

**THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF  
GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**KGATLE LESETJA ESROM**

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

In the

**Faculty of Humanities**

at the

**Central University of Technology, Free State**

Supervisor: Dr Ngobeni E.T.

Co-supervisor: Prof Sepeng P.

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

**2022**

## DECLARATION WITH REGARD TO INDEPENDENT WORK

I, **Kgatle Lesetja Esrom** of Student Number \_\_\_\_\_ do here-by declare that “the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade Ten learners: A case in Selected Secondary Schools in Vaalwater Circuit” is my own independent work and has not been submitted before to any other institution by myself or any other person for the attainment of a qualification. I further declare that all sources used through out this dissertation have been acknowledged through complete list of references.

\_\_\_\_\_

12 June 2022

**Signature**

**Date**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of this work was made possible through the support and encouragement from my family, friends, and colleagues. I am particularly indebted to the following individuals:

- My supervisors' Dr Ngobeni E.T and Prof. Sepeng P for the support, encouragement, and insight from day one up until the completion of this work. Thank you very much for pushing me, even when i thought of quitting.
- The Waterberg district for affording me this opportunity to further my studies.
- Ms Kgosana P.M, who has been my colleague, mentor, and principal for her motivation and support when i needed time off to do my work.
- Principal Mahohoma from Mohlakamotala Secondary School, for allowing me space and time in your school to conduct research and collect data. You were wonderful Sir.
- Mr Setho, the principal of Moshia Secondary School for your understanding and accomodation through data collection process at your school. Thank you very much.
- All participants (Learners & Educators) who contributed to the success of this project.
- And lastly, to the Almighty GOD for providing me with strength and wisdom to pull through.

## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family, friends, and colleagues who supported me throughout until the completion of this project. I also wish to dedicate this work to my wife who showed tremendous support and held the fort while I was held up by this project. The same goes to my colleagues who contributed their time, resources, and insight towards the attainment of this project. Lastly, I dedicate this project to my late father, Sir Maimela Solomon. I wish you were alive...Tlou Motwetla!!!!

## ABSTRACT

The influence of poverty on the academic performance of learners particularly in Grade 10 cannot be ignored. Learners in Vaalwater Circuit perform poorly in Grade 10, some drop out of school while unfortunate ones do not even reach Grade 10. Access to proper education and poor academic performance are considered as one of the major predictors of passing poverty from one generation to another. However, other scholars and researcher such as Vally and Motala (2014:98) opined that it is not only through education that we could end poverty, but good structural arrangements were also equally capable of ending extreme poverty. Therefore, the aim of the study was to investigate the influence of poverty on the academic performance of learners, particularly the Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. Previous studies revealed that learners performed poorly in school for a number of reasons, with some of them emanating from poverty. On the other hand, Vally & Motala's viewpoint was that education in this instance was multi-faceted, as some skills were not necessarily learned in the classroom through learner-educator interactions and assignments, but were acquired through experience and constant practice (Vally & Motala, 2014:138). Seemingly, previous literature suggested that poverty was consistently linked to unemployment, poor health, and low literacy, and poor nutrition, high levels of stress, crime, and teenage pregnancy amongst others.

The study used the Qualitative Research Methodology (QRM) as well as the Case Study research design. The researcher also used the Semi-Structured-Interviews as well as the Focus Group Discussions as data collection instruments. The motive for the use of such tools was to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. The population in the study were school principals, educators, and learners as participants. Vaalwater circuit is a small area of twelve schools, of which four were secondary schools and eight primary schools. Similarly, the study used purposive sampling to select two school principals, four educators, and eight Grade 10 learners. The total population was 2371 inclusive of both the learners and educators from the four secondary schools. The researcher sampled fourteen (14) participants, of which two were school principals; four were educators (two males and two females), and eight Grade 10 learners of a balanced gender. The selected sample

was considered sufficient to provided satisfactory responses to the research questions.

The study found out that there was lack of co-operation and communication between all stakeholders involved in education. Seemingly, government, schools, and communities were not doing enough to eradicate poverty as well as cater for poor learners who come from poor families. Lack of parental support, lack of space and overcrowding at home, lack of proper role models were also found to be some of the influences of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. The study also revealed other challenges such as corruption and mismanagement of resources, which were directed at poverty reduction strategies, such funds did not reach the intended recipients. The study concluded that even though there were many issues around the influence of poverty on the academic performance of grade ten learners that should not be used as an excuse to drop out of school, but should serve as motivation to work hard and achieve the intended goals. All other stake holders should join hands and work together towards the attainment of a common goal which is excellent improved academic performance of learners. Finally, the study recommended equal distribution of resources, improved school infrastructure, donations, creation of job opportunities especially in rural areas and monitoring of state resources amongst others.

**Key words:** poverty, poverty eradication, learners, education, academic performance

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## ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, Croatia and South Africa
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FCG	Foster Care Grant
FET	Further Education and Training
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
HIV	Human Immuno- Deficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Communities
SASA	South African Schools Act
SCT	Social Class Theory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SSI	Semi-Structured Interviews
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TB	Tuberculosis
TVET	Tertiary Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPF	World Food Program

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The influence of poverty and poor academic performance of Grade ten learners in most schools cannot be ignored. Lack of access to quality education and academic excellence of learners is a major predictor of passing poverty from one generation to another, and hence receiving education is perceived as one of the ways of achieving a good life and financial freedom. However some researcher (Vally & Motala, 2014) opined that it is not only education that could guarantee an end to poverty, as good structural arrangements amongst others could also end extreme poverty. Seemingly, previous studies revealed that learners performed poorly in school for a number of reasons, with some of the emanating from poverty. Learners go to school to aquire skills and knowledge; however, Vally and Motala further argue that some skills were not necessarily learned in the classroom or through assignments; instead, they were acquired through experience and constant practice outside of the classroom. According to Uretsky and Stone (2016:69), poverty is a state in which people suffer from relative lack of basic material needs. Previous literature suggest that poverty is consistently linked to factors such as unemployment, poor health, low literacy, poor nutrition, high levels of stress, crime, and teenage pregnancy amongst others (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:83).

In South Africa and many countries around the world, education is a constitutional right, a basic human right, a strategic priority, and the best possible vehicle to empower communities (Constitution of RSA, 1996:12 Section 29(2)). It is also a global fact that economic success depends on quality education, and those with a quality education can fulfil their potential. In the words of the legendary Nelson Mandela, "...it is through education that a daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a domestic worker will become the president of a great nation." Indeed, knowledge gained from school provides learner with the opportunity to dream of a better future and the motivation to succeed academically, which in turn would help to ease the cycle of poverty.

Similarly, poverty is regarded as the cause of higher numbers of learners not attending schools, and the consistent dropouts in schools. Although previous studies (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2014:101) investigated the influence of poverty on the academic performance of learners, little or nothing has been done to reduce or put an end to its influence. Whilst the effort by various government and stakeholders to alleviate signs of poverty in all levels of schooling can be commended, the environment and individual learners' background rendered such efforts null and void. Furthermore, the socio-economic status (SES) in which a child was raised, influenced the level of learning that took place in the classroom, thus influenced the academic performance and the outcomes of education (Cohen et al., 2014:107). Moreover, when learners experienced poverty in their daily lives, it became harder for them to listen, concentrate, and learn. The situation of poor academic performance was aggravated by the condition of many public schools, mostly in rural communities. According to De Vos, Fouché and Delport (2013:132), most of such schools were characterised by lack of basic infrastructure; dilapidated buildings, no running water, no latrine and/or pit latrines, not enough desks, and overcrowding, while most of them were understaffed. Seemingly, education was often referred to as the greatest equalizer to opening doors to quality jobs, and to unlocking opportunities. According to UNESCO (2014), if all children from low-income countries could have just basic reading and writing skills, an estimated 171 million people could escape poverty. Seemingly, if all adults could complete a secondary school education, that would cut the global poverty rate by more than half.

Therefore, based on the above assertions, the aim of this study is to investigate the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners and contribute solutions. Various search strategies were used such as Google Scholar, Ebscohost, ERIC, and SAGE. Other sources of information used were different books, journals, dissertations, articles, and theses in an attempt to gather more information on the topic.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Poor academic performance, particularly in Grade 10, has been a problematic issue for decades. There are multiple causes of poor performance such as poor teaching, bullying, poverty, learning disorder, financial constrains and emotional problems

amongst others. However, almost almost all of them stem from poverty. Poverty is a complex issue that concerns communities and society, and affect learners' academic performance, particularly Grade 10. A study by Reardon and Portilla (2016:115) revealed that one of the most enduring legacies of apartheid in South Africa was the relentless poverty suffered by the country's majority black population. Hence, the current social spending on housing, health care, and a grant system were specifically designed to lift mostly black South Africans out of poverty. Because of poverty, various talents and possible future leaders were flushed out of the education system.

Similarly, Rohwerder (2014:201) was of the view that some of those learners left school earlier to look for jobs, while some became victims of teenage pregnancy and child labour. Therefore, the problem in this study is the influence of poverty on learners' academic performance, particularly in Grade 10. Various researchers (Nelson, Martin & Featherstone, 2013:92) were of the opinion that poverty hampered the performance of some learners who ended up dropping out of school. However, some researchers (Reardon & Portilla, 2016:97) contend that poverty served as motivation to work hard and achieve something in life. This was also the opinion of Vally and Motala (2014:98) who argued that poverty is in the mind and could be defeated through good planning and structural arrangements and not education alone.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

A research question implies an answerable inquiry into a specific issue or concern. It is the initial step in a research project. Similarly, Reardon and Portilla (2016:73) posited that formulation of research questions is essential before starting any research. In this study, research questions were aimed at exploring an existing uncertainty in an area of concern, and pointed to a need for deliberate investigation. According to Creswell (2014:49), a good research question forms the backbone of a good study, which in turn is vital in unravelling the mysteries of nature and giving insight into a problem. Therefore, it was pertinent for the researcher to formulate good research questions (Nelson et al., 2013:112).

### **1.3.1 Main question**

The main research questions was motivated by the manner in which learners from poor backgrounds seemed to struggle academically because of the influence of poverty and other related factors such as bullying and learning disorders, and thus ended up dropping out of school early. The researcher was concerned with the state of affairs which seemed prevalent in Vaalwater Circuit, and wanted to investigate about the influence that poverty has on Grade 10 learners academically, hence the main question in the study was:

- What is the influence of poverty on learner's academic performance in Grade 10?

### **1.3.2 Sub-questions**

- What can be done to reduce poverty in schools?
- What role can the school communities play in overcoming poverty?
- How can we encourage and motivate poverty-stricken learners to work hard?
- How can the society and communities help in the fight against poverty?

## **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Research objectives are concrete statements describing what the research is trying to achieve. According to Budge and Parrett (2018:86), research objectives focus on ways to measure the variables, and summarise what is to be achieved in the study. Thus, based on the above assertions, the study hope to achieve the following objectives:

- To suggest ways to reduce the influence of poverty on learner's academic performance
- To come up with concrete measures on reducing poverty in schools
- To eliminate fear, and encourage poor learners to perform better academically
- To empower schools and communities on poverty reduction strategies

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The research hoped to benefit a number of entities on completion. Firstly, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), particularly in Limpopo would be informed of the challenges and influence of poverty in the education system and improve the situation based on the findings. Learners, not only in Limpopo Vaalwater circuit, could also benefit because the findings would have addressed their concerns and suggested meaningful ways to resolve them. In addition, learners would get motivated to work hard, knowing that their plight was taken care of. Furthermore, the communities would benefit from the numbers of learners who would succeed academically, get better jobs, and plough back into their communities, which would in-turn uplift the economy as well as a number of families out of poverty. Similarly, the findings would ease the burden of financial stress on parents if the recommendations were to be implemented.

## **1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics refers to a system of principles that deals with the dynamics of decision-making concerning what is right and wrong in research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2013:98). There were several reasons why it was important for the study to adhere to ethical norms and standards. In this study, the researcher applied ethics in order to promote the aim of research such as knowledge, truthfulness, impartiality and avoidance of error. Furthermore, ethical norms assisted the researcher in avoiding fabrication of facts, falsifying of information, and misrepresentation of data that was gathered. According to Saunders et al. (2013:103), any research work is governed by individuals, community, and social values. Based on the above, the following ethical considerations were taken into cognisance.

First, the researcher applied for approval to collect data from the selected schools or institution. Once the approval was granted, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in Limpopo was engaged in an effort to get their consent to collect data in their schools. The school principals were also consulted and asked permission to collect data in their schools. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that full consent from all participants was prioritised, as supported by Cohen et al. (2014:103). This was important for the study to ensure that participants were free and willing to share

as much information. Similarly, most of the learners in Grade 10 were still under 18 years of age, and that rendered them minors, and thus unable to make informed decisions with regard to giving consent to taking part in a study. Therefore, the researcher asked permission from their parents and guardians to partake in the study. The relevant consent forms, which were also translated into the home language of the learners to accommodate their parents or guardians, were designed as argued by Lewis (2017:79).

The researcher also ensured that participants were not subjected to harm in any way, and that their dignity were respected and prioritised, as highlighted by Bandason et al. (2013:68). Seemingly, the researcher explained all the procedures of the processes that would be followed throughout the proceedings as well as to assure the protection and privacy of all research participants. Voluntary participation was emphasised, and participants were allowed to withdraw from participation anytime they so wished. Permission to record any participant was communicated and explained to all participants prior to data collection sessions. Seemingly, in line with Cohen et al. (2014:113), the study strived for objectivity and ensured avoidance of biasness, prejudice, as well as the use of offensive, discriminatory and unacceptable language.

According to Nelson et al. (2013:103), plagiarism refers to copying someone else's work without due credit or acknowledgement. This is considered cheating and may result in dire consequences. Therefore, the researcher ensured acknowledgement of sources used through-out the dissertation by complete list of reference. With regard to integrity, Nelson et al. (2013:99) suggested that the researcher must ensure consistency, sincerity, and keep promises and agreements, which were observed to the latter. At the end of each interaction, the researcher made sure to thank the participants for their time, which was aimed at giving the respondents a sense of contribution and value in the study. Lastly, the researcher ensured the protection of confidential communication with all participants.

## **1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

Previous literature revealed that academic poor performance is influenced by multiple factors such as poor teaching styles, emotional problems, abuse/sexual

abuse, bullying, screen time and learning disorders amongst others; however some of those factors stem from poverty itself. Seemingly, lack of access to education is a major predictor of passing poverty from generation to generation, and receiving education is seen as one of the steps in the right direction to achieve financial stability. As highlighted earlier, learners perform poorly in school for a number of reasons, which mostly emanate from poverty. The word 'poverty' originated from the Latin word 'pauper' meaning poor, which translates to 'giving birth to nothing'. According to Chen (2019:101), poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources or essential for a minimum standard of living. Poverty-stricken people and families experience lack of employment, proper housing, clean water, healthy food, and medical attention.

Furthermore, the World Bank (WB) (2015) reports that poverty is the lack of basic needs that ensures mere physical survival. What is common in those few definitions of poverty is one thing: the lack of basic needs. However, each community or individual have their own understanding and definition of what poverty is. For example, someone who was regarded as poor in a townhouse may not be seen as poor in a village (Chen, 2019:96). In the United States of America (USA), more than 40 million people lived below the poverty line (USA Census, 2016).

Further studies reveal that poverty led to social exclusion and affected individuals and communities to fully participate in society. In reality, poverty and the cost of living varied dramatically based on geography (Nelson et al., 2013:121). Similarly, there were various types of poverty such as generational poverty, absolute poverty, and relative poverty (WB, 2015). The most common types of poverty, mostly amongst black communities, were absolute poverty and relative poverty. Regardless of its nature, the span of poverty seems to be an enormous and complex issue that plagues communities in a seemingly endless cycle (Nelson et al., 2014:99). However, in working together to find effective ways of reducing poverty, the future is destined for greatness for all learners and their communities towards the academic performance in Grade 10.

Moreover, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) of 2015 pointed out that poverty had multiple and complex causes. The GPRS found that the lack of capacity of the poor to influence social processes, public policy choices, and resource

allocation are amongst the causes of poverty (Lewis, 2017:87). Other causes of poverty were civil wars, rising divorce rates, female headed and single parent families, child headed families, teenage pregnancy, drug/ alcohol abuse, and crime (WB, 2015). Similarly, the high birth rates, coupled with rapid population growth are among the causes of poverty in many ways. According to the African Union (AU) (2014), poverty was increased not only by the incidence of depth, but also by more unequal distribution of private consumption and lack of education among the poor. Similarly, low capacities through lack of education, vocational skills, entrepreneurial abilities, poor health, and poor quality of life were also quoted. According to Budge and Parrett (2018:89), the low levels of consumption through lack of access to capital, social assets, and land market opportunities, and the lack of macro-economic stability that erodes the resources of the poor through inflation and other variables, were also among the prime causes of poverty.

Although the above-mentioned issues could be prevented, they were usually passed on from generation to generation, which led to vicious cycle of poverty from which few escaped. In addition, Africa had a very poor infrastructure set up as far as roads, health facilities, schools, and water systems went (Budge & Parrett, 2018:107). Another leading cause of poverty was found to be prevalence of global pandemics such as the recent Corona Virus (Covid-19). These pandemics exacerbate poverty levels because most households are left without breadwinners owing to deaths caused by these pandemics.

Moreover, it was also reported that in 1990, 36% of the world's population lived in poverty, and by 2015, only 10% of the world's population lived in poverty (Statistics SA, 2015). There was a decline of over 1 billion people living in poverty in that period. The WB report (2018) also stated that the average poverty rate for sub-Saharan Africa stood at about 14%, and of the world's 28 poorest countries, 27 were in sub-Saharan Africa, all with a poverty rate above 30%. According to Lewis (2017:86), projections by the WB also indicated that extreme poverty showed few signs of improvement in sub-Saharan Africa, and may keep countries from ending extreme poverty by 2030.

Similarly, other researchers such as Jones, Wilson, Clark and Dunham (2018:111) were of the opinion that, despite the general decline in poverty between 2006 and

2011, poverty levels in South Africa rose leading to 2015. Thus, more than half of South Africans were poor in 2015, with the poverty levels increasing to 55.5% from 53.2% in 2011. This translated into over 30.4 million South Africans who lived in poverty in 2015 (Nelson et al., 2013:88). Furthermore, previous literature (Koball & Jiang, 2018:79) revealed that the South African economy (between 2011 and 2015) has been driven by a combination of international and domestic factors such as low and weak economic growth, lower commodity prices, policy uncertainty, persistent high employment levels, lower investment levels, higher dependency on credit, and higher consumer prices.

According to Nelson et al. (2013:109), that period has seen the financial wealth of South African families decline and, in turn, pulled more households and individuals into poverty. Moreover, it was generally believed that poverty was generational and a chronic that was transmitted from one generation to the next (Rohwerder, 2014:69). That implied that children from poor households were likely to become poor adults, whose children risk remaining in poverty (Gibb, Fergusson & Horwood, 2013:97). Seemingly, intergenerational poverty is often caused by specific policies, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, which inherited colonial policies. The researcher is in support of above assertions as poverty is a difficult cycle to break and often passed from one generation to the next (Darby & Rury, 2018:93).

Usually, the typical consequences of poverty are alcohol and substance abuse, lower access to education, poor housing and living conditions, and increased levels of disease, which unfortunately seems to be generational (Lacour, McDonald, Tissington & Thomason, 2013:106). The parents of these learners often come from the same socio-economic background and are unfamiliar with the education system. According to Lacour et al. (2013:61), parents' education plays a crucial role in the performance of learners at school.

Furthermore, the environment a learner finds him/herself in goes a long way in determining his/her learning ability and ultimately his/her academic performance in school (Child Poverty Action Group, 2014:99). That seems to be true because various studies revealed that poverty was not a single factor or reason for poor academic performance in schools, particularly in Grade 10 (Bayat, Louw & Rena, 2014:83). The above assertion was also supported by Vally and Motala (2014:98)

were of the view that it is not only through education that we could end poverty, but good structural arrangements were also equally capable of ending extreme poverty. Seemingly, parental non-involvement, the socio-economic factors, school environment, and teenage pregnancy all contribute to academic underperformance, especially in Grade 10. In addition, parents or guardians of poverty-stricken learners are more likely to be jobless or if employed, work long hours and may not have the luxury to take time-off. The children of these families are said to be dealing with the after effects of poverty at home and at school (White, Field & Kuehn, 2013:201; Child Poverty Action Group, 2014).

Furthermore, such families are also characterised by abusive parenting because of alcohol and drug abuse. Parental education also has an effect on interactions at home and the way in which parents interacts with their children (Duchesne, McMaugh, Bochner & Krause, 2013:121). Children whose parents, especially mothers, have higher levels of income were more likely to be supported in ways that encourage engagement in education including better resources, even though that did not guarantee automatic excellent academic performance. Overall experience in homes with lower levels of parental education was likely to be less with lower parental input (Duchesne et al., 2013:121).

Similarly, parents' own experience of education affected interaction with learners, including their ability to prepare them for school, their expectations, and attitudes towards education. According to Budge and Parrett (2018:95), parents from lower SES groups value education but have little expectations for their children to excel. They may have little or no relationship or trust towards the school or educators. This low level of expectations is linked with a negative orientation towards school, a sense of indifference and alienation from education, and influence the attendance and participation patterns of learners, making further schooling beyond what is compulsory less likely (Boston, 2013:97; Duchesne et al., 2013:110).

Owens (2018:103) asserts that the income gap between black and white is huge, and thus had an influence on the performances of respective learners. Generally, black families have lower income than white families. A small percentage (14%) of Whites is poor as opposed to 42% of black families (Azzi-Lessing, 2017:87). This income gap results in black learners' continued struggle in poor, under-resourced

and dilapidated schools; whereas white learners attended state of the art schools (Owens, 2018:98). This is a result of segregation, which forced blacks and white to live separately.

Similarly, Potter and Morris (2017:74) posit that the poor typically live in impoverished communities, while the rich communities have more resources and better schools. According to Darby and Ruby (2018:86), the racial achievement gap between whites and blacks has not changed much over the years, according to the National Assessment of Education Progress. This gap would continue to grow over time (Potter & Morris, 2017:69), and that showed that the problem is deeper than academics; it is institutional.

The relationship between poverty and schooling is extremely complex; there are actions that the school could take to mitigate the effect of poverty. That includes initiatives to address basic needs such as hunger, and schools meals programmes that do not stigmatise learners. Similarly, Darby and Ruby (2018:87) argue that it is important to ensure that school budget provides for all the costs of education, including school supplies, school trips, and after school activities, so that learners would not miss crucial learning and social activities. Furthermore, Nelson et al. (2013:83) posit that enhancing parents' engagement with their children's education could help to mitigate the effects of poverty and lead to outcomes that are more positive.

Similarly, poor schools tend to struggle to attract good educators. As a result, schools with high rates of impoverished learners were more likely to hire inexperienced educators (Armstrong, 2013:71). As they gain experience, those educators would then move to affluent schools because their school does not have money to retain them (Armstrong, 2013:79; Fusarelli & Militello, 2013:96). Furthermore, those schools also hire non-traditional educator candidates, such as high-achieving matric students and college/university graduates who specialise in scarce skills and subjects such as mathematics and science (Armstrong, 2013:70). Poor schools also have less difficult curricula, higher learner to educator ratio, and receive less funding. Thus, not only are schools lacking in the extra programmes that impoverished kids need to catch up with wealthier peers, but they are also hiring less

qualified people to educate low-income learners, giving them with a low SES an unequal education (Lewis, 2017:86).

The severity of poverty cannot be attributed to one or two factors. The spread of disease in developing countries is often one of the factors that causes and exacerbates poverty globally. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2014), a pandemic is a large-scale outbreak of infectious disease that greatly increases mobility and mortality over a wide range geographical area, causing significant economic, social, and political disruption. A study by Koball and Jiang (2018:87) clearly indicates that these pandemics indeed contribute to the rise in poverty. That is largely because these pandemics were major causes of ill health and death, and increases the number of child headed families. Notable global pandemics such as Ebola, Cholera, HIV, and most recently Corona Virus or Covid-19 all render poverty reduction programmes in different countries less effective (De Vos et al., 2013:91).

Similarly, evidence from Lewis (2017:86) suggest that the likelihood of pandemics have increased over the past century because of increased global travel and integration, urbanisation, change in land use, and greater exploitation of the natural environment. Previously, the Cholera pandemic reared its ugly head in sub-Saharan Africa, where many people succumbed to the pandemic. Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by eating or drinking food or water that was contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio Cholera* (WHO, 2014). To this day, Cholera still remains a global threat to public health and is an indicator of inequality and lack of social development. Research (WHO, 2014; UN, 2016; and Nelson et al., 2013:69) estimated that there were 1.3 to 4 million cases of Cholera each year, and between 21,000 and 143,000 deaths worldwide due to the infection. Although cholera is deadly, it could be eliminated if access to clean water and sanitation facilities as well as good hygiene practices were ensured for the whole population.

Another notable pandemic is the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever. The EVD is a severe, often fatal illness, which affects humans and monkeys. Various researchers (Budge & Parrett, 2018:47) reveal that the virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and then spread through direct contact with blood, organs, secretion, or other bodily fluid of infected people, and

with surfaces and material contaminated with those fluids. The average EVD case fatalities rate is around 50% (WHO, 2014). According to Nelson et al. (2013:68), the 2014-2016 outbreaks in West Africa is the largest and most complex Ebola outbreak since the virus was first discovered in 1976. Symptoms of EVD include fever, fatigue, muscle pain, headaches, and sore throat.

Moreover, the recent global pandemic called Covid-19 exacerbates the situation as far as poverty and the academic performance of Grade 10 learners are concerned. According to De Vos et al. (2013:132) and UNESCO (2020), the situation affected more than 3 billion learners around the world because of the abrupt closure of schools in many countries around the globe. Covid-19 raised fears and concerns in those learners in particular, where exposure may serve as carriers of the pandemic, putting at risk older family members in communities where multi-generational households are the norm (De Vos et al., 2013:102).

While school closures were commended in enforcing social distancing within communities, prolonged closures had an excessive influence on the academic performances of learners (Finn, Leibbrandt & Woolard, 2013:59). Covid-19 revealed the other side of poverty, as most public-school learners stayed at home without learning, while the wealthy former model C and township schools continued their learning online. Because of unequal SES, these pandemics resulted in dire consequences for the poor because of the high medical costs and other health related issues. Consequently, the WHO (2020) declared Covid-19 a global pandemic in March 2020, and by the end of March 2020, the world saw more than half a million people infected and nearly 30,000 deaths reported (Bicaba, Brixiová & Ncube, 2015:103).

However, various policies were enacted in an attempt to reduce the scorch of poverty globally and most importantly in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, anti-poverty programmes in Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria as well as South Africa (Jones et al., 2018:64). It is also worth noting that many parts of poverty-stricken Africa came from the past in which apartheid education was used as a tool to divide society as it constructed certain forms of identity among learners.

Similarly, Finn et al. (2013:72) posited that under apartheid education, schools were divided according to race, and education was used to enhance divisions in society. According to Koball and Jiang (2018:73), the ultimate goal was to prepare mainly Africans to be compliant and submissive to their white masters. For example, in Zimbabwe the coloniser's education was aimed at developing a vast pool of cheap unskilled labour. That resulted in two schools systems as viewed by Finn et al. (2013:76); the whites only subsidised educational system and the non-white chronically under resourced education system.

Similarly, in South Africa, the education system was also segregated and unequal. 'While white schooling was free, compulsory and expanding, black education was sorely neglected. Nonetheless, the new Constitution of South Africa (1996) declares that all children have the right to a basic education. However, according to Jones et al. (2018:62), overcoming apartheid's legacy of severe educational inequality remains a mammoth task to overcome. The new government introduced the new DBE, which is responsible for all schooling from Grade R to Grade 12, and to develop, maintain and support a South African school education system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Similarly, Koball and Jiang (2018:47) posited that schooling 2025 was enacted as the overarching plan for the basic education sector, which encapsulates the long-term vision of education priorities, targets, and programmes articulated for the sector in the National Development Plan (NDP). The DBE continues to focus on various programmes to improve learner's academic performance and thus reduce poverty (Budge & Parrett, 2018:98).

Furthermore, the South African DBE contributes to the NDP priority of eliminating poverty and supporting food security through the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). As part of the programme, the department provides meals to more than nine million learners each year in over 20 000 schools. The programme is among the most popular around the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The use of NSNP is promoted by a number of domestic and external stakeholders, including the NEPAD, the World Food Program (WFP), the WB, and some United Nations (UN) agencies (Jones et al., 2018:101).

Similarly, social spending on housing, healthcare, and a grant system are specifically designed to lift black South Africa out of poverty. Previous studies (Finn et al.,

2013:98) postulate that there are approximately 12.3 million children receiving a child support grant from the government. However, the amount of R420 a month is just a drop in the ocean. According to Stats SA (2015), school-feeding schemes, pension, child support, early childhood development, and disability grants provide a safety net for 16 million South Africans. The well-targeted grant system comes in at 3.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is twice the median spending compared to other developing countries. This public spend allows South Africa to meet the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on primary education, health, and gender indicators. Regardless of all those social efforts, the severity of poverty seem to be persisting because of the higher cost of prepaid electricity, food, water, and transport, which put more pressure on already impoverished households. Research (Duncan, Magnuson & Votruba-Drzal, 2014:109) reveal that in 2018, electricity in South Africa increased by 13.7%.

In addition, the South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996) is aimed at providing for a uniform system for the organisation, governance, and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected with education. According to this Act (SASA, 81 of 1996), admission to public school is compulsory. SASA further posits that a public school had to admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating against them. Again, no learner can be refused admission to a public school because his or her parents are unable to pay or have not paid the school fees.

However, the Act seems contradictory when it states that the admission policy of a public school is determined by the governing body of such a school (SASA, 1996). As a result, Bicaba et al. (2015:95) posited that the majority of poor learners were still being excluded based on lack of proper school uniform, late coming due to long distances, and menstrual cycles in female learners who cannot afford sanitary towels and are sent home. Surprisingly, the Act said little about private schools where it is assumed there is better infrastructure and the best available support stuff, which is essential in the academic performance of the learners. Many of these better-resourced schools have fewer learners, more remedial educators, and are able to run small remedial classes for learners who have trouble alongside regular classes (Bandason et al., 2013:76).

Thus, the consensus was that education could be crucial to breaking the cycle of poverty. Accordingly, Duncan et al. (2014:99) were of the view that education has an uplifting effect on other aspects of society that seem totally unrelated. There is no denying that the relationship between poverty and education is complex, but it is clear that education can help people make healthier and smarter decisions about their children, their livelihood, and the way they wish to live. Furthermore, the authorities need to ensure that poverty reduction policies and programmes reach the intended multitude of recipients.

Those sentiments were further echoed by Bandason et al. (2013:76) who is of the view that the elite, most especially the political appointees of government at higher levels of decision-making, are probably the main cause of the situation in which the poor find themselves. The politics here is that the government and the ruling elites always claim to understand what poverty is, who the poor are and what is needed to eradicate poverty, while in reality, only the poor person really understands poverty and how it can best be eradicated (Duncan et al., 2014:79).

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Based on the nature of the study, the qualitative research methodology was used. The significance of a qualitative methodology was that it helped the researcher to understand and interpret human and social behaviour as lived by participants in their social setting. According to Cohen et al. (2014:103), another advantage of a qualitative methodology was the use of open-ended questions and probing nature, which gave participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses. Open-ended questions had the ability to evoke responses that were meaningful and culturally significant to the participants, and rich and explanatory in nature (Bicaba et al., 2015:99).

Another motivation for qualitative methodology was that it allowed the researcher the flexibility to probe initial participant's responses, and to ask the why or how questions (De Vos et al., 2013:97). Through the usage of qualitative methodology, the researcher was also able to listen carefully to what participants said, engages with them according to their individual personalities and style, and used probes to encourage them to elaborate on their answers.

Furthermore, qualitative research methodology is an intensely personal kind of research (Cohen et al., 2014:123), one that freely acknowledges and admits the subjective perception and bias of both participants and the researcher. The researcher was of the view that human behaviour was always bound to the context in which it occurred, thus qualitative approach allowed the researcher to focus on how people made sense of or interpret their experience (Duncan et al., 2014:97).

### ***1.8.1 Research design***

The study needed a detailed outline on how the investigation would be carried out. According to De Vos et al. (2013:99), a research design is the entire process of research from conceptualising a problem to writing research questions, and on to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing. It is a logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions, and ultimately, to its conclusion. Creswell (2014:109) posited that a research design is the option that is available for a researcher to study certain phenomena according to certain 'formulae suitable for a specific goal.' Similarly, Bryman (2016:77) likens a research design to a detailed outline of how an investigation would take place. Therefore, a case study design was used to investigate the problem.

### ***1.8.2 Data collection methods***

The researcher used the triangulation method of data collection in the study. Duncan et al. (2014:126) posited that triangulation is the practise of using more than one method of data collection in a study. Thus, two data collection methods were used namely Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). This was done in an effort to enhance the credibility of the research study. Similarly, the use of triangulation was motivated by its ability to test the consistency and validity of the findings. However, the purpose of triangulation was not merely to cross validate data (Cohen et al., 2014:98), but to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon in the study. Below is a brief discussion of the two data collection methods, which formed the triangulation.

### *1.8.2.1 Semi-Structure Interviews (SSI)*

Semi-Structure Interview is one of the most frequently used methods of gathering information from people about anything. According to Dave, Corman and Reichman, (2012:74), semi-structured Interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, and also that allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. The researcher chose the SSI because of its probing and open-endedness, which enabled the researcher to dig deeper (Dave, Corman & Reichman, 2012:91). Proponents of SSI such as Uretsky and Stone (2016:73) referred to it as a 'conversation with a purpose'. Another strength of the SSI, which motivated its selection, was that it also allowed for the discovery and elaboration of information, which was important to participants but which may not have been thought of as pertinent by the researcher (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:48).

Similarly, Budge and Parrett (2018:89) argued that it was imperative for the researcher to ask questions that would yield as much information about the study phenomenon as possible, and also be able to address the aims and objective of the study. Chindanya (2013:79) was of the view that in qualitative interviews, good questions should be open-ended. At the end of the interviews, the researcher debriefed all participants about the study and thanked them for their time (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:84).

### *1.8.2.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)*

FGD is considered by Dave et al. (2012:101) as a type of interview which is conducted in a group discussion setting. It consists of a number of individuals (between 6 and 12) invited to discuss their views on a particular topic. According to Marshall and Rossman (2013:83), FGD is best when rich and in-depth information from a number of people is required. In this study, the FGD created a more relaxed atmosphere for the participants than a one-on-one interview. Similarly, Marshall and Rossman (2013:96) were of the view that information gathered from a FGD was more varied than when participants would have been interviewed on a one-on-one basis.

Another advantage of using FGD, as argued by Budge and Parrett (2018:103), was that it provided in-depth information from all participants simultaneously, which made it a time effective method of gathering data. The types of questions that were asked during FGD were similar to the interview questions, such as fact-finding, idea generating, exploratory, and experiential (Dave et al., 2012:99).

Moreover, the researcher chose FGD because it was useful in seeking views, perceptions, and opinions of participants in an open forum. Compared with interviews, FGDs was used since it did not require confidentiality of participants and that it allowed them to contribute more within a group setting rather than in a one-on-one basis (Dave et al., 2012:69). All the discussions of FGD were recorded by means of a tape recorder as well as taking notes. The use of a tape recorder was also supported by Diraditsile and Ontetse (2017:39), who posited that recording the discussions was useful in ensuring that no important points were missed, and that allowed the researcher to focus on guiding the discussion rather than taking notes.

Creswell and Poth (2013:49) posited that because not all of the collected data will be used in the study, less useful data should be discarded. Indeed, data collected through the above-mentioned methods was analysed, categorised, and recorded while less useful data was discarded. Recommendations were made at the end of the study.

### ***1.8.3 Population and sampling***

It is not always necessary to collect data from everyone in a community to get valid findings. In qualitative research, only a sample of a population is selected for any given study (Chindanya, 2013:66). In this study, population is explained as the entire group that the researcher used to draw conclusions. The population was defined in terms of age, geographical area, SES, and many other characteristics.

According to Creswell (2014:36), sampling is the selection of the section of the wider population that will be engaged in the study. The study's research objectives and the characteristics of the study population, such a size and diversity, determined how many people were selected. However, sample size depends on the resources and time that is available, as well as the study's objectives. Furthermore, the number of individuals in the sample depends on the size of the population. Proponents of

sampling methods such as Creswell (2014:41) posits that the larger the sample size, the more accurately the researcher will make interpretations about the whole population.

There are two sampling methods namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling to (Brito & Noble, 2014:68), Probability sampling implied that every member of the society has an equal chance of being sampled. Even though it is found to be cheaper, non-probability sampling is at risk of sampling bias. Thus, based on the flaws of the above-mentioned methods, the researcher chose the most appropriate method in purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that would provide in-depth and detailed information on the phenomenon under investigation (Brito & Noble, 2014:19). Thus, the researcher drafted the qualifying criteria for participation in the study that will further allow the researcher to recruit participants who are easily accessible and convenient for the research.

## **1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Engel and Schutt (2016:82), theory implies a set of principles on which research is based. That assertion is further supported by Darby and Ruby (2018:53), who also posit that theory is a 'lens' which informs the researcher's understanding of the conditions or events being studied or investigated. Based on the above assertions, the study is modelled around two theories namely the Social Class Theory (SCT) of Karl Marx and the Social Learning Theory (SLT) of Albert Bandura.

The SCT is an economic system that speaks of the betterment of the whole, rather than the advancement of the individual (Darby & Ruby, 2018:38), while SLT cautions about the influence that learners get from their surroundings and peers, which they later imitate. Clearly, inequality disadvantages those who are poor and may as well be the root cause of poverty. Unfortunately, blacks live in poverty at higher rates compared to whites (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:44). However, the two theories concur that without education, children are condemned to lives of labour and poverty, but that with education, they have a greater chance to create a better life for themselves.

## **1.10 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

Chapter 1 laid the foundation of the study and outlined plans on how the study will be conducted. The chapter also highlighted the research problem, which was ‘the impact of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit.’ Methodology as well as data collection methods were briefly highlighted. The chapter also highlighted the ethical considerations, which are the cornerstone of every study. Most importantly, the chapter discussed the theories, which supported the study. Some limitations were also discussed. The next chapter focuses on the previous literature on the problem of ‘the impact poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners’ to identify the existing gaps in an attempt to close them.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the problem in the study, and gave a brief definition of poverty and its influence on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. This chapter focuses on literature review from previous studies to gauge the existing gaps and identify solutions to the problem. Reviewing the literature was important to avoid what had already been studied. The problem in this study was the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit, Waterberg district of Limpopo. Research showed that poor academic performance, particularly in Grade 10, was partly caused by poverty. According to Creswell (2014:103) and UNICEF (2013), poverty refers to the lack of the very basic needs to ensure mere physical survival. Poverty is also referred to a state in which people suffer from a relative lack of basic needs such as food, shelter, water, sanitation, and proper healthcare (McCrary & Ross, 2016:87).

Previous literature revealed that being poor was not just defined by lack of income, but by many social aspects of life such as education. Poverty-stricken communities and families experience lack of employment, poor education, proper housing, clean water, healthy food, and medical attention amongst others. That led to social exclusion and hindered affected individuals and families to fully participate in societal issues (Chen, 2019:126). Notable causes of poverty were found to be low capacities through lack of education, lack of capacity amongst the poor to influence social processes, poor health and quality life, vocational skills, and the disadvantaged position of women in society (Chowdry et al., 2013:98).

According to McCrary and Ross (2016:87), poverty is a complex issue that concerns the education sector globally as well as different communities alike. Other causes of poverty were found to be man-made such as civil wars, rising divorce rates, child-headed families, teenage pregnancy, high birth rates, single parent families, drug and alcohol abuse, corruption, the prevalence of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, Ebola, and most recent Covid-19 (Flink et al., 2013:121). Furthermore, inequality and the environmental factors were also connected to poverty. All of the above factors

were found to have an influence on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners through poverty.

Although income was not the only measure of poverty, Dave et al. (2012:98) posited that it was certainly amongst the noticeable determinants of poverty. This was attributed to the fact that a household's access to most measures of well-being was aligned to income. Similarly, Potter and Morris (2017:69) posited that the academic achievement gaps continued despite numerous programmes and policies meant to narrow them. Porter further postulated that many factors inside the education system contributed to those gaps.

Similarly, poverty was found to be a global problem, and where there was poverty, many aspects of life, including education, were likely to suffer. According to Stats SA (2013), poverty in South Africa is on the rise. The latest poverty trends in the South African report showed that despite the general decline in poverty between 2006 and 2011, poverty levels rose in 2015. According to reports (Chowdry et al., 2014:109), more than half of South Africans were poor in 2015, with the poverty levels increasing to 55.5% from 53.2% in 2011.

Even though poverty rates in Africa had gone down, the number of African people living in poverty had increased. The typical consequences of poverty were found to be substance abuse, poor education system, lack of shelter, and increased levels of diseases, which unfortunately seemed to be ongoing (Gibb et al., 2013:91). Often parents of poor learners grew up in poverty themselves, and were either uncomfortable or unfamiliar with educational issues.

Moreover, the WB (2018) reported that the average poverty rate for Sub-Saharan Africa stood at 41% (Bandason et al., 2013:91), and of the world's 28 poorest countries, 27 were in Sub-Saharan Africa, all with a poverty rate above 30%. Projections by the WB also showed that extreme poverty reflected few signs of improvement, and may keep countries from ending extreme poverty by 2030 (Gibb et al., 2013:74).

Jodhka, Rehbein and Souza (2017:76) posited that although the relationship between poverty and schooling was extremely complex, there were numerous steps that schools could embark on to mitigate the effects of poverty. According to

McCrary and Ross (2016:103), there is evidence that interventions that seek to involve parents in their children's' education could contribute to closing the gaps in academic performance of learners. The South African NDP was also enacted in order to accelerate delivery, improve school infrastructure, and enhance teaching and learning. However, poverty could only be fought through strong institutions and equitable distribution of resources in both communities and educational system (Bicaba et al., 2015:83).

Similarly, if more resources were to be invested in poor and previously disadvantaged communities, the gap would lessen and poverty would be defeated. All parents hope for a good education for their children because it was viewed as the key for their future. That was further echoed by various authors such as Kugler et al. (2013:106) who posited that education equipped young people with knowledge and skills to thrive in their country's economy and to participate fully in the societal issues. Unfortunately, poor planning, coupled with poverty and many other social ills, resulted in poor academic performance, more particularly in Grade 10.

## **2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.2.1 Explaining Poverty***

The word poverty provokes strong emotions and definitions in people's minds. The word poverty originated from a Latin word 'pauper', which meant 'give birth to nothing' (Giuffrida, Tondo & Beaumont, 2020:19). Further clarity on the meaning of poverty was given by Chen (2019:53) who posited that poverty was a state or condition in which a person or community lacked the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. However, it was clear that it was not the fault of the poor to be poor, but the fault of the entire populace or society. A family fell into poverty for a number of reasons such as death in the family, sudden unemployment or crop failure (Nelson et al., 2013:46).

According to the WB (2015), poverty remains a global problem. Over 700 million people were living in poverty on less than \$1.90 a day (Jodhka et al., 2017:101). The number also included extreme poverty, which was defined by the United Nations (UN) as a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic needs including food, water, sanitation, education, and shelter. Poverty was considered a cycle, and

without education people were not equipped to break that cycle (AU, 2014 & UNESCO 2013). UNESCO (2013) postulated that over 170 million people could be out of poverty if only they had a basic education. However, in many areas of the world, people were not educated. Often times, parents wanted their children to look for employment because there were no schools nearby or the parents themselves were unable to fend for their children and send them to school. Similarly, girls were not sent to school because of sexism and gender discrimination (Crawford, Goodman, & Joyce, 2013:116). For a girl child, education means healthier mothers and children. A sub-Saharan study conducted by the World Bank and the International Centre for Research on Women also discovered that educated women tend to plan and have fewer children later in life. Similarly, ensuring that girls had more educational opportunities would reduce the likelihood of marital health complications.

Some experts are of the opinion that poverty could easily be defeated by mere hard work and ambitions. However, statistics showed that people who were born into poverty were more likely to remain in poverty despite hard work and ambitions (Nelson et. al., 2013:46; WB, 2015). Each community or individual has his or her own understanding of what poverty is. The reality is that the cost of living varied dramatically based on geography. For example, people who were classified as poor in a town felt not as poor in townships or villages (Chen, 2019:36).

Literature (Rieder & Choonara, 2012:75) suggested quite a number of different types of poverty: Firstly, situational poverty was generally caused by sudden crisis or loss of valuables or something, and was often temporary. Events causing situational poverty include natural disasters, divorce, and loss of job or severe health problems. Those unpredictable and often uncontrollable events could escalate until a person finds himself without material possessions or an income source. However, Brito and Noble (2014:69) argued that people experiencing situational poverty usually came from well-off a background and had access to education, which were considered useful tools in coping and overcoming poverty. Generally, they had better tools to cope and overcome their setback (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014:76). They have a safety net or support system comprising of friends, family, or community members who were likely to help them get back on their feet.

The second variety is generational poverty, which according to Marshall and Rossman (2011:101) is common where at least two generations in a family are poor. Families living in this type of poverty are not equipped with the tools to move out of their situations. The cycle of generational poverty as posited by Rieder and Choonara (2012:121), is a vicious trap that occurred when a parent's poverty permanently affects the lives of his/her children. Growing-up in such poverty hinders a child's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development, and children raised in such poverty had lower lifelong educational and professional attainment compared to children raised out of poverty (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014:79). This disparity is due in part to the fact that children raised in poverty had access to fewer resources than other children did.

Bandason et al. (2013:69) posited that generational poverty is more complicated as there seems to be no escape because people are trapped in its cause and are unable to access the tools required to get out (Nelson et al., 2013:99). People who live in generational poverty often have a much longer family history of impoverishment, typically covering more than two generations. Some families also have children who would face many barriers in the struggle to reach even a moderate income and a sustained quality of life. The strength of those binds, which are social and cultural as well as economic, are clearly illustrated in literature. Hopelessness is the predominant defining condition of generational poverty, which differs from situational poverty, which is mainly caused by a reduced income from a family death, illness, divorce, or other life-changing occurrence (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014:71).

The third variety is absolute poverty, which is also known as extreme poverty or abject poverty. According to Flink et al. (2013:121), absolute poverty is measured in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, safe drinking water, quality education, and healthcare system (CDE, 2013). In other words, regardless of how rich and successful the economy is, people living in absolute poverty have no benefit of the economic prosperity of their country. According to Potter and Morris (2017:136), families who live in absolute poverty have no choice but to focus more on day-to-day survival. Those who belong to this type of poverty tend to struggle to live, they experience many deaths from

preventable diseases like Malaria, Cholera, and water contaminated related diseases (UNESCO, 2013).

Similarly, Cohen et al. (2014:113) were of the view that relative poverty speaks to the condition in which people were deprived of the minimum amount of income needed to maintain the average standard of living in the society they live in. Although people and households living in relative poverty do have a certain amount of money (Nelson et al., 2013:69), it is still not enough to provide for their daily basic needs. The above-discussed examples of poverty were found to be interrelated and very common within the communities, particularly in Vaalwater circuit, Waterberg district where the study was conducted. Poverty in that area seems to be an enormous and complex issue, which plagues the community in an endless way. However, working together to find effective ways to solve poverty, the future may look good (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014:76).

### ***2.2.2 History of Poverty in the Education System***

South Africa and many other parts of the world came from a past in which separate education was used as a tool to divide society, and certain forms of identities among learners were constructed (Ramaphosa, 2013). Under such a system, education was normally divided along racial lines and that was specifically used to enhance divisions in the society. According to Duchesne et al. (2013:123), those divisions reinforced the inequalities of a divided society. In the past, the South African education system reflected the fragmented society in which it was based. Moreover, when colonialists instituted a public education system, the ultimate goal was to prepare mainly Africans to be compliant and submissive to their 'white' masters (Kembo, 2013:110). For example, in Zimbabwe, the colonisers' education policy was aimed at developing a vast pool of cheap unskilled labour. This argument was also supported by Pufall et al. (2014:121). The results were two parallel schooling systems: the Whites-only privileged and subsidised education system and the non-whites chronically under-resourced educational system.

Similarly, the South African education system was also segregated and unequal (Jones et al., 2018:96). While white schools were free, compulsory, and expanding, non-white education was severely neglected. As a result, underfunding and urban

influx led to gravely insufficient schooling facilities, lack of educators, and educational material, as well as learners' absenteeism or non-enrolment.

However, after apartheid in 1994, South Africa's new constitution declared that all children had the right to a basic education (Constitution of RSA, 1996: Section 29 (2)). Overcoming apartheid's legacy of severe educational inequality was a monumental task (Ramaphosa, 2013). The result of the new government was the introduction of the new DBE responsible for all schooling from Grade R to Grade 12, and to develop, maintain, and support a South African school education system for the 21st century. Schooling 2025 (SASA, 1998), the overarching plan for the basic education sector, encapsulates the long-term vision of education priorities, targets, and programmes articulated for the sector in the NDP.

### **2.2.3 Causes of Poverty**

Researchers such as Santelli et al. (2015) suggested that there were multiple causes of poverty and many barriers stopping learners from performing well academically. According to the African Union (AU) (2014), poverty was increased not only by the incidence of depth, but also by more unequal distribution of private consumption and lack of education among the poor. Lack of food and nutritional security, income security, social security, and human security built the ingredients of poverty (White et al., 2013:103). Income security refers to income brought home through regular employment. Social security means access to education, health services, and opportunity of acquisition of skills, and human security (UNESCO (2015)). According to Potter and Morris (2017:98), the causes of poverty in Africa were multi-faceted and included economic, social, political, international, and national factors. Scholars argued that poverty has multiple and complex causes.

A report from Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2015) pointed out that poverty was exacerbated by the lack of capacity of the poor to influence social processes, public policy choices, and resource allocations. The low capacities through lack of education, vocational skills, entrepreneurial abilities, poor health, and poor quality of life all contributed to poverty (Budge & Parrett, 2018:95). Similarly, the disadvantaged position of women in society, which also affected young learners and the exposure to risks through lack of financial, social, or physical security also

contribute to poverty. Moreover, other causes of poverty are low levels of consumption through lack of access to capital, social assets, land, and market opportunities, and the inadequate environmental protection measures, and lastly, the inability of the national economy to optimise benefits within the global system (Owens, 2018:201).

Other causes of poverty are fabricated such as civil wars, rising divorce rates, female headed and single parent families, child headed families, teenage pregnancy, drug/alcohol abuse, and crime (WB, 2015). The high birth rates, coupled with rapid population growth are among the causes of poverty in many ways. This seems to be true, and families with fewer children are likely to invest the little they have in the education of their children. Although the abovementioned issues could be prevented (UNESCO, 2015), they were usually passed on from generation to generation, which led to a vicious cycle of poverty from which very few escaped.

Most countries in Africa (United Nations Security Council, 2013) were notorious for civil wars, either between neighbouring countries or within the same country. In most cases, war zones were unproductive and this scared possible investors away. In addition, Africa had a very poor infrastructure set up, such as poor education systems, poor health care services, poor roads, railways, and water systems (Duchesne et al., 2013:97). Furthermore, other leading causes of poverty are the prevalence of diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, TB, Ebola, and the most recent Covid-19. Because of high unemployment levels, when a household is affected by any of the diseases, the little resources are spent on treating the sick. According to Baker (2016:104), the worst scenario was when the breadwinner died, and those who were left behind had no resources to support themselves, thus leading to poverty. Similarly, natural disasters and conflicts also added to the cycle of poverty. An example would be a natural disaster, an impoverished community without functional public institutions, families that are left vulnerable, and often lacked basic resources to recover (Duchesne et al., 2013:97).

Similarly, Koball and Jiang (2018:101) posited that most poverty-stricken countries depend on financial aid from international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the WB. According to Johnson, Riis and Noble (2016), the loans given out by the WB and IMF also contributed to poverty in Africa. These loans

come with higher interests and strict conditions, which usually required governments to adjust some of their economic decisions. For instance, the requirement to reduce total government spending in African countries had affected major social sectors such as education, health, and infrastructure (Giuffrida et al., 2020:103), which were drivers of economic development. As such, poor countries were forever indebted to the superpowers who lend them money (Bicaba et al., 2015:121).

However, poverty could only be fought through strong institutions and equitable distribution of resources in both communities and educational systems. According to some researchers (Köbach et al., 2015), this requires a non-corrupt government and a stable economy. Countries and individual governments needed to ensure that programmes designed to fight poverty were fully implemented and that funds meant for poverty reduction programmes were spent accordingly. UNESCO (2013) estimated that 171 million people could be lifted from extreme poverty if they possessed a school qualification of some sort.

Similarly, researchers such as Spilt, Hughes, Wu and Kwok (2012:118) revealed that another notable cause of poverty include population growth, which continued to pose challenges in poverty eradication throughout the world. The rates of population growth were not the same in all parts of the world. Among the industrialised countries, Japan and most of the countries of Europe were growing relatively slowly in doubling their populations (Rieder & Choonara, 2012:75). Other industrialised countries are the USA, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Argentina who were doubling their populations.

The pre-industrial, low-income, and less-developed areas of the world, with two thirds of the world's population including Asia, the southwestern Pacific Islands, Africa, the Caribbean Islands, and Latin America were growing at rates ranging from moderate to very fast (Bicaba et al., 2015:95). Annual growth rates, as reported by Dave et al. (2012:101) in all these areas ranged from 1%-3%, doubling in 20 to 40 years. The UNs data showed that this number was expected to continue increasing over the coming decades, with these countries on track to reach between 65 and 67 million people by 2030.

Similarly, Dave et al. (2013:69) were of the view that in sub-Saharan Africa, population growth rates continued to pose prolonged challenges to development efforts on the African continent. According to a recent study by UNICEF (2014), the population of Africa would double by 2050 to two billion people. This would add 1.2 billion people to Africa's 2019 population of 1.3 billion people. The main motivation of higher population growth is high fertility, which was driven by multiple factors such as high desired family size, illiteracy levels of modern contraceptives, and high levels of adolescent childbearing (Brito & Noble, 2014:79).

In South Africa, there was an increase in the percentage of unwanted births from 17.3% in 1998 to 20.4% in 2016. A report by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2015) entitled Unwanted Fertility in South Africa, revealed that about 20% of all births in the five years preceding the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey, happened when women were not planning on having any more children (Finn et al., 2013:92). The total population in South Africa was estimated at 58.8 million people in 2019, according to the latest census figures.

According to reports (Rohwerder, 2014:103), one of the reasons women in Africa still had so many children was that the average age at which they became mothers for the first time was more than 4 years earlier than the global average of 26 years. Adolescent birth rates were also very high. In Central and Western Africa, for example, it was almost three times the global average. During the first half of the last century, the growth of the world population caused the absolute number of extremely poor people in the world to increase, even though the share of people in extreme poverty was going down (Potter & Morris, 2017:86).

Similarly, climatic conditions also ranked amongst one of the causes of poverty and affected all regions around the world. According to Bandason et al. (2013:57), the African continent has been suffering more and more from climate change in recent years. Particularly affected were East Africa and the Sahel region. Gibb et al. (2013:132) argued that climate change destabilised the Earth's temperature equilibrium and had far-reaching effects on human beings and the environment. During the course of global warming, the energy balance and thus the temperature of the Earth changed due to the increased concentration of greenhouse gases,

which had a significant impact on humans and the environment (Gibb et al., 2013:93).

Moreover, as communication links and infrastructure such as power plants, roads, and bridges were damaged and disrupted, some economic activities came to a standstill, people were forced to leave their homes and normal life was disrupted. Similarly, damage to infrastructure also caused long-term impacts, such as disruptions to supplies of clean water, wastewater treatment, electricity, transport, communication, education, and health care (Brito & Noble, 2014:79).

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2015 saw 10 weather and climate disaster events in the US, including severe storms, floods, drought, and wildfires that caused billions of dollars in losses (Bicaba et al., 2015:93). The immediate impact of flooding include loss of human life, damage to property, destruction of crops, loss of livestock, and deterioration of health conditions owing to waterborne diseases. Floods can also traumatise victims and their families for long periods. The loss of loved ones has a deep impact, especially on children. According to Jodhka et al. (2017:121), displacement from one's home, loss of property, and disruption to business and social affairs can cause continuing stress. For some people the psychological impact can be long lasting.

- **Unfair Trade Practices**

According to the UN (2013), the phrase “unfair trade practices” is defined as any business practice or act, which is deceptive, fraudulent, or causing harm to the customer. Research showed that trade was good for the country that was selling goods and products, and it was a way of making more money to offer services to its citizens. It was also good for development; however, sometimes it was damaging because of unfair conditions and prices of the goods being traded (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:109).

Unfortunately, trade kept poor countries poor while it made rich countries richer. Rich countries created unjust trading structures by shielding their markets with high agricultural tariffs and heavily subsidising their own agriculture. That slowed down the development of agriculture on the African continent, causing the continent to suffer from the onset. Thus, as argued by Uretsky and Stone (2016:111), the

governments of European countries, the USA, and other prosperous states contributed to poverty in Africa and other poor communities around the world because of unfair trade policies.

Similarly, poverty can be a trap. Researchers such as Gibb et al. (2013:98) argued that for someone to get out of poverty, they need opportunities such as education, clean water, medical facilities, and financial strength. This is true, as without those basic elements, poverty would become a cycle from one generation to another. If families were too poor to send their children to school, their children would have a difficult time earning an income when they grow up. Similarly, Brito and Noble (2014:76) were of the view that if a community lacked clean water, women would spend much of their time fetching water instead of earning an income. In addition, if medical facilities were far away, it cost parents a lot of money every time they took a sick child to the nearest clinic.

#### ***2.2.4 Statistics on Poverty***

According to Bicaba et al. (2015:95), poverty is a plain reality confronting the majority of the populace on the world. Forms of poverty also differ, ranging from low work intensity, severe material deprivation, and social exclusion. However, the levels of poverty vary from country to country and region to region. Studies revealed that sub-Saharan Africa is the most poverty-stricken continent followed by Asia. Even though poverty levels had gone down, number of people living in poverty had increased (Koball & Jiang, 2018:99) in provinces classified as the most rural provinces in the country. Forms of poverty include income poverty, severe material deprivation, low work intensity, and social exclusion.

##### ***2.2.4.1 International Statistics***

According to the WB (2017), global poverty was 9.2% or 689 million people. In the USA, 11% of the population lived in poverty with an income of less than \$33.26 per day. That was equivalent of 38 million people (USA Census, 2018). In the European Union (EU) in 2018, 5.8% of the population were poor, while more than a quarter of the population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion in seven UN member states such as Romania (32.5%), Italy (27.3%), Spain (26.1%), Bulgaria (32.8%), and Greece at 31.8% (Bicaba et al., 2015:99).

Similarly, a 2020 report by the UN development program revealed that approximately 1.3 billion people in 107 countries were living in poverty (Johnson et al., 2016:68). Those figures were calculated based on income and a person's ability to meet basic needs. Previous studies (WB, 2017) showed that 24.1% of the world lived on less than \$3.20 a day and 43.6% on less than \$5.50 a day. Sadly, the WB estimated that an additional 88 million to 115 million people would fall into extreme poverty by 2020, with the total rising to as much as 150 million people by 2021.

Moreover, previous literature (Cohen et al., 2014: 88) alluded to the fact that global leaders aimed to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere in the world by 2030. It was also revealed that when families moved out of poverty, children's health and wellbeing was likely to improve. Children and youth account for two-thirds of the world's poor, and women represent a majority in most regions. About 70% of people over 15 who live in extreme poverty have no schooling or only some basic education. According to Rieder and Choonara (2012:77), extreme poverty was increasingly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, as about 40% of the region's people lived on less than \$1.90 a day.

Similarly, children and youth account for two-third of the world's poor, while women represent a majority in most regions (Spilt et al., 2012:106). About 70% of people over the age of 15 who lived in poverty had no schooling or only had some basic education. Extreme poverty was mainly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa with about 40% of the region's people living on less than \$1.90 per day. However, poverty in Europe was not limited to those who were unemployed. In 2015, 7.7% of the EU population was at risk of poverty despite working full time. According to Gibb et al. (2013:76), Romania had the highest risk of in-work poverty with 18.9%. Spain and Greece followed with 13.1% and 14.1% respectively. In addition, the in-work poverty risk had increased from 8.3% in 2010 to 9.6% in 2016.

According to Bogale (2014:79), women had a higher risk of poverty in Europe. The number of women suffering from poverty or social exclusion was 1.9% higher than for men in 2015. In addition, young people between the ages of 18-24 were more at risk of poverty than any other age group at about 30.6%. Other interesting stats were that in 2015, almost 50% of all single parents in Europe were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Bicaba et al., 2015:59). Over 63 million children aged 6-12 were not

attending school and that is millions of young children in the world who missed their education. Researchers (Johnson et al., 2016:73) revealed that of all the children who lived in poverty at the time, 75% lived in Africa and Asia.

#### *2.2.4.2 African Perspective*

Even though poverty was evident all over the world, various studies (Rieder & Choonara, 2012:99) showed that the global burden of poverty was highly concentrated in Africa, with more than 150 million people living in extreme poverty. This included children of school going age, particularly those in Grade 10. According to Flink et al. (2013:121), in Sub-Saharan Africa, 41% of the population was living on less than \$1.90 a day. According to the IMF, Africa was projected to decrease the proportion of people living in poverty by nearly 5% between 2015 and 2030. But despite that percentage reduction, the entire number of people living in poverty is forecast to more than double over that same period, swelling from around 270 million in 2015 to more than 550 million in 2030 (Bhorat, 2014:84).

According to the WB (2015), the poverty rate in Africa has gone down, but the number of African people living in poverty has increased. The report, *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa*, says Africans living in extreme poverty has dropped from 54% in 2010 to 41% in 2015, but due to high population growth during the same period, the number of poor people in Africa has actually increased from 278 million in 1990 to 413 million in 2015 (WB, 2015). Unfortunately it is said that if circumstances remain the same, global poverty will become increasingly African, rising from 55% in 2015 to 90% in 2030 (White et al., 2013:164). This is worrisome, as Africa is the fastest growing continent with an estimated 2.7% yearly and its demographic transition is slow (Köbach et al., 2015).

According to White et al. (2013:118), Africa showed great signs of prosperity and thus was projected to decrease the proportion of people living in poverty by nearly 5% between 2015 and 2030. But despite that reduction percentage, the absolute number of people living in poverty was projected to be more than double over that same period, swelling from around 270 million in 2015 to more than 550 million in 2030 (White et.al., 2013:138).

#### *2.2.4.3 South African Perspective*

According to Stats SA (2014), poverty was on the rise in South Africa. The latest “Poverty Trends in South Africa” report (Brandon, 2018:101) showed that, despite the general decline in poverty between 2006 and 2011, poverty levels in South Africa rose in 2015. More than half of South Africans were poor in 2015, with the poverty levels increasing to 55.5% from a series low of 53.2% in 2011. That translated into over 30.4 million South Africans living in poverty in 2015 (Alkire et al., 2015:99).

Furthermore, studies showed that the South African economy in the five years (between 2011 and 2015) has been driven by a combination of international and domestic factors such as low and weak economic growth, lower commodity prices, policy uncertainty, persistent high unemployment levels, lower investment levels, higher dependency on credit, and higher consumer prices. According to the Human Rights Commission (2014), this period has seen the financial health of South African families decline and, in turn, pulled more households and individuals into poverty.

#### **2.2.5 Academic Poor Performance and its Causes**

Scholars such as Brito and Noble (2014:102) revealed that there were a host of factors that contributed to academic performance of Grade 10 learners; some were Internal while some were external factors. It was also reported by some authors that children’s behaviour and attitude towards school was influenced by the society today. Amongst a host of factors were high levels of absenteeism, alcohol and drug abuse, bullying, teenage pregnancy, child- headed families and most notably poverty (Gibb et al., 2013:110).

Brito and Noble (2014:102) posited that there were other reasons for poor performance that were specific or related to the learners, such as bullying. Most schools had some level of violence problem, and the presence of violence in a school led to multiple serious consequences. As highlighted by Guest et al. (2013:96), children who were bullied or injured at school often showed signs of depression, suicide, violent thoughts anxiety, or low self-esteem.

According to Bernardo and Baranovich (2014:79), when learners were in fear of violent attacks, they did not pay as much attention to lessons in class. Moreover,

bullied learners may try to stay away from school as much as possible, which would lower the learners' academic performances. It was also worth noting that some violence and bullying occurred outside of the school premises, on which the school policies did not have much control.

Lately, technology and social media communication has made it easier than ever for young people to be exposed to environments that could make bullying unbearable and even more threatening than before (an example of a 14-year old female learner from Mbilwe secondary school who committed suicide because of bullying).

Similarly, Duchesne et al. (2013:91) were of the view that excessive absenteeism by learners resulted in poor academic performance since learners were not receiving learning regularly as expected. This was true especially when absent learners sometimes arrived at school a day before the exam or test and expecting to write and pass the test. Such problem also caused the low standardisation of the test and or examination because absent were not present to learn. According to Diraditsile and Ontetse (2017:74), excessive absenteeism increased the chances of learners dropping out of school, which was likely to lead to long-term consequences such as low average incomes, unemployment, and poverty.

Moreover, some parents were not as disciplined themselves to warrant disciplining their children (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2014:99). In most instances, such parents were not even interested in their children's schoolwork, whether it was done or not. It was clear from previous studies that some parent's attitude towards their children's education significantly reduced a child's performance at school. Seemingly, many learners avoided doing their schoolwork because parents were not exemplary (Brito & Noble, 2014:112).

The learner's background relating to availability of educational resources at home like books, electronic resources such as TV, computer, study desk and table for their own use and general academic support at home were crucial (Guest et al., 2013:66). Learners who had access to such resources were at an advantage compared to those from poor families because they would be more informed about the latest developments around them thus assisting them to improve their performance at school while those from poor families with no resources still had to write the same

examination paper. Thus, Guest et al. (2013:87) were of the view that the learners' non-exposure to educational resources from poor families affected their performance compared to those who had access to such resources. However, most if not all of the causes of poverty highlighted above had a relationship one way or the other with poverty as asserted in the study, hence this bring into question the problem of the study, which is the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit.

### ***2.2.6 Relationship between Poverty and Inequality***

There is a growing consensus among researchers, policy makers, and even politicians that poverty and inequality should not be treated separately (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). The two phenomena are inseparable. Inequality refers to the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities. Poverty is concerned with the absolute standard of living of a part of the population (the poor), whereas inequality refers to the comparison of living standards across the population (UNICEF and UN Women, 2013). Similarly, inequality implies the fundamental relational disparities, denial of fair and equivalent enjoyment of rights, and the persistence of arbitrary discrepancies in the worth, status, dignity, and freedom of different people.

While the academic achievement of learners in the USA has received increased attention recently (Rieder & Choonara, 2012:75), inequality remains a global phenomenon. There are various types of inequality in the world, from economic to social inequalities like gender, income, wealth, education, health, and nutrition. However, no matter the inequality, it generally means the same thing, which is the unequal or no access to the resources needed to keep or lift a family out of poverty.

Moreover, Brandon (2018:68) posited that high levels of inequality can impose large socioeconomic costs on society. It can further influence the ability of communities to coordinate and provide social services and public goods. Inequality influences how economic growth translates into poverty reduction and it may affect growth prospects. With respect to poverty reduction, when initial inequality is higher, a larger share of poor households will have incomes far below the poverty line, so that growth will result in less poverty reduction.

Similarly, inequality in Africa is huge and complex (Budge & Parrett, 2018:92). Of the 10 most unequal countries in the world, seven are in Africa. However, African countries do not have higher inequality than developing countries elsewhere in the world. For the region as a whole, inequality is high largely because of the wide variation in income across countries (Brito & Noble, 2014:113). Being born poor often means being the beneficiary of less investment in human development, which determines future living standards. Being born poor can also influence one's aspirations (Johnson et al., 2016:121).

South Africa is known as one of the most unequal countries in the world, reporting per-capita expenditure 0.65 in 2015. This is according to the Inequality Trends in South Africa report released by Stats SA (Budge & Parrett, 2018:88). According to the Palma ratio, the top 10% of the population spent 7 to 9 times more than the bottom 40% in 2015. These figures indicate that overall inequality, measured at a national level, has declined up to 2015 (Brandon, 2018: 69). The largest contributor to overall income inequality came from the labour market at 74.2%. Furthermore, the Eastern Cape reported the highest levels of inequality in 2015, with the Western Cape and Mpumalanga coming in second. Reports (Brito & Noble, 2014:100) suggested that all provinces, except Limpopo and Eastern Cape, experienced a decline in inequality from 2006 to 2015. Gauteng and Western Cape were better off when compared to other provinces. A higher percentage (about 60%) of households depend more on social grants and less on income from the labour market (Dave et al., 2012: 69).

### **2.2.6.1 Income Inequality**

According to Budge and Parrett (2018:86), income inequality is growing in many countries around the globe, and has a negative influence on academic performance of learners in schools. The influence of income inequality affects numerous aspects of society's functioning, from health outcomes and even life expectancy to democratic ideals (Budge & Parrett, 2018:89). Similarly, higher levels of inequality may result in lower subsequent growth, and therefore, in less poverty reduction. For example, access to credit and other resources may be concentrated in the hands of privileged groups, thereby preventing the poor from investing, and that is used to measure inequality (Jiang, Granja & Koball, 2017:96). Furthermore, higher levels of

inequality may reduce the benefits of growth for the poor, because a higher initial inequality may lower the share of the poor's benefits from growth (Budge & Parrett, 2018:49).

Although income is not the only measure of poverty, in a world that has moved away from a continuation and trade economy to a market economy, it is certainly among the salient determinants of poverty status (Ziol-Guest & Lee, 2016:58). This is attributed to the fact that a household's access to most measures of well-being is usually a function of income. This correlation, in part, reflects the power of money to provide goods and services. Where such assets are absent, extreme poverty is the result.

Similarly, Owens (2018:79) argued that the income gap between black and white is huge, and thus has a negative influence on the academic performance of respective learners. According to Budge and Parrett (2018:102), this income gap results in black learners' continued struggle in poor, under-resourced, dilapidated schools whilst white learners attend state of the art schools. This is a result of segregation, which forced blacks and whites to live separately. This assertion was further echoed by Potter and Morris (2017:69) who claimed that the achievement gaps continued despite numerous programmes and policies, which were meant to narrow them. According to Darby and Rury (2018:79), the racial achievement gap has not changed very much in over 40 years and therefore, it will even continue to grow over time. This shows that the problem is deeper than academics; it is institutional (Potter & Morris, 2017:121).

#### **2.2.6.2 Gender Inequality**

According to Budge and Parrett (2018:73), almost everywhere in the world, men and women play different roles in every society. In a patriarchal society, these differences harm women, which explain why poverty not only affects men and women differently, but also affects women more deeply. Budge and Parrett (2018:96) are of the view that women were traditionally expected to perform domestic chores and reproductive activities. Therefore, they are the least educated and thus more vulnerable to poverty. If employment is used as an indicator of poverty, women are also at a disadvantage because there are more men than women in paid employment, and

the domestic chores and reproductive activities of the majority of women are not remunerated (Alkire et al., 2015:99). As women are the cornerstone of the family, they have a great impact on the household income, and on the education of children (Kugler et al., 2013:107).

In political participation, there were also great disparity between men and women. In appointed positions, the target of 30% female representation has not been met at any level of government in the country. According to De Vos et al. (2013:112), asserted that the work of women as homemakers is equally important. They take care of the elderly, the sick, the children, and the men by cooking food, fetching water, washing clothes, and cleaning the house, among other activities. Burdened with these traditional roles and undermined by discriminatory practices, it is not surprising that women are the most impoverished members of society (Budge & Parrett, 2018:79).

In the education sector, as posited by Alborz, Slee & Miles (2013:99), gender inequality was very much alive and sensitive, which derailed their performance and progress. When girls face barriers to education in the schooling, it became difficult for them to recover (Alborz, 2013:100). Another sensitive issue discovered was found to be child marriages, which was amongst one of the most common reasons a girl child did not get to school.

Previous studies revealed that more than 650 million women globally had already married under the age of 18. The researcher found that the age gap talked to those learners who were in their teens and somewhere in Grade 10, which is where the study focused on (Potter & Morris, 2017:131). For families experiencing financial difficulty, child marriage reduced their economic burden, but it ended up being more difficult for girls to gain financial stability if they were unable to get quality education. Similarly, girls in their teens struggle with accessing adequate menstrual hygiene necessities, which mostly stop them from attending school and thus affecting their academic performance (Human Rights Commission, 2014).

According to Alborz (2013:87), some girls could not afford sanitary products, or mere clean water to prevent diseases. In addition, they chose to stay at home to avoid putting themselves at risk of sexual assault or harassment by their peers. Sometimes

females are denied certain positions of leadership in society (chieftaincy in most royal families) because of gender issues (Tung, 2019). Similarly, the trend toward more single-parent families has only made things worse and women have become more and more vulnerable to their environment (AU, 2014). They find themselves forced to feed the poverty cycle by living in poverty with their children.

However, educating a girl child will not only increase personal earnings but also helped to reduce poverty in our communities (Kugler et al., 2013:91). According to Gibb et al. (2013:116), an educated girl child is likely to have healthier and better-educated children. Seemingly, when countries invest in girl child, the results would likely be an increase in female leaders, lower levels of population growth as well as a reduction of climate change. Education promotes economic growth because it provides skills that increased job opportunities and income. According to UNESCO (2014), 420 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all adults completed secondary education.

Duchesne et al. (2013:86) were of the opinion that not every person without an education was living in extreme poverty. However, most of those living in extreme poverty did lack a basic education. Those living below the poverty line were also more likely to keep their children out of school, which means that their children would also have a greater chance of living in poverty (Human Rights Commission, 2014). Education is often referred to as the great equalizer: It can open doors to better jobs, skills, and resources needed for people to survive.

Sub-Saharan Africa was also affected by gender inequality at home and the work places, female workers earn approximately 30% less, on average, than male workers. The report reveals that males are more likely to be employed and have relatively better-paying jobs compared to females. In addition to having the worst employment outcomes, black Africans also earn the lowest wages when they are employed. Whites, in contrast, earn substantially higher wages than all the other population groups. To put things into perspective, the mean real earnings between 2011 and 2015 amongst employed black Africans was lower (Stats SA, 2015), as compared to coloureds and Indians whose corresponding figures were higher per month (Kugler et al., 2013:100). Amongst whites, it was more than three times as high as it was amongst black Africans.

However, rising achievement gap might not be such a major concern if our education, economic, and social protection systems acted as compensatory mechanisms, helping individuals, and especially children, rise above their birth circumstances and improve their mobility (Budge & Parrett, 2018:89). In the education arena, children's socioeconomic status (SES), of which income is a key component, is considered one of the most significant predictors of educational success (Alborz, 2013:93).

According to Budge and Parrett (2018:89), the degree of inequality and inequity tends to increase, as the country is poorer. Indeed, developed countries have achieved through ages a remarkable reduction of inequality in their society. Thus, for a population to escape poverty, all groups must be involved in the decision-making processes, especially when it comes to having a say in the things that determine a place in society (Owens, 2018:201).

### ***2.2.7 Link between Unemployment and Poverty***

The link between unemployment and poverty is well documented. Various studies (Ross, 2016:95) had repeatedly showed a link between the two phenomena, which were shocking. Unemployment contributed to poverty; those who were not working had little chance of escaping poverty. Similarly, people without education, also had little chance to get a decent job to build their livelihood. Household stresses from living in poverty build up in the child, making it extremely hard to concentrate in education (Johnson et al., 2016:61). Even if such children were going to school regularly, they would often fail to get an adequate education due to stress of becoming destitute. The link between education and poverty could be understood in two ways. Firstly, investment in education increased the skills and productivity of poor households. It enhanced the wage level as well as the overall welfare of the population. Secondly, poverty may create a major constraint to educational attainment. Moreover, poverty may generate social pressures, which might damage the mind-set of poor learners.

The lack of a proper quality education is a major part of the poverty trap; an occurrence in which people living in poverty could not rise up due to scarce resources, depression, lack of opportunities, and many other issues. According to

Gibb et al. (2013:101), the poverty trap can start before the child arrives in the classroom, and it has long-term psychological consequences. The financial cost of schooling was also very high, making it difficult for poor parents to afford schooling for their children. Such financial constraints include not only school fees, but also other direct costs of transport, school uniform, and school books (Ross, 2016:99).

The lack of educational resources in poor countries in schools sometimes makes learning extremely difficult. Without good textbooks or other classroom resources, more educators will not necessarily improve the quality of learning. Often, resources are more widely available in urban than in rural areas, or in rich than in poor neighbourhoods within cities. Even in countries where public resources are equally distributed between schools; good educators may avoid poor schools because of the greater difficulty of educating poor learners. Developing countries find it difficult to get good educators to teach in rural areas; in rich countries, good educators often avoid poor schools. While African economies are generating more income, that income has to be shared among an ever-growing number of people. Even if the continent's income is growing, it is often not enough to push people over the US\$ 1.90 threshold.

Bhorat (2014:87) posited that the relationship between poverty and education runs in both directions. A lack of a good quality education means that many South Africans cannot fully participate as workers or entrepreneurs in the economy. This condemns them to unemployment or low-wage employment, and prevents their human potential being unlocked to allow them to become productive workers and citizens. According to Ross (2016:59), better educated workers stimulate economic growth by making it possible to compete better in international markets, and also implies that there are more people to take the initiative in starting more businesses and serving new markets (Santelli et al., 2015:138).

On the other side of the poverty education relationship was the fact that the education provided to poor people is usually of weak quality. Finn et al. (2013:92) asserted that throughout the world learners from richer households perform better at school than poor learners, on average. Potter and Morris (2017:79) revealed that our education system, like our economy, is still characterised by a stark dualism where a privileged group of about 15% of participants in the labour market hold most of the

attractive jobs in the economy, and those attaining these jobs mainly come from the best performing 15% of schools (Duchesne et al., 2013:113).

In contrast, children from the bulk of the school system still struggle to overcome their background to become successful in the labour market. Only about 15% of children eventually achieve a Bachelor's pass in matric that allows them to enter university, an important route to attractive jobs and opportunities. As a society, we expect our education system to create conditions for poor children to become full participants in a modern economy, as pointed out by Budge and Parrett (2018:104). Yet our education system is still unable to create such opportunities for most poor children (Dave et al., 2012:96).

While receiving education was one of the top measures to achieve financial stability and reduce poverty, Gibb et al. (2013:69) argued that lack of access to education was also a major predictor of passing poverty from one generation to another, increasing access to education could equalise communities, improve the overall health and longevity of a society, and help save lives. According to UNESCO (2018), the problem was that about 258 million children including youth were out of school around the globe. Children did not attend school for many different reasons, but all of them stemmed from poverty.

Families living in poverty often had to choose between sending their children to school and providing other basic needs in the family. Even when families did not pay school fees, school came with added costs of necessities such as uniform, books and transport money (Gibb et al., 2013:83). Countries across sub-Saharan Africa where the poorest children lived had made a concerted effort to abolish school fees. While the ratio of learners completing lower secondary school increased in 2014, enrolment was low compared to the global ratio of 75%. Thus, school remained too expensive for some in some regions.

According to previous studies (Tung, 2019), South African youth experience extremely high levels of unemployment and poverty. Currently there is no social assistance for low-income young adults in South Africa unless they are disabled. According to (Johnson et al., 2016:108), poverty and unemployment go hand in hand, as demonstrated by the fact that labour absorption rates of the working-age

population in the poorest deciles are very low. The impact of high levels of unemployment is devastating, resulting in poverty, social exclusion, inequality, crime, and social instability (Alkire et al., 2015:124). In South Africa, only 60% of all households obtain income by means of any kind of work, while 40% of households obtain income by means of government welfare payments.

According to research (Save the Children., 2014), many young people do not grow up in households with adults in paid work. In 2008 over one-third (36%) of children lived in households with no working adults and 55% lived in a household where no adults were in formal employment. On the same breath, Alkire et al. (2015:124) postulate that the depth of poverty faced by youth acts as a barrier to accessing opportunities. Flink et al. (2013:121) found that financial reasons are one of the main explanations for dropping out of school and higher institutions.

Moreover, the economy is growing too slowly to absorb young people and they are generally not the first to be considered by employers. Employment projections show that even if average annual growth was to rise to 5%, unemployment amongst 15 to 24 year olds would be 44% and 31% by 2020 and 2030 respectively (Flink et al., 2013:121). Currently there is no social assistance aimed at able-bodied working-age young people (with the exception of the Foster Care Grant (FCG), which can be extended from 18 to 21 year olds if the young person is completing secondary education or special education training (Diraditsile & Ontetse, 2017:79).

The creation of jobs has been a challenge globally (Borel-Saladin & Turok, 2013:153), especially in Africa. Unemployment rates in South Africa have escalated to a new peak of 25.2% (Stats SA, 2013), compared to a global average of 9.2% in 2013 (CIA World Fact Book, 2013). South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, and unemployment is the most pressing policy challenge facing government (CDE, 2013). The obvious solution to unemployment, poverty, and inequality, as identified in the NDP, is the creation of jobs (The Presidency, 2011). Youth unemployment is also a global problem with youth unemployment rates usually between two to three times that of the overall unemployment rate of a country. Youth jobs are usually of poor quality, low earning, and temporary in nature (WB, 2013).

South Africa is affected by structural unemployment in most sectors of the economy South Africa Reserve Bank (SARB, 2015). This type of unemployment occurs where the quantity of labour supplied exceeds the quantity of labour demanded. The unemployed may lack the necessary skills required to fill the limited jobs that are available. Globally 200 million people are unemployed in terms of the narrow definition of unemployment and only 27% of all employable people have jobs that pay a monthly salary (WB, 2013). South Africa contributes approximately 2.3% to the world's unemployment and only 0.8% of the total world population. In South Africa, only 18% of the working age population (economically active) earn a monthly salary (CDE, 2012).

Only 15.6% of all employed people are employed in the informal sector (Stats SA, 2013). Furthermore, since 2001 to 2013 the total number of employed people has increased by 3.9%, while the total unemployed increased by 4.0% (SARB, 2015). South Africa's labour absorption rate compares poorly with European countries. The informal sector specifically has a very low contribution to employment in South Africa, especially if compared to the other developing countries in the BRICS group (Baker, 2016:94). The IMF (2013), states South Africa needs structural reforms to boost growth and create employment. According to Borel-Saladin and Turok (2013:76), the high rate of unemployment is well entrenched, and successful policy intervention, as well as rapid economic development, is needed to turn the situation around.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the unemployment rate is expected to reach 7.2%, essentially remaining unchanged in 2018 (Cloete & Butler-Adam, 2012:101). The number of unemployed should increase by 1 million due to the region's high levels of labour force growth. More than one in three workers is living in conditions of extreme poverty, while almost three out of four workers are in vulnerable employment (ILO, 2018). According to Diraditsile and Ontetse (2017:98), in Sub-Saharan Africa, the youth unemployment rate hovers around 12%. While this is slightly lower than the global youth unemployment rate of 12.4% (Lucas, Chidothe & Wilson, 2019:74), the African region has the world's highest rate of unemployment. Without a job or a livelihood, people would face poverty. While inconsistent work and low paying jobs could land a family in poverty, absolutely no work meant that a family cannot get by

without assistance. Thus, unemployment is a general problem and there must be a partnership between governments and the private sector to address it (Borel-Saladin & Turok, 2013:106).

### **2.2.8 Effect of the Environment on Learner's Performance**

The academic performances of any learner cannot be separated from the environment in which the child lives. Indeed, one of the basic tasks of education is to train the young minds to become useful members of the society. According to Jensen (2013:18), educational processes occur in physical, social, cultural, and psychological environment. Learners are motivated to learn and work harder when the environment they find themselves in is interesting and rich in activities that arouse their interests and offer challenges. As such, training has to begin at home which is the first place the learner is exposed to when he or she is born. Unfortunately, there is much variability in the state of individual learner's environment and motivation influences (Kanafiah & Jumadi, 2013:99).

Similarly, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (2010) argued that learners from poor environments have a higher level of absenteeism, they struggle with focus and concentration, they have significantly more difficulty in comprehension and memory, and they struggle with motivation (Jensen, 2013:18). Chronic stressors caused learners to underperform in school and either give up or become disinterested in their schoolwork (Johnson et al., 2016:62). Therefore, a proper and adequate environment is very much necessary for a fruitful learning of the child. In addition, living in homes where there is little parental interaction, fewer books to read, and fewer chances for cognitive stimulation will decrease the children's confidence, which, in turn, will lead to future academic failure (Dave et al., 2013:69). The researcher supports this argument, as in most instances black learners mostly from poor disadvantaged school tend to be demotivated and lacked confidence and motivation to perform academically.

Similarly, as children grow, schools and peers also began to play a role in their intellectual socialisation. Darby and Rury (2018:86) postulate that the environment that black children are in plays a role in the achievement gap as well. Residential segregation places minorities in neighbourhoods that are economically

disadvantaged and have high rates of crime, pollution, poverty, and unemployment (Potter & Morris, 2017:77). If more money were invested in black communities, the gap would lessen. In addition, an effective residential integration plan has to occur in order for problems black urban youth face to change.

#### *2.2.8.1 The Home Environment*

A good home environment has an important influence on the learner's academic achievement. The home environment provides the foundation for learning and is an element of the learner's life that can affect his or her academic performance (Kanafiah & Jumadi, 2013:96). Furthermore, providing opportunities to learn at home helps facilitate learner's success in the school environment. According to experts, the family background was the most important and weighty determining factor in the academic performance of learners. Countries that were educationally progressive encouraged the active participation of parents in the education of their children. However, that had not been the case in poorer countries. Learners who needed assistance with their schoolwork were left frustrated. The mother's educational level has the most important impact on a young child's academic performances. Previous studies showed that what the child learns at home and how his family motivates him towards education contributes to the child's success in school (Jayanthi & Srinivasan, 2015:79).

Furthermore, studies revealed that many learners avoided their schoolwork since their parents were bad examples. That had a negative effect in the short and long term. Moreover, parents could also influence their children's performance negatively when they delegate their responsibilities to children. The learner's background relating to availability of educational resources at home like books, electronic resources such as TV, computer, study desk, and table for their own use and general academic support at home are crucial. Learners who have access to such resources are at an advantage compared to those from poor families because they will be more informed about the latest developments around them, thus assisting them to improve their performance at school, while those from poor families with no resources still have to write the same examination paper.

However, there are various types of environments evident in most parts of the world (Cloete & Butler-Adam, 2012: 06), namely, formal, informal, and traditional. Formal dwellings are permanent modern structures with brick walls and having tiled or corrugated roofs. These dwellings are considered superior. Informal dwellings have corrugated iron as walls and roofs, whilst traditional dwellings have mud walls and thatch roofs. According to Bayat et al. (2014:103), Informal dwellings were densely populated settlements, such as squatter camps, vulnerable to unfavourable weather conditions and open fires (typical example of Alexander in South Africa). Such environments had no privacy for both communities and learners alike, thus not conducive to the growth and development of young children since they were densely populated (Lucas, Chidothe & Wilson, 2019:126).

In its report, the DRDLR (2012) posits that home factors have shown to be important such as home discipline style, involvement with the child, organisation of the environment, the availability of appropriate learning material and opportunities for daily stimulation. The environment that provides a warm, responsive and support will accelerate children's intellectual development, which eventually increases academic performance (Lacour & Tissington, 2013:99). Most learners who live in informal houses, for example shacks or in overcrowded conditions, generally perform poorly academically as compared to those learners who live in better households that are not overcrowded.

Similarly, learners who have more home duties appear to perform poorly compared to those that have lesser responsibilities (Jayanthi & Srinivasan, 2015:79). Such learners are unable to complete their homework, because of multiple chores they are expected to perform at home. The family background was the most important and weighty factor in determining the academic performance of learners (Adell, 2015:91). Countries that were educationally progressive encouraged the active interest of parents and local communities in the education of their children. However, that had not been the case in South Africa. Children who needed assistance for their homework become frustrated and without any hope, resulting in poor performance at the end of the year with results that prevent them from achieving required results. Unpredictable home environment includes loss in the family through death, divorce, separation, or substance abuse.

Similarly, children living in stressful environments, particularly substandard accommodation, are more likely to suffer illness that affects their academic performances (Duchesne et al., 2013:102). Families at a higher risk for poverty include single-parent families, child headed families and families with unemployed parents. The researcher found that parents who abuse substances could not model the correct behaviour or be of any assistance, let alone motivate their children. In contrast, it has been found that internationally, poor academic performance is a problem that manifests itself not only in poor communities but also in countries that were classified as developed.

Moreover, the children of those families were dealing with the effects of poverty at home and at school. Furthermore, such families were also characterised by abusive parenting because of alcohol abuse amongst others (White et al., 2013:91). The researcher supports the above assertion, as in most cases, black learners from poor backgrounds mostly in rural areas tend to be demotivated and lack confidence, especially if they were to compete with learners from urban schools.

Moreover, such learners were also at an elevated risk of exposure to violence and victimisation by their peers in school (Alkire et al., 2015:75). Seemingly, in Zimbabwe, it was estimated that about 7 out of 10 families in Zimbabwe live in dire environments, because of political unrest, socio-economic instability, economic and political sanctions, and HIV/AIDS, which exacerbates poverty among families. Parents or guardians of such learners were more likely to be jobless or if employed, work long hours and may not have the luxury to take time-off (Potter & Morris, 2017:136).

#### *2.2.8.2 School Environment*

According to Rieder and Choonara (2012:75), schools were the second most intimate environment next a home, which had a fascinating influence on the child's academic performance and acts as an agency equipped with multiple opportunities that stimulates the child to explore, investigate and experiment in many ways (Johnson et al., 2016:38). Similarly, Rieder and Choonara (2012:78) is of the opinion that the learning environment, which includes the classroom, libraries, technical workshop, laboratories, educators' quality, school management, and peers were

variables that affected learners' academic performances, hence, the learning environment remained an important area that was to be explored and well managed to enhance students' academic performance.

Unfortunately, as argued by Lucas, Chidothe and Wilson (2019:73), a great number of schools in South Africa and elsewhere are usually not designed for institutional purposes, and the environment do not encourage academic success due to a number of reasons such as; the absence of essential infrastructure, absence of well-designed environment, lack of water and proper sanitation and schools situated in residential quarters (Potter & Morris, 2016:88). Learners' academic performance would improve upon the provision of the adequate conducive school environment with an emphasis on facilities like the classrooms. It was also revealed that good indoor air quality, good visual comfort, and sufficient learning space are the fundamental factors that can affect learning outcomes (Duchesne et al., 2013:102).

Similarly, the educators played a significant role in learner's performance and were partially responsible for learners' poor performance. For example, if an educator lacked experience or was dispassionate about teaching, the learner might not be able to develop comprehensive understandings of the subject material. Furthermore, if the teacher suffered from a classroom management problem, such as extreme authoritarianism, the classroom environment hindered fruitful class discussions and collaborative learning. It also could deter learners from applying themselves to the best of their abilities.

Moreover, the number of children enrolled in primary schools more than doubled between 1990 and 2012, from 62 million to 149 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa. This was a huge increase in enrolment compared to what the schools were able to accommodate, let alone increase the number of qualified educators. Schools themselves could then be contributors to low learner performance when one analysed those numbers. In such an environment, students then had to put forth less effort because the expectations placed upon them had been lowered in order to cope with increased demand for education. Furthermore, governments' lack of ability to provide more school funding increased the disparity.

Similarly, schools that could not afford more educators or building expansions, classes sometimes became overcrowded to the point that learners learnt under trees and educators have to spend more time on classroom management than on teaching, which resulted in lower learner performance. Rural and township schools were the most affected and in those areas, you find the highest levels of poverty, given that 32 of the world's 38 heavily indebted poor countries are in Africa.

School constitutes a large part of a learner's existence (Baker, 2016:97). Therefore, the issue of poor academic performance of learners should be a global concern for all stakeholders including government, parents, educators, and even learners themselves. Every child is born with certain level of intellectual ability and capability, but a good conducive environment with adequate learning facilities will help boost that intellectual capability of the child UNESCO (2015). Parents from wealthy environments will always have good attitude towards educational issues and provide learning aids to their children. Educated parents were likely to see value in helping their children with schoolwork as opposed to uneducated parents.

For schools to attain the intended academic outcomes, they need involvement of families and environmental, public health, public safety, public welfare, and other community agencies (Baker, 2016:83). Hence, the quality of education not only depends on the educators only, but also in the effective coordination of the learning environment which include instructional spaces planning, administrative places planning, circulation spaces planning, spaces for conveniences planning, accessories planning, the educators as well as the learners themselves for essential in teaching-learning process (Baker, 2016:83).

### ***2.2.9 Lack of Proper Infrastructure in Schools***

There is no question that there are many risk factors associated with poverty. According to UNESCO (2015), schools must confront the evidence that learners living in poverty face significant educational barriers. It is also important to identify those educational barriers, but also to identify and explore more school initiatives that can mitigate the effects of those barriers. Nelson et al. (2013:74), state that enhancing parents' engagement with their child's education can help to mitigate the effects of poverty and lead to outcomes that are more positive. The relationship

between poverty and schooling is extremely complex; schools could take certain action to reduce the effects of poverty.

Duchesne et al. (2013:133) highlights the number of ways in which the relationship between schools and their communities contribute to educational disadvantage. These include initiatives to address basic needs such as hunger, including school meals programmes that do not stigmatise learners. It is also important to ensure that school budgets provide for all the costs of education, including school supplies, school trips, and after school activities, so that learners do not miss crucial learning and social activities (Nelson et al., 2013:114).

Similarly, when a school is in need of repair, lacks books and other resources, and has a hard time retaining educators, students are negatively affected (Brito & Noble, 2014:76). Many poor children are not taught about the variety of career opportunities within and outside of their communities. Growing up poor, they leave school with a general focus on “making money” instead of trying to excel at a career. It is not a matter of lack of motivation; it is a question of lack of information. Schools can educate children about possible careers and the requirements for a successful career. Furthermore, poor schools also cannot afford good educators. It is argued that learners with the most need often have the least experienced educators (Brito & Noble, 2014:76). Schools with high rates of majority impoverished learners, were more likely to hire beginning educators (Bandason et al., 2013:87).

Moreover, such educators would move to affluent schools as they gain experience, because the schools did not have the money to retain those (Fusarelli & Militello, 2012:69). Those schools needed to offer incentives such as targeted salary increases, bonuses, housing incentives, tuition assistance, and tax credits, which is the case in some but not all educational systems (Finn et al., 2013:92).

Moreover, some schools hire non-traditional teaching candidates, such as retired military professionals and high-achieving college students (Bhorat, 2014:80). Poor schools also have a less difficult curriculum, higher learner to educator ratios, and receive less funding (Turton & Herrington, 2012:100). Thus, not only are schools lacking in the extra programmes that impoverished kids need to catch up with

wealthier peers, but they are also hiring less qualified people to teach low-income children, giving children with a low SES an unequal education.

Not only does economic background contribute to academic success or failure, but educators' reduced expectations can also diminish student learning (Alkire et al., 2015:101). Deficit theory, or the tendency to define a learner by his weaknesses instead of his strengths, can be destructive within a classroom. This way of thinking involves the idea that poor people do not value education and are therefore at fault for their lack of educational success. This gave educators an excuse to lower expectations and skirt responsibility for a poor learners' learning (Alkire et al., 2015:101).

Many children raised in poverty come to school without the necessary social-emotional responses needed to be successful at developing relationships with their peers and educators (Jensen, 2013:58). Children raised in poverty need to develop relationships with teachers who give them a reliable and positive role model that they can count on and trust. Inappropriate emotional responses in the classroom can be diminished and engagement increased by taking the time to nurture a strong learner-educator relationship (Budge & Parrett, 2018:98).

Similarly, the relationship between the learner and his/her educator is the remedy to any learning happening in classrooms (Budge & Parrett, 2018:98). If the learner does not perceive that this relationship exists, there will be no learning. There is a saying that a learner would not care what the educator know until they know that the educator care (Turton & Herrington. 2012:78). Learners who know that their educator care about them will be more likely to follow what their educator are modelling, and will feel more confident taking risks and trying out new behaviours in the classroom.

Various experts (Alkire et al., 2015:107) posit that this relationship can be nurtured by offering the learner the opportunity to learn how to be respectful and develop appropriate social skills. Providing an environment where the learner feel included and valued as members of their classroom community will also help to improve their overall mental health and academic performance. These efforts can assist in closing the achievement gap for learners (Rieder & Choonara, 2012:92).

Furthermore, promoting inclusive classrooms wherein learners felt that they were part of the school and the classroom was a powerful way to increase engagement and effort in learners raised in poverty (Jensen, 2013:103). Learners who grew up in poverty, but with a safe place where they feel supported, and will ensure that their needs are met, will in turn raise student achievement (Budge & Parrett, 2018:99). A sense of belonging in the classroom gave learners the opportunity to learn in a community where all were viewed as equals and were valued in their diversity (Katz, 2012:109; Lucas, Chidothe & Wilson, 2019:106). In learning communities such as those, learners felt safe, that they belong and that, they were a part of something meaningful. Celebrating effort and not just achievement would increase learner engagement as it changes the focus from reaching milestones to a mind-set of growth and change (Jensen, 2013:93). It is important that we remember to have clear communication with parents that education should be a priority in all homes, no matter the SES, to ensure that all learners were given the same opportunities to learn to their full potential (Rohwerder, 2014:90).

#### ***2.2.10 Conflict, Poverty, and Poor Academic Performance***

There is consensus amongst scholars and researchers that conflict or war affects poverty, which in turn affects the academic performance of learners. Much of the literature (Justino & Verwimp, 2013) discusses how conflict contributes to poverty and the possibility of cycles of poverty and conflict as a result. Overall, the latest evidence suggests that violent conflict causes and intensifies poverty and its persistence (Kugler et al., 2013:111; WB, 2014).

Conflict has been defined by various scholars (Baddeley, 2012; 2014; Justino & Verwimp, 2013:109) as a hostile relationship between states or rival factions within a state, which implies subjective hostilities or tension manifested in subjective economic or military hostilities. Some experts (Kugler et al., 2013:97; WB, 2013) view conflict as a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are to injure or eliminate their rivals. Conflict undermines public service delivery, including that of education.

Moreover, conflict contributes to poverty by causing damage to infrastructure, institutions and production, the destruction of assets, the breakup of communities

and social networks, forced displacement, increased unemployment and inflation, and death and injury to people (Justino & Verwimp, 2013:89). Similarly, displaced households and households with widows, orphans, elderly, and disabled individuals are most vulnerable to falling into poverty because of conflict (De Vos et al. 2013:103). Furthermore, in times of war everything stops, productivity suffers, and the GDP decreases. As a result, it becomes very difficult to get things going again as foreign businesses and countries are unlikely to invest in a war-torn country (Gibb et al., 2013:131).

Similarly, conflicts and civil wars in Africa were caused by borders, incompetent political leadership, corruption debt burden, and poverty amongst others (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2014:86). It is further reported that since 2011, no conflict-affected country had managed to recover economically (WB, 2012). Unfortunately, recovery time after conflict is said to take upward of 15 years and even longer (USAID, 2014). Research by Koball & Jiang (2018:97), revealed that in Nigeria, a suicide bomber entered a secondary school by disguising himself as a member of the school, killed about 47 school learners, and injured many others during their morning assembly. Similarly, over 200 girls were abducted from their school residence and had not been found except for some that were reported to have escaped. According to Koball and Jiang (2018:86), the Chibok girls' abduction represented the largest single incident of abduction attributed to the Boko Haram.

Another notable cause of conflict and civil wars is referred to as populism (African Development Bank, 2013). Populism is simply an act of defending the interests of the people against an existential threat. It is also claiming to be fighting for the general interests of the public, most times the majority who are below the privilege line (Bandason et al., 2013:77). This threat could be either domestic or foreign. Often times, the populist portrays himself as the solution and salvation against a corrupt and polluted system that oppressed and killed.

However, the grave mistake of a populist was that he saw no one as good and fit to take power but himself, even if he had nothing to offer and had to die in power to achieve nothing significant. An example of a populist was President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe (Lucas, Chidothe & Wilson, 2019: 69), in which the opposition party leaders were starved of democratic space for their outspokenness and willingness to

contest Dr Mugabe for president (Tung, 2019). The reason forwarded by the populist Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF government mainly rested on the liberation wars that Mugabe fought in the yesteryears, which the latter did not.

Johnson et al. (2016:113) revealed that of the world's 20 war-related conflicts in 2013, 11 alone were fought on the African continent - all in sub-Saharan Africa. These include the wars in Sudan and South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic. In the crisis regions, agricultural production usually came to a standstill. Many people that flee were forcibly expelled from their homes, and were dependent on outside help. Poverty in Africa was increasing because of these wars (White et al., 2013:104).

Conflict affects education in many ways. Most tragically, it results in the death or displacement of educators, staff, and learners. According to Justino and Verwimp (2013:106), war and conflict also destroy and damage schools and educational infrastructure. UNESCO (2011) reported that education has been attacked in at least 31 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America from 2011 to 2015. Sadly, the years of conflict represent an interruption to education, and for this reason many of these learners will often not want to return to school or they will do so belatedly. According to Shokya (2012:96), for the learners, the years spent away from the classroom are a source of embarrassment when the time comes to return to education, and learners are thus unwilling to take that step.

Similarly, attacking schools during armed conflict was a grave violation of children's rights. Those attacks were mounted against learners, educators, and other education personnel (USAID, 2014). They include the killing, abduction, kidnapping, illegal detention, torturing, sexual abuse of and forced recruitment of school children and educators, and result in the violent denial of children's right to access education. (Turton & Herrington, 2012:73) These attacks also involve damaging educational buildings and other facilities, occupying school buildings for military purposes, initiating violent attacks on educational activities such as attacks on convoys carrying examination papers, and prevention of the repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of schools already attacked (Bandason et al., 2013:81).

These disruptions have the effect of preventing access to education and diminishing the quality of the learning experience. Even where educational opportunities exist, parents worried about the safety of their children may be reluctant to send them to school. In 2014, conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo kept over 31 000 children out of school in response to the attacks that had taken place on 22 schools, of which 12 schools were thereafter used for military purposes (Turton & Herrington, 2012:126).

Given that the environment had an influence on development, on learning and other aspects of behaviour, a society characterised by any form of violence will not be conducive for social interaction in the form of teaching and learning (Alkire et al., 2015:66). Violence can affect learners' performance in school, as insecurity constitutes a negative reinforcement due to the obvious fact that teaching and learning could not successfully occur in an environment of fear. Studies (Crawford et al., 2013:83) showed that learners were affected by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) such as irritability, insomnia, sleeping disorders, fear, aggression, confusion, and an inability to concentrate, which greatly affects their ability to have a loving relationship with their family and friends and to perform well in school.

Another significant consequence of conflicts was the psychological and mental disorders suffered by learners during and after the conflict (Alkire et al., 2015:99). People suffer from at least one form of trauma, among the most common of which are distraction, hostility, emotional instability, sorrow, withdrawal, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, and suspicion; depression, irritability, aggression, isolation, symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, and paranoia, nervousness, anxious arousal; loss of the ability to concentrate, passivity, loss of spontaneity, and sorrow, and suicidal tendencies (Bandason et al., 2013:81). Once the conflict is over, many learners suffer from appetitive aggression (Alkire et al., 2015:99) and even maintained a symbolic link to the armed group, becoming their point of reference.

Another frequent situation during a time of conflict where children were displaced, was their enrolment in new centres of learning alongside different cultures (Nelson et al., 2013:73). When a learner was moved from a centre of learning, he or she needed a certain time to acclimatise to that new environment. For learners who had suffered the consequences of armed conflict and have been displaced as a result,

the period of acclimatisation may be more complex and lengthier (USAID, 2014; Kugler et al., 2013:84). The army often recruited boys into the army, and consequently they lose their right to education. It could be argued that the impact of a conflict was greater on boys than it is on girls. Nevertheless, due to the privation and destruction of schools and other related infrastructure, the effects were similar for both (Shemyakina, 2013:92).

### ***2.2.11 Corruption & Poverty and the Effect on Academic Performance***

One of the major causes of poverty was said to be corruption (Crawford et al., 2013:114). The word corruption implies the abuse of a trusted position in one of the branches of power, or in political or other organisations with the intention of obtaining material benefit, which is not legally justified for itself or for others (Transparency International, 2016). In political circles, corruption is the manipulation of policies, institutions, and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by decision makers who abuse their position to sustain their power, status, and wealth (Turton & Herrington, 2012: 64).

Furthermore, corruption posed a threat to the academic achievement of learners and educators as well as the well-being of the general society. It has the capacity to erode social trust and sabotage development by undermining the formation of educated, competent, and ethical individuals for future leadership and the labour force. According to Beegle and Christiansen (2019:75), the most common forms of corruption in education are theft, embezzlement of funds, educator absenteeism, selling of educator posts and question papers, private tutoring, as well as sexual favours in exchange for good marks. Educators also suffer from low or delayed salaries that, in turn, can be a result of corruption at higher levels (Von Meding & Forino, 2016:87).

Whilst the scope of corruption on China, Italy, and Africa were high, it is worth noting that corruption was a global problem (Ndikumana, Boyce & Ndiaye, 2013:96). Similarly, corruption in China was concentrated in those sectors with extensive state involvement, such as infrastructure projects and government procurement, the consequent increased costs of which, during a 10-year period, were estimated as 10% of spending. Such a reduction of funds contributed to environmental

degradation, social instability and inadequate health care, housing and education (Bold et al., 2017: 88).

Corruption in education threatened the well-being of society because it eroded social trust and worsened inequality. According to some authors (Bandason et al., 2013:76), corruption sabotaged development by undermining the formation of educated, competent, and ethical individuals for future leadership and the labour force. Corruption also occurred at university level where its consequences were particularly damaging, since future economic and political leaders were trained there. Procurement contracts for school building or maintenance, textbooks, teaching materials or feeding schemes provided ample opportunities for collusion between public officials and suppliers (Lewis, 2017:86). In education, this theft of resources translated into shabby classrooms, leaking roofs, dysfunctional toilets, defective furniture, inadequate textbooks, a shortage of chalk, blackboards, and textbooks (Bold et al., 2017: 88).

However, it is important to remember that corruption in the sector was a symptom of underlying problems. There was embezzlement of funds intended for teaching materials and school buildings. Substandard educational material was purchased due to manufacturers' bribes (African Development Bank, 2013). Schools or politically connected companies monopolised the provision of meals and uniforms, resulting in low quality and high prices. Teachers on the public payroll offered private tutoring outside school hours to paying learners. This reduced educators' motivation in ordinary classes and reserve compulsory topics for the private sessions, to the detriment of learners who did not or could not pay.

According to reports (Nelson et al., 2013:103), political decisions about allocation of funds may lead to wastage when they result in unnecessary projects such as building schools in areas that already have many schools, leaving poor areas underserved. That worsened inequality and undermined equitable development. Corruption also affected procurement of textbooks, school supplies, uniforms, meals, equipment, and buildings (Bicaba et al., 2015:98). For example, in Afghanistan, there was widespread corruption in the procurement and distribution of school materials. Textbooks were supposed to be issued free to learners, yet many parents have reported that the books were sold by government officials, educators, and some

learners. Similarly, corruption in the examination processes put low-income learners at a disadvantage, which reduced their equal access to a better life (Transparency International, 2013).

Furthermore, in Romania fraud, cheating, and grade selling in the public education system was extensive. The upper-secondary exit examination in particular had been characterised by corruption (Borcan, Lindahl & and Mitrut, 2017:69). Similarly, in Sierra Leone, one form of corruption involved allowing learners to pay for the privilege of retaking exams they have failed. In 2017, three educators who were also examiners were arrested because they allegedly asked learners to pay large sums of money per subject, so that the learner could rewrite the exams at a secret location and pass the tests with the examiners' help (Borcan et al., 2017:75). Education that should be free became prohibitively expensive for poor families while private tutoring was required to pass exams and assessments (Bicaba et al., 2015:76).

Moreover, ghost educators' were another problem affecting the education sector (Bold et al., 2017:110). The term (ghost educators) refers to educators who simply did not exist. The automation of educator registration and records created an opportunity for school heads and inspectors to connive with those in charge of information technology systems to create non-existent teachers, whose salaries they then found ways to appropriate. In Nigeria, in the first half of 2016 alone, allegations of ghost educators or educators collecting more than their official salary were made in 8,000 cases across four states (Nelson et al., 2013:75). Moreover, motivated and efficient educators were crucial for quality in teaching (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014:108). In developing countries, corruption was often not the exception to the rule, but an entrenched system. This was true in the education sector as well.

Moreover, in academic settings corruption also tends to weaken economic development and perpetuate poverty levels and social inequalities (Jones et al., 2018:121). In highly afflicted countries, corruption deteriorates educational quality and increases the risk of unqualified practitioners in professions with critical public impact, such as medicine, nursing, education, architecture, or law. The extent to which education was affected by corruption varied from country to country, but the education system often ranked amongst the most vulnerable sectors (Jones et al.,

2018:96). Similarly, corruption wasted precious resources and raised the costs of education, pricing out less affluent social groups (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014:84).

Duchesne et al. (2013:83) reported that the social impact of corruption in afflicted countries contributed to class divides, exploitation, and poverty. Again, poor people tend to be more dependent on corrupt officials, as they relied more on public services and were less capable of paying extra costs associated with bribery and fraud; furthermore, as they were less educated and less informed, they were easier to manipulate. Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the poorest regions in the world, and along with the rest of the globe. It is aiming to meet the sustainable development goals (SDG) (Jones et al., 2018:131). As a result, most of these goals were sadly vulnerable to corruption, whether in the realm of poverty eradication, access to health care or affordable energy (Jones et al., 2018:90).

There can be no denying that corruption's sole mandate was to collapse economies of various countries and governments. In addition, it fuelled maladministration and public fraudulence and imperils the capacity of the state to fulfil its obligation to respect, protect, and promote the rights enshrined in the South African Bill of Rights (Nelson et al., 2013:101). When corruption and organised crime flourish, sustainable development and economic growth became stagnant. Therefore, until corrupt practices are traced and stopped, it may not be realistic to expect villagers in long-term poverty to turn to new activities merely by advising them to do so. After all, decades of abject poverty had instilled in them a deep fear that trying anything new may be disastrous' (Jones et al., 2018:97).

### ***2.2.12 Effect of Global Pandemics and Poverty***

Deadly diseases were also found to impact negatively on the academic performances of learners in schools. Scientists and medical researchers such as Beegle and Christiansen (2019:80) differed over the exact definition of a pandemic. However, one thing everyone agreed on was that the word pandemic describes the widespread occurrence of disease, in excess of what might normally be expected in a geographical region. Pandemics are large-scale outbreaks of infectious diseases that can greatly increase mobility and mortality over a wide range geographical area and cause significant economic, social, and political disruption (WHO, 2014, 2020).

Evidence suggested that the likelihood of pandemics has increased over the past century because of increased global travel and integration, urbanisation, change in land use, and greater exploitation of the natural environment.

Various Global pandemics such as Cholera, EVD, HIV, and Spanish flu all exacerbated poverty in different ways (Kawano & Kakehashi, 2015: 82). This speaks to the main question of the study since most of the poor learners who underperform are vulnerable to such pandemics. According to Jensen (2013 87), Cholera was, and remains a global threat to public health. Similarly, an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by eating or drinking food or water is contaminated with the bacteria (Beegle & Christiansen, 2019:100). Research estimated that every year there was 1.3 to 4 million cases of cholera, and between 21,000 and 143,000 deaths worldwide due to the infection.

EVD is a severe, often fatal illness-affecting human (Jones et al., 2018:97). The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and then spread through direct contact with the blood, secretions, organs, or other bodily fluids of infected people, and with surfaces and materials contaminated with these fluids. The average EVD case fatality rate was around 50%. The first EVD outbreak occurred in remote villages in central Africa near tropical rain forest. Various experts (Jones et al., 2018:106) posited that these pandemics no longer serve as symptoms of poverty, but have also emerged as the obvious causes of poverty particularly in most developing countries. This was largely because these pandemics were major causes of ill health, deaths and the growing number of child headed families. As a result, many have succumbed to these pandemics while leaving orphans who cannot fend for themselves behind (Jensen, 2013:49). This directly imposed poverty on the vulnerable, thus, causing poor performance of Grade 10 learners.

#### *2.2.12.1 HIV/Aids Pandemic*

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system of an individual. According to research by Koball and Jiang (2018:98), if not treated properly, HIV will eventually lead to AIDS, causing the immune system to be stripped away and the body to be defenceless. HIV is spread through certain bodily fluids when an individual has unprotected sex with an HIV positive partner, shares HIV infected needles, receives

HIV infected blood during a transfusion, or when an HIV positive mother breastfeeds her infant (Avert, 2018: 79).

Reports showed that over the last three decade, 35 million people died of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Several studies (Tosca et al., 2012:82), concur that about 17 million children have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS since the eruption of the epidemic (USAID, 2016). Most of these children (about 90%) reside in sub-Saharan Africa. An estimated 3.4 million children under 15 years are currently living with HIV (USAID, 2016). HIV-infected children, AIDS-orphaned children, and children with HIV-infected parents may be deprived of opportunities that lead them to become economically productive adults (Sherr et al., 2016:106). In particular, HIV/AIDS may impede children's schooling, through childhood illness, orphan-hood, and parental illness.

According to Kawano and Kakehashi (2015:75), in sub-Saharan Africa, the impact of the HIV epidemic on children's education was only beginning to be properly understood. Unfortunately, the majority of children affected by HIV were of school-going age and lived in countries where education was a scarcity (Bandason, 2013:123). As a result, children stopped attending school because they had to care for sick family members, or may themselves be HIV-positive (Global Aids Response Progress Report, 2013). Indeed, in the Central African Republic and Swaziland, AIDS caused school enrolment to fall by 25–30% at the beginning of the millennium (Eaton, 2013), and in a high-density community in Zimbabwe, nearly 72% of children affected by AIDS were not in school, compared to just 29% of children not affected by AIDS (Kembo, 2013:123). Moreover, research suggested that prenatal HIV infection caused developmental delay and affected cognitive development at a young age, which affected negatively on school attendance and performance (Bandason et al., 2013:98).

Additionally, previous studies found that learners who lost either or both of their parents to AIDS were less likely to be in the correct grade for their age due to the interruption in studies caused by parental illness preceding death (Kremer, Brannen & Glennerster, 2013:98). This orphan-hood was also found to hinder general educational attainment due to the interruption of parental illness and death (Sherr et al., 2016:163). Seemingly, learners orphaned by AIDS have been reported to be less

confident and more impulsive, anxious and aggressive in school than other children (Bandason et al., 2013:136). This signified a recipe for poor academic performance of learners, particularly those in Grade 10.

However, for schools to be able to support children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, it was necessary that they remain accessible to as many children as possible, which could be a challenge due to the many barriers that exist at individual and institutional levels. Even though reports (Bandason et al., 2013:116), suggested that there's a decline in HIV infection among youth aged between 15 and 24, girls still carried the uneven burden of HIV that spiked as they moved from adolescence into young adulthood, such as the ones studied in the research.

Other education related effects identified were; missing and dropping out of school, hunger at school due to household poverty, and difficulty concentrating. In South Africa, the number of orphans may well continue to rise until 2020 (Tosca et al., (2012:106). This will pose new challenges for the education system that will have to confront a new generation of educationally disenfranchised children that the system has not been able to integrate in the past.

#### *2.2.12.2 Corona Virus (Covid-19 Pandemic)*

The recent Corona Virus (Covid-19) caught the world, including the education system off-guard. No one globally expected such an occurrence to befall the world in our lifetime. COVID-19 is a human, economic, and social crisis affecting everyone globally. Researchers believed that Corona virus was transmitted through droplets from an infected person. When such droplets fell on surfaces and someone come upon it, mostly with the hand and thereafter touches the nose or the mouth with the hand, such a person would be infected with the virus (UNESCO, 2020). Similarly, medical experts posited that social distancing remained the best way to contain the spread of the virus. That led to different governments all over the world, including South African implementing what was known as 'lockdown' in their contain the spread of the virus and thus flatten the curve (Giuffrida et al., 2020:136). Seemingly, the lockdown resulted in the closure of churches, businesses, education sector, and most notably loss of jobs (Goldberg, March 2020).

Moreover, Bernardo and Baranovich (2014:99), an estimated 71 million people were lived in poverty because of Covid-19. Southern Asian and Sub-Saharan Africa were expected to see the largest increases in extreme poverty, with an additional 32 million and 26 million people respectively (Bhorat, 2014:90). Unfortunately, such higher margins would be living below the international poverty line because of the covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, Gibb et al. (2013:131) were of the view that the impact of Covid-19 on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners was projected to push millions of learners out of school and into poverty.

Furthermore, recommended closure on schools and many other work places around the world affected 81% of learners, employers, employees, severely limited jobs and income. Seemingly, Bandason et al. (2013: 87) further indicated that Covid-19 would have both immediate and long-term economic consequences for all, including learners globally however, even before the covid-19 pandemic the baseline projections had suggested that 6% of the global population would still be living in extreme poverty by 2030, which would be defeating the goal of ending poverty anytime soon (Dave et al., 2012:96).

According to the World Health Organization (2020) and the South African Presidency (2020), South Africa reported its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on 5 March 2020 and about a month later (5 April 2020), the number of confirmed cases increased to 1585. As of 23 April 2020, the number of confirmed cases in South Africa rose to 3953 with 75 related deaths. By April 6, 2020, 53 AU Member states had shut down their institutions of learning. That affected negatively on education as over 20 million learners were left out of school. Schools typically provided safe spaces for learners (UNESCO, 2020). When they were in school, they were less likely to be forced into marriage and being sexually abused. During the pandemic, however, schools were not there to protect learners (Budge & Parrett, 2018:98). Girls and women face gender-based violence in schools and university, but a considerable number also find school to be a safe haven when they face abuse and poverty at home (Potter & Morris, 2017:56).

South Africa has the fourth largest number of learners affected by COVID-19 in Africa (UNESCO, 2020). The lockdowns revealed the need for governments to invest in nationwide ICT infrastructure in schools, including strategic crisis management

plans and funds geared towards education, to make it easier for a smooth continuation of education during times of crisis. While commending school closures to enforcing social distancing within communities, prolonged closures tend to have an excessively negative impact on the performances of learners especially in Grade 10. Kaliope and Tigran (2020:79) pointed out that such learners had fewer opportunities for learning at home, and their time out of school presented economic burdens for parents who were likely to face challenges due to poverty. It must be pointed out that most of those learners could not study on their own; they relied mostly on face-to-face interaction to learn.

Many schools especially in the cities were able to continue their schooling using technology (Potter & Morris, 2017:62), as opposed to their rural counterparts who were found to be poor technologically. Covid-19 again showed the other side of poverty as most public schools were found to be unprepared on the technology side of education. This meant poor public school learners stayed at home without learning while the wealthy former model C schools continued their learning online (UNESCO, 2020; WHO, 2020). Therefore, as asserted by Giuffrida et al. (2020), many low-income workers lost their jobs because of pandemics, most notably the recent COVID-19. Thus, the implication was that about 14% of annual school curriculum coverage for 2020 would be lost as result of COVID-19 pandemic (HSRC, 2014).

### ***2.2.13 Poverty Eradication Measures or Strategies***

Poverty reduction in the world is so paramount and topical that it occupied a front burner. Every responsible government all over the globe sees it as an obligation to its citizens to attempt to reduce poverty.

#### ***2.2.13.1 International poverty eradication strategies***

On the global front, the SDGs were enacted as a plan of action for countries worldwide to unify in a global partnership for the benefit of the planet and its people (Rieder & Choonara, 2012:97). In addition, the IMF and the WB engaged in the global efforts to support development agendas. Seemingly, Gibb et al. (2013:73) posited that each institution had committed to new initiatives within their respective remits to support member countries in reaching their SDGs. They were also working together to better assist the joint membership, including through enhanced support of

stronger tax systems in developing countries an support of the group of twenty (G-20) (Gibb et al., 2013:131).

Seemingly, Uretsky and Stone (2016:94) posited that by 2030, The SDGs aim to end extreme poverty for all people everywhere and at least cut in half the proportion of people living in poverty in all its forms. The United Nations (UN) member states adopted this goal to end poverty as one of 17 goals in September 2015. According to Duchesne et al. (2013: 94), since 1990, more than 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty and child mortality has dropped by more than half. According to Giuffrida et al. (2020), reducing extreme poverty rates was a central goal in the MDG, eight goals signed by all United Nations member states in 2000 with a goal to achieve them by 2015. Since then, the world has made much progress in reducing global poverty (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:103).

The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) supports actions of EU Member States to provide material assistance to the most deprived by addressing their most basic needs, which is a precondition towards social integration (Santelli et al., 2015:97). This included food, clothing, and other essential items for personal use. In real terms, over €3.8 billion were earmarked for the FEAD for the 2014-2020 periods. In addition, EU countries were to contribute at least 15% in national co-financing to the national program. The FEAD Network brought together those working to reduce the worst forms of poverty in European countries. That includes EU level NGOs like the European Food Banks Federation and EU institutions, organisations interested in or delivering FEAD-funded activities and national Managing Authorities (Santelli et al., 2015:97).

In Europe, the head of government adopted the euro 2020 strategy to address poverty (Gibb et al., 2013:131). The goal was to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020. Unfortunately, that goal has not been achieved and the situation has gotten worse instead of better. However, Brito and Noble (2014:71) posited that China as a country had made significant progress in uplifting its citizens out of poverty. Over 68 million, Chinese had benefited since 2013 when the president of China vowed to eradicate poverty in China by 2020. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), China made great increases in

reducing poverty and reaching the benchmark set out in the SDGs by lifting more than 500 million of citizens out of extreme poverty over the last decade.

Similarly, Rieder and Choonara (2012:101) reported that the Chinese government had increased funding for poverty reduction, both on the national and local levels. Financial institutions had also enhanced contributions to increase loans and provide assistance to local projects. Loans, higher wages, and subsidies were economic means through which china had planned to create opportunities for local businesses and self-employed individuals. Larger enterprises were also encouraged to invest in smaller businesses and development projects, which worked alongside poverty relief fund, which was granted to farmers (Giuffrida et al., 2020). Similarly, the establishment of Brazil, Russia, India, Croatia And South Africa (BRICS) Development Bank, Silk Road Fund, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank were also meant to benefit the rest of the Global South. All those poverty eradication strategies if implemented effectively would allow for the growth of the economy as well as increase the living standards of the poor (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:91).

Moreover, Nelson et al. (2013:99) posited that in the USA, the government has also recognised the importance of the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the overall policy framework to eradicate poverty. In particular, it has supported the microfinance activities of Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) as an integral part of its poverty programmes. According to Duchesne et al. (2013:93), AIM was the first N G O aimed at poverty alleviation in the USA. The establishment of AIM was for the sole purpose of assisting hard-core poor households to lift themselves out of poverty regardless of gender, race, or political affiliation.

#### *2.2.13.2 African poverty eradication strategies*

Like anywhere in the world, Sub-Saharan Africa was not left behind in as far as tackling the impact of poverty on its shores (Duchesne et al., 2013:109). In Nigeria, there had been a number of initiatives aimed at alleviating and reducing poverty. Those included the National Poverty Eradication Programme, the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, Better Life for Rural Dwellers, Operation Feed the Nation and universal primary education. The poverty situation referred to above illustrated that such programmes

had failed to achieve their objectives. Rieder and Choonara (2012:66) posited that their failures could be attributed to decades of corruption and mismanagement especially during the military administrations. Moreover, such previous poverty reduction programmes did not really reach the poor; they were opportunities to provide wealth for the elites, distribute patronage, and promote parochial interests.

Further research has shown that a number of poverty eradication programmes in the Southern African Development Communities (SADC) region were run through the SADC Council of Non-Governmental Organisations, including the Poverty and Development Programmed (International Council on Social Welfare, 2013). This programme was intended to contribute to the realisation of regional poverty eradication targets and the MDG. Through its operation, it seek to address structural, historical, and global drivers of poverty in the SADC region and to enable SADC and Member States to increase action against poverty (African Development Bank, 2013).

### *2.2.13.3 South African poverty eradication strategies*

Although South Africa has adopted three national poverty lines (Nelson et al., 2013:97), for the official statistical measurement of poverty, the lower-bound poverty line has emerged as the preferred threshold that is commonly used for the country's poverty reduction targets outlined in the Medium Term Strategic Framework, NDP, and SDG. The last five years, notably between 2011 and 2015, have been a rough economic rollercoaster for South Africa driven by a combination of international and domestic factors such as low and lacklustre economic growth, continuing high unemployment levels, low commodity prices, higher consumer prices, lower investment levels, greater household dependency on credit, and policy uncertainty. According to Borat, Hirsch, Kanbur and Ncube (2014:74), the period has seen the financial health of South African households decline under the weight of these economic pressures and, in turn, pulled more households and individuals down into poverty.

Moreover, the NDP was a strategic framework for addressing the socioeconomic and developmental challenges confronting South Africa. According to Santelli et al. (2015:112), the overarching goal of this plan was to eliminate poverty and reduce

inequality in the country by 2030. It was compiled by the National Planning Commission (NPC) which was established by the government in 2010 with the mandate to take a broad independent and critical view of South Africa, to help define the South Africa envisaged and to map out ways to achieve those objectives (Nelson et al., 2013:97).

At school level, the DBE contributed to the NDP priority of eliminating poverty and supporting food security through the NSNP. As part of the programme, the department provided meals to more than nine million learners each year over the medium term in over 20 000 schools (Giuffrida et al., 2020: 83). These programmes were among the most popular types of in-kind transfer around the world, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this region, their use was promoted by a number of domestic and external stakeholders, including the NEPAD, the WFP, the WB, and some UN agencies.

Similarly, social spending on housing, healthcare, and a grant system were specifically designed to lift black South Africans out of poverty (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2013). According to Stats SA (2013), there were approximately 12.3 million children receiving child support grants from the government. The number of social grant beneficiaries had multiplied since 1994; at present, school feeding schemes, pensions, child support, early childhood development and disability grants provided a safety net for 16 million South Africans (South African Treasury, 2018). The well-targeted grant system came in at 3.5% of the GDP, which was twice the median spending compared to other developing countries. This public spend allowed South Africa to meet the UN MDG on primary education, health and gender indicators (IMF, 2013).

Regardless of those social efforts, the severity of poverty seem to persist because of corruption, ever-increasing prepaid electricity costs, water and transport increases amongst others (Rieder & Choonara, 2012:75). In 2018 Electricity in South Africa increased by 13.07%. Moreover, in September 2019 the Child Support Grant was set at 25% below the food poverty line and 26% below the cost of securing a basic nutritious diet for a child aged 10-13 years.

Furthermore, the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) was enacted to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith. According to this Act, a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. The Act further says that no learner may be refused admission to a public school because his or her parents were unable to pay or have not paid the school fee (Bhorat et al., 2014:91).

However, the irony of this Act was that it went on to say the admission policy of a public school shall be determined by the governing body of such as school. As a result, Gibb et al. (2013:131) asserted that the majority of poor learners were still being excluded on the basis of lack of proper school uniform, late coming due to long distances and menstrual cycles in female learner who could not afford sanitary towels (Sant, Lewis, Delgado & Ross, 2018: 99). Global poverty was expected to rise first time in 20 years. However, the Covid-19 pandemic threatened to push about 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty in 2020 with the total rising to approximately 150 million by 2021.

## **2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A study is perceived incomplete without theory. A sound theory is defined as a set of principles on which research is modelled (Engel & Schutt, 2016:136). Creswell (2014:69) posited that a theory serves as the 'lens' which informs the researcher's understanding of the conditions or events being studied. Similarly, Chilisa and Kuliwa (2015:101) were of the view that theories help organise relevant empirical facts in order to create a context for understanding a phenomena. Seemingly, theory helps to direct research, filters data in terms of relevance to the study (Creswell, 2014:69). The study was modelled around two theories: SCT of Karl Marx and the SLT of Albert Bandura.

### **2.4.1 The Social Class Theory (SCT)**

The SCT is said to be an economic system that focuses on the betterment of the whole, rather than the advancement of individuals (Darby & Rury, 2018:69). It is a system where the means of production are owned by a collective of people and by

the state. This theory posits that everyone works, and everyone benefits from the reward thereof (Ravallion, 2016: 87). The SCT was found to be a perfect fit in the study since it talks to the aims and objectives of the study, which were to reduce poverty and achieve equality amongst communities and in the academic sector, in order to solve academic poor performance of Grade 10 learners.

Similarly, the SCT argued that the cause of inequality in communities was societies' classes, and that society should have no classes. Such sentiments were further echoed by Uretsky and Stone (2016:103) who added that wealth played a greater role in inequality. Indeed, one cannot separate poverty from inequality. When someone is poor, it means there is a lack of the very basic needs and necessities to be equal with other members of the society.

Moreover, the SCT postulates that without education, societies and communities were condemned to lives of labour and hardship, but that with education, they stood a chance of a better life (Uretsky & Stone, 2016:98). Similarly, McCrary and Ross (2016:126) were of the opinion that in most public schools, learners were taught to follow basic instructions and not necessarily to be independent thinkers or decision makers. As a result, the kind of jobs they got were low paying ones as opposed to those learners from wealthy communities who were taught to be creators and decision-makers. According to Rohwerder (2014:97), some of the positives of SCT were the promotion of equality by ensuring equal distribution of all things to all the people. Thus, no person had more or less than the other. This assertion argues well for the objectives of the study, which were to suppress the influence of poverty on the academic performances of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit.

Owens (2018:79) posited that for the longest time black people were abandoned by governments with regard to schooling. If schools needed resources to aid teaching and learning, poor communities had to struggle for it and ended up getting little or nothing (Darby & Rury, 2018:102). As a result, blacks suffered in all aspects of life including education. As a result, those schools with high levels of learners living in poverty tend in shortfall of qualification of educators, extra-curricular activities, and individualised services for learners (Johnson et al., 2016:107).

Like Karl Marx's SCT, the study seeks to address the influence of poverty on the academic performances of Grade 10 learners, which was partly caused by inequality in societies. Clearly, inequality disadvantaged those who were poor and unfortunately, blacks lived in poverty at higher rates than other races (Azzi-Lessing, 2017:93). As a result, high school and education in black communities suffered the most. Instead of providing those living in poverty with the necessary and basic needs to survive, the poor were blamed for the situation and seen as not worthy of help. However, Nelson et al. (2013:106) were of the view that the poor should not be blamed for their situation; rather the lack of resources, economic and racial inequality, civil wars, and many other causes of poverty should be blamed.

#### ***2.4.2 The Social Learning Theory (SLT)***

Because learning is so complex, Nelson et al. (2013:97) posited that there were many psychological theories to explain how and why people learn. The proponent of the SLT, Albert Bandura suggested that children, including learners in Grade 10 were surrounded by many influential models such as parents, friends, peers, and educators at school (Spilt et al., 2012:136). Unfortunately, some of those models provided exemplary behaviour, which led those children astray. The SLT further argued that those children or learners pay attention of such behaviours and later imitated the behaviour. That was evident throughout the study as most Grade 10 learners were still teenagers, surrounded by peers who mostly led each other astray.

As argued by Creswell (2014:97), some learners copied their parents' behaviour of dropping out of school because of peer pressure, as well as to seek employment since they idolised older people, who were already working. Bandura's theory suggested that parents conduct not only influence their children education, but children influence their parents as well (De Vos et al., 2013:79).

#### ***2.4.3 Application of theory to the study***

In Vaalwater circuit where the study was conducted, a number of issues emerged: the issue of unemployment, inequality and the behaviour of parents, educators and peers, which shaped the behaviour and attitude of learners towards education. Indeed, for the longest time blacks were abandoned by government when it came to schooling. This was witnessed in Vaalwater through lack of proper resources in most

black public schools. It must be remembered that previously when rural schools needed resources for learning, black communities had to struggle first (Darby & Rury (2018:101), particularly high schools suffered the most. Instead of providing those schools with resources, they were blamed for the situation they were in.

Although the SLT and the SCT were not widely about education, they developed theoretical perspectives on modern societies that have been used to highlight the social functions of education, and their concepts and methods served to theorise and criticise education in the reproduction of societies and to support projects of alternative education (Santelli et al., 2015:96).

## **2.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter dealt with previous literature on the impact of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners. The chapter explained what poverty is and highlighted various causes, which included unemployment and corruption amongst others. Other causes of poverty were found to be the prevalence of pandemics such as HIV/Aids and the recent Ccovid-19, which brought the world to a standstill, and most certainly affected all sectors of life including education. This chapter also revealed the relationship between poverty and underperformance of learners (particularly Grade 10 learners) even though some were said to have succeeded academically regardless of their circumstances.

Various attempts to eradicate poverty were put in place in different countries, however, all attempts partially succeeded or never succeeded at all. The next chapter outlines research methodology employed in the study, research design, data collection instruments used, sampling technique, ethical considerations, as well as limitations to the study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with previous literature on the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners, in an attempt to find answers to the research questions. This chapter focused on research methodology, research design, data collection methods, ethical considerations, as well as limitations to the study. According to De Vos et al. (2013:93), research methodology implies the systematic design of the study to ensure reliable and valid outcomes that best address the aims and objectives of the study.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

There are generally three main research approaches namely: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methodology. Consequently, De Vos et al. (2013:101) postulated that a quantitative research approach focused on measurements and numerical data, whereas a qualitative research approach focused on analysing written or spoken words (textual data).

The distinction of qualitative and quantitative research approaches were that quantitative research put more emphasis on statistical, mathematical, or numerical data (Cohen et al., 2013:69). Furthermore, typical quantitative research methods such as surveys and polls provide numerical data that can be visualised into graphs, charts, and tables for analysis as argued by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014:132). However, there is often no room for participants to explain the reasoning behind their responses or the participants' individual interpretation of the question.

On the other hand, qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting (Cohen et al., 2014:102). Rather than statistical and numerical measurements that described the situation, qualitative research focused on the reasoning behind the actions of individuals, societies, and cultures through open-ended, exploratory questions. Similarly, Saunders et al. (2013:98) posited that qualitative research usually takes

place in a natural environment. 'Natural environments' in this context means a place that participants could freely discuss and provide in-depth answers to the question that the researcher provided.

Moreover, qualitative research methods were much more personal, creative, and interactive than a quantitative method (Saunders et al., 2013:142). Methods such as focus groups, online research communities, and forums allowed research participants more freedom to provide in-depth answers and discussions for more detailed and informed insights (White, 2013:87). Briefly, qualitative and quantitative research approaches do not conflict with each other; they actually complement one another well. However, for the purpose of this study, the author chose one approach in qualitative research.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research implies a kind of research that produces findings arrived at from real-world settings, where the phenomenon of interest unfold naturally, as opposed to findings arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Saunders et al., 2013:99). It is also a type of primary research in which the researcher collects first-hand information obtained directly from participants. Consequently, the researcher used the qualitative research approach, which has proven to be sensitive to the human situation, and thus enabled the researcher to gather in-depth information and analyses it in a manner which best-presented answers to the research questions (White, 2013:101).

Similarly, the researcher used the qualitative approach due to its suitability in social research, which can be done in the subjects' natural setting (White, 2013:75). Proponents of a qualitative research approach argue that human behaviour is always bound to the context in which it occurs, and further that it focuses on how people make sense of or interpret their experience (Saunders et al., 2013:122). Like in this study, the qualitative research helped to answer the 'How?' and 'What?' questions in an attempt to answer the research question (Pelto, 2017:136). Various data collection instruments are discussed in this chapter.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research is the entire process of research from conceptualising a problem to formulating research questions, on to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing. These sentiments were also echoed by Creswell (2014:84) who posited that a research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions, and ultimately, to its conclusions. De Vos et al. (2013:128) define a research design as the option that is available for researchers to study certain phenomena according to certain formulae suitable for a specific goal. Similarly, Bryman (2016:133) posits that a research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place. Therefore, a case study design was used to investigate the problem.

#### **3.3.1 Case Study**

A case study design is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a confined system over time through detailed, in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information such as observations and interviews. According to Yin (2014:101), case study research is a time-honoured, traditional approach to the study of topics in social science, management, and education. The researcher chose a case study design as it was viewed as a valid form of enquiry to explore a broad scope of complex issues, particularly when human behaviour and social interactions are central to understanding the problem (O'Leary, 2012: 97).

Case study research is often described as a qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2014:93). Creswell and Poth (2013:90) posit that the case study grew in complexity, and was viewed as a valid form of inquiry to explore a broad scope of complex issues. The fundamental goal of a case study research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue within its context, with a view to understanding the issue from the perspective of participants (Yin, 2014:98). Like other forms of qualitative research, the researcher wished to explore, understand, and present the participants' perspectives and get close to them in their natural setting (Creswell, 2014:101).

Moreover, the use of multiple methods to collect and analyse data are encouraged and were found to be mutually informative in case study research, where together they provide a more collaborative and comprehensive view of the issue being

studied (Yin, 2014:99). Similarly, case study research has grown in reputation as an effective methodology to investigate and understand complex issues in real world settings. Consequently, case study designs have been used across a number of disciplines, particularly the social sciences, education, business, law, and health, to address a wide range of research questions (Nelson et al., 2013:109).

### **3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

It is not always necessary to collect data from everyone in a community to get valid findings. In qualitative research, only a sample of a population can be selected for any given study. According to Krueger and Casey (2012:127), population refers to the broader group of people to whom the author intends to generalise the results of the study, while sample is the fewer selected individuals from the population whom the researcher wishes to engage and interview in the study.

#### **3.4.1 Population**

According to Flink et al. (2013:96), population is explained as the entire group from which the researcher draws conclusions. This population was defined in terms of age, geographical area, SES, and many other characteristics. The study was conducted in the Vaalwater Circuit of the Waterberg District in Limpopo province. The circuit constitutes 4 secondary schools and 10 primary schools. Of the four secondary schools, only two secondary schools were sampled. The two sampled schools were considered the biggest and most convenient for the study due to their proximity to the researcher (Santelli et al., 2015:104). The total population was 2371 inclusive of both the learners and educators from the four secondary schools. The researcher sampled fourteen (14) participants, of which two were school principals; four were educators (two males and two females), and eight Grade 10 learners of a balanced gender. The selected sample was considered sufficient to provide satisfactory responses to the research questions stated in Chapter 1.

Waterberg area is surrounded by farms and the majority of schools were isolated farm schools. This proved to be a barrier for the researcher as the roads and transport system were not convenient, except for scholar transport, which operated on fixed times. Thus, such schools were difficult to sample in the study (Spaull,

2013:63). The school research site was chosen based on the known high incidence of students living in poverty as determined by school demographics (HELP, 2013).

### **3.4.2 Sampling**

The study used purposive sampling, which is also known as judgment or subjective sampling. According to Creswell (2014:91), purposive sampling refers to elements of a population selected with the intention of finding out something about the total population from which they are taken. This is a sampling technique where the researcher relied on his own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study (Saunders et al., 2012:141). Creswell (2014:103) posited that purposive sampling technique has proven to be effective when only limited numbers of people serve as primary data sources, which bodes well for this study.

The sample of this study was a total of fourteen participants of which four were educators (two males and two females), two principals (male and female) because of their administrative roles, and eight learners (four males and four females). The age group of learners ranged from fifteen to nineteen as it was discovered that most learners were over aged for Grade 10. The age bracket of educators was not considered. Thus, in total the researcher sampled fourteen participants. Because not all members of the population could be sampled, the researcher was content with the selected sample and regarded it as the appropriate group from whom generalisations can be drawn. The researcher decided on the qualifying criteria for participation in the study, which were pieces of papers written yes and no. Those who picked the yes were the ones to participate in the study. This further allowed the researcher to recruit participants who were easily accessible and convenient to the research (Spaull, 2013:86).

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection is an important aspect of any type of research. According to O'Leary (2012:97), Data collection refers to the process of gathering and measuring data from all available relevant sources to find answers to the research questions and evaluating the outcomes. Data collection becomes almost impossible without data collection instruments. Therefore, inaccurate data collection can affect the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results (Yin, 2014:95).

Consequently, the study used the triangulation method of data collection, which according to Creswell (2014:73), refers to the practice of using more than one method of data collection in a study. Thus, two data collection methods were used namely SSI and FGD. This was done in an effort to enhance the credibility and reliability of the study.

Similarly, the use of triangulation as supported by Marshall and Rossman (2013:108) was motivated by its ability to facilitate validation of data through cross-verification from multiple sources, and to test the consistency of the findings. However, the purpose of triangulation was to validate data and to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2013:102). Below is a brief summary of the two data collection methods that were used.

### **3.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews (SSI)**

The SSI is regarded as one of the most frequently used methods of gathering information from people about anything. According to Krueger and Casey (2012:201), SSIs are those in-depth interviews where the respondents have to answer pre-set open-ended questions. These types of interviews are conducted once only, with an individual or with a group. Therefore, the author chose SSI as it they helped to define the areas to be explored, but also allowed both the researcher and the interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. Another advantage of SSI was the less chance of biasness (Krueger & Casey, 2012:138).

Similarly, the researcher chose this method because of its probing and open-endedness style, which allowed the researcher the latitude to dig deeper. Proponents of SSI such as O'Leary (2012:91) sometimes call it a "conversation with purpose. The strength of SSI, which also motivated its selection, was that it allowed for the discovery and elaboration of information that was important to participants, but which may not have been thought of as pertinent by the researcher (White, 2013:89).

To have the interview data captured more effectively, White (2013:91) suggests that recording of the interviews is considered an appropriate choice as opposed to handwritten notes, which is considered unreliable as the author may miss something

important. Thus, the tape-recording of the interview made it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview content and the verbal prompts.

However, there were certain flaws associated with interviews as a data collection instrument. Firstly, conducting interviews can sometimes be costly and time-consuming (O’Leary, 2012:101). Moreover, interviews provide little chance for anonymity, which can sometimes be a concern to some participants. Nevertheless, all flaws were dealt with and the process ran smoothly. Thus, interview questions were set and all participants were asked similar questions. At the end of the interview, the researcher debriefed participants about the study and thanked them for their time and participation in the study (Nelson et al., 2013:99).

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

An FGD is considered a type of interview conducted in a group discussion setting (Krueger & Casey, 2012:83). It consists of a number of individuals invited to discuss their views on a particular topic, typically involving between 6 and 12 people. For this study, the FGD consisted of a maximum of fourteen (14) participants, of which seven were male and seven females. The purpose of the group was not to arrive at a consensus or agreement on the topic, but to identify and understand participants’ perceptions of the phenomenon. According to Krueger and Casey (2012:121), a crucial step in conducting FGD is the process of participant selection. The author carefully selected participants for the study to represent the larger population. The goal of the group was made clear before the beginning of the discussions (Spaull, 2013:98).

Similarly, Mills (2014) posited that FGD is best applied when rich, in-depth material from a number of people is required. This method created a more relaxed atmosphere than a one-on-one interview during the proceedings. Therefore, information gathered from the FGD was more varied than when participants had been interviewed in a one-on-one situation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:96).

Another advantage of using FGD was that it provided in-depth information from a number of individuals simultaneously, making it a time effective method of gathering data. Similarly, as argued by Marshall and Rossman (2011:111), the types of questions asked during a FGD were similar to those asked during the interview

sessions, which were mostly fact-finding, idea generating, exploratory, and experiential in nature.

However, FGD could only be used when confidentiality is not an issue, and when it was felt that participants were more likely to contribute within a group setting rather than on a one-on-one basis (O'Leary, 2012:121). That nearly posed a challenge, where some participants wished to withdraw from the discussion because of anonymity reasons. Fortunately, as supported by Bicaba et al. (2015:95), that was clarified and resolved as all sampled individuals were willing to partake.

Consequently, the best way to record ideas and responds during FGD was by using a tape recorder and by taking notes (Krueger & Casey, 2012:120). However, tape recording the discussion was the most useful in ensuring that no important points were missed, and enabled the researcher to focus on guiding the discussion rather than taking notes. Alternatively, the researcher had a note-taker sitting in on the discussion.

Furthermore, FGD research included a moderator. According to O'Leary (2012:79), the task of the moderator was to ensure legitimate results and reduced bias in the discussions. The group shared their feedback, opinions, knowledge, and insights about the topic at hand. The mediator took notes on the discussion and opinions of group members.

A notable setback of FGD included group thinking (O'Leary, 2012:103). The setback occurred when influential members of the group affected the expressions of others within the group. Additionally, some participants seemed reluctant to express their ideas in front of the more influential ones. That was dealt with by encouraging maximum participation and giving all participants equal time during the discussions (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2014:107).

Another major drawback of a focus group was that it required a good moderator, and as argued by Miles et al. (2014:138), if the moderator was weak, some FGD members may feel uncomfortable in the environment to offer their opinions. Nevertheless, the author assumed the role of the moderator and ensured impartiality and objectivity throughout the discussions. While each method of data collection was

unique, the combination of those methods (triangulation) proved useful to the study and helped the researcher to arrive at satisfactory findings.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Creswell (2014:84), data analysis refers to the process of carefully extracting useful data from raw data, cleaning, and transforming such data and making conclusions or decisions based on that data. The insights gained from the data collected through qualitative research will always be context-dependant, and must be carefully reported on in reference to the context in which it was gathered Creswell (2014:96).

Therefore, the study used thematic content analysis, in which recurring themes, patterns, and relationships within the data were identified and interpreted to generate insights (White et al., 2013:113). Thematic content analysis talks to five phases, which are transcribing, checking, editing, analyses, interpretation, and verification (Miles et al., 2014:71).

- Transcript - The raw data was analysed at an early stage of data collection, and collected through tape recording and transferred onto paper. It was then read and re-read to identify different themes and ideas. The raw data was analysed at an early stage of data collection and at the analysis phase.
- Checking and editing - Secondly, data was categorised or grouped into mini units of similar themes.
- The third step involved analysing and interpreting data. Here the researcher used his own understanding of what different themes meant.
- The fourth is where data was generalised; the differences and similarities, between the different interviews were identified.
- Lastly, validity and reliability was achieved by going through transcripts again, and having my supervisor to go through it and comment.

In including this section, participants were also allowed to see the drafted versions of the data collected from them to confirm that the reported research findings were indeed their own experiences.

### **3.7 RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

There were a number of aspects used to achieve reliability and trustworthiness of the study. According to Spaul (2013:112), trustworthiness refers to a technique in which data, interpretation, and conclusion are shared with participants. It is the overall impression of quality associated with a research endeavour.

#### ***3.7.1 Credibility***

Credibility or trustworthiness was done to allow the participants to clarify their intentions, to correct errors in the report, and to provide additional information if necessary. Creswell (2014:101) suggested that trustworthiness is the key element to maintaining the place of qualitative research in the academic world, and there is a consensus that qualitative inquirers need to demonstrate that their studies are credible.

#### ***3.7.2 Accuracy***

The second aspect considered was accuracy, and as supported by Flink et al. (2013:121), the technique used to gauge the accuracy of the findings was data triangulation through multiple data collection methods and participants or member checks. The study used both the Semi-Structured Interviews and the Focus Group Discussion as data collection methods.

#### ***3.7.3 Reliability***

According to Spaul (2013:112), reliability refers to the soundness of the research, particularly in relation to the appropriate methods chosen, and the way in which these methods were applied and implemented in a qualitative study. Thus, the researcher ensured that correct data collection instruments and methods were used to collect information (Bicaba et al., 2015:93).

#### ***3.7.4 Dependability***

The study also ensured dependability by being consistent in reporting. Dependability was further ensured by the manner in which the research was conducted, results analysis, and presentation. Each process in the study was reported on in detail.

Similarly, bias was also avoided to guarantee conformability in the findings. This was also echoed by Duchesne et al. (2013:114) who argued that bias is the act of taking sides on the part of the researcher when reporting or conducting research.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

While data collection is central for the successful completion of the research in general, it must adhere to ethical issues of social research. As a researcher, one has a responsibility towards the research participants, colleagues, and to the people to whom the findings will be presented. Ethics refers to a system of principles, which deals with the dynamics of decision-making concerning what is right and wrong (Saunders et al., 2013:132).

Ethics refers to a system of principles that deals with the dynamics of decision-making concerning what is right and wrong in research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, and 2013:98). There were several reasons why it was important for the study to adhere to ethical norms and standards. In this study, the researcher applied ethics in order to promote the aim of research such as knowledge, truthfulness, impartiality and avoidance of error. Furthermore, ethical norms assisted the researcher in avoiding fabrication of facts, falsifying of information, and misrepresentation of data that was gathered. According to Saunders et al., (2013:103), any research work is governed by individual, community, and social values. Based on the above, the following ethical considerations were taken into cognisance.

First, the researcher applied for approval to collect data from the selected schools or institution. Once the approval was granted, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in Limpopo was engaged in an effort to get their consent to collect data in their schools. The school principals were also consulted and asked permission to collect data in their schools. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that full consent from all participants was prioritised, as supported by Cohen et al. (2014:103). This was important for the study to ensure that participants were free and willing to share as much information. Similarly, most of the learners in Grade 10 were still under 18 years of age, and that rendered them minors, and thus unable to make informed decisions with regard to giving consent to taking part in a study. Therefore, the researcher asked permission from their parents and guardians to partake in the

study. The relevant consent forms, which were also translated into the home language of the learners to accommodate their parents or guardians, were designed as argued by Lewis, E (2017:79).

The researcher also ensured that participants were not subjected to harm in any way, and that their dignity were respected and prioritised, as highlighted by Bandason et al. (2013:68). Seemingly, the researcher explained all the procedures of the processes that would be followed throughout the proceedings as well as to assure the protection and privacy of all research participants. Voluntary participation was emphasised, and participants were allowed to withdraw from participation anytime they so wished. Permission to record any participant was communicated and explained to all participants prior to data collection sessions. Seemingly, in line with Cohen et al. (2014:113), the study strived for objectivity and ensured avoidance of biasness, prejudice, as well as the use of offensive, discriminatory and unacceptable language.

According to Nelson et al. (2013:103), plagiarism refers to copying someone else's work without due credit or acknowledgement. This is considered cheating and may result in dire consequences. Therefore, the researcher ensured acknowledgement of sources used through-out the dissertation by complete reference. With regard to integrity, Nelson et al. (2013:99) suggested that the researcher must ensure consistency, sincerity, and keep promises and agreements, which were observed to the latter. At the end of each interaction, the researcher made sure to thank the participants for their time, which was aimed at giving the respondents a sense of contribution and value in the study. Lastly, as postulated by Bandason et al., (2013:75), the study ensured protection of confidential communication with all participants.

### **3.9 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

The limitations of a study are its flaws or shortcomings, which could be the result of unavailability of resources, small sample size, or methodology. No study is flawless or inclusive of all possible aspects. Creswell (2014:86). Therefore, listing the limitations of the study reflects honesty and transparency and shows complete understanding of the topic.

The first obstacle during the study was time, as schools were busy preparing for mid-year examinations. Furthermore, some participants chose to withdraw from the study. Unfortunately, as argued by Bernardo and Baranovich (2014:98), some of the learners who did not want to participate might have been those who could have shed more light on the problems encountered as individuals. The language barrier was also a problem, as the learners struggled to respond to the questions during the interviews. Despite those limitations encountered, data collection went well and the feedback was useful in trying to address research questions as well as the aims and objectives of the study.

### **3.10 LOCATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in Vaalwater circuit, Waterberg district of Limpopo province. Vaalwater circuit is found in the Waterberg District Municipality, which is located in the South-West of Limpopo. Waterberg district borders Botswana and shares boundaries with the North West and Gauteng provinces as well as Sekhukhune and Capricorn District Municipalities. The economy of the Waterberg District is largely dominated by three (3) sectors namely mining, tourism, and agriculture. The greatest contributor to Waterberg's Gross Value Add is mining with 56%, followed by community services with 12% and Trade with 9%. The district is covered by large commercial agricultural sector experienced the highest growth with an average growth rate of 21.6%, its level of economic importance declined and its contributions to employment and growth diminished.

About education, the Waterberg TVET College and the Lephalale FET College were the only public institutions of higher education and training. There was also one private institution, which was registered in 2017. The district did not have any community colleges, but there were 74 Community Learning Centres, supported by Sector Education Training Authorities. However, most primaries and secondary school were small and isolated deep in the farms. Some farm schools were merged because of lower enrolments, which prompted the government to initiate scholar transport with 2090 learners enrolled. In terms of poverty, Waterberg District has a South African Multidimensional Poverty Index head count poverty of 9%, which is an increase of 6.5% from 2011.

Waterberg district was sub-divided into five municipalities namely Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Thabazimbi Local Municipality, Bela-Bela Local Municipality, Lephalele Local Municipality, Modimolle/Mookgopong Local Municipality. The unemployment rate in Waterberg district was estimated at 49% as of 2018.

### **3.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology and the data collection methods. The study used the qualitative research approach, which has proven to be sensitive to the human situation and which enabled the researcher to gather in-depth information. A case study design was chosen and discussed as a valid form of enquiry, particularly when human behaviour and social interactions were central to understanding the problem. The fundamental goal of case study research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue within its context, with a view to understanding the issue from the perspective of participants. The study was conducted in Vaalwater Circuit of the Waterberg District in Limpopo province. The circuit constituted 4 secondary schools and 10 primary schools. Of the four secondary schools, only two high schools were sampled. The two sampled schools were considered the biggest and most convenient for the study due to their proximity to the researcher. The school research sites were chosen based on the suitability and comfortability of participants. The study used two data collection methods, which were SSI and FGD. The choice of two methods was done in an effort to enhance the credibility and reliability of the study. In terms of data analysis, the study used thematic content analysis, in which recurring themes, patterns, and relationships within the data were identified and interpreted to generate insights. Data was analysed through transcripts, checking and editing data and then generalisation of data. Reliability and trustworthiness were also ensured and discussed. The next chapter focuses on findings, data presentation, and interpretation.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the methodology used and data collection instruments that were employed. This chapter presents the findings, which emanated from data, which was collected. The problem under investigation was the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. Previous studies revealed that children perform poorly in school for a number of reasons, but they all stem from poverty. The study employed the qualitative research approach coupled with case study research design. Data was collected through SSI and FGD as data collection instruments. The population in the study constituted school principals, educators, and learners as participants. A purposive sampling technique was used to select two school principals, four educators, and eight Grade 10 learners.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, data collection took place at the two sampled schools in Vaalwater Circuit, which were Mohlakamotala and Moshia secondary schools. The total population was 1731 inclusive of both the learners and educators from the four secondary schools. The researcher sampled fourteen (14) participants, of which two were school principals; four were educators (two males and two females), and eight Grade 10 learners of a balanced gender. The selected sample provided satisfactory responses to the research questions stated in Chapter 1. The total population was 542 in Mohlakamotala and 487 in Moshia secondary school. The researcher sampled fourteen (14) participants, of which two were school principals; four were educators (two males and two females), and eight Grade 10 learners of a balanced gender. The selected sample provided satisfactory responses to the research questions stated in Chapter 1. The researcher discovered that Waterberg district was surrounded by farms, and the majority of people found employment at surrounding lodges, farms, and game reserves.

The research questions were as follows:

- What is the influence of poverty on learner's academic performance in Grade 10?
- What can be done to reduce poverty in schools?
- What role can the school communities play in overcoming poverty?
- How can we encourage and motivate poverty-stricken learners to work hard?
- How can the society and communities help in the fight against poverty?

## 4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

**Table 4.1: Participants and Codes**

The table below shows different participants and a code assigned to each one of the participants. The table shows two (2) school principals, four (4) educators, and eight (8) learners. Gender of all participants is also reflected on the table.

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>			
<b>NO:</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>CODE</b>
1.	School Principal 1	Male	SP1
2.	School Principal 2	Male	SP2
3.	Educator 1	Female	EDU1
4.	Educator 2	Female	EDU2
5.	Educator 3	Male	EDU3
6.	Educator 4	Male	EDU4
7.	Learner 1	Male	LNR1
8.	Learner 2	Female	LNR2
9.	Learner 3	Female	LNR3
10.	Learner 4	Female	LNR4
11.	Learner 5	Male	LNR5
12.	Learner 6	Female	LNR6
13.	Learner 7	Male	LNR7
14.	Learner 8	Male	LNR8

**Table 4.2: Participants Age Groups**

The table below displays different ages of all the participants. The table shows two clearly overaged learners who were in Grade 10 at the time of the study.

<b>Participants</b>	<b>15-18</b>	<b>19-21</b>	<b>35-45</b>	<b>45-55</b>	<b>55-65</b>
Learners	6	2			
Educators			3	1	
Principals				1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 4.3: Participating schools and codes**

The table below shows the two sampled schools. Moshia Secondary is referred to as School A while Mohlakamotala Secondary is referred to as School B. The table shows that the combined population of the two schools was just below 600 at 591.

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Moshia Secondary School	487 Learners	School A
Mohlakamotala Secondary School	542 Learners	School B
Total	1029 Learners	

### 4.3 FINDINGS

Various themes emerged from the data collected, which included:

- Lack of parental support for learners at home
- High unemployment rates in communities
- Lack of space and privacy for learners to do homework
- Too many chores at home for learners that demanded a lot their time
- Absence of co-operation between educators and parents
- Peer pressure and teenage pregnancy amongst Grade 10 learners
- Lack of infrastructure both at school and at home, such as libraries and internet access
- High levels of absenteeism, school dropout, and poor performance

## **QUESTION 1: What is the influence of poverty on learners' academic performance in Grade 10?**

### ***4.3.1 Absenteeism***

The study discovered that poverty had a negative influence on the learner's academic performance in Vaalwater Circuit. It was revealed that poverty was the root cause of high absenteeism rates, lack of concentration in class, and high levels of dropouts in schools. Duchesne et al. (2013:91) also highlighted that excessive absenteeism by learners resulted in poor academic performance since learners were not receiving learning regularly as expected. According to LNR3, poor learners usually did not have a choice when it came to absenteeism, as it was often to rescue a situation back home for the survival of the family. That was also highlighted by Gibb et al., (2013:110), who opined that amongst other factors, were high levels of absenteeism, alcohol and drug abuse, bullying, teenage pregnancy and child-headed families.

EDU4 continued to say absent learners usually struggle to adapt if they decide to come to school. In line with the above assertion, Robertson, L. and Gregson, S. (2014:102) posited that usually a rift ensues between educators and learners who were often absent. No educator likes an absent learner, and when the learner is isolated, it leads to absconding or dropping out.

LNR2 said that learners from poor backgrounds were often absent from school because they had to fend for their families while others were busy learning. The researcher also agreed with the assertion above, because absenteeism was common among learners from poor family backgrounds and that was confirmed by EDU6. De Vos et al. (2013:98) argued that failure to do well and progress in their studies led to continued poverty in poor families or what was known as a "Cycle of Poverty" or poverty trap. Such sentiments were also echoed by EDU4. Another participant, LNR2 posited that usually absent learners suffer when it was time for group work. That was confirmed by Jensen (2013:18) who added that such learners struggled with focus and concentration. Jensen further highlighted that they have more difficulty in comprehension and memory, and they struggle with motivation. Consequently, such learners struggle to form groups as no learner wished to work

with an absent-prone learner. The result, as EDU2 says, was poor academic performance and high failure rates. Studies revealed that Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest out-of-school rates for all age groups. More than half (57%) of all youth between the ages of 15 and 17 were not in school.

#### **4.3.2 Poor health of Learners**

The study discovered that poverty led to health issues, which unfortunately affects negatively on their academic performance. Research has shown that learners who lived in poverty were constantly exposed to stressful situations. An unhealthy amount of stress can weaken cells in certain parts of the brain and prevent new brain cells from growing. Crawford, Goodman, & Joyce, (2013:116) supported this opinion and went further to say stress impairs attention and concentration as well as reduce creativity and memory. Stress also diminishes social skills and decrease motivation and determination. Poor health increases school absences and limits a learner's ability to progress in class. SP2 postulated that he realised that some learners' school performance was affected by poor health, which was partly due to a poor diet. SP2 was of the view that most learners came to school without having had breakfast and having slept on empty stomachs. Thus, as supported by Alborz (2013:87), such learners suffered from dizziness, headaches, stomach cramps, and lack of concentration. LNR3 argued that at home they did not have a refrigerator, and because of poverty could not afford to throw away left overs. Thus, eating leftovers in the morning caused such unnecessary poor health issues.

Similarly, LNR6 posited that some learners suffered from chronic diseases, which sadly affect their concentration levels in the classroom. That drew support from Robertson, L. and Gregson, S. (2014) who posited that some of them abscond simply because they had to fetch their own medication from health facilities, had to look after a sick person back home, or to take a person to the clinic. Such sentiments were supported by Crawford, Goodman, & Joyce (2013:116) who argued that sometimes parents would send a visibly sick learner to school, hoping that the educators would take care of the situation, as was normally the case with learners who felt sick while at school.

Accordingly, absenteeism goes hand in hand with dropping out of school. EDU1 posited that learners dropping out were mostly those learners who were prone to absconding. LNR6 supported the assertion by saying that some of those learners would drop out of school to pursue 'piece jobs' in order to assist their families where sometime nobody was working. Seemingly, SP2 posited that sometimes learners would disappear from the second school term only to resurface at the last term, during exam. Such learners would normally be permitted to sit for the exams, hence the poor academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit. The researcher agreed with the views of SP2 because where the researcher was working, the principal would admit learners even during the last term of the year.

### **4.3.3 Environmental factors**

The environment in which learners find themselves at times plays a significant role in determining the academic success of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit. According to SP2, a safe and orderly school and home environment were related to learners' academic performance in schools. Robertson, L. and Gregson, S., (2014) supported the environmental issue by arguing that a comfortable and caring school or home environment could assist in contributing to learners' academic performance in Grade 10. This view was supported by Bayat et al. (2014:103) who opined that some informal dwellings in densely populated environments had no privacy for both communities and learners alike, and thus not conducive to the growth and development of young children. Indeed there is a strong relationship between the home and the school environment. Ravallion, M. (2016:116) posited that when a learner misbehaved or fails to meet expectations at school, the learners' home and family life should be considered. Similarly, providing opportunities to learn outside of school would help facilitate learners' academic success in the school environment.

#### **4.3.3.1 Home environment**

A child's home environment plays a significant role on learning and general academic performance. It also facilitates the foundation for learning and is an element of the learners' academic life that can affect progress. SP1 alluded that several family factors affected the learners' behaviour and ability to perform well in school. Indeed Jensen (2013:18) supported that by saying educational processes

occur in physical, social, cultural, and psychological environment. Similarly, SP2 agreed that learners would be motivated to learn and work harder when the environment they find themselves in was interesting and rich in activities that arouse their interests. Vally and Motala (2014:97) concurred and further posited that such activities included economic stability of the family, parental attitudes towards education, changes in family relationships such as divorce, and incidents of child abuse. Research has shown that young children need some kind of support from parents for them to develop into the right direction and succeed academically. Ravallion, M. (2016) concurred with the above assertion, saying that when children come from homes where there was abuse, domestic violence, an incarcerated parent, or a parent with drug or mental health problems, they do not get that kind of attention, and thus were victims of depression, teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, drug abuse, and poor academic performance.

Poverty also exacerbated poor performance of Grade 10 learners because of the environmental factors such as overcrowding at home, lack of study space, and study material. About the environment, EDU2 said that most of their learners stay in informal settlements where it was always difficult to avoid the noises from the neighbours, and consequently, LNR8 argued that it made his life difficult when he wanted to do homework or to study, especially during examinations. According to Lacour & Tissington (2013:99), informal dwellings in densely populated settlements, such as squatter camps, were vulnerable to unfavourable weather conditions and open fires. For LNR4, the situation seemed worse since she stayed next to a tavern, thus the everyday loud music made her academic life challenging.

Furthermore, Duchesne et al. (2013:112) posited that there was a positive correlation between the parents' level of education and their child's attitude toward academic achievement. This was supported by EDU6 who posited that learners who had parents or guardians, who encouraged academic success, were more likely to develop their own aspirations for academic success. According to Duchesne et al. (2013:102), that was unlike learners living in stressful environments, who were more likely to suffer illnesses that affected their academic performances. Thus, parents' level of education was also critical to the learner's academic performance.

LNR2 was of the view that after school, learners from disadvantage homes were faced with many chores at home, and thus finding it difficult to do their homework. This was in line with Kanafiah & Jumadi (2013:96) who argued that the home environment provided the foundation for learning and was an element of the learner's life that could affect his or her academic performance. As a victim of such a situation, LNR2 argued that she did not have a place to study, and as an eldest of five siblings, she was entrusted with all those parental duties while her parents were away working on the farms. LNR2: "Through-out the whole week, I am supposed to wake all my siblings in the mornings, prepare them for school before I can ready myself. I must also ensure that they ate something before leaving. The youngest in the family is still at crèche, meaning that I must take him to crèche first." The other participant, LRN6 concurred with the above sentiments and further said that he had to repeat Grade 10 because his examinations was marred by lack of study space and the crying of the new born baby at home. He argued that he could not sleep well, hence, the struggle to study and perform during the examinations.

SP1 posited that there was evidence of child-headed families as the parent/s had passed on. Unfortunately, these learners lacked parental supervision to do their homework and study at home. However, White et. al. (2013:89) found that parents who abused substances could not offer support or be of any assistance, let alone motivate their children to do school work. Seemingly, it has been found that internationally, poor academic performance is a problem that manifests itself not only in poor communities but also in countries that were classified as developed.

Moreover, LNR3 posited that at home, they did not have electricity, space to do homework, too many domestic chores, noisy neighbourhoods, and unsupportive parents. Indeed, as supported by Potter & Morris (2016:88), the environment did not encourage academic success due to a number of reasons such as the absence of well-designed environment, lack of water and proper sanitation and schools situated in residential quarters. Similarly, lack of electricity continued to disadvantage learners because they were forced to do their homework when the sun was still out, as parents would not allow them to use lamps and candles until late.

#### 4.3.3.2 *School environment*

A school environment is a place where learners and educators meet for the sole purpose of learning. The school environment includes classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM), teaching staff, management, and teaching methods. These factors affect learners' academic performance at the end of the day. The school environment also includes the planning of the instructional space, administration place, the educators as well as the learners whom are essential in the teaching and learning process. EDU2 believed that a well-planned school environment would yield the expected outcomes of education that will facilitate effective teaching and learning processes and academic performances of learners.

Every learner is a world unto him/herself, and the reality that each learner is experiencing at home can have a major impact on how they progress in school. The reality is, learners who lived in poverty had less access to the learning resources, which led to academic success. Seemingly, it is when the parent/ educator works together that the children profit most from their experiences. Educators work better and are able to assist the learners if they know the home background of the child. Sadly, without proper and adequate infrastructure, teaching and learning is bound to suffer. Seemingly, the positive attitude of the educators towards learners was very important to the learning process. SP2 posited that the educator's positive attitude builds a positive classroom atmosphere where learners feel happy, safe and secure to learn. In such environment learners thrive.

SP1 posited that proper and adequate infrastructure would serve as motivation for meaningful learning and improve learner concentration for the much-needed improvement of learner academic performance. In the classrooms, LNR4 said that there were not enough desks and most of the classes were overcrowded. A study by UNICEF (2011) established that many schools in rural areas lacked learning resources such as textbooks, libraries, laboratories, and computers that can enhance their academic performance. EDU7 acknowledged that marking the register and controlling activity books on a daily basis for such overcrowded classrooms always proved a mammoth task, which as educators they do not normally

accomplish. The situation seemed to hamper the academic performance of Grade 10 learners, as the classroom environment was not conducive to teaching and learning.

The principal of SP2 revealed that they have been engaging the department for ages about the inadequate toilets in their school, but nothing materialised. LNR6 posited that when it was raining, they already know that there will not be schooling as the mother helpers did not have a secured cooking place (kitchen) where they could prepare food for learners, and without lunch, learners were not expected to attend school for the day.

#### ***4.3.4 Poor academic performance***

Many factors contribute to poor academic performance of learners, with some of them emanating from poverty. Participants raised quite vast issues, which indicated that poverty resulted in poor academic performance. LNR3 experienced that because of poverty she lacked many learning aids such as a dictionary, extra textbooks, access to internet, and a smartphone. She mentioned that internet and a smart phone were important in her studies since they were used for study WhatsApp groups and to do research. EDU3 posited that it was indeed sad for a Grade 10 learner to go to school without a dictionary. Nowadays dictionaries form part of LTSM.

There is a saying in Sepedi, which goes 'Malapa ga a lekane', meaning as people we are not comparable/equal. This was stated by LNR6, whose class teacher usually chased him out of class for untidy school uniform. The learner argued that at home, they did not have the luxury of washing a few items midweek, as the little 'Ariel' washing powder left was spared for the whole family over the weekends. As such, when the uniform was too dirty, the learner chose to stay home, which in turn resulted in poor academic performance.

Similarly, LNR7 posited that after school many chores would be waiting at home, the first priority on arrival would be to satisfy those chores. Sadly, there was no electricity to do homework or to study in the evenings. Thus, the learner had no choice but to hide when it was time to submit the work for marking. LRN1 concurred with the above sentiments and even said that educators gave them too many home activities

without considering individual circumstances, which unfortunately did not favour most of them.

Similarly, poverty also led to diseases such as malnutrition, malaria, HIV/AIDS, and most recently Covid-19. EDU1 was of the opinion that such deadly diseases badly affected the ability of the learners to perform at their peak. EDU7 posited that learners seemed to abscond from school owing to such poverty related diseases. EDU2 posited that Waterberg district was the worst affected by chronic diseases. She argued that since arriving in Waterberg district, especially Vaalwater Circuit, the researcher had been exposed to learners as well as community members who were openly on chronic medication. SP1 added that many households were child-headed due to dreaded diseases such as HIV/AIDS hence, these children ended up prioritising feeding for siblings rather than attending school.

#### ***4.3.5 High unemployment rates***

Poverty is perceived as the major cause of higher rates of unemployment and vice versa. According to reports, millions of people globally were unemployed. Barker (1999:165) defines an unemployed person as the one who is without work, is currently available for work, and is seeking or wanting to work. The unemployment rate is defined as the number of unemployed persons taken as a percentage of the economically active population, which includes both the employed and the unemployed. A person is regarded as being underemployed if he does not earn an adequate income. Adequacy is based on whether a person and his dependents are able to meet their basic needs, both long-term and short-term, from income.

According to EDU5, most community members regard employment as one of the most important aspects of being human. This was supported by SP1 who argued that being employed served various social and interpersonal functions such as friendship, social contact, gaining recognition, as well as helping young people enter adult world in a dignified manner. Youth unemployment affects negatively on the individual and the family, but also on the broader community with serious economic and social consequences. EDU3 posited that this includes economic welfare, social exclusion, crime, and social instability. The researcher concurs with the above argument, as most of the time unemployment is also the cause of other social ills like

crime, divorce, suicide, and teenage pregnancy. Sadly, the unemployed rely mostly on the State for survival.

Moreover, EDU7 was of the opinion that a person with higher education qualifications become easily frustrated if they do not find employment and that increases the potential for crime and civil unrest. Employers often use educational levels as a selection method, and if the average level of education rises, the selection criteria might be raised. Unfortunately, the cost of unemployment include severe financial hardships and poverty, debt, homelessness and housing stress, family tensions, isolation, crime, and ill-health.

People with low education and skills are more likely to be unemployed or to have low wages (WB, 1993), and work by Williams (1993) indicates that school completion is lower for young people with parents who have a low level of education and an unskilled occupational background (and thus who are more likely to be unemployed). About 70% of the unemployed never held a permanent job. They would therefore not have contributed to the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and would not qualify for such benefits. In addition, they would lack most of the basic world-of-work skills that many employers expect, and would be difficult to place in employment.

The second component is to strengthen the employability of labour by improving the availability of skills, through improved education and training, improving the manufacturing of the labour market, with emphasis on a more appropriate regulatory framework, reduced discrimination, greater mobility, improving social security services, the implementation of the social plan, and giving special attention to vulnerable groups such as women, young workers, and the disabled.

#### ***4.3.6 Peer pressure and teenage pregnancy***

Some participants asserted that poverty also caused peer and teenage pregnancy. Peer pressure is defined as “a feeling that one must do the same thing as other people of one’s age and social group in order to be liked or respected by them.” Other participants say that peer pressure is a person being influenced by others to behave or act in a certain way, because your friends or group expects it. A peer can be any individual who belongs to the same social group or circle and has some type of influence over the others. EDU3 alluded to the fact that from their peers the

learners did not always get positive role models and that was where they learn substance abuse. EDU8 argued that peer pressure could influence the typical teenager's perception about sexuality, so much so, that teenagers tend to conform to the norms about sexual behaviour, which were deemed acceptable to the peer group to which he or she belongs. This was supported by LNR3 who also suggested that parents and guardians should be mindful of the friends their children have.

Similarly, teenage pregnancy was also central to the influence of poverty on the performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. EDU3 posited that teenage pregnancy is usually a pregnancy that occurs in females when they were still below the age of twenty. Similarly, Rohwerder (2014:79) posited that teenage pregnancy was strongly linked to issues such as lack of education and information about reproduction, peer pressure, and early engagement in sexual activity. Although some teenage pregnancies were intentional, LNR2 argued that the majority of them were unintentional, and led to many negative outcomes for them as teenage mothers, the child, as well as their families. Most of the time, teenage mothers do not have the resources to care for a child, and often they are not able to sustain healthy habits throughout the pregnancy to ensure they produce a healthy baby. SP2 alluded to the fact that usually these young mothers could not complete their education, as supported by Rohwerder (2014:109), and they begin a perpetual cycle in which the child may go on to become a teenage parent as well.

Similarly, studies by Jansen (2018:86) revealed that most teenagers were vulnerable to peer pressure, to such an extent that they may learn some behavioural patterns from friends, which affect their attitudes, beliefs, and values. LNR5 asserted that the majority of teenagers engage in sexual activities because of the need for acceptance, curiosity, and peer pressure. With the lack of education and thorough knowledge about sexual matters, teenagers would engage in unprotected sexual activities. According to Jansen (2018:91), usually teenagers did not use contraceptives, and even when they did, they used them incorrectly, which made them ineffective during sexual activity. That increases their chances of falling pregnant and contracting diseases. SP2 also concurred with Jansen's views and further blamed Media platforms whom he said offered little sex education but more vulgar images such as nude pictures and sex videos. Teen pregnancy is unwanted

as that seem to increase the chances of abortion, neglect, and child abuse. EDU3 posited that it also made it harder for female learners to complete their schooling.

**QUESTION 2: What role can the school communities play in overcoming poverty?**

A school is regarded as the extension of the home. According to some participants, the school could focus on some critical issues to aid the situation. To successfully deal with learners and with poverty in mind, educators needed to address the special concerns and circumstances that poor learners came from and adapt the learning environment accordingly. EDU4 posited that schools could provide access to affordable uniform, stationary, free internet at school, and fee-free school camps that would uplift their academic performance, especially in Grade 10. Similarly, LNR6 argued that schools should avoid costly materials such as school uniform, but rather keep most of the school requirements simple for all learners to afford. Some schools charge exorbitant fees to purchase school uniforms and other requirements, which disadvantage learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Furthermore, LNR8 was of the view that educators needed to make sure that assignments and general expectations do not put poor learners at a greater disadvantage. It is true that nowadays educators assign homework and assignments, which requires the use of computers and internet; however, as asserted by LNR3, the problem arises when poor learners do not have access to computers and internet at home, and may not have the money to go to the internet café. LNR2 was of the view that educators should only assign activities, which requires the use of computers and internet access and other costly resources when the school was able to provide such resources, because it became difficult for poor learners to access such resources at home.

There is no denying the fact that technology is expensive; however, schools need to acknowledge that learners living in poverty struggle to access computers and are not confident to use technology or pursue careers involving it. Introducing such learners to technology will help to create feelings of comfort and open up career possibilities for learners who would not have had that chance. By becoming more familiar with technology such as computers and tablets, learners would open up opportunities for

careers in the science, technology, electronics, and mathematics field. After all, this is the fastest growing field for employment after high school, and learners would keep more doors open to possible careers, and extended educational opportunities, by increasing their comfort with technology.

According to research, creating opportunities for academic growth in after-school programmes involving literacy and technology will give learners living in poverty an opportunity to find academic success. Thus, if educators could know their learners and their backgrounds, they would be able to adjust their methods to suit all categories of learners. Learners ought to have equal chance of completing task and submitting them. Furthermore, schools could also consider partnerships with community-based organisations to offer free after school learning programmes. This would provide impoverished learners with the added learning aid that they so need in order to uplift their academic performance.

Moreover, SP1 posited that educators should be trained on issues on eliminating poverty, and to join forces with other members or community organisations who advocate for poverty eradication. EDU3 said that as educators “we also need to continue the efforts to reach out to parents of our learners even when we feel they were being unsupportive.” This was also supported by Budge & Parrett (2018:101) in the literature review who said that educators needed to fight against colleagues and other learners who mock and stigmatise poor learners and/ or their parents. EDU5 also emphasised that schools should be mindful of the fact that most learners from impoverished communities have never been exposed to technology, visiting museums, and eating in restaurants. Rather than schools spending money on ‘unnecessary claims,’ schools could take such learners to a museum or organise free computer lessons. Poor learners need a good relationship especially with trustworthy adults in order to succeed.

SP2 posited that there are ways in which schools could deal decisively with poverty. He argued that there were various policies on how schools should be governed to make them conducive to teaching and learning, and managers should ensure the correct and thorough implementation of such policies. SP2 gave an example of educational policies on bullying, discipline, and late coming, and argued that they needed to be enforced in schools. Still on the issue of policies, Lewis (2017:86)

added that stated that schools should issue learners and parents with copies of such polities to eliminate fear and arguments when it is time to enforce such policies. The researcher agrees with the above sentiments as most parents become aware of these policies only when it is applied on their children. Not knowing the consequences of one's actions led many a learner astray, and led to poor academic performance, which usually led to high failure rates.

Similarly, EDU3 postulated that the current NSNP initiative was ineffective and needed to be improved. Firstly, SP2 said that the food was not enough for individual learners per day/ learning hours. "Currently learners have only one meal per day", he said. There was no breakfast and learners were expected to survive the whole seven hours at school with just a spoonful of food. There is a saying, which says 'a hungry learner is an angry learner.' Thus, SP2 suggested that the schools, through the DOE, could provide learners with breakfast in the mornings and then later provide them with good enough lunch. That was supported by LNR3 and LNR7 who said that most of them came to school without having had any form of breakfast, thus for them lunch came too late and when it was eventually served the food was too little.

Furthermore, LNR3 was worried about the mother helpers who cook for the learners at schools. The learner alleged that a lot of food meant for the learners was being 'stolen', which resulted in learners not being fed enough. LNR3 argued that some decide to run away from school immediately after break and never return to class. It is true that the classes are half-empty almost every day after break, and it did not bode well for the academic performance of the Grade 10 learners. EDU1 postulated that at School B, they were on the verge of organising cooking experts to come and workshop their staff, since the food was sometimes not enticing. EDU1 further explained that the selection procedure of mother helpers did not consider the experience and knowledge of cooking which proved problematic later.

SP2 added that some of the impoverished learners were actually the most intelligent learners; however, they needed motivation and good educators to show their true potential those sentiments were also echoed by Guest et al. (2013:96). Similarly, SP2 said that such learners needed the help of the psychologist and motivational speakers to visit schools to monitor them. EDU4 supported the above assertion and said that school principals should also allocate subjects to the specialist educators.

He argued from the point of view that in School A, where he works, educators were assigned learning areas, which were not their speciality. Therefore, if schools could have specialists in all learning areas, it would contribute in improving the academic performance, especially in Grade 10.

EDU4 posited that the only other way in which school poverty could be eliminated was when the parents and educators worked together for the benefit of the learners. EDU4 further said that educators worked better if they knew the home background of the child. As it was, schools work in isolation of their communities. LNR2 said that apart from the existence of School Governing Bodies (SGB) in schools, parents had no direct working relationship with schools. Seemingly, Kugler et al. (2013:106) was of the view that parents did not know the educators of their children and vice versa, which did not argue well for the good performance of learners. Some parents were not in a position to take off time to come into school for meetings, and they may not even have the money to pay for extra-curricular needs. Therefore, EDU7 asserted that educators should try to accommodate all parents as much as possible so they can be involved in the education of their children, which would give the children a greater chance of success.

Furthermore, LNR8 asserted that schools in Vaalwater circuit were underdeveloped and lacked infrastructure. For example in her school (School B), some classrooms were dilapidated while some had broken windows. Some classrooms did not have working lights, which made it difficult for learners to see clearly on the chalkboard, especially when it was cloudy. A study by UNICEF (2012) revealed that many schools in the rural areas lacked learning resources such as textbooks, libraries, laboratories, and computers that were meant to enhance learners' academic performance. Based on the above assertions it can be assumed that without good textbooks and other basic learning resources, many learners, particularly those from poor backgrounds, were not motivated enough to perform at their peak.

Another critical issue, which was raised by participants, was the issue of educators being expected to perform roles, which they were not trained for and thus were novices in that regard. In the literature review, Gietz & McIntosh (2014:76) suggested that each school should be allocated a psychologist, a social worker, and security officers. This was argued based on tightening the security at schools, addressing

learners with psychological problems, and for easy and earlier identification of such problems. Psychologists and social workers are scarce in our schools and communities. It continued to be a struggle for communities as and when they need the assistance of such experts. Rieder & Choonara (2012:75) also supported such views and added that it was true that nowadays there were typical individual problems, which required the expertise of social workers and psychologists.

With regard to security officers, it was mainly because of the lack of security at schools, which motivated the suggestion. Learners and the whole school community are not safe from intruders and bullies whose sole aim was to cause havoc to educators and learners within the school premises. That was also attested by Kugler et al. (2013:101) who argued that even the school infrastructure such as books, chalk, desks, and chairs were not safe. This was also supported by LNR3 who posited that at School B where there was a hostel, they experienced burglaries every time they came back from vacation. Therefore, the school community needed to feel safe to work freely and produce good performance.

Moreover, it was also discovered that the majority of learners, particularly those from poor family backgrounds, experienced difficulty in adapting to a school environment where they felt isolated because of their socio-economic background. Moreover, the study also discovered that some of those learners could not afford a decent school uniform, shoes, or even a standard hairstyle for a girl learner. EDU5 also attested to the situation where female learners were once embarrassed in front of the whole class when she experienced her menstrual period without sanitary towels, which resulted in male learners being chased out of the class for female educators to clear the embarrassment. Such were in line with the views of Rieder & Choonara, (2012:106) who opined that female learners struggled to cope during their monthly period, especially because they could not afford sanitary towels. That led to these learners being mocked and teased by their fellow learners who came from well-to-do families. The above highlighted issues all point to familiar conditions, which may hamper improved academic performance of Grade 10 learners; hence, they needed to be addressed.

### **QUESTION 3: How can the society and communities help in the fight against poverty?**

Communities and societies play a significant role in fighting poverty at school and at home. It is a naked truth that some parents did not support the learners on their academic journeys. These parents, as viewed and supported by Gietz & McIntosh (2014:96), would overload the children with home chores, not considering the fact that they needed some time to do their homework. According to EDU2, a lot still needed to be done to educate communities on how best to support the education of their learners. Most community settings did not support education whatsoever. For example, taverns were closer to the schools and would usually play loud music even during the week.

Loud music and noisy neighbours during school hours were not conducive for the concentration levels of the learners in class. Similarly, the society needed to encourage and motivate learners to go to school. LNR2 acknowledged that it was indeed true that through education, many doors will open, including those of better employment opportunities. The society also should persevere and look after the little resources they have, because some of those provided employment for their families. For example, people vandalised properties such as schools, community halls, roads, and businesses during strikes.

Businesses provided many employment opportunities to most community members, thus vandalising them was counterproductive. SP1 argued that lack of roads could not attract investors into communities, while vandalised properties takes away the little employment opportunities that were there. EDU7 asserted that once the majority in society were educated, their chances of employment were high that those who did not go to school. Community members who were employed somewhere and earning better salaries should plough something back into their communities. LNR5 posited that these successful individuals should create employment opportunities even if it were domestic work. EDU4 concurred with LNR5 and suggested that graduates and professionals should create an employment agency through which they would help unemployed matriculates or graduates to apply and find employment. Such an agency would have a database of all unemployed community

members so that when the need arises the agency knows where to look for the unemployed.

Learners are members of their communities, thus, they need good role models from the communities they come from. If the community around those learners does not value education, the problem of underperformance in Grade 10 and beyond will persist. The above sentiments were echoed by EDU3 who also said that for learners to envisage and work hard in schools, they needed educated role models and individuals who will encourage them to take their studies seriously. This was supported by SP1 by saying that learners idolise and model their lives around influential individuals in the community. Thus, in the absence of educated role models, learners were likely to idolise thugs or even drunkards who flash their monies unnecessarily. The researcher observed that Vaalwater Circuit was populated by professionals from outside the area who were employed mostly in the education, health, police, and retail sector where you were likely to find people from far-away places.

The worst scenario would be when female learners, particularly from poor family backgrounds, became vulnerable and exposed to older men (sugar daddies) to secure “financial sponsors” for their day-to-day necessities. Most often, these older men are married with families, and would just play around and destroy the future of these learners. Once the learner is pregnant, the sugar daddy would vanish and look for other prey. Unsuspecting female learners continued to fall prey to sugar daddies because of their vulnerability. That actually constitutes sexual abuse. Kugler et al. (2013:96) opined that such victims of abuse usually felt angry, dirty, and betrayed by adults who were meant to protect them, hence they transfer that anger into the classroom. Sadly, Robertson, L. and Gregson, S. (2014) cautioned that victims of abuse sometimes felt rejected when no one either at home or at school believed them.

Another issue raised by participants was the absence of co-operation between schools and the communities. This issue was also raised by Gietz & McIntosh, (2014:76) in the literature review who posited that most parents were not cooperating with the schools for the betterment of their children’s education. Some of them do not usually show up when called to school regarding the learner’s conduct at school. The

only time some of them visited a school was when they had to confront an educator when their child has failed or had a quarrel with another learner or educator. In such cases, enmity ensues between the educator, the parent and the learner, which does not argue well for the education of the learner.

Educators were also blamed for operating in isolation from the communities. SP2 posited that as most of the educators came from far-away areas, they usually went home during weekends, thus could not attend community meetings and other gatherings such as funerals. This did not help the educator/learner/parent relationship since the educators was not familiar with the background of his or her learners. LNR4 supported the above views, said that once an educator shouted at him for not doing his homework, and even said, "I taught your mom, she was just as a fool as you are, I am not surprised at your conduct." Unfortunately, the mother had passed on the previous year and that was opening the old wounds for the learner. EDU2 said acknowledged that if the educators had known and attended that funeral, he would have not said what he said about the dead mom. As highlighted by Guest et al. (2013:96) in the chapter 2, such actions amounted to bullying and learners who were bullied at school often showed signs of depression suicide, violent thoughts anxiety, or low self-esteem with all of them influencing their academic performances.

Similarly, Rieder & Choonara (2012:113) were of the view that one of the common misconceptions people have about unemployment was that those experiencing unemployment and poverty choose not to work. In reality, there are various factors that individuals had to deal with, which made it difficult to get employment. According to SP2, one of the straightforward measures of fighting poverty in communities was through donations. If local businesses or organisations could employ more people, poverty may be reduced in communities. The problems come when community members choose jobs while some were unemployable because of discipline issues.

LNR6 asserted that many people living in poverty may not have had access to higher education or special certifications, but according to EDU5, that did not mean they did not have skills to contribute. To increase their chances of employment, Vally & Motala (2014) argued that non-literate people could be taught a few skills to make them employable. Thus, identifying areas of opportunities within businesses or organisations, expanding recruiting pools, and paying a living wage would be one of

the measures to help a neighbour living in poverty in our communities (Robertson, L. and Gregson, S., 2014). The more employment options, the more ways of how to stop poverty.

#### **QUESTION 4: How can we encourage and motivate poverty-stricken learners to work hard?**

During the focus group discussion, most participants shared a number of ideas on how to motivate poor learners to perform at their level best. After all, EDU6 argued that poverty actually should motivate the learners to work hard and end the scorch of poverty. The consensus of the participants in both the interviews and the focus groups was that Grade 10 learners performance concerns us all, thus they needed support and encouragement to perform better in schools. On the contrary, Vally and Motala (2014) argued that it was not only through education that individuals could get out of poverty and thrive in life, but also through good structural arrangements of the economy. After all, their point of view was that through skills and practice people could be able to master the art of economic prosperity. SP1 posited that educator's attitude needed to change towards victims of poor performance. EDU6 concurred that as educators they did not take the issue of poor performance lightly, as it makes them accountable and look bad to the authorities. However, as acknowledged by Bicaba et al. (2015:95), educators could only do so much. The rest was upon the learners themselves to up their game. According to Robertson, L. and Gregson, S., (2014:113), educators should be able to create time with poor performers to assess them on an individual basis. That would include extra lessons and weekend lessons to some extent.

Moreover, poor performers needed to be shown affection by educators and learners alike. LNR3 suggested that it was time for educators should start assigning important roles to these learners to make them feel welcomed. LNR8 added roles such as classroom monitors or register markers. Such roles would motivate them to wake-up every day and go to school, as well as bring them closer to the educators. LNR2 seemed worried about the lack of career guidance activities in their school (School A). She argued that career guidance in schools should be reconfigured to cater for the needs of the majority of poor learners. Career guidance focused mainly on Grades 11 and 12, is mainly verbal, and lacked a practical side, and in addition,

learners had to fund themselves to the venue/s where career guidance was held, which affects the empty pockets of the poor learners.

According to SP1, educators hold the key to unlock the chains that poverty has on education by creating a positive school environment, providing opportunities for academic growth, and teaching positive social behaviours, educators can help learners in poverty achieve academic success. This is in line with the view of Davis and Warner (2018) that developing a positive school environment for learners in poverty would create a safe place for learners to feel comfortable to take risks and find academic success. While there may be chaos and instability in homes of children living in poverty, Bicaba et al. (2015:95) postulated that a positive school environment has been found to have a lasting positive effect on the academic success and future for learners living in poverty.

Having an adult in the school who a learner feels is an ally helps to create a safe environment. The positive relationship is built on trust and a belief that the learner holds the potential for academic success (Davis & Warner, 2018). When educators show a belief in a learners' academic ability, a learners begins to believe in his/her own self-worth. Educators need to show a learners they care before a learners will care to learn. When learners feel valued and safe in an educational environment, they will find greater academic success.

However, Bicaba et al. (2015:103) opined in the literature review that learners living in poverty would not have the same academic opportunities as learners living with wealth. This contradicts with Vally & Motalas' (2014) views that poor performance affected all learners irrespective of the socio-economic status of the family. In the classroom setting, educators' skills in behaviour management would be critical in creating a classroom in which learners could achieve academic success. Effective classroom management implies the educator's ability to promote classroom order, discipline, and to establish a safe and conducive learning environment. EDU2 posited that communities needed to support and encourage learners to continue schooling. This applies to parents as well as other home based organisations. Previous research indicated that the parent and other stakeholders' involvement in children's' education as well as the educators' efforts to encourage parent involvement were associated with improved academic outcomes, especially amongst

the poor. Robertson, L. and Gregson, S. (2014) was in support of the statement and further suggested several home-based routines, which would support improved academic performance of Grade 10 learners, such as adequate sleep, minimal home chores, homework support, and enough time to study.

### **QUESTION 5: What can be done to reduce poverty in schools?**

The number of impoverished households globally, and in the Vaalwater area in particular is discouraging. While there were a multitude of poverty stricken learners, things were not entirely bleak. Studies showed that there have been marked progress in the fight against poverty in the past, but the decline has slowed down recently. SP2 alluded to the fact that for starters, the authorities need to make education more accessible, especially to the marginalised. This was also highlighted by Crawford, Goodman, & Joyce (2013:113). The problem with today's education was that it focused on classroom education whereas, as indicated by Vally & Motala (2014) education was multi-faceted and could be provide even outside of the classroom through skills development and practice. It was revealed that the lack of good quality education, particularly in rural Vaalwater, is what really pushes Vaalwater youth, and especially Grade 10 learners into poor performance, high levels of dropouts, and consequently unemployment lines. Not only does this increase poverty and poor performance but also perpetuates it, pushing Grade 10 performance in Vaalwater circuit further down.

EDU3 posited that for a reduction in poverty, access to quality education should be made available to all. This was in line with a UNESCO (2012) report, which argued that lifting communities out of poverty means education its people, not only on basics like maths and science, but also on proper hygiene, gender equality, educating females equally, and investing in resources for education. UNESCO further posit that to improve the schooling system in developing countries, the school building and resources need to be improved, and the educators need to be properly trained and well paid. These facts make education attainment a valuable tool to fight and reduce poverty.

On a global level, ending poverty in all its forms will be the first of the 17 SDGs of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The SDGs also aim to create sound

policy framework at national and regional levels based on pro poor and gender sensitive development strategies, to ensure that by 2030 all men and women have equal rights to education, economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control of land, and other forms of property.

Similarly, the government should ensure that access to better healthcare is improved, especially in rural areas. Chen (2015: 92) opined that when a person is healthy, they were able to work, participate fully in community events, and to better contribute to the development of the society. Making sure that communities have better healthcare facilities is essential in alleviating poverty. This includes widespread vaccinations, better healthcare resources, training more medical professionals and improving hygiene. Therefore, for Vaalwater to reduce poverty and improve academic performance, the area needs improved access to healthcare, increased personnel and improved facilities. There is a need to empower people living in poverty by involving them in the development and implementation of plans and programmes to reduce and eradicate poverty. Their involvement ensures that programmes reflect those things that are important to them.

Some key issues and possible solutions could make this goal achievable. Studies reveal that one of the main causes of poverty was marginalisation, which are the systemic barriers that lead to groups of people going without representation in their communities. Unfortunately, those living in impoverished households sometimes could not even afford the costs associated with education. Thus, SP2 argued that the communities should collectively step up efforts to help community members living in such unfortunate conditions to gather the means to earn better livelihoods. After all, helping an impoverished household to afford education for their children is an important milestone.

A report from UNESCO suggests that if all learners from low-income households could have just basic writing and reading skills, an estimated 171 million people could escape poverty. Similarly, if all adults could complete a secondary school education, that would cut global poverty by more than half. Community members could also assist and choose to fund a poor child's education, as well as sponsoring one of the poor families and encouraging other community members to do the same.

Having access to clean water is a huge factor in the welfare of a country. Not only does it need to be safe to drink, but also needs to be closer to people's homes. While most middle-class citizens can just turn on a tap for clean water to pour out, many poor families spend hours just trying to find water and it is not always entirely clean. Investing in clean wells and water systems can not only ensure the safety of a country's citizens, but can free up their time, allowing them to better participate in the economy. Improve management of water and other natural resources. Most of the rural poor depend on agriculture or other natural resources for their livelihood. Consequently, it is necessary that they have access to those resources so they can better manage their resources.

LNR6 alluded to the fact that unemployment was a major contributor of poverty, which needed to be addressed. He said that mostly the unemployed had little or no income and relied more on State benefits. Unemployment can be reduced through both supply-side policies, such as free training schemes for those who are structurally unemployed. According to the UNESCO report, poverty and unemployment were often geographical problems, with rural areas seeing higher levels of poverty. Therefore, policies to overcome geographical poverty could also include government subsidies for firms to set up in rural areas. Building better infrastructure such as transport and communication in rural areas can provide economic stimulus to create new jobs. After all, when people have the means and opportunities to work, it helps end the poverty cycle. Therefore, countries need to create a wide variety of jobs, especially for skilled individuals, to help end the cycle. When the female population is educated and has the means to education, it can help solve several issues other than poverty.

According to SP1, high quality teaching and learning showed to be an important school-level factor affecting the realisation of good performance in schools, and was particularly significant for learners from impoverished backgrounds. For these learners, having a good educator in front of them, compared to a bad educator, guaranteed them of better outcomes at the end of the year. In the literature review Chen (2015: 101) suggested that for schools to remedy the situation, educators needed to be thoroughly trained, and correctly monitored at managerial school level. Other important factors affecting pupils include good quality careers advice,

acquisition of social and emotional skills, and active monitoring of pupil destinations (not just their achievements).

SP2 posited that access to clean water and sanitation directly affects the health and education of learners. Previous studies (Chen, 2015: 121) revealed that as of 2018, about 800 million people lived without access to safe water, and 2.5 billion lived without adequate sanitation. Similarly, lack of clean water spreads diseases like malaria, cholera, and diarrhoea, which derails academic progress of more than one million children each year. LNR5 argued that dirty bathrooms in schools and at home keep learners from attending schools. Moreover, education could help increase individual earnings for every member of a family. UNESCO (2012) pointed out that basic reading skills could lift 171 million people out of extreme poverty, ultimately reducing the world's total poverty by 12%.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

Poverty has consistently been found to be a powerful determinant of delayed cognitive development and poor school performance. This has shown to be largely mediated by the physical and social environment in which poor children live, maternal characteristics, the learning environment of the home, and community and organisational characteristics. Although poverty may hinder the educational success of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit, it does not entirely sentence learners to a life of failure or cancel out opportunities to succeed. Everyone has a part to play in giving children an education that develops their curiosity, creativity, and kindness, and produces young people ready to change the world. Poverty does not mean a person is unable to succeed. Children who live in poverty could meet high expectations and standards. If educators could understand and embrace this truth, the outcomes for learners in schools would change for the better. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The academic performance of impoverished Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit cannot be ignored. This chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion, and the recommendations, which were discussed in chapter four. Previous studies revealed that children performed poorly in school for a number of reasons, with some of them emanating from poverty. The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of poverty on the academic performance of learners, particularly the Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. The objectives of the study were:

- To suggest ways to reduce the influence of poverty on learner's academic performance
- To come up with concrete measures on reducing poverty in schools
- To eliminate fear, and encourage poor learners to perform better academically
- To empower schools and communities on poverty reduction strategies

The study used the qualitative research approach coupled with a case study research design. The researcher used the SSI as well as the FGD as data collection instruments. The use of these tools was to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. The population in the study were school principals, teachers, and learners as participants. Vaalwater circuit is a small area of twelve schools, of which four were secondary schools. Similarly, the study used purposive sampling to select two schools, two school principals, four educators, and eight Grade 10 learners to participate.

The study found that there was a lack of co-operation and communication between all stakeholders involved in education. The problem of poverty and poor performance in Grade 10 were ignored for far too long. EDU3 posited that government schools and communities were not doing enough to eradicate poverty or to cater for poor learners from impoverished families. Seemingly, the lack of parental support, lack of space and overcrowding at home, and lack of proper role models were found to be some factors of poverty that have an effect on the academic performance of Grade

10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. The study also revealed other challenges such as corruption and mismanagement of resources, which were directed at poverty reduction strategies, and these funds did not reach the intended recipients. The study recommended equal distribution of resources, improved school infrastructure, donations, creation of job opportunities especially in rural areas, and monitoring of state resources.

It was also established that many learners drop out of schools due to poverty related reasons such as financial difficulties, lack of parental support, parental SES, and poor performance. EDU6 alluded to the fact that home-based factors such as lack of space to do homework, no electricity, too many domestic chores, the shortage of learning resources, and unsupportive parents impact negatively on the Grade 10 learners' academic performance.

EDU8 revealed that financial constraints and economic background led the learners to attend poor schools where the quality of education was compromised. Despite the negative impact of poverty on academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit, the researcher ascertained that poverty should not be used as an excuse by learners from impoverished households to not do well academically or dropping out. While it remains true that poor learners came to school with numerous issues and challenges that interfered with their learning, SP1 argued that there was a need for educators, principals, and all stakeholders to focus on the learners in an effort to find ways to help them overcome those challenges.

Participating learners concurred that education remains poor learners' chance to break and escape from the cycle of poverty. True, it was therefore one of the reasons for all learners to push for success in their schooling. However, despite of the overwhelming effects of poverty on the learners' education and development, SP2 posited there are quite a number of learners from low-income families who thrived in their academic performance. This was in line with the notion that "poverty should not determine learner's altitude" (Vally & Motala, 2014:86).

The environment was identified an important influence in extending or limiting the child's education. The results have shown that most respondents come from impoverished backgrounds, where there was nobody working. The majority of

participants have indicated that academic expectations were very low when families lived in poverty. This was partly attributed to overcrowding, lack of school requirements such as books, and lack of proper nutrition. Children who come from overcrowded households are often deprived of room to study freely, and as a result cannot do their schoolwork at home, the way they may want to, which led to their under-achieving at school. SP1 pointed to the fact that it was challenging for the learner to achieve academically in a deprived and disadvantaged environment, which are caused by poverty.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The research was organised and divided into five chapters. This section presents the summary of each chapter.

Chapter 1 dealt with the introduction to the research problem. It detailed a map on how the study would be carried out. The aim of the project was to investigate the impact of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit, Limpopo Province. Chapter 1 also highlighted the population as well as the sample that would be used in the study.

Chapter 2 dealt with the review of literature. The study was modelled around two theories namely the SCT of Karl Marx and the SLT of Albert Bandura. Both theories put emphasis on collectivism; bridging the inequality gap and leading an exemplary live especially to our children. The literature review highlighted several factors, which pointed to the impact of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners internationally, nationally, and locally in Vaalwater circuit. For example, issues such as absenteeism, poor academic performance, and high levels of dropout amongst others emerged as some of the consequences of poverty on education. Various strategies, which were previously used to address the issue, were also highlighted.

Chapter 3 presented the methodology used and the data collection instruments used to collect empirical data that was gathered to answer the research question. The qualitative case study design was adopted. Chapter 3 further explained the population and sampling procedures as well as data collection instruments, which were the interviews and the focus group discussions. Data analysis processes, ethical considerations, and research questions were highlighted and clarified.

Objectivity, truthfulness, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants and the need for participants to be well informed in advance were emphasised. Data collection instruments were delivered earlier to all the participants before the date of the interviews to allow the interviewees to familiarise themselves with questions to be addressed.

Chapter 4 focused on the presentation and the discussion of the key findings of the study. The presentation of the findings was structured around the research questions and centred on the emerging themes. Data was collected with interviews and focus groups. Pseudonyms and coding of participants and schools was done in a table form and thoroughly explained.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

The influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit is a complex issue that concerns school communities and the society as a whole. It was clear from the finding that being poor was not just defined by lack of income only, but by many other social issues. It is no secret that SES played a major role in educational opportunity as well as educational success. Even if two learners attend the exact same school, a learner from a more affluent home has a better chance of succeeding in school though it is not always the case. Being poor is a combination of many aspects such as lack of good education, access to health care, good nutrition, and water. Thus, in order to address issues of poverty and the influence it has on learners' academic performance especially in Grade 10, it is important for schools as well as community members to believe that change is possible. The challenge to reduce poverty is massive, and the resources required to combat it are huge.

Usually, the typical consequences of poverty include alcohol and substance abuse, less access to education, poor housing and living conditions, and increased levels of illness and disease. Seemingly, it was also discovered that parents' education plays a crucial role in the performances of learners at school. Often, parents of these poor learners grew up in poverty themselves, and were either uncomfortable or unfamiliar with educational issues. The high rate of poverty has also caused many children to

drop out of school, thereby causing Vaalwater Circuit to have a high rate of poor performance in Grade 10.

However, despite the influence of poverty on academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit, the researcher also ascertained that poverty should not be used as an excuse by learners from impoverished households not to do well academically or dropping out. The study revealed that even though there were many casualties of poverty academically, there were still a few good lessons to be learnt and good stories to tell, which emerged from poverty. While it is true that learners do come to school with numerous issues and challenges that interfered with their learning, there is a need for educators, principals, and all stakeholders to focus on the learners in an effort of finding ways to help them overcome their challenges and perform better in school. If the government can deliver services for communities equally, there can be a great change. Thus, the researcher believes that improving academic performance of Grade 10 learners will decrease poverty in Vaalwater Circuit.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study makes the following recommendations:

- The DOE should ensure that every school has a library and computer centre so that learners of different grades may have access to those useful facilities. Under normal circumstances, Grade 10 learners should have the basic knowledge of computer skills and the knowledge on how to use a library.
- Government should introduce technical subjects like welding, farming, sewing, carpentry, bricklaying, and a Certificate in Grade 10. That would encourage learners to complete Grade 10 to acquire the certificate and practical experience in such technical subjects. Not all learners are good at reading books.
- The educators must teach the subjects they specialised in to increase the pass rate. Teaching wrong subjects also affect negatively on the academic performance of learners.

- Parents, schools, and educators should improve their working relationship through workshops and home visits. Parents' roles in education should be clearly clarified during such meetings.
- To the learners that cannot clearly interpreted questions in English, the government and schools should consider oral tests as opposed to 'age cohort.' The educator should take the question paper and ask the learner questions orally.
- The government should generate more employment opportunities for as many people as possible. To increase employment opportunities, non-literate people should be taught a few skills to make them employable.
- Government should subsidise companies and encourage them to set up in impoverished areas, to build better infrastructure thus provide economic stimulus for potential investors to create new jobs.
- The government should formulate a policy that will make basic education compulsory for all the children regardless of their SES, and withdraw social grants to school dropouts.
- Educators and other wealthy community members and organisations may as well be encouraged to "adopt a learner," which would be an initiative aimed at motivating and improving the academic performance of learners, particularly the Grade 10 in Vaalwater Circuit. That would save the region and the entire country a lot of wasted talent who dropped out earlier to find employment. When such people adopt a learner, they would look after the general needs of that learner and assist them accordingly. That does not necessarily imply contribution from own pockets, but also using their influence to ask for donations to assist with the learners' needs. Donations may also be in a form of clothes, shoes, books, sanitary pads, or even food for those learners who sometimes went to sleep on empty stomachs.
- Schools can also identify those learners who rely solely on the school nutrition programme for food, and provide them with weekend and school holiday food parcels. Such learners may also be given leadership roles at school or in their classes to make them feel loved and a "part of the family." Roles may include but not limited to school patrollers, classroom monitors, bell ringer, or classroom Covid-19 compliance learner.

- A further study to look into 'the effect of free education in South Africa on the alleviation of poverty' is recommended.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Main question	Guiding question	Possible question/s
	What is the role of school communities in dealing with poverty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role can the school communities play in overcoming poverty?</li> <li>• What role can the learners play to overcome poverty?</li> </ul>
What is the impact of poverty on learner's academic performance in Grade 10?	What is the role of communities in alleviating poverty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the society and communities help in the fight against poverty?</li> </ul>
	What are the challenges facing schools with regard to poverty stricken learners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we encourage and motivate poverty-stricken learners to work hard regardless of their circumstances?</li> </ul>
	What are the possible solutions to poverty alleviation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can be done to reduce poverty in schools?</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Main question	Guiding question	Possible question/s
	What is the role of school communities in dealing with poverty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role can the school communities play in overcoming poverty?</li> <li>• What role can the learners play to overcome poverty?</li> </ul>
What is the impact of poverty on learner's academic performance in Grade 10?	What is the role of communities in alleviating poverty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the society and communities help in the fight against poverty?</li> </ul>
	What are the challenges facing schools with regard to poverty stricken learners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we encourage and motivate poverty-stricken learners to work hard regardless of their circumstances?</li> </ul>
	What are the possible solutions to poverty alleviation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can be done to reduce poverty in schools?</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

## Appendix D: TURN IT IN COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE

## Appendix E: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



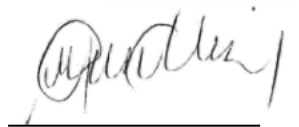
**Marieta Grundling (MBA)**

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366 Rosemary Street  
Grootfontein Country Estates  
Pretoria, 0081  
081 354 1596  
edit@profeditmba.co.za  
12 June 2022

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that the dissertation: ***The Impact of Poverty on the Academic Performance of Grade 10 Learners: A Case in Selected Secondary Schools in Vaalwater Circuit, Limpopo Province*** by **Lesetja Esrom Kgatle** was edited. The language, presentation, and referencing system (both in-text and against the Reference List), were checked and corrected.



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M Grundling

**12 June 2022**

## Appendix F: CONSENT FORMS



### CHILD ASSENT FORM AGES 15-17

<p><b>THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE</b></p>
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**Dear Student/Learner,**

My name is Kgatle L.E (Student No: 220049963). I am a student at the Central University of Technology (CUT). I am inviting you to participate in a research study about “the impact of poverty on the performance of learners in Grade 10 at Vaalwater Circuit.” Your parent(s) know we are talking with you about the study. This form will tell you about the study to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in it. The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether you want to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later on in this form.

#### **STUDY PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this study is to contribute solutions to the problem of the influence of poverty on the performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. You are being asked to take part in the study because of your suitability to the study. You cannot take part in this study if you did not fill- in the consent form and submitted it back to me. If you decide to be in the study, I will ask you to respond to questions in an interview and to take part in focus discussion groups to answer similar questions. Questions in the interviews and focus discussion groups will be the same. The Interviews and Focus Discussions Groups may be recorded, but will only be recorded if you want it to be recorded. Taking part in this study may not have direct benefits to you, but it will help me learn how poor learners struggle in their schoolwork and how the situation can be changed.

There are no foreseeable risks; however, you may experience fatigue, boredom, or anxiety. However, I encourage lively participation. There will also be a break and snacks provided. Your responses will be confidential, however, due to the nature of focus groups, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. Results will only be shared in aggregate form. Data collected will be stored in a locked cabinets, password-protected computer, password-protected files, and/or cloud servers. Only the researcher and the research team will have access to data. Data will be kept safe for up to 3 years after the project is completed, and will be disposed in the following manner: the paper records will be shredded and the digital files will be erased. Your participation in this study is voluntary. No one will get angry or upset if you do not want to do this. You can change your mind anytime if you decide you do not want to be in the study anymore. It will not affect your grade.

There are no direct benefits to participation in this study, however, your participation will help improve the lives of poor learners and help reduce the influence of poverty in schools. You will also not receive any payment for taking part in this study. Only refreshment will be provided. If you have questions about the study, you can ask me now or anytime during the study. You can also call me at 076 400 1021 or e-mail me at [esromles@gmail.com](mailto:esromles@gmail.com). [If this is a student research project, include the contact information for the faculty advisor. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact 076 400 1021. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Signing below means that you have read this form and that you are willing to be in this study.

Name of the Participant (Write your name on the line):

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Participant (Put your signature on the line):

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: GENERAL INFO/CONSENT COVID 19 COMPLIANT



<p><b>THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE</b></p>
--

### Informed Consent Covid 19 compliant

Dear: School Principal/ Teacher/Learner

My name is Mr Kgatle L.E (**Student No: 220049963**) and I am Masters Student in Department of Education at the Central University of Technology (CUT). You are invited to participate in a research study of 'The influence of poverty on the performance of learners'. You were selected as a possible participant because suitability and role at your school. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later on this form.

The purpose of this study is 'to investigate the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in vaalwater circuit'. You will be asked to take part in interview sessions as well as focus group discussions. We expect that you will be in this research study for a maximum of 2 hours. The primary risk of participation is zero. The main benefit will be the knowledge that will be gained from information shared in the process.

The purpose of this study is to to investigate the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in vaalwater circuit. If you agree to participate, you will be one of 14 participants who will be participating in this research.

## **PROCEDURES:**

If you agree to be in the study, you will be expected to answer questions (interviews) about 'The influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners', and also participate in a focus group discussion with other participants to discuss more about the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit. All activities will take place at any place chosen by the researcher, but which will be convenient to you, and will last for a maximum of 2 hours.

There are risks and inconveniences to participating in this study. These include:

1. You may feel anxious and/or fearful of being exposed to COVID-19 in the study.
2. You may be at risk of contracting COVID-19.

However, all Covid-19 safety protocols such as wearing of masks, sanitising of hands and correct social distancing will be observed.

To minimise these risks and inconveniences, the following measures will be taken:

- You may be allowed to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering while participating in focus group discussions or during the interview.

We are further taking the following precautions to minimise of exposure to cove 19:

- All cove 19 safety protocols will be adhered to (hand sanitising, wearing of masks and social distancing).
- Except for the focus group discussion, the interviews may be scheduled at a time that is convenient to you and at a place that is private.

In spite of these precautions, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is still present.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Your responses will be confidential, however, due to the nature of focus groups, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The results if this study may be used

in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. Results will only be shared in aggregate form. Data collected will be stored in a locked cabinets, password-protected computer, password-protected files and/ or cloud servers. Only the researcher and the research team will have access to data. Data will be kept safe for up to 3 years after the project is completed, and will be disposed in the following manner: the paper records will be shredded and the digital files will be erased.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Central University of Technology (CUT).

There are no direct benefits to participation in this study, however, your participation will help reduce the impact of poverty in schools and contribute new knowledge. If you decide not to participate in this study, you have the option to support those who will be taking part in the study. You will not receive payment for taking part in this study. Only refreshment will be served. There will be zero chances of injuries expected from taking part in the study.

If you have questions about the study, please call me at 076 400 1021 or e-mail me at esromles@gmail.com. You will be given a copy of this form for your records. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact CUT or supervisor.

### **PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT:**

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the study. [Release statement for audio or videotaping must be inserted here if applicable. If video and/or audio recording, add the following statement: "Please check the option that applies to you before signing" with the following options:

- I give permission for my interviews to be audio (or video) taped.
  
- I do not give permission for my interviews to be audio (or video) taped.

I have been informed about the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in this study. I understand that regardless of any precautions taken, a possible risk of exposure to the virus still exists.

Name of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H: INFORMED CONSENT



<p><b>THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE</b></p>
--

### Informed Consent

#### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE:

Dear Educator/Learner/Principal

My name is Mr Kgatle L.E (**Student No: 220049963**) and I am master's student in the faculty of humanities at Central University of Technology. You are invited to participate in a research study of '**the influence of poverty on the performance of Grade 10 learners in vaalwater circuit**'. You were selected as a possible participant because suitability to the study. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later on in this form.

The purpose of this study is to contribute solutions in to the influence of poverty on the performance of Grade 10 learners. You will be asked to [include a brief statement of the procedures that will be done. You will be asked to take part in interviews sessions and focus group discussion session. We expect that you will be in this research study for one hour per day for three days. The primary risk of participation is zero. The main benefit is the knowledge and experience that will be shared.

## **STUDY PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this study is to contribute solutions to the problem of the influence of poverty on the performance of Grade 10 learners. If you agree to participate, you will be one of fourteen (14) participants who will be participating in this research.

## **PROCEDURES:**

If you agree to be in the study, you will be expected to answer questions (**Interviews**) about 'The influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater Circuit', and also participate in a **Focus Group Discussions** with other participants to discuss more about "the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit." All activities will take place at any place chosen by the researcher, but which will be convenient to you, and will last for a maximum of 2 hours.

There are risks and inconveniences to participating in this study. These include:

1. You may feel anxious and/or uncomfortable of answering certain questions in the study.

To minimise these risks and inconveniences, the following measures will be taken:

- You may be allowed to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering while participating in focus group discussions or during the interview.
- Except for the focus group discussion, the interviews may be scheduled at a time that is convenient to you and at a place that is private.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Your responses will be confidential, however, due to the nature of focus groups, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. Results will only be shared in aggregate form. Data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet,

password-protected computer, password-protected files and/ or cloud servers. Only the researcher and the research team will have access to data. Data will be kept safe for up to 3 years after the project is completed, and will be disposed in the following manner: the paper records will be shredded and the digital files will be erased.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with your school.

### **BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:**

There are no direct benefits to participation in this study, however, your participation will help improve the lives of poor learners and help reduce the influence of poverty in schools. You will not receive monetary payment for taking part in this study. Only refreshment will be provided.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:**

If you decide not to participate in this study, you have the option to remain in your class or at school. This will not affect your studies or relationship with the Central University of Technology. There are no anticipated injuries associated with the study. However, any unexpected injuries or medical emergencies during the study will be attended to by the research team and/or the school.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

If you have questions about the study, please call me at 076 400 1021 or e-mail me at [esromles@gmail.com](mailto:esromles@gmail.com). You will be given a copy of this form for your records. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact 076 400 1021.

### **PARTICIPANT CONSENT:**

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the study. Please check the option that applies to you before signing” with the following options:

I give permission for my Focus Group Discussions and Interviews to be audio/video taped.

I do not give permission for my Focus Group Discussions and Interviews to be audio/video taped.

Name of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix I: GENERAL INFORMATION FORM: PARTICIPANTS



### THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

#### Information Sheet

**Dear Participant,**

My name is Mr Kgatle L.E (Student No: 220049963) and I am Masters Student in Department of Education at the Central University of Technology (CUT). I am conducting a research study on “the influence of poverty on the academic performance of Grade 10 learners in Vaalwater circuit.” The purpose of this form is to inform you about the study.

#### **Why am I being invited to take part in this study?**

You were selected as a possible participant because of your suitability and role at your school, to contribute to new knowledge and solutions in the topic. If you agree to participate in the study, you will ask to take part in **Interview** sessions as well as **Focus Group Discussions**. Audio tape may be used as back up for data collection during the proceedings only with your permission. We expect that you will be in this research study for a maximum of 2 hours.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate at any time, even after the study has started. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty, and you will be able to keep any incentives you have earned up to the point at which you withdraw. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is the contribution

towards reduction of the influence of poverty on the academic performance in schools as well as contributing to new knowledge.

### **What happens to the information collected for the study?**

Your responses will be confidential, however, due to the nature of focus groups, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. Data will be stored in locked cabinets and/ or password protected computer. Only the researcher and the research team will have access to data. Data will be retained for up to 3 years after the project is completed, and will be disposed by shredding of papers and erasing digital files.

### **Is there any risk to me by being in this study? If so, how will these risks be minimised?**

There are minimal risks and inconveniences to participating in this study. These include:

To minimise these risks and inconveniences, the following measures will be taken:

- You may be allowed to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering while participating in focus group discussions or during the interview.
- Except for the focus group discussion, the interviews may be scheduled at a time that is convenient to you and at a place that is private.

### **Who should I contact for questions?**

If you have questions about the study, please call me at 076 400 1021 or e-mail me at [esromles@gmail.com](mailto:esromles@gmail.com). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the research team at 076 400 1021.

Name of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix J: GENERAL PARENTAL CONSENT FORM



<p><b>THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE</b></p>
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### Memo go motswadi:

#### Go Motswadi/Mohlokomedi wa ngwana,

Leina la ka ke Kgatle L.E (Student No: 220049963). Ke moithuti wa dithuto tša Masters go tšwa Central University of Technology (CUT). Ke mema ngwana wag ago go tla go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše mabapi le hlogo ya “*Seabe sa bohloki mo katlegong yatša dithuto go barutwana ba Grade 10 mo sedikuthotong sa Vaalwater, Waterberg district ya Limpopo.*” Ngwana wa gago o kgopelwa go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše ka lebaka la tsebo le maswanedi a go ka fana ka tshedimošo yeo e hlokagalago gore dinyakišišo tše e be katlego. Ngwana wa gago a ka se dumelelwe go tšea karolo ge o sa tlatša foromo ye, le go e bušetša go nna. O kgopelwa go bala foromo ye ka hlokomelo e kgolo le go botšiša dipotšišo mo o gakanegago pele o saena. O swanetše go ba le mengwaga e lesome seswai goba go feta go dumelelwa go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše.

Maikemišetšo a dinyakišišo tše ke go hwetša tharollo ya bothata bja “*Seabe sa bohloki go katlego ya barutwana ba Grade 10 mo sedikothutong sa Vaalwater, Waterberg District ya Limpopo.*” Ngwana wa gago o tla tšea karolo mo go **Interviews** le **Focus Group Discussions**. Morero wo o ka tšea tekano ya di iri tše pedi. Kgonagalo ya dikgobalo ga ya lebelelwa, eupša ge di ka ba gona di tla elwa šedi. Ga go na tefelo ya mašelang mo dinyakišišong tše, fela ngwana wa gago o tla ikgantšha ka go kgatha tema tharolong ya bothata bjo bo nyakišišwago. Ge ngwana wa gago a ka kgatha tema, etlaba o mongwe wa batšea-karolo ba lesome-nne (14) bao ba memilwego.

Ditiragalo ka moka di tla tšea karolo lefelong leo letla kgethwago ke banyakišiši, fela etlaba leo le kgotsosatšago batšea-karolo kamoka.

Go ka ba le ditšhitišo tše mmalwa tšeo di ka bago gona ka nako ya dinyakišišo, go akaretšwa:

- Ngwana wa gago a ka hloka boitshepo ka nako ya dipotšišo.
- Nako yeo o hlokegago e kaba e telele mo go ngwana.
- Ga gona sephiri ka nako ya Focus Group Discussions.

Tharollo ya tšeo ka moka e akaretša gore:

- Ngwana a ka se gapeletšego go araba potšišo yeo a sa lokologego go e araba.
- Ngwana a ka lpeela thoko dipotšišong tše disa mo swarego botse.
- Ngwana a ka nyakelwa thušo ya badirela-leago.
- Ngwana a ka kgetha go botšišwa dipotšišo ka nako ya gagwe, lefelong leo yena a ikwang a bolokegile.

### **Tšhireletšo ya tshedimošo le batšea-karolo:**

Dipoledišano le dikarabo tša ngwana wa gago e tla ba sephiri, fela, le ge go le bjalo kgonagalo ya sephiri ke ye nnyane mo go Focus Group Discussions, moo batšea-karolo ba kgathago tema ka nako e tee, felo gotee. Dipelo tša dinyakišišo tše di ka šomišwa mo go dipego, dithutofahlošo le diphatlalatšo, feela leina la ngwana wa gago le ka se tšweletšwe. Tshedimošo kamoka yeo e kgobokantšwego e tla bolokwa mafelong a bohlokwa ao a šireleditšwego. Ke fela monyakišiši le bao a šomago le bona bao baka fihlelelago tshedimošo yeo. Tshedimošo ye etla bolokwa fao tekano ya mengwaga e meraro, morago ga moo matlakala a tla fišwa le go phumulwa mo ditirišong tša theknolotši.

### **Go kgatha-tema ga boithaopo:**

Go kgatha tema ga ngwana wag ago ga se kgapeletšo. O ka gomiša tumelelo ya go tšea karolo ga ngwana wa gago nako efe kapa efe. Go ka sebe le kotlo ya go ikgogela morago, ebile seo se ka se ame dithuto le tswaro ya ngwana wa gago mo sekolong. Ngwana wa gago le yena o na le tokelo ya go ikgogela morago ge a nyaka, ga go na kotlo ya seo.

Le ge go sena dipoelo tšeo di lebanego go ngwana wa gago, se bohlokwa ke ge ngwana wa gago a kgathile tema go thuša mo tharolong ya bothata bja “*Seabe sa bohloki mo go katlego ya dithuto ya bana ba Grade 10 mo Vaalwater Circuit, Limpopo province.*” Ge eba o ka se kgone go dumelela ngwana wa gago go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, o sana le monyetla wa go thekga bao ba tšerego sephetho sa go tšea karolo. Ga gona diputseletšo tša mašeleng go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, feela dinwamaphodi di tla fiwa. Dikgobalo ga di a letelwa, ge di ka ba gona di tla elwa šedi.

Ge go na le dipotšišo mabapi le dinyakišišo tše, o ka nteletša mo dinomorong tša 076 400 1021 goba e-mail ya esromles@gmail.com. O na le tokelo ya go hwetša sengwalwa (copy) sa foromo ye go ipolokela yona. Ge go na le dingongorego ka ditokelo tša gago bjalo ka motšea-karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, o ka ikgokaganya le banyakišiši goba Central University of Technology.

**Tumelelo ya motswadi:**

Go saena foromo ye go laetša go fana ka tumelelo ya gore ngwana wa gago a ka tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše. Ka kgopelo tlatša lepokišaneng la maleba go fana ka tumelelo ya kgatišo go ba aowa ya dipoledišano le ngwana wa gago:

- Ke fa tumelelo ya gore ngwana waka a ka gatišwa le go tšeiwa diswantšho ka nako ya dinyakišišo.
- Ga ke dumele gore ngwana waka a ka gatišwa goba go tšeiwa diswantšho ka nako ya dinyakišišo.

Leina la ngwana: \_\_\_\_\_

Leina la motswadi: \_\_\_\_\_

Mosaeno wa motswadi: \_\_\_\_\_

Letšatšikgwedi/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix K: GENERAL PARENTAL CONSENT FORM



### THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

#### Memo go motswadi:

#### Go Motswadi/Mohlakomedi wa ngwana,

Leina la ka ke Kgatle L.E (Student No: 220049963). Ke moithuti wa dithuto tša Masters go tšwa Central University of Technology (CUT). Ke mema ngwana wag ago go tla go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše mabapi le hlogo ya “*Seabe sa bohloki mo katlegong yatša dithuto go barutwana ba Grade 10 mo sedikuthotong sa Vaalwater, Waterberg district ya Limpopo.*” Ngwana wa gago o kgopelwa go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše ka lebaka la tsebo le maswanedi a go ka fana ka tshedimošo yeo e hlokagalago gore dinyakišišo tše e be katlego. Ngwana wa gago a ka se dumelelwe go tšea karolo ge o sa tlatša foromo ye, le go e bušetša go nna. O kgopelwa go bala foromo ye ka hlokomelo e kgolo le go botšiša dipotšišo mo o gakanegago pele o saena. O swanetše go ba le mengwaga e lesome seswai goba go feta go dumelelwa go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše.

Maikemišetšo a dinyakišišo tše ke go hwetša tharollo ya bothata bja “*Seabe sa bohloki go katlego ya barutwana ba Grade 10 mo sedikothutong sa Vaalwater, Waterberg District ya Limpopo.*” Ngwana wa gago o tla tšea karolo mo go **Interviews** le **Focus Group Discussions**. Morero wo o ka tšea tekano ya di iri tše pedi. Kgonagalo ya dikgobalo ga ya lebelelwa, eupša ge di ka ba gona di tla elwa šedi. Ga go na tefelo ya mašeleng mo dinyakišišong tše, fela ngwana wa gago o tla ikgantšha ka go kgatha tema tharolong ya bothata bjo bo nyakišišwago. Ge ngwana wa gago a ka kgatha tema, etlaba o mongwe wa batšea-karolo ba lesome-nne (14) bao ba memilwego.

Ditiragalo ka moka di tla tšea karolo lefelong leo letla kgethwago ke banyakišiši, fela etlaba leo le kgotsosatšago batšea-karolo kamoka.

Go ka ba le ditšhitišo tše mmalwa tšeo di ka bago gona ka nako ya dinyakišišo, go akaretšwa:

- Ngwana wa gago a ka hloka boitshepo ka nako ya dipotšišo.
- Nako yeo o hlokegago e kaba e telele mo go ngwana.
- Ga gona sephiri ka nako ya Focus Group Discussions.

Tharollo ya tšeo ka moka e akaretša gore:

- Ngwana a ka se gapeletšego go araba potšišo yeo a sa lokologego go e araba.
- Ngwana a ka lpeela thoko dipotšišong tše disa mo swarego botse.
- Ngwana a ka nyakelwa thušo ya badirela-leago.
- Ngwana a ka kgetha go botšišwa dipotšišo ka nako ya gagwe, lefelong leo yena a ikwang a bolokegile.

### **Tšhireletšo ya tshedimošo le batšea-karolo:**

Dipoledišano le dikarabo tša ngwana wa gago e tla ba sephiri, fela, le ge go le bjalo kgonagalo ya sephiri ke ye nnyane mo go Focus Group Discussions, moo batšea-karolo ba kgathago tema ka nako e tee, felo gotee. Dipelo tša dinyakišišo tše di ka šomišwa mo go dipego, dithutofahlošo le diphatlalatšo, feela leina la ngwana wa gago le ka se tšweletšwe. Tshedimošo kamoka yeo e kgobokantšwego e tla bolokwa mafelong a bohlokwa ao a šireleditšwego. Ke fela monyakišiši le bao a šomago le bona bao baka fihlelelago tshedimošo yeo. Tshedimošo ye etla bolokwa fao tekano ya mengwaga e meraro, morago ga moo matlakala a tla fišwa le go phumulwa mo ditirišong tša theknolotši.

### **Go kgatha-tema ga boithaopo:**

Go kgatha tema ga ngwana wag ago ga se kgapeletšo. O ka gomiša tumelelo ya go tšea karolo ga ngwana wa gago nako efe kapa efe. Go ka sebe le kotlo ya go ikgogela morago, ebile seo se ka se ame dithuto le tswaro ya ngwana wa gago mo sekolong. Ngwana wa gago le yena o na le tokelo ya go ikgogela morago ge a nyaka, ga go na kotlo ya seo.

Le ge go sena dipoelo tšeo di lebanego go ngwana wa gago, se bohlokwa ke ge ngwana wa gago a kgathile tema go thuša mo tharolong ya bothata bja “*Seabe sa bohloki mo go katlego ya dithuto ya bana ba Grade 10 mo Vaalwater Circuit, Limpopo province.*” Ge eba o ka se kgone go dumelela ngwana wa gago go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, o sana le monyetla wa go thekga bao ba tšerego sephetho sa go tšea karolo. Ga gona diputseletšo tša mašeleng go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, feela dinwamaphodi di tla fiwa. Dikgobalo ga di a letelwa, ge di ka ba gona di tla elwa šedi.

Ge go na le dipotšišo mabapi le dinyakišišo tše, o ka nteletša mo dinomorong tša 076 400 1021 goba e-mail ya esromles@gmail.com. O na le tokelo ya go hwetša sengwalwa (copy) sa foromo ye go ipolokela yona. Ge go na le dingongorego ka ditokelo tša gago bjalo ka motšea-karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, o ka ikgokaganya le banyakišiši goba Central University of Technology.

### **Tumelelo ya motswadi:**

Go saena foromo ye go laetša go fana ka tumelelo ya gore ngwana wa gago a ka tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše. Ka kgopelo tlatša lepokišaneng la maleba go fana ka tumelelo ya kgatišo go ba aowa ya dipoledišano le ngwana wa gago:

Ke fa tumelelo ya gore ngwana waka a ka gatišwa le go tšeiwa diswantšho ka nako ya dinyakišišo.

Ga ke dumele gore ngwana waka a ka gatišwa goba go tšeiwa diswantšho ka nako ya dinyakišišo.

Leina la ngwana: \_\_\_\_\_

Leina la motswadi: \_\_\_\_\_

Mosaeno wa motswadi: \_\_\_\_\_

Letšatšikgwedi/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix L: GENERAL PARENTAL CONSENT FORM



### THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS: A CASE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VAALWATER CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

#### Memo go motswadi:

#### Go Motswadi/Mohlakomedi wa ngwana,

Leina la ka ke Kgatle L.E (Student No: 220049963). Ke moithuti wa dithuto tša Masters go tšwa Central University of Technology (CUT). Ke mema ngwana wag ago go tla go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše mabapi le hlogo ya “*Seabe sa bohloki mo katlegong yatša dithuto go barutwana ba Grade 10 mo sedikuthotong sa Vaalwater, Waterberg district ya Limpopo.*” Ngwana wa gago o kgopelwa go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše ka lebaka la tsebo le maswanedi a go ka fana ka tshedimošo yeo e hlokagalago gore dinyakišišo tše e be katlego. Ngwana wa gago a ka se dumelelwe go tšea karolo ge o sa tlatša foromo ye, le go e bušetša go nna. O kgopelwa go bala foromo ye ka hlokomelo e kgolo le go botšiša dipotšišo mo o gakanegago pele o saena. O swanetše go ba le mengwaga e lesome seswai goba go feta go dumelelwa go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše.

Maikemišetšo a dinyakišišo tše ke go hwetša tharollo ya bothata bja “*Seabe sa bohloki go katlego ya barutwana ba Grade 10 mo sedikothutong sa Vaalwater, Waterberg District ya Limpopo.*” Ngwana wa gago o tla tšea karolo mo go **Interviews** le **Focus Group Discussions**. Morero wo o ka tšea tekano ya di iri tše pedi. Kgonagalo ya dikgobalo ga ya lebelelwa, eupša ge di ka ba gona di tla elwa šedi. Ga go na tefelo ya mašeleng mo dinyakišišong tše, fela ngwana wa gago o tla ikgantšha ka go kgatha tema tharolong ya bothata bjo bo nyakišišwago. Ge ngwana wa gago a ka kgatha tema, etlaba o mongwe wa batšea-karolo ba lesome-nne (14) bao ba memilwego.

Ditiragalo ka moka di tla tšea karolo lefelong leo letla kgethwago ke banyakišiši, fela etlaba leo le kgotsfatšago batšea-karolo kamoka.

Go ka ba le ditšhitišo tše mmalwa tšeo di ka bago gona ka nako ya dinyakišišo, go akaretšwa:

- Ngwana wa gago a ka hloka boitshepo ka nako ya dipotšišo.
- Nako yeo o hlokegago e kaba e telele mo go ngwana.
- Ga gona sephiri ka nako ya Focus Group Discussions.

Tharollo ya tšeo ka moka e akaretša gore:

- Ngwana a ka se gapeletšego go araba potšišo yeo a sa lokologego go e araba.
- Ngwana a ka lpeela thoko dipotšišong tše disa mo swarego botse.
- Ngwana a ka nyakelwa thušo ya badirela-leago.
- Ngwana a ka kgetha go botšišwa dipotšišo ka nako ya gagwe, lefelong leo yena a ikwang a bolokegile.

### **Tšhireletšo ya tshedimošo le batšea-karolo:**

Dipoledišano le dikarabo tša ngwana wa gago e tla ba sephiri, fela, le ge go le bjalo kgonagalo ya sephiri ke ye nnyane mo go Focus Group Discussions, moo batšea-karolo ba kgathago tema ka nako e tee, felo gotee. Dipelo tša dinyakišišo tše di ka šomišwa mo go dipego, dithutofahlošo le diphatlalatšo, feela leina la ngwana wa gago le ka se tšweletšwe. Tshedimošo kamoka yeo e kgobokantšwego e tla bolokwa mafelong a bohlokwa ao a šireleditšwego. Ke fela monyakišiši le bao a šomago le bona bao baka fihlelelago tshedimošo yeo. Tshedimošo ye etla bolokwa fao tekano ya mengwaga e meraro, morago ga moo matlakala a tla fišwa le go phumulwa mo ditirišong tša theknolotši.

### **Go kgatha-tema ga boithaopo:**

Go kgatha tema ga ngwana wag ago ga se kgapeletšo. O ka gomiša tumelelo ya go tšea karolo ga ngwana wa gago nako efe kapa efe. Go ka sebe le kotlo ya go ikgogela morago, ebile seo se ka se ame dithuto le tswaro ya ngwana wa gago mo sekolong. Ngwana wa gago le yena o na le tokelo ya go ikgogela morago ge a nyaka, ga go na kotlo ya seo.

Le ge go sena dipoelo tšeo di lebanego go ngwana wa gago, se bohlokwa ke ge ngwana wa gago a kgathile tema go thuša mo tharolong ya bothata bja “*Seabe sa bohloki mo go katlego ya dithuto ya bana ba Grade 10 mo Vaalwater Circuit, Limpopo province.*” Ge eba o ka se kgone go dumelela ngwana wa gago go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, o sana le monyetla wa go thekga bao ba tšerego sephetho sa go tšea karolo. Ga gona diputseletšo tša mašeleng go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, feela dinwamaphodi di tla fiwa. Dikgobalo ga di a letelwa, ge di ka ba gona di tla elwa šedi.

Ge go na le dipotšišo mabapi le dinyakišišo tše, o ka nteletša mo dinomorong tša 076 400 1021 goba e-mail ya esromles@gmail.com. O na le tokelo ya go hwetša sengwalwa (copy) sa foromo ye go ipolokela yona. Ge go na le dingongorego ka ditokelo tša gago bjalo ka motšea-karolo mo dinyakišišong tše, o ka ikgokaganya le banyakišiši goba Central University of Technology.

**Tumelelo ya motswadi:**

Go saena foromo ye go laetša go fana ka tumelelo ya gore ngwana wa gago a ka tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše. Ka kgopelo tlatša lepokišaneng la maleba go fana ka tumelelo ya kgatišo go ba aowa ya dipoledišano le ngwana wa gago:

Ke fa tumelelo ya gore ngwana waka a ka gatišwa le go tšeiwa diswantšho ka nako ya dinyakišišo.

Ga ke dumele gore ngwana waka a ka gatišwa goba go tšeiwa diswantšho ka nako ya dinyakišišo.

Leina la ngwana: \_\_\_\_\_

Leina la motswadi: \_\_\_\_\_

Mosaeno wa motswadi: \_\_\_\_\_

Letšatšikgwedi/Date: \_\_\_\_\_