poor student results. According to the Issue Brief (Penn State University, 2016), absenteeism of learners is one of the causes of teacher stress, which lower students' achievements. In support of this view, Pulane, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, explained:

*Some of the learners live in child-headed families. The other day the other one was telling me that he didn't come to school because there was no electricity and so, there was no warm water for bathing and it is winter and the water is cold. Some of them will be absent from school because of sanitary towels (Pulane).*

Happy, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, shared the same sentiment:

*Only 20 learners can perform at the expected level. Our performance is also negatively affected by high level of absenteeism. When formal tasks and examinations are administered, learners just don't come to school; they literally run away (Happy).*

Similarly, Cathy, a teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), added:

*The School has a high percentage of absenteeism. Obviously, absenteeism has a negative impact on teaching and learning, as learners are lagging behind in terms of curriculum coverage. For this, teachers are blamed that they are not teaching the learners. You will find that the learners of your class are absent for the whole month. These learners are at home. Sometimes when these learners come back to school, you have already forgotten them (Cathy).*

A cause of teachers' stress was the absenteeism of learners, according to the research findings. It affected both the teachers' and the learners' work. Moreover, teachers were blamed for the poor performance of learners due to absenteeism, which caused further stress for teachers. Absenteeism, according to the findings of this study, only occurred in two schools, namely Kganya Public School and Jahman

Rural School. Absenteeism was not an issue at Groenvlei Private School. Why was this only happening at these two schools? The dominating variables in these schools were family background, neighbourhoods, and the environments around the schools (Chapter 3). The family background and the school environment were a cause for concern and needed to be conscientised and changed.

### **7.2.3.9 Curriculum challenges**

Teachers need to be well trained regarding curricular efficiency to enable them to accomplish their tasks more effectively and efficiently. Some variables identified by Naidoo et al. (2013), linked to teacher stress, were educator ratios and curriculum approaches. Curriculum challenges are unavoidable if teachers are not properly trained. This was evidenced by Happy, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, who explained as follows:

*I have some experience as a teacher. It was at the time of the introduction of OBE (Outcomes-Based Education) and I was a bit not clear about what I was doing, but with the introduction of the streamlined CAPS (Curriculum & Assessment Policy Statement), despite the fact that it has many challenges, it's much more clearer. We are expected to administer 26 classwork activities per week. This is just too much. According to the pacesetter for oral work and other activities and the system employed, I find this system having more challenges. The approach of teaching a language is functional; namely, if you teach comprehension or story; this is not done in isolation, as you also need to integrate language structures. These language structures should not be presented in isolation, but be based on the story you have chosen. You need to formulate questions based on the story, irrespective of any language activity, whether it's reading, poetry teaching or any other language activity. Questions should be based on what the CAPS document prescribes. This is a serious challenge, as this means more work on the part of the teacher. If you are teaching languages in four grades, then you are bound to have four different comprehension tests and you also have to grade your questions according to different cognitive levels. This state of affairs poses a serious challenge for teachers (Happy).*

Cathy, a teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), held a similar view as Happy:

*With the advent of OBE, group work was introduced and it came with its share of challenges, as it created serious challenges for the learners, as other learners depended solely on other learners. So, you as a teacher need to use your own discretion to circumvent these challenges. The issue of classifying learners according to different cognitive levels in the formation of groups is also a challenge. As a teacher, I had to be innovative, take some elements of OBE and old teaching methods techniques. This strategy I used whilst teaching in Edenburg. For group work to work, as espoused by OBE, I had to group learners according to their abilities to obviate learners relying on others. In these homogeneous groups, learners are given different tasks, which they could perform with ease. These high performing learners are used to assist these slow learners with their homework and tasks. They also become free when they are assisted by their fellow learners. This is a good strategy, as some of us teachers, as we ridicule learners when they make mistakes, but with other learners assisting them, they become free. This strategy of mine worked wonders as I was teaching three languages in my class, namely, Afrikaans, English and Sesotho. I would obtain up to 80% academic success rate. CAPS also came with its own challenges as the concept of working in groups was abandoned. Learners have to work individually, but they seem not to be interested in this approach because even with the simplest and short assessment that requires simple recall responses, their performance is poor, as they forget even subject content presented a few minutes ago. The system of recording sheet helps learners in their CASS marks (Cathy).*

In addition to Cathy's views, Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, had the following to say:

*Inside teaching experience, what I can tell you now is that teachers have lost interest in teaching. They are demotivated, too much paper work, attending workshops, but we don't produce quality learners; until now we are only producing drop-outs. That I have noticed. The Department is only focusing on certain schools (Tsamai).*

Additionally, Tsamai said:

*What is worse is the departmental policies because they allow learners to be promoted to the next grade even if they do not meet the requirements, because of age (age-cohort).*

*This is problematic because they can't grasp anything and they use this defence mechanism, knowing that they cannot comprehend anything. Most of them are old; some of them come from other schools where they failed (Tsamai).*

The teachers at Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School did not receive sufficient training regarding curricular efficiency. They were frustrated by the concepts related to the new curriculum. Moreover, the teachers were not well versed in the curriculum's methods of teaching. The Department of Education also did not do enough to equip the teachers with the skills of presenting curricular concepts to the learners. Critical Theory encourages institutions to equip their employees with the skills that will enable them to participate in social and political processes, and to contribute as good persons and competent actors in democratic life.

### **7.3 RACE/ETHNICITY**

In order to understand cultural issues, race and ethnicity must be considered in the context of their relationship to oppression (Hesmondhalgh & Saha, 2013). According to the participants of this study, race and ethnicity encompass cultural factors, such as religion, language and traditions; hence, the discussion is based on cultural issues.

- **Cultural issues**

Futterman (2015) states that culture influences the way people see the world, understand the world and communicate with each other, and it determines teaching and learning styles. Adding to this line of thought, Pulane, a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School, commented:

*Fortunately, for us here we have only blacks and a few Coloureds but because they live together, there aren't any challenges when it comes to race (Pulane).*

Khathi, a teacher from the same school (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School), added to the debate by saying:

*We have the Coloureds. They come here because it is a free school. They have a problem of answering in Sesotho because they don't know the language. When they get home,*

*they speak Afrikaans. They were brought here because it is a no-fee school; they don't pay school fees. Some of the kids are taken out of the school called Academy of Excellence and brought here. Some come from Botshabelo. They are old, and they failed, and they are uncontrollable. They are over-age and they are not supposed to be in a primary school. They cannot be rejected from school, so they are all admitted (Khathi).*

Consequently, when asked about the handling of racial ethnic issues, this was what Khathi said:

*We are one in the classroom. We are sisters and brothers. That is how I keep it. We help one another. We teach them that those who have must give those who don't have (Khathi).*

Similarly, Kalawe, a teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, had the following to say:

*Ok, with race, we didn't have any problem because there was one boy who was a Coloured coming from Heidedal and stayed in a plot near Grassland. He was treated well amongst others. There was no discrimination or segregation at all. You made mention of the Xhosas and Zulus of which we still have one here, but they are working together, mingle together, and there is no separation at all. The challenge that we face as the question says here is that these boys can't speak or express themselves in English. They struggle to write English and Sesotho. That is the problem we are facing. When you ask them questions, they struggle to answer. You realize that this is a Xhosa-speaking person. You struggle to understand him when he is trying to respond. These people can't even read. They can't construct a sentence. That is the problem we have with some learners who are from different ethnic groups. They go to the next grade because of age cohort. They can't even write the word 'social sciences', as they copy it on the chalkboard. They can't interpret the scenario or case study. This means that they don't understand anything. The content is a problem (Kalawe).*

In the same vein, Happy, a teacher from the same school (Jahman Public Rural School), explained:

*There are challenges here. This is wholly a Sesotho school, but there are also learners who are Afrikaans and isiXhosa-speaking. This poses serious adaptation challenges for these learners, as well as the teacher. When parents are asked why they bring their children to this particular school, even if they know that the home language is Sesotho,*

*their response is that schools are full and they don't have any other options. Here at school we have two shelters, one for the orphans and the other one is for abused children. These children bring along their own cultural and language challenges, which further compounds the situation. Their level of understanding and language acquisition further adds to the already existing challenges. These learners are also placed at the school at any time during the school year. The other challenge we find is that when you look at reports of these learners, say in language, the learner obtained level 6 in terms of assessment score, but on further assessment, this learner understands so little; ... should actually be placed in grade 2 (Happy).*

Happy further articulated on how to handle the above issues. This was the scenario the teacher applied:

*Luckily, at our school it's not rife or common. You'll find very few Xhosa and Coloured learners and learners are also grouped or sited in heterogeneous groups. But, in as far as their level of understanding of different learning topics are concerned, I divide them accordingly, as they tend to hide behind the best performers. I then focus on slow learners and give more work to those who learn fast (Happy).*

Adding to Happy's view, Cathy, a teacher from the same school, said:

*Among our learners, we do have children with disabilities and because they are children, they do tease those others with disabilities, but then it becomes the teacher's responsibilities to intervene and impress on them to love and embrace children with disabilities. The learners know the Lord's Prayer, which does not discriminate. There are ethnic and cultural nuances, as there are three groupings, with Sesotho dominating. However, this does not pose a serious challenge. Bullying on the basis of ethnicity is there, but insignificant. There are indeed challenges. The School is largely catering for Sesotho-speaking learners, but there are learners whose home languages are isiXhosa and Afrikaans (Coloured). Such learners find it difficult to adapt to this school environment that is wholly Sesotho (Cathy).*

Explaining the measures undertaken to address the above challenges, Cathy expatiated as follows:

*To some extent there's a link between bullying and racism/ethnicity, but as a teacher I ensure I nip this misbehaviour as soon as it rears its head. I impress on learners that*

*children of foreign nationals are not different from them. They are all human beings and they need to treat them as such. I indicate to my learners that we should not ill-treat nor look down upon other people. I make my learners aware that they should not make other learners feel out of place because that will make them not to participate actively in all classroom activities, and thereby denied the opportunity to assist other learners who might need his/her assistance. If you guide your learners well, it becomes easy for them to follow (Cathy).*

Alex, a teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School, echoed Cathy's views:

*In my class, there are no race issues. I remember when I started here, the parents and the history, were very against Afrikaans. The purpose of Afrikaans is to teach them it is fun to learn in another language and you break barriers because the children enjoy it and then when they see the kids were enjoying it, that question was wiped away. So that was a variation of bringing two cultures together because when parents speak at home, they have a negative connotation because of back in the day. But, children are innocent; they don't know about that. The infants that come from the parents, they want to put in the children, but as soon as they see that the children love the subject, the children love the teacher, then that falls away. And, the other thing I told them as well, with the Afrikaans we're learning another language and having fun with it and they can use it in London, Australia, Canada, many places. So, that was one of the biggest things I saw and your approach to something, the race and ethnicity falls away and we're all the same (Alex).*

Alex added how to handle racial/ethnic issues:

*We had a situation the other day when the one black girl said, she referred to the k-word and... but it is a black girl and they were all like oooohhh and I said, guys, guys, guys, julle praat nou lelik; so you guys know it's not the correct way and we just went on. Instead of blowing it up into an issue, it's a child, did not understand the past, and they heard it from the parents so instead of making a big issue about it, I just explained to them we don't talk like that here and we go on. Because all of sudden we see, he said that, she said that, and we just have a chat. It is the same with any issue, the more you blow it up, that is actually not an issue; they may want to make it a big issue and usually what happens then kids are kids, tomorrow they are going to play together again and the parents are angry with each other. Otherwise, no, we speak openly about white culture, black culture, Indian culture, so they know it is a safe place, they can speak about their*

*cultures and when I explain about my culture when we come into a classroom, I take off my hat, because there is a roof. And, in their culture they keep on the beanie, they don't have a problem with that, so we speak openly about the different classes and cultures that we have (Alex).*

Nic, a teacher from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), added to Alex's view:

*One incident I can really mention to you, the girls were sitting outside and beliefs, if you don't do this, the tokkoloshi is coming to get you and stuff like that. As a Christian, you believe that will not happen, but they are Christian, but their grandmother said if you don't jump over me, my leg is not going to grow. So I was in a situation with one girl being a, they're both Christian, but a white girl and a black girl and she said you have to jump over my leg because otherwise it is not going to grow so I had to resolve that issue. Things like beliefs, on the camp last week the one boy said a frog jumped on the ground, and he ran to the kitchen to go get salt, because he must kill the frog, because it's got demons in it. Putting salt on a frog, it's not a nice situation I had; to what I know as a grown-up, I know about their beliefs, but you have to come say ahahah, it's human nature, you do it at home, but you're a Christian, you believe like I believe, but now you take in your background beliefs. That's one thing; you have to tread very carefully from what their grandmother says from, that's the one thing (Nic).*

Nic added:

*Very carefully. We have one specific teacher that teaches. LS. Nkosi has been here a long time, she knows the learners, the ins and outs of them. You have to know the learners, number 1, and you kind of you need... all the learners here have some issues, either at home or in their background, socially or >>>, you have to be aware of that, so when we deal with issues like that, we deal with it very carefully (Nic).*

Additional to Nic's view, Lydia, a teacher from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), explained:

*I don't think there's much, especially in our school. We don't seem to have much issues, regarding race. Specifically I think, the little ones aren't really conscious of race; I think it's more the older generations that battle. We actually had a discussion in class this morning with the grade 7s. I had a discussion with them and the younger generation; they*

*really don't have issues with race. I really do see, the youth is really broken with all the racial issues. You do get odd children, now and again, which are still very much influenced by parents and their views; but it's not really a problem within this school. So I can imagine at home they have to comply with whatever. Look, most of our children are black, so there isn't really a racial issue because of that, I'm just trying to think in the one grade, six classes, there's a little white girl, we do have Chinese kids in grade 7, but really there's never been any kind of issue (Lydia).*

Lydia discussed the issue further:

*I think by just being honest. A lot of our work that we deal with, especially in English, a lot of our texts and things, are often related to apartheid era of which these kids actually know very little. Quite a few of them, their grannies and grandpas have spoken to them and you know they understand, but the majority don't. It was never a part of their lifespan and they really aren't interested in it. Some of them are sort of like, if we do a text type, we had I think a book called Love David, a literature book, one year, and some of the kids were like couldn't believe what people went through in apartheid times. So I think just being honest about it, sometimes it is difficult, as well being a white teacher and I always say to them, you know, we talk about politics as well, we talk about politicians as well, and I always say to them it's not a colour or racial thing, we must just be honest about who and what, it does not go about colour or being against a government because it's majority black, it's not about black and white, it's about what's right and wrong, not black and white as a skin colour. So ja, honesty, dealing with issues as they arise, and only telling kids as much as they ask, I don't think it serves any purpose if their parents haven't gone through apartheid times, then why we as teachers should... you hear what I am saying? Address issues as they arise. So if a child were to ask me, I would be more than comfortable speaking to them about it, whatever; but there is obviously a reason why (Lydia).*

Hanover, the principal from the same school (Groenvlei Urban Private School), added to Lydia's views:

*Our ethos is Christian principles, our slogan is 'Walk in the light', so we apply that. We have diversity in our school, we appoint teachers from all race groups, we have a diversity committee that also drives diversity, not only colour, also sometimes we have a topic like diabetes or anything like that makes a person stand out from the rest. So, we have that*

*in place, programmes for diversity, and I think our parents can testify that we treat everybody the same. I don't have challenges with people confronting us with racial ... as far as possible we don't have those issues (Hanover).*

Cultural issues need to be handled with great care at schools because there is no culture that has more power than another culture. In the three researched schools (Kganya Public School, Jahman Rural School and Groenvlei Private School), none of the participants indicated that the school battled with cultural differences. The only point, which was mentioned, was that Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking learners struggled to understand Sesotho, when the medium of instruction was Sesotho in a specific school. Another challenge mentioned was that it was difficult for these learners to adapt to the school environment.

Furthermore, culture was handled with great care. Cultural differences need not to have any impact on education. The attempt to deliver education by enabling cultural and social transformation through the progressive growth of individuals is one of the fundamental aims of Critical Theory. The issues of adapting to the school environment and the language or medium of instruction of the school are variables that could be changed at any time to accommodate all learners from different ethnic groups. That is why the core idea of Critical Theory is to bring about radical change in how education is organised, how teachers and learners think, and the kind of environment created to enhance quality and equality regarding teaching and learning at schools. Paulo Freire emphasises critical consciousness as the vehicle to cultural emancipation (Chapter 3).

#### **7.4 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

This chapter provided an analysis of the environmental and social factors that influence the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within the context of the three sites. The findings regarding school location showed that the schools differed in terms of their physical environment; therefore, this influenced the academic achievement of the learners. Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School were

severely affected by their schools' location, while Groenvlei Private School was not as badly affected. This resulted in children being absent from school, particularly at Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School, as stated in the research findings.

The distance to school was one of the major contributory factors for the poor academic performance of the learners, as most of the learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School walked to school. They became tired and could not concentrate well during lessons (as mentioned by the teachers), compared to Groenvlei Private School, which did not experience such a challenge.

Teachers' emotional responses were the result of many factors, including learners' behaviour, their workload, lack of parental support/involvement, and curriculum challenges. All the findings above indicated the inequality gap between the different types of schools, which contributed to poor quality teaching and learning.

The next chapter will provide a summary of the study, the discussion of the main findings, the contributions of the study, the implications for future research, as well as the conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the preceding chapter, the researcher presented an analysis of the data collected and the discussion of the findings. This chapter, firstly, provides a synopsis of the study. Secondly, discussions of the main findings and implications of the study are put forward for future research. Thirdly, the contributions of the study are highlighted, based on the main findings and related to the key research questions of the study. Lastly, the implications for future research are provided, based on the findings.

#### **8.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY**

In this research, the focus was on exploring the impact of environmental location and socio-economic factors on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning in three schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa, that are different in nature (rural, urban and public schools). The research was structured as follows:

Chapter 1 provided the background and the rationale of the study. The purpose of undertaking this study was elucidated by presenting a problem statement. In addition, the researcher provided motivations as to why this study is needed in the South African context. This study was undertaken to explore the socio-economic differences that existed in the urban and rural regions of Bloemfontein, South Africa, and how they affected school communities within the respective areas. The socio-educational inequalities that exist within and between these three schools (Groenvlei Urban Private, Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public School) were explored. The study exposed the factors that promoted inequalities in the school communities (that is, learners, teachers and school governing bodies), which impacted negatively on teaching and learning.

In Chapter 1, the following aspects were also highlighted: the background of the study, the aims/objectives of the study, the research questions, the problem statement, the location of the study, the rationale and motivation for the study, the significance of the study and the key foci of the study.

Chapter 2 offered a review of literature. This chapter drew literature from different sources, including academic authors in the field of social justice in education. The themes that were discussed in terms of the environmental location and the socio-economic inequalities and emotional geographies of teaching and learning were the learners' attitudes towards teaching and learning, family structures' influence on academic performance, and parents' literacy levels and their involvement in their children's schooling. The effects of school environment and location on teaching and learning were also highlighted in this chapter. Chapter 2 further discussed social and economic inequalities in rural-urban schooling; rural, public and private expenditure gaps in education; the historical emergence of social inequality in schools; as well as the effects of the emotional geographies of teaching and learning at schools. Lastly, the strategies were discussed that could be used to eradicate the disparities within and between similar schooling environments.

Chapter 3 focused on the theoretical framework and the research paradigm. The following aspects were discussed: Critical Theory: A Brief Overview; Critical Theory in Education: A Brief Overview; Critical Theory in Education: Marxist Critiques; and Critical Theory in Education: Modern Theory.

Chapter 4 provided a description of the research design and methodology employed in the study. Qualitative design was employed in this study to describe the route undertaken for the research project. The research project, firstly, opted for observation to allow a person to understand the environment where the research project was to take place. The data generation process took the form of semi-structured interviews. Critical paradigm was employed as it best matched the purpose of this research study. The rationale for selecting purposive sampling to generate data was also provided. Data gathering techniques, such as observation and interviews, were elucidated. Furthermore, data analysis with the various methods employed to collect data like data collection, data

reduction, data display and drawing/verifying were clearly explained. Moreover, the ethical considerations were discussed, together with the issue of validity in this study. Issues related to the challenges and limitations of the study, namely, generalisation, duration and bias, were also examined.

Chapter 5 focused mainly on the first research question, which dealt with the environmental and social factors that contribute to educational disparities in, and between, three (public peri-urban, public rural and urban private) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa. The themes identified from this study were the teaching and learning environment and social factors. Sub-themes that emerged from the themes were discussed in the following order: classroom size, school building, family structure, and learners' attitudes to learning and parental involvement.

Regarding classroom size, the broad findings from this research indicated that Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School's learner enrolments were 48 and more per class, which exceeded the Department's prescribed norm (30 learners per class), when compared to Groenvlei Urban Private School's ratio, which ranged between 14 and 25 learners per class, which was below the Education Department's norm. The research also revealed that Groenvlei School's buildings were much better maintained and of a much higher quality than those of Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School at the time of this research.

The findings further indicated that most learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School did not live with their parents, while Groenvlei Urban Private School's learners, particularly the grade 7's, stayed with their parents. The research also established that Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School learners' attitudes towards learning were affected mainly by the circumstances in which they found themselves, which included walking long distances to school, the school environment, and the school buildings. This had a lesser (or no effect) on the part of Groenvlei Urban Private School learners. Parental involvement was found to be a serious problem in terms of Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School learners, while Groenvlei Urban Private School's parental involvement was found to be good.

Chapter 6 addressed the second research question relating to how economic inequalities affected teaching and learning in three different schooling environments. The theme identified was economic inequalities. The sub-themes that emerged from economic inequalities were finances, learning resources, poverty, and unemployment.

Furthermore, the research findings indicated that Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School battled in terms of finances when compared to Groenvlei Private School. The findings also revealed an inequality gap regarding learning resources between Kganya Public School, Jahman Rural School and Groenvlei Urban Private School. It was established that Groenvlei School was better resourced than Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School.

The findings also established that Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School were severely affected by unemployment. However, no incident of unemployment among the parents was found relating to Groenvlei Urban Private School.

Chapter 7 mainly dealt with the third research question, which was how environmental and social factors influenced the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within these three schools. The themes identified from this study were environmental location and race/ethnicity. Sub-themes emanating from the themes were school location, transport and distance, teachers' emotions, and cultural issues.

The findings revealed that school location influenced teaching and learning. The research further found that the community's location, namely where the school was situated, had an effect on the academic performance of learners.

Moreover, the findings indicated that transportation was determined by the distance between home and school. It was established that learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School are more affected by transport issues and distances than Groenvlei Urban Private School, whose learners were transported to school by their parents or a school bus.

The findings of the research further revealed that the social circumstances of the teaching environment affected teachers' emotions. According to the findings, the teachers at Kganya Public School and at Jahman Rural School were more affected than Groenvlei

Urban Private School's teachers were, as they received minimal, if any, support from the parents.

The emergent findings of this study indicated that culture influenced the way people communicated with each other and this determined teaching and learning styles. It was further established that cultural differences occurred where there were different races with different cultures, which occurred minimally in Kganya Public School and Jahman Public Rural School, compared to Groenvlei Urban Private School. This was revealed in the number of White teachers (according to my observation), who were more than black teachers, and the learners from different communities such as Indian, Coloured, White and African communities who attended Groenvlei Urban Private School. It was therefore clear that different races went hand-in-hand with different cultures.

Chapter 8, which is the current chapter, concludes the study. It provides a synopsis of the chapters, a discussion of the main findings, the contributions of the study, the implications for the school community, the implications for the South African government, societal contributions, and implications for future research within the field of social justice in education.

### **8.3 DISCUSSION OF MAIN FINDINGS**

The aim of the study was to uncover the environmental, social and economic factors that give rise to educational inequalities between three urban and rural schools, and to explore how such inequalities affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. The findings of this study are based on the above aim and the sub-research questions, which are as follow:

- a) What environmental and social factors contribute to educational disparities in, and between, three (public peri-urban, public rural and urban private) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa?
- b) How do economic inequalities affect teaching and learning in three different schooling environments?

- c) How do environmental and social factors influence *the emotional geographies of* teaching and learning within these schools?

In this study, the above questions were addressed. First, the participants revealed that factors such as class size, space and classroom relationships had a negative impact on student performance. It was further evidenced that there were educational disparities regarding the aforementioned factors when the three types of schools were compared. Similar findings were established with regard to the rural and the public school. The private school was an exception in terms of the negative effects caused by class size, as well as the school buildings. The participants from the private school indicated that class size and school buildings did not have negative effect on teaching and learning at their school. This was evident from the experiences of a participant named Buhle. She revealed that the classrooms were perfectly safe. According to Buhle, this could be ascribed to the fact that only 15 learners were accommodated in a class. Hence, the environment was conducive for teaching and learning.

The shared experiences of Sylvia (Jahman Public Rural School) and Kate (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) indicated challenges regarding class size and school buildings. In this regard, Sylvia indicated that there was overcrowding in classrooms, with more than 50 learners accommodated. Moreover, Kate revealed that there were cracks in the walls; another class had a broken door, and no electricity. All this was evidenced by the observations the researcher made at all three schools (Appendices 15; 16 and 17). The private school's (Groenvlei) classroom floors were tiled and 15 learners were seated in groups to allow for discussions and interaction. On the walls of the classroom, one could see the pictures/resources. The classroom was spacious, beautiful and conducive for teaching and learning. According to the researcher's observations, rural and public schools experienced similar challenges. There was no electricity in some of the classrooms. There were holes in the walls in some of the classrooms, while some had no doors and broken cupboards. The researcher also saw cracks in the walls of some of the classrooms at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School. The cracks in one classroom's walls were such that you could see through them to what transpired in the next classroom.

It was also established from the findings of the study that several social factors impacted negatively on teaching and learning. As a result, the academic performance of the learners was severely affected. The family structure, learners' attitudes to learning, and parental involvement were some of the social factors that had a negative effect on teaching and learning. All the stakeholders involved in education should address these factors. Regarding family structures, the findings of this study showed that most of the participants from the two of the researched schools (Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) appeared to be adversely affected by family structures. However, Groenvlei Urban Private School was not severely affected, taking into account the responses from the participants, who indicated that they stayed with both their parents. In contrast, most of the learners' responses from Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School indicated that they did stay with both their parents.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the learners' attitudes were one of the social factors that contributed to teaching and learning. According to this study, the learners who had a negative attitude towards learning mostly came from Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School. A teacher from Jahman Public Rural School indicated that learners did not respect each other, there was bullying, and this negative attitude extended to the teachers. Similarly, a teacher at Kganya Public Peri-Urban School articulated regarding the learners' attitudes, saying that they were very naughty, did not listen, were rowdy and disruptive, fought with each other, and were unruly. Contrary to that, the teacher from Groenvlei Urban Private School indicated that the learners from Groenvlei were wonderful, but that some were spoilt and "a bit lazy" when it came to schoolwork. It is of critical importance for researchers to determine the causes of the negative attitudes of learners in schools. In this study, environmental and social factors resulted in the negative attitudes and behaviour of learners at the schools under study. This negatively impacted on teaching and learning.

Additionally, the findings of this research indicated that parental involvement was one of the key social factors that contributed to the effective teaching and learning at schools. This was emphasised by Drajea's (2015) research, which indicated that the practical involvement of parents contributed positively and directly to children's achievements. It

was also substantiated from Emerson et al. (2012) research findings that parental involvement in school activities had important community and social functions. In this research, parental involvement was very good at Groenvlei Private School, compared to the other two schools (Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban Schools), where the majority of parents were not involved in school activities. This was evidenced by the principal of Groenvlei Private School, who stated that parental involvement was very good, especially at primary school level. Regarding Jahman Public Rural School, the principal, who was a participant in this study, indicated that only a few parents were involved in the school activities. Kganya Public Urban School's principal also indicated that the majority of the parents were not committed to the school activities. It is in this context that parental involvement was found to be an important factor in the sphere of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that economic inequalities had a major effect on teaching and learning in schools. The socio-economic background of some of the learners had a negative effect on their education. Moreover, the unequal learning resources revealed in this study demonstrated how economic inequalities affected teaching and learning in different schooling environments. A participant from Groenvlei Urban Private School (Nic) said that the School was well equipped in terms of resources. The School has Wi-Fi, which learners could utilise at school for academic purposes. Participants from Jahman Public Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School echoed the same sentiments by stating that their schools were under-resourced and, as a result, teaching and learning suffered. This was also highlighted by Gina's (2015) findings, which revealed that private schools were better equipped than rural schools in terms of resources.

Moreover, the findings of this research demonstrated that poverty and unemployment were the root causes of socio-economic inequalities, and had a negative effect on the academic performance of learners. This was emphasized by Agommuoh's (2017) research results, which revealed that students from low economic backgrounds achieved less academically than those from high socio-economic backgrounds. The socio-economic status determines the school that a learner must attend; hence, the research

findings of this study showed that more learners were enrolled at rural and public schools than at private schools. Evidence in this regard could be found in Agommuoh's (2017) research findings, which indicated that more learners from low socio-economic backgrounds attended public schools than those from high socio-economic backgrounds.

The results further indicated that learners from low socio-economic backgrounds achieved less academically than those from high socio-economic backgrounds did. The participants, such as Bothma (the principal, Jahman Public Rural School) and Tax (the principal, Kganya Peri-Urban School) shared the same sentiments by revealing that some learners did not have electricity to study because of poverty. Another participant from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School (a teacher, Khathi) stated that some children fainted because of hunger. According to this study's findings, only two schools (Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) were severely affected by poverty and unemployment. According to a Groenvlei Private School participant (Hanover, the principal), most of the learners came from middle class backgrounds, which indicated that they were not affected or affected to a lesser extent by poverty and unemployment. Two learners, namely Norma (Jahman Public Rural School) and Nkhethi (Kganya Public Peri-Urban School) said that their parents were unemployed. It is evident from the above findings that inequality gaps, regarding poverty and unemployment, existed between private schools and rural-public schools.

Furthermore, the findings suggested that environmental location had an effect on teaching and learning. It is therefore imperative to note that the environmental location negatively affected the academic performance of learners and teachers. The findings indicated that factors, such as school location, distance, transport and teachers' emotions, had a negative effect on teaching and learning. Participants from three different schools echoed the negative effects of the school location. According to Groenvlei Urban Private School, the school is slightly affected. A participant (the principal, Hanover) alluded to the two sides of the story, regarding this finding. On the one hand, it was tranquil, as there was no noise, and the School was in a rural area. However, on the other hand, the School experienced late coming of some of the learners due to a "don't care" attitude of the parents, as articulated by Lydia (a teacher at Groenvlei School). In contrast,

Jahman Rural School and Kganya Public Peri-Urban School experienced challenges that impacted negatively on teaching and learning due to the schools' locations, which further contributed to the poor academic performance of their learners. Evidence from Cathy, who is a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, indicated that the School's location led to absenteeism, and as a result, teaching and learning was greatly affected. Echoing the same sentiments about school location, Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public School Peri-Urban School, stated that their school was surrounded by people who did not attend school, have gone to initiation school, and force the learners (who have not been to initiation school) to go to initiation school. The result is that, ultimately, they will be forced to attend. When they attended initiation school, they were absent from school and, thus, their academic performance suffered.

Distance, transport and teachers' emotions were some other contributing factors that affected teaching and learning at schools. According to Groenvlei Urban Private School, the distance to the School contributed to late coming. The principal of the School (Hanover) referred to this. Bothma, the principal of Jahman Public Rural School, indicated that some learners walked long distances to school. The evidence showed that walking long distances to school resulted in learners being exhausted, a lack of concentration in class, and stubbornness. This was revealed by Happy, a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School, who indicated that learners walked long distances on foot and, as such, they could not concentrate in class, and they developed "a stubborn attitude". Additionally, the findings of this research revealed that some of learners did not come to school because of the long distances involved. This evidence was provided by the principal of Kganya Public School Peri-Urban School, who added that some learners who experienced transport problems lived far from the School.

Regarding transport, the evidence showed that at private schools, late coming was rife due to the busy schedules of most of the parents. However, rural and public schools were in the same boat in that most of the learners used public transport and were sometimes unable to pay for the bus fares, which resulted in the learners staying away from school. A teacher from Jahman Public Rural School, Kalawe, indicated that there were learners who absented themselves from school because they did not have money to pay for the

bus fare. He further stated that there were small children who were doing grade R who walked to school because they did not have transport. This was emphasised by Mege's (2014) research findings, which indicated that learners who lived far from school used public transport to and from school. A problem arose when parents did not have money to pay for the transport, which resulted in absenteeism.

Issues relating to teachers' emotions arose as a result of various factors, including a lack of parental support, an excessive workload and the curriculum. Teachers' negative emotions could lead to demotivation, the poor academic performance of learners, and learners dropping out. According to this study, learners who did not get support at home led to Groenvlei Urban Private School teachers focussing their attention on discipline and matters related to support. This factor impacted negatively on teaching and learning. Jahman Public Rural School's teachers' emotional reactions were caused in main by curriculum challenges and by the learners. The finding of this study further revealed that Kganya Public Peri-Urban School's teachers became demotivated due excessive paper work and the attendance of workshops, which did not produce quality learners. A teacher from the same school (Tsamai) pointed out that their school was dilapidated, there were safety hazards and cracks in the walls, and the environment was not conducive for teaching and learning. This awoke negative emotions in the teachers, which put teaching and learning at a disadvantaged position. Additional to the above was a lack of resources, as indicated by another teacher (Pulane) at the same school, who stated that some children often did not have pens to write with. This frustrated the teacher, as effective teaching cannot take place without assessment and evaluation.

It is also imperative to indicate that the findings of this study suggested that ethnicity and race were intertwined and could have a negative impact on teaching and learning. Cultural issues emerged from race and ethnicity. According to this study, communities could provide a school environment that could complement and reinforce positive values and a culture conducive to teaching and learning. In this regard, Groenvlei Urban Private School was more concerned about cultural beliefs. A teacher from this school referred to when a boy saw a frog jumping, while they were camping, and he took salt and poured it over the frog, believing that it had demons. The girls at the School also mentioned the

issue of tokkoloshi. Regarding this study, there was a larger mixture of races in the private school than in the rural and public schools. It is also evident from this study, according to the collected data, that culture played an important role in the teaching of the learners at schools, as language and cultural beliefs were included in the curriculum.

According to the results of this study, the issue of language was more dominant in rural and public schools, as opposed to the private school. Evidence from Jahman Public Rural School showed that learners whose home languages were isiXhosa and Afrikaans (Coloured) found it difficult to adapt to the school environment, which was predominantly Sesotho (according to Cathy, a teacher at Jahman Public Rural School). The same sentiment was shared by a teacher from Kganya Public Peri-Urban School (Pulane), who indicated that Afrikaans-speaking learners (Coloureds) had a problem with answering in Sesotho because they did not know the language. Thus, it could be concluded, as stated by Shoji et al. (2014), that racial ethnicity contributed immensely to educational inequalities.

#### **8.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

In the previous section, the focus was on the conclusions, based on the research aim and the sub-research questions of this study. As revealed in the findings, the environmental location and socio-economic inequalities affected the emotional geographies of teaching and learning at schools.

Although the study was done in the Free State Province, the review of literature provided knowledge and information about the inequalities that hamper education in schools worldwide. Adding to the literature, in the present study, the school environment was found to influence the process of teaching and learning, as highlighted by Mege's (2014) findings. Agommuoh's (2017) research also revealed that students from low-economic backgrounds achieved less academically than those from high socio-economic backgrounds did. Likewise, the results of the present study further indicated that students from low socio-economic backgrounds normally attended public schools, while those from high socio-economic backgrounds routinely attended private schools. The findings will be

discussed with the relevant stakeholders in the Free State Department of Education as per the Department's arrangements. Presentations will be made to the schools and their community at large.

Addressing the findings of the data, the following implications will be discussed: the implications for the school community, the implications for the government, and the societal contributions. The suggestions for future research will also be highlighted.

#### **8.4.1 Implications for the school community**

The school community in this study involves the parents, SGBs, learners, teachers and principals. They are called the school community because they share responsibility for one another and provide an environment conducive for teaching and learning. They also create a healthy social atmosphere to enable all community members to be supported. It is important for the school community to work together for a common goal.

One of the findings of this study indicated that there was no parental involvement in rural and public schools. This is emphasised by Jahman Public Rural School's principal who indicated that the majority of the parents were not involved in school activities. A public school principal, who also alluded to the fact that the majority of parents were not committed to the school affairs, shared the same sentiment. However, a private school principal pointed out that parental involvement at the school was very good. Hence, the researcher suggests that the Education Department should work together with SGBs, principals, community leaders, church leaders and all stakeholders to mobilise parents to be involved in school activities. This could be done through awareness campaigns, workshops, church services, or community meetings.

Furthermore, a system of grade representatives should be introduced to all schools, as is the case in Groenvlei Urban Private School, as indicated by the findings of this study. This is a system whereby individual parents are elected to represent classes or grades; thus, they are called grade representatives. A grade representative's task is to oversee the daily activities of the learners and teachers in and outside the classroom. They call meetings with the parents of the specific grade and iron out any problems related to

education. This could be further strengthened by forming executive committees that deal with issues such as absenteeism, late coming, cleanliness, sports, finances, and behaviour. Different committees and sub-committees should be established to ensure that all parents take part in the affairs of the school. In this regard, the school community and the community as a whole should work together for the betterment of education in South Africa.

#### **8.4.2 Implications for the government**

The government can play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between rural, public and private schools. Even though private schools are independent, the government can work closely with them through the Education Department to bridge the gap that exists between different schools. The findings revealed that there is a vast difference between the schools regarding class size and school buildings. Evidence from the participants showed that most private schools, if not all, are not overcrowded. According to the research findings, they accommodate at least 15 learners per classroom. Their counterparts (rural or public schools) experience a different environment whereby class size is a big challenge. The ratio is 1:50 (one teacher to 50 learners), which makes it difficult for teachers to provide individual attention to the learners.

The researcher therefore suggests that the government reduce the class sizes in rural and public schools to enable a conducive environment for teaching and learning. This could be achieved by building sufficient schools. It was further established that school buildings are not in a good state for quality teaching and learning to happen. Evidence shows that school buildings in rural and public schools are not in a poor state and therefore this state of affairs affects learners and teachers. It is a different matter when it comes to private schools, because these buildings are in a very good condition. The researcher therefore proposes that the government works together with non-governmental organisations to assist with the building and renovations of schools. All stakeholders must be involved in this process for the betterment of education in South Africa.

Regarding economic inequalities, the findings revealed a lack of learning resources, poverty and unemployment as obstacles to teaching and learning. The government has to play a central role in changing the situation in schools. The researcher's proposal is that the government should provide more funding to the Department of Education for it to provide sufficient resources for schools. It has to find ways of ensuring that resources are distributed equally, including to rural schools. The Department needs to ensure that schools have Wi-Fi connections to ensure that quality education takes place.

Regarding poverty and unemployment, the researcher proposes that the government seeks ways of eradicating poverty and unemployment so that learners and their parents are able to live better quality lives. Those who receive grants should be monitored to ensure that their grants are not abused and the Department of Social Development should work closely with schools and parents to ensure that grants are utilised correctly for the benefit of children. The researcher also proposes that the government find ways of creating job opportunities for unemployed parents to be able to help their children and not be reliant on government. This can be achieved by training them to acquire skills that would assist them to open their own businesses. They should also be funded and monitored to be able to sustain their businesses.

Another finding of the study is that some of the learners are absent from school because of the distances to schools. They live far from schools and do not have money to pay for transport. It was also said that the learner transport provided by the Department of Education does not reach all learners, as one of the rules relating to transport indicates that learners staying outside the prescribed radius have to provide their own transport. The researcher's suggestion is that radius should be extended to assist more poor children. Another proposal is that children should be allowed to attend schools closer to their homes and, if need be, schools be built or classrooms be increased, and additional staff be employed to remedy the situation related to school location, distance and transport.

Another finding of the study was that most teachers are frustrated at schools, due to a number of issues that make their tasks difficult. The issues include children coming from homes with social problems, children who do not receive support from home, a lack of

discipline, curriculum challenges, dilapidated classrooms, safety hazards and the school environment.

Regarding social problems, the researcher suggests that the Department of Social Development should come up with a plan of clustering schools. Each social worker has to adopt a specific cluster to enhance the social functioning and the overall well-being of the society. This will also address the issue related to support from home, discipline and other related factors. According to my observation and the information I received from the schools under study, there was a lack of social workers allocated to schools. Regarding curriculum challenges, the Department of Education should conduct workshops regularly to equip teachers to do their jobs more effectively and with greater ease.

In terms of dilapidated school buildings, the researcher proposes that this situation could be addressed by engaging with the Department of Public Works and other stakeholders to assist with the maintenance of schools and school renovations. The Department of Education could create a maintenance and renovation fund to enable companies, individual sponsors and volunteers to donate towards school renovations. Regarding safety hazards and the environment, the researcher suggests that the Department of Police monitor and oversee the safety and security of the school community. The Department could work together with the Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Affairs to ensure a healthy and secure environment for the school community.

One further finding of the study was that some learners experienced challenges regarding the language of instruction and the school culture. According to Section 29(2) of the Constitution (RSA, 1996), every learner has the right to receive a basic education in the language of their choice, where it is practically reasonable. The researcher proposes that the government ensures that SGBs play an important role regarding the powers vested in them concerning language and culture. There should be monitoring mechanisms that would ensure that the learners were placed appropriately in a school that used the language of their choice. The researcher therefore recommends that task teams be established in each province to ensure that the Constitution of the country was adhered to regarding the language of instruction, cultural issues, and many other aspects related

to the Constitution. The task team would be in a position to look at the policy, norms and standards that determine whether the Provincial Education Department should refuse or implement the language of instruction, decided by the governing body of a particular school, on the basis that it is reasonable and practical to do so. The Department of Education has to ensure that this happens. The researcher also proposes that schools develop a policy regarding cultural issues. The school community, including the parent component, has to be engaged in the drafting of a document to prevent bias. The document should be taken to the Department of Education for scrutiny and approval. This policy should be reviewed and monitored by the Department of Education on an annual basis.

#### **8.4.3 Societal contributions**

It is important to note that education shapes the quality of life of young people. To ensure that young people experience a good quality of life, the community can assist in ensuring that the well-being of learners and teachers are attended to. Since a school belongs to a whole community, it must ensure that the education in a specific school is not compromised. The community has to take full responsibility for what is taking place in schools. The researcher therefore proposes that parents play an active role regarding all the activities that take place in schools, including the school management and governance. They should collaborate with teachers to promote learner achievements.

An additional finding of the study was that absenteeism was a major issue in schools. The researcher proposes that parents should be involved in school activities. Learners whose parents are involved in school activities have better attendance and complete their homework. Involvement between the parties includes collaboration and communication, which create opportunities for learners to develop social, emotional, and academic skills. Schools, through the guidance of the Department of Education, should create an environment that enables the society to be engaged in matters related to volunteering, communicating with school officials regarding cultural or language barriers, transportation, and child care. Even though there is a lack of resources in rural and public schools, according to the research findings of this study, when parents get involved, their

participation can help schools to make the most of existing resources.

Therefore, this proposal (involvement and partnership) means that schools and the community should work together in creating an equal and free environment, conducive for teaching and learning, which further enables parents to become involved by:

- Communicating with teachers through phone calls and e-mails,
- Attending parent-teacher meetings or conferences,
- Assisting teachers with learners' behavioural problems, such as attitudes, values, hopes and expectations,
- Managing the homework process by establishing a regular time for the child to do schoolwork like homework, daily assignments, and monitoring the work,
- Volunteering in helping to shape the school for the better, for example painting of walls (if necessary), donations, running a school activity and cleanliness, and
- Offering their expertise (skills development) to learners, be it either academically (education), physically, (sports) or otherwise.

The implications for future research are outlined in Section 8.4.4 below.

#### **8.4.4 Implications for future research**

Deriving from the research findings, the following implications are highlighted for further research:

It was indicated earlier that the focus of this study was socio-economic inequalities at schools. The environmental location of schools has a negative impact on teachers and learners. This is because of a high level of absenteeism on the part of the learners, which affects their academic performance. The process of teaching and learning is thus affected as the curriculum coverage by the teachers suffers and it impacts negatively on their job satisfaction. The researcher therefore suggests that future researchers explore how to create a sustainable environment, which is conducive for teaching and learning.

The research of this study focussed on three primary schools purposively selected in Bloemfontein, South Africa. It was a comparative analysis between a rural, a public and

a private school. The researcher therefore recommends that future researchers conduct a study on how to bridge the inequality gaps that exist between rural, public and private schools. This would significantly add to the inequalities analysed in this study.

This study further indicated that absenteeism in rural and public schools was rife, when compared to private schools. The principal of a private school indicated that they had more late-comings than absenteeism; hence, they have good attendance.

Moreover, the inequality gap regarding infrastructure left much to be desired, as illustrated by this study in regard to infrastructure and resources. Inferior school building was another barrier to teaching and learning, which led to further inequality between the schools. Future researchers could investigate the strategies that could be put in place to curb the inequality gap that exists regarding school buildings to enhance quality teaching and learning in all schools.

Future studies should also examine various factors, such as learner-teacher ratio, poverty, unemployment, school policy, learning resources, teachers' emotions, as well as transport, which caused inequality between schools. The researcher also suggests that more schools be interviewed in future studies. This would increase the sample size and provide more data regarding inequality gaps that exist between schools.

It was also clear from the study that there are definite inequalities between rural, public and private schools. More studies should be conducted on the aforementioned issues and strategies should be developed that could eradicate all inequalities in schools. The strategies should aim to create a safe, conducive environment for equal, quality teaching and learning to take place.

The researcher therefore suggests that future studies explore legitimate strategies that could be used to combat inequalities in South African schools.

## **8.5 CONCLUSION**

Concluding this thesis, it is of paramount importance to conscientise all education stakeholders about the impact that inequalities have on teaching and learning in South

African schools so that these issues can be addressed as a matter of urgency, so that teaching and learning can be improved in schools.

For one, environmental inequalities that were identified in this study included classroom size and school buildings. The social inequalities comprised, but were not limited to, family structures and parental involvement in school affairs and activities. The classroom sizes in the two schools (Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School) exceeded the Education Department's prescribed norm, which affected learners and teachers negatively in the classroom environments. Teachers could not teach well and learners could not learn optimally, which led to learners' poor academic performance because of the lack of individual attention, which was not applied by teachers due to overcrowded classes. This affected teachers negatively because they were unable to do their work and therefore they became frustrated. Groenvlei Private School did not experience ratio challenges because the numbers were below the Department's prescribed norm.

Regarding school buildings, there were cracks in the classroom walls (especially at Kganya Public School) and learners could not concentrate during lessons, as they feared that the buildings would collapse. They also were cold during winter or when it rained. Teachers could also not teach as they wished to because they could not paste learning aids on the walls due to the condition of the walls. Jahman Rural School's classroom floors had holes, there were no doors, and teachers and learners could not move freely, which led to group activities not occurring. This led to poor teaching and learning, which affected the teachers and learners severely. There was also a shortage of classrooms; hence, there was overcrowding in classrooms. However, Groenvlei School's teachers were not affected in the same way because the school buildings were in a good condition.

Social inequalities, such as family structure and parental involvement in Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School, were a huge challenge. The findings revealed that learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School did not stay with their parents, when compared to Groenvlei Private School's learners who stayed with their parents and received assistance in terms of their learning. In contrast, the learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School were not assisted in whatever they needed compared to their counterparts at Groenvlei Private School, who received

assistance from their parents. The teachers from Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School were most affected because the children came to school without the basic necessities (such as pens and rulers); thus, they could not teach optimally. The learners were also affected negatively because of a shortage of educational necessities. Moreover, there was little or no parental involvement at Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School. The impact it had on teachers was that they could not share their frustrations relating to learners with anybody; however, teachers from Groenvlei Private School could share their frustrations with the parents of the learners.

Regarding economic inequalities, the teachers and learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School were affected, which led to poor scholastic achievements. The unemployment of parents in the disadvantaged schools led to learners going to school with empty stomachs, which was not the issue at Groenvlei Private School. How could the learners concentrate in class with empty stomachs? After the learners at the disadvantaged schools were provided with a meal, they could concentrate well in class and do their work. The teachers were also affected because in the early hours of the day before the meal was served, learners tended to be stubborn and could not do their work because they were too hungry. This (unemployment) inequality had a negative impact on teaching and learning; as a result, learners could not cope well with their studies while teachers could not teach properly. This affected teachers' emotions negatively, as well as learners' academic performance, specifically at Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School.

The other inequalities revealed by this study were the environmental location of the school and distance travelled to school. The environmental location had a negative impact on teachers as well as on the learners. The effect of school location was that learners (especially in Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School) came late to school. It impacted negatively on teachers because during lessons, especially in the mornings, some learners were unavailable to receive tuition, which in turn affected the teachers' work. Teachers were also blamed for learners who could not cope with their work. The impact on learners was that they lost tuition and it affected their scholastic achievement.

Resource inequality was another obstacle that impacted negatively on the education of the learners in this study. Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School were impacted by a lack of resources. However, Groenvlei Private School was not affected at all; hence, inequality existed between the schools. The inequality gap that existed between well-resourced and unresourced schools put learners in a disadvantaged position of not receiving quality teaching and learning. In the same vein, teachers were unable to teach properly, which led to frustration. As a result, poor quality teaching and learning took place.

Another inequality revealed in this study, which affected both teachers and learners from Kganya Public School and Jahman Rural School, was curriculum challenges (Outcomes-Based Education). Teachers did not receive enough training from the Department of Education to implement the curriculum effectively and efficiently. They became frustrated because of some of the concepts, which they were unable to apply correctly, such as to administer 26 classwork activities per week (which was excessive according to the teachers); the pace setters for oral work; and classifying learners according to different cognitive levels in the formation of groups. This led the teachers to become demotivated because they were producing dropouts (as alluded to by Tsamai, a teacher from Kganya Public School). Another factor was the age cohort, which promoted learners to the next grade even if they did not grasp the schoolwork. Moreover, learners were affected mentally and dropped out of school because they could not cope with the schoolwork. Groenvlei Private School was not affected by the curriculum as private schools design their own curriculum and train their teachers well.

Regarding cultural issues, the findings revealed that the inequalities were based on issues related to language. The medium of instruction differed from one school to another. The Afrikaans-speaking learners were affected by having to attend Sesotho language schools, which they did not speak. It was compulsory at Kganya Public School to do Sesotho as an additional language. Therefore, they failed the subject dismally because it was not their home language. Fortunately, there were not race issues in all the schools, as they were addressed in a proper manner.

The study found that the history of inequalities in schools, and the damages caused by apartheid, still played a major role in shaping schools in the post-apartheid era.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1[A]: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



### COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

NAME OF PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR: MR N.S. MASOKA

**STUDENT NUMBER:** 2016077019

**NAME OF ORGANIZATION:** UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
(EDGEWOOD)

**NAME OF SPONSOR:** UKZN

**SUPERVISOR:** DR CLAIRE GAILLARD

**DURATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT:** 3 YEARS

**TITLE:** Exploring the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning: A comparative analysis of three primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

### **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

I am Samson Nkesane Masoka, working for the University of the Free State. I am conducting a study on social inequalities in rural-urban education, a concerning phenomenon in this region and the rest of South Africa. I hereby invite you to be part of this research project. Please feel free to talk to anyone you are comfortable with regarding this project. I would be glad if you could stop me as we go through the information in order to explain where you need clarity. I am prepared to address the concerns or questions that you might pick up, even later in the research project.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

Our schoolchildren come from different backgrounds. Some of them do not accept themselves in their peer groups because of the social inequalities that exist in our communities. We have children who attend schools in rural and urban areas respectively. There are educational inequalities that exist between rural and urban education. We believe that you can help us by sharing with us what you know about some social inequalities in education. We want to learn more about what people who live or work here know about the social and educational inequalities between the learners. We want to establish what causes educational inequalities in schools and how educational inequalities affect the schoolchildren and the school as a whole.

## **TYPE OF RESEARCH INTERVENTION**

This research will be in the form of interviews that will take about an hour to complete for those who are taking part, for example the principal or deputy, parents, teachers and learners. The time allocated per school is 4 hours. It will therefore be two days per school whereby 4 hours would be broken into 2 days (for example 2 hours per day) in order to conduct the interviews effectively.

## **PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

You are being invited to take part in this research because of your experience as a teacher, principal, parent or a learner. We feel that your knowledge and expertise would contribute a lot to this research project.

## **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Please note that your participation in this research is voluntary. Whether you would like to continue to participate or not, is your choice. Your choice will not have a bearing on your job and/or studies or on any work-related evaluations or reports.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **A. Introduction (brief introduction to the format of the research study)**

We ask you to help us learn more about the educational inequalities that take place in your area. We invite you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be interviewed.

### **B. The Interviews**

Everything pertaining to the interviews will be clearly explained to you. You will be asked whether you are comfortable with the questions asked and if not, the clarification will be done to enable you to answer the questions effectively. The questions will be about educational inequalities and social inequalities in education. For example:

*How can schools be rescued from the social and educational inequalities?*

These are the type of questions that will be asked in the interview(s). The interview sessions will also be tape-recorded if necessary. No one will be identified by name. The interviewee and the tape-recorded information will be treated with confidentiality. No names of people will be used in the interviews (they will be anonymous). No other person except you and the researcher will have access to your answers.

### **Duration**

The data collection of the research project will probably take four weeks. During that time, each participating school will be visited twice for the completion of the interviews.

### **Risks**

If there are sensitive issues, for example personal habits and others that the person feels uncomfortable about, he/she can choose not to take part in the interviews. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the questions are too personal or make you uncomfortable. It will be fine to do so. No reason must be given regarding the refusal to answer the questions.

### **Benefits**

There will be no direct benefit(s) to you. Your participation will enable us to gather more information on social and educational inequalities that make children uncomfortable when attending school and thereby help in reducing the learners' dropout rate or to help the school(s) to provide quality and equality in education.

### **Reimbursements**

There will be no incentives provided to you for taking part in the research project. The research project is done to assist the community to overcome the barriers (social inequalities) that are hampering the education of the children in your area. Yours is just to help us identify the social issues and to come up with the mechanisms for overcoming them.

### **Confidentiality**

No one outside of the research team will know about your information. All the information collected from this research project will be kept private and confidential. A number and not your name will appear on the information about you. Only the researcher will know what your number is and it (information) will be kept under lock and key. The information will not be shared with or even given to anyone except the research sponsor, if there is anybody, for example UKZN.

### **Sharing the results**

Not anything that you have told us on the given day will be shared with anybody outside the research team. Sharing of the findings with the participants will be done if deemed necessary. The research findings will be shared with the community broadly through publications and conferences. The rationale for publishing results is for the interested people to learn from the research. Each participant will receive a summary of the results.

### **Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

You have the right not to take part in the research if you do not wish to. Choosing not to participate will not affect your job in any way. You are allowed to stop participating in the research at any time. You will also be allowed to review your answers or remarks in the interview(s) and you can modify or give the answer of your preference.

### **Who to contact**

You are allowed to ask any questions at any time. You may also ask questions later if needs be. If you wish to ask questions later, please contact Mr Masoka through any of the following means:

✉ P O Box 37553, Langenhoven Park, Bloemfontein 9330



📧 [masokans@ufs.ac.za](mailto:masokans@ufs.ac.za)

*This proposal will be reviewed and approved by:*

DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY AND RESEARCH

Free State Department of Education, Private Bag X 20565, Bloemfontein, 9300



**PART II: CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT**

- ✓ I have been invited to participate in research about social inequalities.
- ✓ I have read the forgoing information, or it has been read to me.
- ✓ I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction.
- ✓ I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Name of Participant: .....

Signature of Participant: .....

Date: ..... (day/month/year)

**Statement by the Researcher/Person taking consent:**

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. There will be confidentiality about the information shared.
2. Participants have the right not to take part in the research.
3. Participation is voluntary.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent,

and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Name of Researcher/person taking the consent: .....

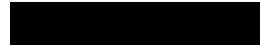
Signature of Researcher/person taking the consent: .....

Date: ..... (*day/month/year*)

**NB! A copy of this IFC has been provided to the participant.**

**APPENDIX 2[B]: LETTER TO SCHOOLS**

S. Masoka  
8 Dot Serfontein Street  
Langenhoven Park  
Bloemfontein  
9330



The Principal

\_\_\_\_\_ School

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Samson Masoka and I am currently doing a research project for my PhD at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood).

Subject to approval by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee, this study will be using an interview as a tool to determine the impact which the environmental location and social inequalities might be having on teaching and learning in schools.

I am writing to ask for your permission to be allowed access to your school to conduct interviews in this regard. The interviews will not take long and will be conducted at a convenient time and date to be arranged with you. Group interview will be used since it is quick and enables members of group to interact with each other. Consent forms will be issued to all participants prior to interviews. School personnel and the learners will be interviewed after school hours at the convenience of the interviewees. For the learners, interviews will be conducted in the presence of the Principal and their parents. Regarding the teachers and the SGB chairperson, the principal will be present

to observe. All I require is to arrange a suitable time to meet with you and further discuss this matter. I will also be asking team members if they would like to take part.

All answers and results from the interviewees will be kept strictly confidential.

If positive, please e-mail me at [masokans@ufs.ac.za](mailto:masokans@ufs.ac.za) to confirm that your willingness to allow access me to the teachers, learners and the chairperson of the SGB provided they agree to participate in the research project.

I trust my request will be favourably considered.

Yours sincerely,

S. Masoka

## APPENDIX 3[C]: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (SCHOOL PRINCIPAL)

<b>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PRINCIPAL OF _____ SCHOOL</b>
--

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Please tell me about the grading of your school – is it private, rural or urban school?
2. What are the social domains that have direct effect on what and how much children learn?
3. From which background do most of your learners come?
4. How do the social inequalities affect your school learners?
5. How does the school respond to this phenomenon?

### **HANDLING INEQUALITY**

6. Tell me about the educational inequalities affecting your school.
7. Tell me about programmes that you have put in place to bridge the inequality gap between the learners.
8. How do you deal with the learners who do not have anything to eat during break time?
9. How do you deal with the issue of racial/ethnic groups in your school?
10. What are the major challenges of social inequality that the school has to deal with?

### **HANDLING SOCIAL ISSUES**

11. Does your school policy include social inequality issues? Please explain.
12. Does the environmental location of your school have an effect on what and how much children learn? Please explain.
13. How is the parental involvement at your school?

14. How are the parents supporting the school?
15. How do you handle multi-graded classroom teaching, if any?
16. How do you deal with learners and parents who are unable to pay school fees, if any?
17. What causes absenteeism among the learners?
18. Which social inequalities exist at your school?
19. How do you deal with social inequality?

## APPENDIX 4[D]: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (TEACHER)

<b>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: TEACHER</b>
--

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Tell me about your teaching experience.
2. What kind of challenges do you face in the class regarding race/ethnic groups, if any?

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

3. What is the learner-teacher ratio in the classrooms?
4. What is the percentage pass rate in your classroom?
5. How does the social status and social identity of the learners' impact on teaching and learning?
6. What challenges do you face regarding social inequality in the classroom, if any?
7. What impact does the environmental location bring to teaching and learning?
8. How is discipline affected by the social inequalities between learners?
9. How do you handle racial/ethnic issues in the classroom, if any?
10. How do you handle social issues in the classroom?
11. How do the current resources in your school influence social inequalities?

## APPENDIX 5[E]: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (LEARNER)

<b>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: LEARNER</b>
--

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Tell me about your family background, for example how many are you at home, whom do you stay with?
2. How do you get to school?
3. Why did you come and study at this school?
4. What is the attitude of the other learners towards you?
5. Are you paying school fees?
6. Does the environment of the school affect your ability to learn?

### **SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

7. How do you socialize with other learners?
8. Are you comfortable with this school?
9. Do you have all the necessities, for example school uniform, books as required by the school?
10. Are your parents employed? If yes, where?
11. Are your parents able to pay for your school fees?
12. Do you eat before you come to school?
13. Do you get money or a lunchbox when you come to school?

## APPENDIX 6[F]: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (SGB)

<b>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: SGB</b>
--

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Where do you stay?
2. Where do the majority of the parents of the learners stay?
3. Where does your neighbour's child/children attend school?
4. Why did you bring your child to this school?

### **ECONOMIC ISSUES**

5. Are you employed? If yes, where?
6. What is your approximate monthly income?
7. Do you pay school fees? If yes, how much per month?
8. What is your impression of the extent to which parents are paying or not paying the school fees?
9. Is your neighbour employed?
10. Does the donation list work well for fundraising projects? Please explain.

### **SOCIAL ISSUES**

11. How do you as school governing body handle the issue of social inequality?
12. Is there unity amongst the parents? If not, explain.
13. Are the school buildings conducive for teaching and learning? Please explain.

## APPENDIX 7[G]: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO PARENT

S. MASOKA

8 Dot Serfontein Street, Langenhoven Park, Bfn 9330



For attention: Parent

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sir/Madam

### LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I, Samson Masoka, am aware that your child attends \_\_\_\_\_ school. I wish to include your child in a research project that studies how the environmental location and social inequalities impact on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. It is a comparative analysis of three primary schools in the Bloemfontein area. The study seeks to explore ways in which the environmental location of a community and the socio-economic status of its members affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within its schools. The study will be conducted by me as a researcher for a Doctoral Thesis at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My supervisor is Dr Claire Gaillard and can be contacted on 031-260 3143.

I therefore require your child to help me in my research by participating in an interview with me that will revolve around social issues. It is important to know how social issues affect teaching and learning. This will assist us to come up with the strategies that could be used to reduce disparities within and between communities. Permission will also be sought from your child before participation and you are required to be present

in the interviews to observe.

Only the researcher and his study supervisor will have access to the information collected in this project. The information collected will be kept in locked storage of the University for a period of five (5) years following the completion of the research project. Neither your name nor your school name will appear in any report of this research. You will have the right to review the information being used regarding your participation. Participation in this project is done voluntarily and no unusual risks to your child or school are envisaged.

Remember, you may withdraw from the project any time and there will be no consequences to yourself. However, your participation is of vital importance in the sense that it will help me develop and improve the strategies to enable the schools to deal with social inequalities. Your contribution will also help us to improve the quality of teaching and learning at your school and in South Africa as a whole. You will be notified by the school on the date of the interview. The interview will only last for an hour whereby your child will be asked questions; for example, how do you get to school? The venue is at the same school attended by your child. A group interview will be used since it is quick and enables members of group to interact with each other. The Principal and the parents will be present in the interviews.

Please indicate your response on the attached permission slip if you are willing to allow your child to participate in the research project. You are more than welcome to ask any questions regarding this research project or alternatively to review the information prior to providing consent. Please feel free to contact me at the above-mentioned contact numbers.

Yours sincerely,

S. Masoka

**APPENDIX 8[G]: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO PRINCIPAL**

S. MASOKA

8 Dot Serfontein Street, Langenhoven Park, Bfn 9330



For attention: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sir/Madam

**LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

I, Samson Masoka, wish to include you in a research project that studies how the environmental location and social inequalities impact on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. The study seeks to explore ways in which the environmental location of a community and the socio-economic status of its members affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within its schools. The study will be conducted by me as a researcher for a Doctoral Thesis at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My supervisor is Dr Claire Gaillard and can be contacted on 031-260 3143.

I therefore request you to help me in my research by participating in an interview which will revolve around social issues. It is important to know how social issues affect teaching and learning. This will assist us to come up with the strategies that could be used to reduce disparities within and between communities.

Only the researcher and his study supervisor will have access to the information collected in this project. The information to be collected will be kept in locked storage of the University for a period of five (5) years following the completion of the research project. Neither your name nor your school name will appear in any report of this

research. You will have the right to review the information being used regarding your participation. Participation in this project is done voluntarily and no unusual risks to you and your school are anticipated.

Remember, you may withdraw from the project any time and there will be no consequences to yourself. However, your participation is of vital importance in the sense that it will help me develop and improve the strategies to enable the schools to deal with social inequalities. Your contribution will also help us to improve the quality of teaching and learning at your school and in South Africa as a whole.

Please indicate your response on the attached permission slip if you are willing to participate in the research project. You will be notified by the school on the date of the interview. The interview will be conducted at school and at a convenient place for the interviewee. The Principal and the parents of the learners selected for the interviews will be present. In the case of the teachers, the principal will be present as an observer. You are more than welcome to ask any questions regarding this research project or alternatively to review the information prior to providing consent. Please feel free to contact me at the above-mentioned contact numbers.

Yours sincerely,

S. Masoka

## APPENDIX 9[H]: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO LEARNER

S. MASOKA

8 Dot Serfontein Street, Langenhoven Park, Bfn 9330



For attention: Learner

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sir/Madam

### LETTER OF CONSENT TO THE LEARNER TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I, Samson Masoka, am aware that you are a learner at \_\_\_\_\_ School. I wish to include you in a research project that studies how the environmental location and social inequalities impact on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning. The study seeks to explore ways in which the environmental location of a community and the socio-economic status of its members affect the emotional geographies of teaching and learning within its schools. The study will be conducted by me as a researcher for a Doctoral Thesis at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My supervisor is Dr Claire Gaillard and can be contacted on 031-260 3143.

I therefore request you to help me in my research by participating in an interview which will revolve around social issues. It is important to know how social issues affect teaching and learning. This will assist us to come up with the strategies that could be used to eradicate disparities within and between communities.

Only the researcher and his study supervisor will have access to the information collected in this project. The information to be collected will be kept in locked storage of the University for a period of five (5) years following the completion of the research

project. Neither your name nor your school name will appear in any reports of this research. You will have the right to review the information being used regarding your participation. Participation in this project is done voluntarily and no unusual risks to you and your school are anticipated.

Remember, you may withdraw from the project any time and there will be no consequences to yourself. However, your participation is of vital importance in the sense that it will help me develop and improve the strategies to enable the schools to deal with social inequalities. Your contribution will also help us to improve the quality of teaching and learning at your school and in South Africa as a whole. You will be notified by the school on the date of the interview. The interview will only last for an hour whereby you will be asked questions, for example how do you get to school? The venue is at the same school where you are attending. A group interview will be used since it is quick and enables members of group to interact with each other. The Principal and your parents will be present in the interviews.

Please indicate your response on the attached permission slip if you are willing to participate in the research project. You are more than welcome to ask any questions regarding this research project or alternatively to review the information prior to providing consent. Please feel free to contact me at the above-mentioned contact numbers.

Yours sincerely,

S. Masoka

**APPENDIX 10[1]: REPLY SLIP**

S. MASOKA

REPLY SLIP

I, \_\_\_\_\_ designation \_\_\_\_\_  
hereby grant / do not grant permission to be interviewed by Mr S. Masoka for research  
that will be conducted at \_\_\_\_\_ school.

Please mark with a tick

Permission granted

Permission not granted

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Designation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX 11[J]: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



06 June 2018

Mr Nlesane S Masoka 2116077019  
School of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Masoka

Protocol reference number: HSS/0212/018D

Project title: Exploring the effects of Environmental Location and Social Inequalities on the Emotional Geographies of Teaching and Learning: A comparative Analysis of 3 Primary Schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

### Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 08 March 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

Prof Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr Claire Galliard-Thurston  
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Simon Khoza  
cc School Administrator: Ms Mball Ngcobo, Ms Tyzer Khumalo

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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## APPENDIX 12[K]: ASSENT FORM

College of Humanities  
Social Justice Education  
Edgewood Campus  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605

### ASSENT FORM

*This form is recommended for minor ages 7-12, but may be used for subjects up to age 17.*

Project title:

*“Exploring the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning: A comparative analysis of three primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa.”*

We are asking you to take part in a research study because we want to learn more about your feelings or perceptions regarding the school environment and social inequalities.

If you agree to take part in our study, we are going to ask you some questions about the school environment, social inequalities you experience at home in the community where you live and at school as well. The interviews will take place at the convenient location at school. The interview will only last for an hour. The parents and the Principal will be present in the interviews.

You can ask questions about this study at any time. If you decide at any time not to finish, you can ask us to stop. You will not directly benefit from participating in the research project. You will indirectly benefit by contributing to the research, in order to curb the inequalities that are taking place in school or within the communities in which you live.

The questions we will ask are only about what you think. There are no right or wrong answers, because this is not a test.

If you have questions later that you did not think of now, you can call me at [REDACTED]

Signing your name below means that you agree to be in the study. You and your parents will get a copy of this form.

NAME OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of participant      Signature of participant      Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING ASSENT

In my judgement, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly agreeing to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF PERSON OBTAINING ASSENT      CONTACT PHONE NO.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING ASSENT      DATE

## APPENDIX 13[L]: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION LETTER



College of Humanities  
Social Justice Education  
Edgewood Campus  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605

The Chairperson  
School Governing Body

### GATEKEEPER PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Mr Nkesane Samson Masoka (2016077019). I wish to conduct research at your school for my PhD thesis. I am writing to ask for your permission to be allowed access to your school, to conduct interviews with the Principal, teachers, learners and the SGB/representative of the Board of Governor. This will not take a large amount of time and can be conducted at a convenient time and date to be arranged.

As part of the research work for my PhD studies I am investigating the effect which the environmental location and social inequalities have on teaching and learning at your institution.

The title of my research is *"Exploring the effects of environmental location and social inequalities on the emotional geographies of teaching and learning: A comparative analysis of three (3) primary schools in Bloemfontein, South Africa."*

I chose your school because of convenience. I was a school principal for fifteen years and I know your school very well. It is a good school. Regarding this project, I want to be able to observe how the learners come to school, play, are taught in the classrooms and interact with their teachers, peers, etc.

This means that I will be present in the school for about one month. I would like to be able to observe the interaction of the teachers with the learners and other members of the school community. I would also like to interview the Principal, teachers, SGB/representative of the Board of Governor and the learners in a location of their choice and at a convenient time for them, without impacting negatively on the school day.

I will seek written permission from all participants including the Principal, teachers, as well as community members (Board of Governor), selected to participate in the research project. Names and places will be changed to ensure that the school and participants remain anonymous. All those directly involved will be spoken to personally before signing letters of informed consent. If permission is not granted by a parent, the face of the child will be concealed to protect their identities in all publications.

Dr Claire Gaillard-Thurston is my supervisor. To enable the research to be effective, we request your assistance by allowing your school to be part of the study. There are no financial rewards that will be given to your institution for taking part in this research project.

Hoping and trusting that my letter will receive your favourable consideration.

Please contact me should you require more information in this regard. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr Claire Gaillard-Thurston at 031 – 260 3143.

Yours faithfully

Masoka Samson

Office no: 031 – 401 9943

Cell: 078 688 1150

e-mail: [Masokans@ufs.ac.za](mailto:Masokans@ufs.ac.za)



College of Humanities  
Social Justice Education  
Edgewood Campus  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605

## FOROMO YA TUMELLANO

*Foromo ena e a kgothaletswa mabapi le dilemo tse nyenyane 7-12, empa e ka sebediswa le ho fihla dilemong tse 17.*

Sehlooho sa Porojeke:

*"Tekolo ya sephetho sa bodulo ba tikoloho le ho se lekalekane ha phedisano ho maemo a maikutlo a ho ruta le ho ithutwa: Manollo ya papiso ya dikolo tsa poraemari tse tharo(3) tsa Mangaung, Bloemfontein, Afrika Borwa."*

Re o kopa ho ba le seabo dipatlisisong, hobane re batla ho ithuta haholwanyana ka maikutlo a hao kapa kutlwisiso ya hao mabapi le tikoloho ya sekolo le ho se lekalekane ha phedisano.

Haeba o dumela ho ba le seabo dipatlisisong tsena tsa rona, re tlo o botsa dipotso tse mmalwa mabapi le tikoloho ya sekolo, ho se lekalekane ha phedisano ka lapeng setjhabeng moo o phelang teng le sekolong.

O ka botsa dipotso mabapi le dipatlisiso tsena nako e mngwe le e mngwe. Haeba o etsa qeto nako efe kapa efe ho se tswela pele, o ka re kopa hore re emise. Ha ho seo o tla se una ka ho otloloha ka ho ba le seabo porojekeng ena ya dipatlisiso. O tla una ka mkgwa o sa otlolohang ka ho phehisa dipatlisisong tsena, e le ho thibela ho se lekalekane ho teng sekolong kapa setjhabeng moo o phelang teng

Dipotso tseo re tla o botsa tsona di itshetlehile feela ho seo o se nahanang. Ha ho dikarabo tse



nepahetseng kapa tse fosahetseng, hobane sena ha se teko. Dipotsiso di tla nka hora e le mgwe feela. Mosuwe – hlooho le batswadi ba tla ba teng nakong ya dipotsiso.

Haeba o ka ba le dipotso hamorao tseo o sa nahanang ka tsona ho jwale, o ka ntetsetsa dinomorong tsena ( [REDACTED] )

Ka ho saena ka tlase o dumela hore o ba karolo ya dipatlisiso tsena. Wena hammoho le batswadi ba hao le tla fumana khopi ya foromo ena.

LEBITSO LA MONKAKAROLO DIPATLISISONG

Lebitso le tlantsweng la monkakarolo	Tshaeno ya monkakarolo	Mohla
---	------------------------	-------

TSHAENO YA MOTHO YA FUMANANG TUMELLO

Maikutlong a ka monkakarolo o ithaopa a utlwisisa ho ba le seabo dipatlisisong tsena.

LEBITSO LA MOTHO YA FUMANANG TUMELLO	MOHALA
---	--------

TSHAENO YA MOTHO YA FUMANANG TUMELLO	MOHLA
---	-------

**APPENDIX 14[M]: OBSERVATIONS  
OBSERVATION: KGANYA PUBLIC SCHOOL PERI-URBAN SCHOOL**

**7 MARCH 2019**

I (the researcher) arrived at 07:40 before the school started. The school principal and teachers were already at school. Firstly, I stood at the gate to observe what took place before the school started. The school started at 07:45. It was time for assembly and devotions. At 08:00 lessons resumed. While I was standing at the gate, I realized that some of the children were using taxis to school because they were staying far from school. Parents paid for the taxis.

Assembly was held on Mondays and Fridays. It was only held five consecutive days if there were challenges to be attended to. I then went to the principal's office who in turn introduced me to the teacher who took me through the school. The teacher offered to do a presentation in the classroom. The teacher introduced the lesson and went on with the presentation. The classroom's floor was covered in tiles. There was the so-called "reading corner" where the books were displayed to enable the learners to read. The learners were involved in the lesson presentation by the teacher. There were learning aids displayed on the walls such as letters of alphabet and vowels (basic principles) for grade 3. The arrangement of learners' desks was done in a way that encouraged involvement. There were old broken cupboards in the classroom.

**CLASSROOM 2**

I was also introduced to the next classroom. It was grade 2 learners and I was asked to see how the teachers were teaching in the lower grades. The classroom was full of teaching and learning aids. There were wall charts and teaching and learning aids displayed on the wall. In this classroom, the arrangement was different. Learners were sitting in rows. The cupboard was old and could not be locked up for the purpose of storing valuable goods. There were 41 learners accommodated in this classroom. In this classroom, you could see the following items displayed on the wall: Name of the seasons, Days of the week, Number combinations 10-20, pictures of a ball and chicken, the months of the year, introduction of words, for example how to form words and sentences. Vowels were also displayed. The learners were free to talk. The teacher's chair was not in a good

condition. The teacher told me (without asking her) that the classroom was not conducive for teaching and learning. The community in that environment vandalizes classrooms (according to the information I have gathered). Cupboards were being stolen by the communities around the school.

Even though my task was to observe grade 7 learners and their actions, I was asked to visit other classrooms as well to observe. I had an opportunity to visit grade R learners where a student teacher from Motheo TVET College was doing observations. The classroom teacher was teaching the learners. Children were doing activities related to colouring. It was practical work. The teachers were friendly when I met them in their respective classrooms. There were teaching and learning aids in the classroom, such as scissors, glues, mugs and others. There were many teaching and learning aids displayed on the wall. There was only one shelf and one cupboard. The arrangement of learners' tables was done in such a way to enable the learners to work together. They were arranged in groups. The groups were called teams. There were four teams in this class.

The classroom's floor was covered with old tiles. At some places on the floor, you could see the patches where the floor was not covered. There was a corner covered with a small mat called the reading or fantasy play corner. There was a place for putting their belongings. Counters were mostly used in the classroom. The teacher used taxi as a mode of transport to and from the school.

### **GRADE 7 CLASSROOM**

I saw a badly cracked floor in the classroom, which could injure the learners. The classroom's wall had terrible cracks, which one could see through to the next classroom. Wall charts could not be placed on walls because of the cracks. Windows were not in a good condition. Some of the tables and chairs were not in a good condition. There was no security officer at this school. The problem of absenteeism was mentioned as a huge problem.

### **THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND PHYSICAL ASSETS**

- There was no laboratory
- There was no library

- There were not enough toilets for learners
- There was playground but no poles
- There was no furniture in the staffroom

The observation went very well with the support of the school principal and teachers.

## **OBSERVATION: JAHMAN PUBLIC RURAL SCHOOL**

**10 MAY 2019**

I visited the school at 07:25 in the morning. On my way to school, I passed one learner walking to school. I met the principal at 07:30 where he discussed many issues (even if he knew that I was there for observation). I listened to him while he pointed out challenges such as transport, the feeding scheme, electricity and administrative matters. There was an issue of the learners coming from different directions, including the township (Mangaung).

The Department of Education provided a bus to transport learners from different places to the school and back. I saw a kitchen and a staffroom with two computers. There were chairs and a table. I was able to see the clerk's office, the principal's office and two HOD offices, and a storage office. There was a fence around the school. A vegetable garden was established to grow spinach and tomatoes.

The school used a borehole for water. There were also two water tanks, which showed that there was no problem with water. There was a church building called "NG Kerk in Afrika".

I was told that it was not a school site. Movable toilets were used at the school. There were also two movable classes for grade 7 learners. Moreover, a 22-year disabled child also attended the school.

Some of the learners were from Lesotho. Most of the learners coming from the township were from Lesotho. I was informed that if the mother was a South African, the father was from Lesotho, and vice versa. Some of the learners were said to come from informal settlements. One of the teachers at the school informed me that a brilliant child dropped out of school because the parents could not afford to pay R450 for public transport. The mother was from Lesotho and the father was a South African.

I visited grade 7A and discovered the following: there were 38 learners during the time of observation. There was a cupboard for the teacher. Regarding grade 7B, the following was observed: the floor had holes, there was no door for the classroom, and a cupboard

was broken. Some other observations were as follows: the sportsground for soccer was also a farming site. The school used pre-paid electricity. The sportsground was neglected. The field had long grass and needed to be cut. The scraper was mentioned as the solution to level the ground. The sports field was not fenced. Regarding the school's location, learners were staying far from the school. They walked long distances even during rainy conditions. The school had a language challenge. The Afrikaans-speaking learners were unable to understand English. Coming to school on an empty stomach was another challenge because learners could not listen and concentrate when taught. What I also observed was that there was a shortage of classes. The observation ended very well.

## **OBSERVATION: GROENVLEI URBAN PRIVATE SCHOOL**

**23 MAY 2019**

I arrived at Groenvlei Private School at 06:50 in the morning for observation. I met a security officer at the gate. The gate was opened for me as he was informed that I would be visiting the school. The school was well fenced for security purposes. In front of the gate, you could see the name of the school written in visible capital letters and Bloemfontein. On the other side of the gate (on the wall), you could see the following words "Walk in the light". The school had an electronic board on the gate, displaying the school information, such as choir practices, how can I help you, uniform, music centre and the following: "End of term 2, Parents please check whether admin has your correct e-mail address".

The flow of cars started at 07:00 in the morning bringing children to school by their parents. The cars that brought the children were mostly private cars followed by private combis, mini-busses and the school bus. The general employees started walking into the schoolyard at approximately 07:15 in the morning. These employees were using public transport. The public transport dropped them off +- 1 km from the school. The school had carpools for the cars (staff members in particular). I saw learners from different sections of the population attending the school. The gate was closed at 07:50 by the security officer. Only three parents brought their children late to school (08:03) that day.

I was invited into the grade 7 class for observation. The lesson was about Visual Literacy. The picture of a person in the island: The cartoon: facial expression, the person was happy (cartoonist), the person was smiling. The teacher was able to provide the learners with teaching aids for the lesson. Learners were sitting in groups to allow for discussions and interaction.

It was an English lesson presented to the learners. The learners participated well in the lesson. Recycling was also highlighted in the lesson. The lesson was fantastic and the children enjoyed it. They were free to talk to the teacher in the lesson. On the walls of the classroom, there were resources pasted. The resources were pasted according to the syllabus; for example, if a teacher was to deal with advertisements, all placards and flyers

were to be pasted on the wall. The placards related to the concept “advertising”. The resources were only removed and replaced by others when the new lesson was introduced. Before the introduction of the new lesson, placards, teaching or learning aids were to be pasted on the wall.

I visited the second grade 7 class and the following came to the fore: there were 15 learners in the classroom. The classroom was big and spacious, beautiful and conducive for teaching and learning. There were beautiful cupboards for the teacher. The floor was tiled. There were many resources in the classroom, including a wall watch. There was also a projector installed in the classroom for PowerPoint presentations. The classroom had a ceiling and the walls were painted. The staffroom was also spacious with tables and chairs. Tables were arranged in groups (round tables). The floor was tiled.


In the staffroom, one could see a microwave, fridge, stove, pigeonholes and cupboards, a sink and washing basins. There were also computers. There was a data projector installed in the staffroom for presentations. Regarding the buildings and other physical assets, I observed the following: toilets for learners were attached to the classroom. There were aftercare classes to assist learners with schoolwork. There were also scooters for learners to play. The playground was well resourced. There were four tennis courts whereby two was used for netball and two for tennis. There was paving all over the school. There were two fields for soccer and rugby. There was also a big hall for the school. There was also a Science Lab and an IT Lab. The school had lockers for the learners to store their possessions in. Textbooks were ordered via the internet. The chemicals were available for experiments, such as Zinc Sulphate, Sodium Oxalate, Sodium Hydroxide and others. The IT Lab was used for learners to acquire computer skills. They were trained from as early as eight years old. Every child has his or her own password. The computers were equal to the number of classes. The teacher took his/her class to the IT Lab and guided them. There was also a photocopy room with laminating, binding, and cutting resources. There was also a sickroom comprised of two beds for those who were ill. There was a Resource Room where most of the resources were kept. There was a Robotics Room, where programming was taught. The observation went very well.

## **APPENDIX 15[N]: CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING**

This is to certify that I, Margaret Linström, language edited this doctoral thesis by S. Masoka.

The language editing was done using Track Changes to allow the student to accept or reject the changes made.

## APPENDIX 16[O]: TURN IT IN RECEIPT AND REPORT


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### Exploring the effect of environmental location and social inequalities

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<b>2</b>	Manasa Kolibylu Raghupathy, Bhamini Krishna Rao, Shubha R Nayak, Alicia J Spittle, Shradha S Parsekar. "Effect of family-centered care interventions on motor and neurobehavior development of very preterm infants: a protocol for systematic review", Research Square, 2020 Publication	<1 %