



**The impact of social issues on the academic performance of secondary school
learners in the Palala circuit division of Waterberg district in the Limpopo
Province**

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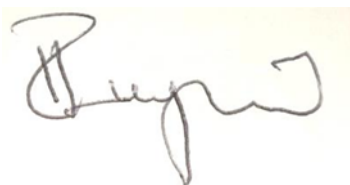
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2022

DECLARATION

I, Ramokone Lillian Whyken, hereby solemnly declare that this thesis titled: The impact of social issues on the academic performance of secondary school learners in the Palala circuit division of Waterberg district in the Limpopo Province, submitted to the central university of Technology for Masters in Education is my own original independent work except where otherwise indicated. I further clarify that this dissertation does not contain other people's data, text, pictures, graphics or other information unless specifically acknowledged and the source being detailed in the reference section; where the exact wording is used, it has been placed within quotation marks and referenced.

My dissertation has never been presented or submitted for any academic purposes to another university. This dissertation complies with policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and code of academic integrity of the Central University of Technology.



SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

MAY 2022

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my late parents Alfred Chef and Mphephu Emily Masiah, my late brothers Godfrey and Howard Masiah, my late nephew Cecil Masiah, my late in laws Patrick and Suzan Whyken, my late cousin Josephine Mahlaba Mbokane, including my children Nhlanhla and Mosa Whyken, and my nephew Sello Nkwe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following:

- Firstly, I submit my heart-felt and humble gratitude to my Almighty God for giving me life, granting me the strength and ability to cope throughout my study journey even under challenging situation of Covid-19. To God the glory.
- My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr MA Modise, for his patience, understanding, support, and guidance. His dynamism, vision, sincerity, and motivation have deeply inspired me.
- To my co-supervisor Prof P. Sepeng - the completion of my study could have not been accomplished without his support and guidance throughout this research. It was an honour and great privilege to work and study under their great supervision.
- To my former colleague, Dr Maluleke - I would also like to thank him for his friendship, advices, guidance, and his words of support and encouragement throughout my study process.
- To my mentor, Dr Ngobeni – I have immeasurable appreciation and deepest gratitude for the help and encouragement for my study registration, sharing your knowledge and your advice throughout my study journey.
- To all my colleagues from CUT, including Mr H Phage and my friends for their entire help and support during my research work.
- Thank you to Ms Marieta Grundling for editing the document.
- I would like to express my gratitude towards my family, my fiancé Ntshimane Johannes Morobe, Mosa, Nhlanhla, and Oratilwe Whyken for their love, patience, and understanding. They stood by me throughout the period of my research.
- To my sisters (Hellen, Evelyn, Cathren, and Jacky), my younger brother Oupa, my nieces Lerato, Tumishang, and Mmapaseka, my nephews Lehlogonolo and Sello – you have been my pillar of strength throughout my educational journey of my study.
- To Waterberg district (Limpopo) under district director, Madela S.J for giving me the permission to conduct my research, including the two circuit managers Mr Marakalla of Palala North and Mr Mongwe of Palala South.

- Special thanks to all the principals, HOD's, Life orientation teachers and learners from the 10 selected schools in Palala circuit for their willingness and enthusiasm to participate and add valuable contributions to my studies.
- Lastly, thanks to the SETA bursary fund for their financial support to complete my study project.

ABSTRACT

Social issues in secondary schools in South Africa are a growing phenomenon, regardless of a new government and newly amended policies promising equal opportunities for access to adequate education. There are still several barriers that prevents and forces learners to drop out of school or not consider school as an important institution to draw knowledge from. As such, it is important to disclose some of these social issues and their impact on the academic performance of learners. The study explores the social issues that contribute to the poor performance of secondary school learners in South Africa, specifically the Palala circuit in the Waterberg district, Limpopo. A mixed research method is used (qualitative and quantitative) to investigate the possible improvements that could be used to deal with the social issues facing secondary school learners. Questionnaire surveys were distributed to 10 principals, 10 Head of Departments (HoDs), 10 Life Orientation teachers, and 30 learners, 3 per school in the 10 selected schools from the Palala circuit division. Interviews were conducted with the same participants. The study revealed some of the social issues that affect the academic performance of learners in secondary schools in the Palala circuit division, with some of the predominant social issues being poverty, teenage pregnancy, and unemployment. The key findings showed a correlation between what has been reported through literature, and this study. Findings indicate that participants selected prominent social issues that affect the academic performance and based on the top five social issues that were selected, literature includes those selected. Considering the comments from the participants, it shows how the trends of the social issues interrelate to a negative implication on the academic outcomes of secondary school learners. Learners and teachers revealed known barriers and challenges they face with the mentioned social issues. The study recommends that schools should establish functional health, alcohol, and drug committees that will ensure that learners do not use drugs, alcohol, and other substances that could lead to poor academic performance due to consistent absenteeism, bullying, and dropout. These committees should also invite learners' role models, social, and former students to give motivational talks that would show how they themselves addressed challenges when they were still learners and the dangers of not focusing on their schoolwork.

Keywords: academic performance; learners; secondary school; social issues

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
StatsSA	Statistic South Africa
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings are naturally social beings in their daily lives and in almost everything they do, they interact with other individuals, which is why they tend to feel the need to belong. Their interactions in society tend to form a way of life where they live by certain morals, beliefs, and traditions; some of these have a positive impact whilst others have a negative impact on different individuals, and this impact are the root of social issues that we all face. Learners also face numerous social issues within the education system, some of which need serious intervention. Social issues that need intervention within schools include but are not limited to bullying, poverty, and teenage pregnancy. There are certain measures put in place to manage these situations but in some instances, it does not resolve the issues.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As in many other countries, education remains one of the most important basic human rights and needs in South Africa (Moyo, 2013). However, how accessible education is to learners remain questionable and will certainly be accounted for throughout this study. With the pursuit of disclosing underlying social issues faced by South African learners, it is important to also consider the implications of the setbacks the Apartheid regime has contributed to the education system in the country. The Apartheid regime played a big role in segregating learners of colour, who now reside in areas stricken by a wide range of social issues, including socio-economic status, environmental, and psychological factors, which are key factors contributing to the known social issues faced by learners (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015; Taylor, 2010). However, the government after democracy in 1994, has allocated funds and came up policies and strategies to eradicate the inequality and segregation because of the oppression from the apartheid era (Taylor, 2010). The government has managed to allocate funds including social grants and food schemes in schools with the goal of making education more accessible for those in need, usually the poverty-stricken groups from rural areas. However, even with the allocation of funds and the provided access to education, there

are barriers that prevent some students/learners from attending school on a daily basis or even attending at all.

It is important to acknowledge the effects of the environment people live in. An environment is unarguably a contributing factor in a person's growth, as there is a difference in the welfare of people from different environments. Teh and Otman (2018) differentiate between people from different environments, stating that a healthy environment is more likely to rear a perfect individual, while a less or unhealthy environment will rear a problematic/troublesome person. It is important to look into the demographics of students/learners while analysing and examining the possible social issues challenging them. Teh *et al.* (2018:930) further state that, "the environment is a contributing factor to students' delinquency such as loitering, playing truant, bullying, skipping, and more". To some extent, this needs to be looked at from a South African viewpoint, as some of the highlighted delinquencies are prominent in South Africa. Considering the inequality in South Africa, where the greater part still earns below minimum wage, the environment they come from and the high rate of crime, a clear picture of how learners struggle in their academics is needed.

People reside in different areas of the country, some live in suburbs, some in townships, and others in rural areas, and it is clear that the standard of living, as per the StatsSA report, is not the same, with an increment of only 18-22% for Black people, 40% of Coloureds, 75% Asian, and 85% White living in the middle-class bracket (StatsSA, 2009). Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015) conducted a study on teachers' understanding of inclusive education in a journal titled *Enacting understanding of inclusion in complex contexts: classroom practices of South African teachers*, and one of the things discussed in the journal is that classrooms comprise of a heterogeneous mix of learners. This entails the difference in race, tradition, gender, beliefs, language, ability, and capabilities, and this is the same for all learners residing in different parts of the country, whether they come from rich or poor backgrounds. There will be a difference in traits and capabilities despite the social factors/issues affecting them individually.

Among other issues, some of the prevalent social issues facing most South African secondary schools are poverty, pregnancy, crime, bullying, and early parenthood.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Marx (2018), a successful intervention to overcome the impact of social issues in schools is more likely to raise resources to keep the intervention going. Meaning an evaluation of existing programmes that are available will assist with indicating which areas of the intervention needs to be improved, and changes that need to be implemented to make the improved interventions more effective.

The researcher, as a teacher with many years of experience, noticed that the issues of bullying, substance abuse, racism, teenage pregnancy, and poverty have long been there in schools, and it is important that learners and organisations try to prevent it from perpetuating; therefore, strategies must be created and implemented. Social issues in schools are extremely common, and the education system should focus on this, as it affects everyone and is a collective responsibility.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study comprises of a primary research question and secondary research questions. The primary question emanated from the need to address and advocate for ways to combat the social issues faced by students in secondary schools, in Limpopo, Waterberg district.

1.4.1 Main research question

How best can the known, social issues be controlled in Secondary Schools?

1.4.2 Sub research questions

- What are the main causes and effects of social issues?
- What impact does these social issues have on the future of learners?
- How can the education system address social issues in schools?

1.4.3 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study was to provide a comprehensive review of the different literature and practices within the education system in Limpopo. The research objectives include:

- To outline the main causes and effects of social issues.
- To outline the impact that social issues have on the future of learners.
- To outline how the education system can address social issues in schools through implementing prevention programmes and collaborating with other organisations and governmental departments.

Both the aim and objective of the study are to identify, analyse, and provide solutions to the social issues that affect secondary school learners in South Africa. The overall objective of the study was to provide a comprehensive review of the different literature and practices within the education system in Limpopo that are used, and as mentioned, formulate some of the solutions that can be implemented in secondary schools to combat social issues.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Upon completion, this study may provide insightful information to the government and other education stakeholders to review some of the social issues secondary school students are exposed to, and suggest a response to address and eliminate them. Because the main objective is to identify, analyse, and provide solutions for the social issues in secondary schools, it opens opportunities for further research to be conducted on the same topic, but with a larger sample size, and can be scrutinised for opposition in other research provided there are proven and reliable findings from those studies. The research aims to contribute to the practice and academia in South Africa and extend to an international academia contribution.

1.6 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale for the study is to identify, analyse, and formulate a response on the social issues in secondary schools. Before revealing the importance of the study,

social issues in Secondary Schools globally were identified, then the identified social issues were analysed and categorised based on their applicability to the South Africa, context, lastly research tools were used to formulate solutions for the identified social issues and provide mitigation strategies. The importance of the study is to reveal the social issues experienced by secondary school learners, and to recommend practical applications to solve these issues.

The findings of this study may be of vital importance to the government and education stakeholders, to gain a better understanding of the social issues in schools, and help them to determine ways of managing these issues through research and practical application.

1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE

The new South Africa, post-apartheid and newly amended policies promised to offer equal opportunities to every citizen in having access to adequate education; however, there is still a number of challenges that prevent and forces other citizens, especially children between 7 and 18 years of age to drop out of school, or consider school as unimportant (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015; Taylor, 2010). This is a result of collective failures in the implementation of strategies and inadequate solutions to remedy the situation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the social issues that contribute to the poor performance of secondary school learners in South Africa, and to scrutinise the failed solutions already implemented to solve social issues affecting secondary school learners.

The study investigates the social issues, while proposing solutions in secondary schools in South Africa, particularly in the Palala circuit division of the Waterberg district in Limpopo. The study firstly explored the social issues faced in schools by applying meta-synthesis methods to identify the research gap, problem, and questions, and furthermore to identify social issues in schools globally. The study then analyses the identified social issues based on the applicability in the South African secondary school context, and lastly, through questionnaire surveys and interviews, solutions are proposed.

As with every other country, education remains one of the most important basic human rights and needs, meaning every person has a right to education (Moyo, 2013). The

question remains: How accessible is education? It will be addressed throughout this study. Humans are natural social beings in their daily lives, and in almost everything they do, they interact with other individuals, which is why they tend to feel the need to belong (Starratt, 2004). Their interactions in society tend to form a way of life where they live by certain morals, beliefs, and traditions. Some of these have a positive impact while others have a negative impact on different individuals, and these are at the root of the social issues that we all face. Learners also face numerous social issues within the education system, some of which need serious intervention. Social issues that need intervention within schools include but are not limited to bullying, poverty, and teenage pregnancy.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research methodology can be defined as a channel or route used in research to guide the researcher to find solutions and answers to a research problem; it may be from following a framework, research onion, or any flow chart (Kumar, 2011). To account for the research problem, a route is followed in an attempt to find answers and deal with the research gap in the study.

Initially, the study employs a meta-synthesis approach, which explores the available literature from secondary sources, help to identify the research gap, research problem, and research questions; and then a population of interest and a sample size is developed. Furthermore, by choosing to employ mixed method research (both qualitative and quantitative methods) in-depth interviews are used to conduct exploratory research and an online survey for descriptive quantifiable research. From collecting data, an analysis is done and solutions and recommendations are provided for the research problem.

1.8.1 Research approach

This research employs an epistemology approach, narrowed to two philosophical concepts namely positivism and interpretivism. Positivism focuses on the objective knowledge, which is derived from the empirical nature of study and supported by facts and quantifiable observations, and interpretivism focuses on the subjective knowledge derived from people's perspectives and understanding (GuhaThakurta *et al.*, 2015).

This particular research approach works in a sequential manner, with the research approach and method structured in the study, as the quantitative study is based on the concept of positivism. Positivism is approached through a method of collecting primary data, and involve the development of hypotheses, which is later tested and confirmed with data to answer the research problem. It also caters for the qualitative study as it considers people's knowledge, the subjective meaning of things, and social phenomena through the interpretivist approach (GuhaThakurta *et al.*, 2015).

The selection of the epistemology approach is to cater for the research methods, as they work in a sequential manner. Because of the nature of the epistemology approach, to account for both the positivism and interpretivism concept, an incorporation of mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) is introduced to link the two approaches (positivism and interpretivism) with the two methods (quantitative and qualitative). Furthermore, it assists to collect accurate and reliable information for analysis to formulate a solution to the research problem.

1.8.2 Research design

Akhtar, Shah, Rafiq and Khan (2016) describe a research design as a platform or a base that allows all the research elements to combine for a particular aim; thus, meaning that it is an outlet that allows collaboration of methods and approaches to achieve a research goal and objective.

The research design caters for all aspects of research to ensure consistency in the conduct of the research and the findings. The research was designed to link the research philosophy, approach, methods, and tools to ensure compatibility in the steps taken to conduct this study.

1.9 RESEARCH PARADIGM

As mentioned under the research approach, the research takes the epistemology approach as per the paradigm, which in general is the assumptions derived from knowledge, whether it is from intuitive knowledge (knowledge based on intuition, beliefs) or empirical knowledge (knowledge based on proven facts) (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). These assumptions may constitute valid, acceptable, and legitimate knowledge to an area of study (GuhaThakurta *et al.*, 2015). Rehman and .

Alharth (2016) describe epistemology as “the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated”. This approach then narrows to two philosophical aspects namely positivism and interpretivism. Positivism focuses on objective knowledge, which is derived from the empirical nature of study and is supported by facts and quantifiable observations. Interpretivism focuses on the subjective knowledge derived from people’s perspectives and understanding (GuhaThakurta *et al.*, 2015). This particular philosophy approach paved the way for the research method, as the quantitative study was based on positivism in a sense that positivism is approached through data collection and developing of hypothesis, which was later tested and confirmed to answer the research question. It also caters for a qualitative study, as it considers people’s knowledge, subjective meaning of things and social phenomena through the interpretivism approach.

The research comprises of two research approaches (qualitative and quantitative). The two approaches are used as tools to collect data, which was later analysed and used to formulate solutions to the research problem. The qualitative approach was conducted by means of interviewing the selected participants, while the quantitative approach took a simulation approach, which is conducted to collect information from the identified sample.

1.10 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

According to Saunders *et al.* (2009), a population is a sub-group within a larger group to which the results of a study or research will apply, and a sample is a selection from the target population that represents the population.

1.10.1 Population

The study is restricted to focus on a specific population, in this case the education sectors. The study only focused on people directly affected by social issues, such as the learners and teachers. The selected population were learners and teachers.

1.10.2 Sampling

The research employed a mixed method approach where questionnaire surveys and interviews were the tools used to collect data. The sample size was drawn from the identified population, which are teachers and learners in Limpopo. The sample size for this study was secondary school learners and teachers from the Palala circuit division of the Waterberg district in Limpopo. The sample was 30 learners, 7 Life Orientation teachers, 10 HoDs, and 9 Principals.

1.10.3 Data collection

Saunders *et al.* (2009) developed a research onion that describes and shows stages leading to the development of an effective research methodology; the study also follows a structure in a sequence, where steps in conducting the research are taken. As mentioned before, the study employed mixed research method, so for the data collection, questionnaire surveys were distributed to the sample size for participation, and interviews as a tool of qualitative data were conducted amongst the participants from the sample size.

A questionnaire is said to be a widely used tool in research to collect relevant quantifiable data or information that is reliable and valid (Taherdoost, 2016). It is usually used to ensure reliability and validity by its consistent and accurate nature (Taherdoost, 2016). The study also employs a questionnaire survey to ensure that the data collected forms reliable and valid findings, which can be relied on in terms of the accuracy of the study.

Face-to-face interviews are another type of research tool used in the study. The use of interviews and a questionnaire was to gather as much information as possible, also considering the subjective and objective point of view of the participants. Questionnaires are used for objective information, while interviews are used for subjective information.

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

The study accounted and provided for the ownership of secondary information by means of referencing authors' work, such as a direct quote, knowledge drawn from their study, or any idea generated from using their work.

To further ensure the trustworthiness of the study, issues of bias answering and duplicating another survey were accounted for to ensure that the information was based on what is seen by an individual who is in the system being questioned. This was done to avoid redundancy and inaccurate data that was used to form a conclusion on the research topic.

1.12 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

For validity and reliability in this study, a research instrument was developed and structured in such a way that it provided accurate and reliable data. Even though the research instrument is open for scrutiny and restructuring, it certainly provided validity and reliability of the study.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The dictionary of psychology defines ethics as "what is deemed to be acceptable or unacceptable in human conduct". Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins and Van Wuk (2010) emphasise that in research, as it is a complex phenomenon, plagiarism, dishonesty, misconduct, and theft of work still prevails.

The intensity of research is rather challenging and testing, but for the validity and accuracy of the research, certain aspects of ethical behaviour are undisputed. The research employed a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) route that comprised of primary and secondary sources, which were acknowledged and referenced.

For this research, the aim is to address and eliminate all possible unethical conduct by:

- Not tempering, altering, or falsifying any information from participants
- Maintain participants confidentiality

- Not disclosing any information to third parties
- Not benefiting in any way from the information received from participants other than in an academic sense
- Not overstating the benefits of the findings

1.14 LIMITATIONS

Due to lack of resources and the restrictions from the ongoing global pandemic, the scope of the research was limited to the Limpopo province, specifically in the Palala circuit division of the Waterberg district. All interviews and questionnaire surveys conducted in this study were based in Limpopo due to lack of resources (i.e., finance) to conduct the research to a wider scope to investigate social issues and their possible solution in the country in its entirety. The research was subject to some limitations, as there was limited literature in the South African context that scrutinise social issues and provide insightful solutions.

The following are potential limitations for this study:

- The pandemic limited the number of participants that could partake in the questionnaire survey and interviews, as the setting of levels in the country limited the number of learners and students who could attend school.
- Answers were limited due to the nature of the participants chose. There is a limited teacher-parent and teacher-learner relationship, and the integrity of the answers might be compromised because of a lack of interaction to combat these issues.

1.15 DELIMITATIONS

The study intended to be carried out in the secondary schools of the Palala circuit division of Waterberg District, Limpopo. In the area of interest, Palala circuit division. The area of focus was public schools where the target was learners and teachers. The area of interest was chosen because it is pertinent to the study topic and its demography allows for public schools as opposed to private schools. Some of the reasoning behind the area was that schools within the district are aware of the prevalent social issues facing the education system in this area.

1.16 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.16.1 Democratic schooling leadership practices

Principles set out by the government, post democracy to be practised in education include promoting social justice, equality, and foster a sense of social responsibility and nationalism.

1.16.2 Apartheid regime

This is defined as a system of institutionalised segregation and racial discrimination (Mhlauli *et al.*, 2015). Apartheid is a system that once governed South Africa and posed harsh conditions and rules that oppressed people of colour in terms of equality, access, and free of will (Mhlauli *et al.*, 2015). The system did not allow many black and coloured people in schools and institutions of learning, which then later presented challenging issues within the education system, healthcare system, and many other institutions.

1.16.3 Feeding scheme

This is defined as a programme that provides access to food for learners in areas of low social economic status. The food is offered to provide a nutrition meal to develop and grow students (Nhlapo, Lues, Kativu & Groenewald, 2015).

1.17 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1: Presents the introduction, statement of the problem, rationale, research questions, and objectives of the study, research methodology, data collection, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Outlines the literature and theoretical background of the study, based on specific social issues and the effect on learners' academic performance.

Chapter 3: Deals with the research methodology employed in the study and outlines the research design. It also presents data collection methods employed in the mixed method study.

Chapter 4: Presents data analysis and interpretation. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis is presented with relating interpretations.

Chapter 5: This chapter outlines and represents comparisons, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for further study.

1.18 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the background to the study and the need to further investigate the impact of social issues on secondary school learners. The research problem was defined, research questions were formulated, and objectives set. The research methodology was defined, and limitations described. The main concepts were defined and the content of subsequent chapters described. In the next chapter, literature on the topic of social issues facing learners in secondary schools is reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 deals with the literature review. The literature was adopted from other literature reviews, journals, books, and relevant websites. This chapter reviews the effect and cause of the decline in the academic performance of secondary learners, and further look into the social issues surrounding the decline in the academic performance.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the social issues while providing solutions in secondary schools in South Africa, particularly in the Palala circuit division of the Waterberg district in Limpopo. The study firstly explores the social issues faced in schools by applying meta-synthesis methods to identify the research gap, problem, and questions, and furthermore to identify social issues in schools globally. The study then analyses the identified social issues based on applicability in the South African secondary schools and lastly, through questionnaire surveys and interviews, solutions are provided for these social issues faced to secondary learners in the schools sampled for the study.

The literature review highlights the following identified social issues:

- social issues and their effects faced in South African schools
- social issues and their effects faced in schools in Kenyan schools
- social issues and their effects faced in schools in Indian schools

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ISSUES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

As in every other country, education remains one of the most important basic human rights and needs, meaning that every person has a right to education (Moyo, 2013). However, the question of how accessible education is will certainly be accounted for throughout this study. Education around the world is taken as a driving force that forms and enhances the development of a nation (Moranga, 2013). In South Africa, the apartheid regime played a big role in segregating learners of colour, many of which

now resides in areas stricken by a wide range of social issues, including low socio-economic status, environmental, and psychological issues, which are key factors contributing to the known and unknown social issues faced by learners (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015; Taylor, 2010). However, the current government after democracy in 1994 has allocated funds and devised policies and strategies to eradicate the inequality and segregation because of the oppression of the apartheid era (Taylor, 2010). The government has managed to allocate funds, including social grants and food schemes in schools, with the goal to make studying more accessible for those in need, usually the poverty-stricken groups from rural areas. However, even with the allocation of funds and access to education, there are barriers that still prevent some learners from attending school on a daily basis, or even attending at all. It is questionable how the government, with policies that emanates the right to education and equality, still fails to provide the promised education to each child. Despite all the government interventions and ensuring quality education to all, there are still a number of learners struggling with getting access and fully participating in their academic path; hence, the poor performance in their studies (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015).

Human beings are naturally social beings in their daily lives and in almost everything they do, they interact with other individuals, which is why they tend to feel the need to belong (Starratt, 2004). Their interactions in society tend to form a way of life where they live by certain morals, beliefs, and traditions; some of these have a positive impact whilst others have a negative impact on different individuals and these impacts are the root of social issues that we all face. Learners being human, also face numerous social issues within the education system, some of which need serious intervention. Social issues that need intervention within schools include bullying, poverty, and teenage pregnancy. There are certain measures in place to manage these situations, but in some instances, the implementation does not work in resolving the issues.

The study takes on an analysis of the impact of social issues faced in secondary schools by learners, which ultimately affects their academic performance. The analysis is conducted by means of firstly identifying social issues faced by learners from a global perspective, and then from the identified social issues, the study is narrowed into relevancy in terms of the social issues applicable in the South African context. Lastly, from the information drawn from identifying and analysing the social issues with

effects, a further exploratory study is conducted to explore ways in which intervention or improvements can be made to the current provisions made by the government and education stakeholders.

The literature review does not answer or provide solutions to the identified research questions in this study, but helps to form a base leading to research strategies that will help in answering the questions by providing what already exists in literature from the topic of interest, and further generating data that will be used to draw conclusions and findings.

2.3 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The following section provides information from previous researchers on factors such as the diverse backgrounds of learners, the involvement of teachers, their availability, and sexual assault and victimisation.

2.3.1 Diverse Backgrounds

It helps noticing that the nature of one's background plays a major role in one's life, whether it is by access to certain things, morals, culture, social status or an upbringing. A home has a major impact on a child's upbringing and contributes to how a child views the world (Ugwuoke, Eze & Omeje, 2018). Because of different backgrounds, children tend to have different upbringings, which then contribute and distinguish their behaviour towards life, academics, and other life goals and achievements (Ugwuoke *et al.*, 2018). It is questionable whether a child's background affects their academic performance, but considering all the factors and their effects, it would make sense to conclude that the diverse background of the children plays a vital role in their academic life. Educational inequality is one other factor that contributes to the academic performance of a learner (Knutsson, 2020). In the South African context, it is evident that post-apartheid, although there has been provision for education restructuring and promotion of equality, there is still a huge gap between the then oppressors (whites) and the oppressed (Blacks, Indian, and other native Africans) (Knutsson, 2020). The black majority of South Africa mostly resides in rural areas with a minority in the urban areas, and the white majority resides mostly in the urban and suburban areas. With this highlighted, children from urban areas have an advantage over those in rural areas in terms of access and environmental ease (Ugwuoke *et al.*, 2018). They mostly have

access to electricity, computers, Wi-Fi, libraries, transport, and other amenities that allows them to enrich and enhance their learning outcomes as opposed to children residing in rural areas (Ugwuoke *et al.*, 2018).

The differences in the living standards of a learner from an urban area and rural area is extremely complex and need to be scrutinised and accounted for, to allow fair and equal opportunities to the learners, which can have a positive shift in academic performance. Among some of the living standard differences between learners, the following have been identified:

Table 2.1: Diverse living standards between children in rural and urban areas

A learner from an urban area	A learner from rural area
Variety of transport: • access to buses, • trains, • own transport, • hired transport	Lack of transport: • Travel long distances to school. • They do not have enough money to hire transport
Variety of learning facilities: • Access to libraries, • Access to educational organisations and programmes, e.g. Kutlwanoong, Centre for Maths Science and Technology in Gauteng • Can afford afternoon classes and tutors	Lack of educational facilities: • lack of libraries, • lack of learning programmes • No facilities and funds for afternoon classes and tutors

The information in Table 2.1 shows the distinct nature of people's backgrounds, which could affect their lives negatively or positively. Given the different circumstances, children from poor families who mostly reside in the rural areas, have many barriers and challenges to perform excellently in school, as opposed to the ones in urban areas who have all the facilities and amenities that allows them to obtain extra help in their studies and access to materials needed. In addition, considering how a parent views education, there is a close link to how their children eventually perform in school (Nieuwenhuis, 2018). Because of a parent's social inferiority or lack of social impact

and access to funds for school programmes, the parent, given their poor educational level may not value education as much, which in turn affects their children's readiness for school (Nieuwenhuis, 2018). In conclusion, a learner's background plays a major role in their academic performance; however, it cannot be concluded that all learners from poor backgrounds do not perform well because of their home situation, as some are not susceptible to their environments, while others are badly affected; hence, their poor academic performance.

The home situation has interrelated factors that ultimately affect a child's academic performance, from the parental education level all the way to the performance of the child. For instance, in a case of a child from a poor background, the parent might not be educated and could have possibly dropped out because of poverty. The parent might not be able to provide a safe environment that promotes learning. It is important to remember that a child's first education and knowledge is adopted or provided at home, and if the home situation does not allow or provide a conducive space for a child to learn, then the child may be hampered from developing at the same rate as a child from a well-off family (Chinyoka, 2014). Therefore, if a family is living in poverty, the home circumstances would be poor as well, which then affects the upbringing and well-being of a child given the poor living circumstances, and there would be less or no learning resources, which eventually affects the child's performance at school (Chinyoka, 2014).

(Chinyoka. 2014) identified the following as some of the factors causing a decline in a child's academic performance:

- Age
- gender
- demographics
- ethnicity
- marital status
- social status
- parents' education level
- parental profession
- language

- income and religious affiliations
- school background

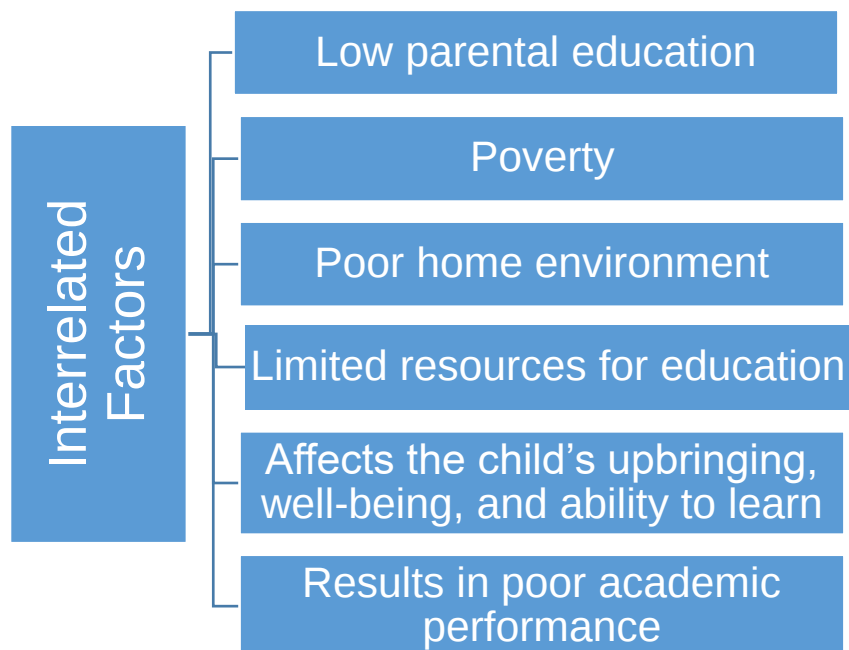


Figure 2.1: Interrelating factors affecting learners

The above Figure 2.1 shows how certain factors all work together in contributing to a learner's performance in school. The factors are however applicable to learners residing in rural areas and not to learners in urban areas who have access to resources and facilities that support their learning objectives. This proves the difference between learners from urban and rural areas and the affect it has on their studies.

2.3.2 Teacher Involvement, Availability, and Experience

Teachers, by their authority, are head of subjects and learners depend on them for knowledge, skills, and experiences. A teacher, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is, "a person whose job is teaching, especially in a school". Teachers play a vital role in learners' upbringing, knowledge, development, and behaviour to some extent; learners believe their teachers above any other available sources (Mohamedayupkhan *et al.*, 2014). The quality of the content from a teacher has the potential to build a learner, and if the teacher is not properly equipped to educated teenage learners in secondary school, there could be a possible decline in the learners' academic performance.

While exploring and giving insight on the factors that influence the academic performance of learners in school, it is important to also consider the social issues that arise from the factors. Social issues are invertible, there will always be issues that affect people socially, and in considering the focus of the study, social issues are explored in schools to determine their extent in influencing the academic performance of learners. Some of the most common social issues are sexual victimisation, corruption, gangsterism, child labour, and child marriage; however, the question remains whether these issues are affecting the academic performance of learners.

2.3.3 Sexual Assault and Victimisation

Sexual assault is a widespread problem anywhere in the world with people preying on others. It has been reported that about 86% of girls would experience some sort of undesirable sexual encounter, harassment, or rape during their school days (Edinyang, 2020). Rape and sexual assault are a very dire and harming encounter that has the potential to ruin a person's life, with the resulting stress, self-esteem problems, anxiety, and other resulting consequences. Given the harsh after effects of sexual assault, it is obvious that it will affect a learner drastically after the act, and this could cause a decline in the academic performance or even force them to drop out. Edinyang (2020) states that sexual assault and victimisation has a huge impact on a person's behaviour, which in turn would affect how they perceive the world and perform academically.

Again, sexual assault and specifically rape, is identified as a social issue, together with births, which is pregnancy and possible illness (STIs and STDs). Learners who become victims of rape could fall pregnant and be infected with sexually transmitted diseases, which could lead to trauma, stress, anxiety, and possibly depression. Given the circumstances of the victim, the learner could be forced to drop out to look after the baby resulting from the rape. Student issues are numerous, considering all the hardship they go through facing these social issues and even after falling victim to most of the harsh issues surrounding them. With 25% to 33% of women having been victimised sexually during their school days, the resulting significant change in behaviour may have been drastic (Edinyang, 2020).

2.4 SOCIAL ISSUES AND THE EFFECTS IN SCHOOLS: A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE - SOUTH AFRICA

The new South Africa, post-apartheid and newly amended policies promised to offer equal opportunities to every citizen in having access to adequate education. However, there is still a number of challenges that prevent and forces other citizens, especially children between 7 and 18 years of age. to drop out of school, or consider school as unimportant (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015; Taylor, 2010). This is a result of collective failures in the implementation of strategies and inadequate solutions to remedy the situation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the social issues that contribute to the poor performance of secondary school learners in South Africa, and to scrutinise the failed solutions already implemented to solve social issues affecting secondary school learners.

With the pursuit of disclosing underlying social issues affecting South African learners, it is important to also consider the implications of the setbacks the Apartheid regime has contributed to the education system in the country. The apartheid regime played a big role in segregating learners of colours, many whom now reside in areas stricken by a wide range of social issues, including low socio-economic status, environmental, and psychological factors, which are all key factors contributing to the known social issues faced by learners (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015; Taylor, 2010). However, the government has allocated funds and devised policies and strategies to eradicate the inequality and segregation because of the oppression pertaining the apartheid era (Taylor, 2010). The government has managed to allocate funds including social grants and food schemes in schools, with the goal to make studying more accessible for those in need, usually the poverty-stricken groups from rural areas, however even with the allocation of funds and the provided access to education, there are barriers that prevents some students from attending school on a daily basis or even attending at all.

It is also important to acknowledge the effects of the demography or an environment people live in. An environment is unarguably a contributing factor into a person's growth as there can be a difference in the welfare of people from different environments. Teh *et al.* (2018) differentiate between people from different environments, stating that a healthy environment is more likely to breed a perfect

individual, while a less or not healthy environment might breed a problematic person. It is important to look into the demographics of students while analysing and examining the possible social issues they experience. Teh *et al.* (2018: 930) further state that “the environment is a contributing factor to students’ delinquency such as loitering, playing truant, bullying, skipping, and more”, to some extent this needs to be looked at from a South African context, as some of the highlighted delinquencies are prominent in South Africa. Considering the inequality in South Africa where a greater part still lives below the poverty line, the environment they come from and the high rates of crime, a clear picture emerges of how learners struggle in their academic performance.

People reside in different areas of the country, some live in suburbs, some in townships, and others in rural areas, and it is clear that the standard of living as per StatsSA is not the same, with an increment of only 18-22% for black people, 40% of coloureds, 75% Asian, and 85% White living in middle-class (StatsSA, 2009). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2015) in their study on the teacher’s understanding of inclusive education, found one of the issues discussed is that classrooms comprise of a heterogeneous mixture of learners, and this entails the difference in race, tradition, genders, beliefs, language, abilities, and capabilities. This is the same for all learners residing in different parts of the country, whether they come from rich or poor backgrounds, there will be a difference in traits and capabilities despite the social issues affecting them individually.

There are many factors contributing to a person’s behaviour, and in this context - a student, one being the environment surrounding that student. Teh *et al.* (2018) state that a student who likes hanging out and roaming around places will most likely fall prey to misconduct in their life due to the social influences exposed in all the areas the student find themselves. Amongst the misconduct, the predominant ones are smoking, stealing, and drug abuse, which can cause a person to lose focus not only on their studies, but also in most aspects of their lives (Newcomb *et al.*, 1992). In support of what is mentioned above, it states that about 14,000 of the 165,000 recorded criminal cases in 2005 involved students; this goes to show that the behaviour students adopt from the streets and from hanging out tend to shift their mind-set and eventually they misbehave. This will affect their studies; however, it is always the student’s choice to be influenced badly or in a good way by their environment.

As per the social issues mentioned under the introduction to the literature review, the identified social issues are discussed and how they affect the performance of learners.

2.4.1 Poverty

“Education is the key to success” has become a saying that most people use. Poverty brings forth social issues that range from classism to mental issues. We can still see the effects of our country’s history, more especially in rural areas. We have instances of socio-economic differences where learners feel the need to associate with other learners from similar backgrounds, even when they are in a diverse setting with different races, thus excluding those who are not like them (difference in ethnicity and background). This has the potential to make other learners feel rejected and socially excluded, and their response to the rejection is varied, ranging from them being bullies or start showing signs of withdrawal (Mafokwane, 2017). Inequality in the distribution of resources in the education system is evident, with suburban schools receiving adequate resources needed, whereas school in rural areas receive the bare minimum and lack most of the resources, including basic needs such as infrastructure, lack of libraries, and lack of reading materials in schools (Mafokwane, 2017). Furthermore, schools in rural area mostly have fewer classrooms, which results in overcrowding, where teachers struggle with giving each learner enough attention and considering learners who require extra help because of their inability to grasp the content at the same pace as other learners (Mafokwane, 2017). These schools unfortunately are predominantly black schools, which show that race plays a role in our current society by creating some of the social issues experienced by learners in the country.

Parental involvement is also a social issue of importance, and it has been shown that students, who have the positive support and involvement of their parents in their education, tend to have a better performance, and parents from poorer environments are unlikely to have the knowledge, time, and money to provide academic assistance to their children (Mafokwane, 2017). Parent illiteracy poses a problem for parent-teacher involvement, as these parents rarely invest in their children’s education, which could discourage their children and cause them to perform poorly in school or even

dropping out (Mafokwane, 2017). Parents that do not attend meetings to get feedback on their children's performance are another cause for concern (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). Unfortunately, some households are child-headed, where the children have to find means to get their own basic needs such as clothing and food, and seldom have the time for their schoolwork. These learners have a higher potential of dropping out of school before completing Grade 12 to find employment (Zuma *et al.*, 2019), thus allowing the cycle of poverty to continue in the family.

There are measures put in place such as social grants and feeding schemes, but these are somehow ineffective. In terms of feeding schemes, learners get their meals during lunchtime, meaning that some of the poor learners come to school having not had breakfast and having to wait until lunchtime for a meal. This is often the only meal they get for the day, and their weekends and school holidays are spent on empty stomachs (Mafugu, 2021). These situations have the potential to cause mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, often leading to substance abuse. Schools and the government should identify parents in low-income households and encourage their involvement in their children's education. Mafugu (2021:10) expresses that "School meal programmes provide meals in schools or as take-home rations after attending school. Such programmes are implemented to fill gaps in macronutrient and micronutrient deficiencies for the children. Moreover, school meals boost student learning, increase enrolment and school attendance. More than 360 million school children worldwide benefit from such feeding schemes."

2.4.2 Bullying

Bullying is a social phenomenon that is recognised on a global scale and it can come in the physical and mental form; physical in the sense that it causes bodily harm, and mental in the sense that it causes emotional damage which could lead to depression, anxiety, and eating disorders to name a few (Marx, 2018). Children become bullies due to numerous reasons, some being that they have personal problems at home such as abuse (Zuma *et al.*, 2019), or they themselves are used to being bullied. Bullying can traumatise the victim and cause changes in their behaviour, personality, and self-esteem; victims could develop depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and externalising issues (Marx, 2018). Peer support could help the victims, but peers often do not offer assistance and support, even though they do not agree with bullying, but fear

victimisation (Marx, 2018). Violence in schools is not only directed at learners, and teachers experience violence at the hands of their learners, which could lead to teacher stress and absenteeism (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013).

2.4.3 Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is a major social issue that poses a challenge to global society (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). In the South African context, pregnant teenagers, especially in rural areas, have to drop out of school even though the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 forbids discrimination against learners based on pregnancy (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). Other students, even in developed areas, still drop out of school due to their inability to keep up with their schoolwork, whilst some do successfully manage to continue with the academic career. Some families see teenage pregnancy as an embarrassment when their children fall pregnant at a young age, and in some societies, the learners are shamed and ridiculed.

Teenage pregnancies result because of peer pressure, where peers influence each other to engage in sexual activities. Some children fall pregnant due to rape. Rape causes mental health issues and social consequences, and even though the schooling system provides lessons regarding sexuality, sex, contraception, and rape through Life Orientation, unfortunate circumstances still occur. Prevention and management methods should be taught in schools and parent-teacher involvement and school management teams (SMTs) could assist (Zuma *et al.*, 2019). Limpopo province is one of the provinces where teenage pregnancy is at a high level, as Limpopo mostly has rural areas where some parents are not invested in the education of their children (Mafokwane, 2017).

2.5 SOCIAL ISSUES AND THEIR EFFECTS IN SCHOOLS: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE - KENYA

Kenya, like South Africa, strives to fully apply the “democratic schooling leadership practices”, which like the South African mandate, states that every person has a right to education with fair opportunities being offered (Jwan *et al.*, 2017:1). Kenya is no different to South Africa; there are similarities in many instances, such as the democratic leadership in schools and the enactment of free education for all citizens (Moranga, 2013). The objective behind “free education” was to ensure that all

students, mostly from poor families and neighbourhoods, have free access to education to enhance self-advancement (Moranga, 2013).

Education around the world is taken as a driving force that forms and enhances the development of a nation (Moranga, 2013). It is however questionable how the government with policies that promotes the right to education and equality still fails to provide the promised education to every child. Despite all the government interventions and promises of offering and ensuring quality education to the society, there are still a number of learners struggling with access and fully participating in their education, hence the poor performance in their studies (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015). This does not only highlight that there needs to be further intervention by the government, but opens opportunities for academia and research facilities to further look into the current basic education being offered, and provide suitable solutions. This approach might be open to scrutiny of the current situation, and provide quality basic education.

Although the government intervenes, some immediate factors contribute to the poor academic performance of learners. Kibaara and Kabura (2015) explain that key amongst the social barriers is residing in the slums or informal settlements; they stress that due to the complex nature of living in the slums, their studies are affected and this leads to poor performance. These learners have little hope of changing their living and home situation, and some if not most of them fall prey to prostitution, drop out, crime, and pregnancy amongst other social issues (Kibaara & Kabura, 2015).

Kibaara and Kabura (2015) in their research titled *Factors Influencing Academic Performance in Urban Informal Settlements in Kenya: A Case Study of Public Primary Schools of Kibera Slums, Nairobi County* developed a conceptual framework that categorised the prevailing social issues contributing to the academic performance of learners in Kenya.

2.5.1 Socio-Economic Issues

- Lack of electricity at home
- lack of proper medical care
- child labour
- inability of parents to afford school requirements

- lack of enough food at home

2.5.2 Environmental Issues

- tribal intolerance
- stereotyping
- text book to pupil ratio
- high prevalence of drug abuse
- pupil to teacher ratio
- high level of indiscipline cases among pupils
- unsuitable sanitary facilities
- insufficient classrooms

2.5.3 Psychological Issues

- stigma related to HIV/AIDS and related illnesses
- pupil stress emanating from poor parental support
- pupils' anxiety prior to and during exams, and stress as a result of poor health and nutrition, or both
- pupils' self-esteem
- mental preparedness of pupils
- pupils' attitude to class attendance

It is evident that one of the contributing factors to the identified social issues in schools from both South Africa and Kenya is poverty. People living in poverty from both these countries have little or no time to invest in their children's studies, and this has been noted in the study by Mchebe (2017) titled *The Impact of Parental Level of Income on Students' Academic Performance in High School in Japan*, where parental involvement tend to help learners perform better in schools (Mchebe, 2017). Mchebe further state that a parent's involvement is influenced by their social class, parent's education, and status, meaning that families that are well off will most likely invest in their children's education as opposed to poorer families. This goes to show that people's social status, which allows them access to funds to invest in quality education, contributes a lot to good performance in schools.

The intervention from the two governments on the raised social issues is the same. As a large number of people were out of school with limited educational infrastructure available, these governments constructed schools to accommodate the high influx of people to urban areas after democracy. Similarly, they made provision to offer free education, with the goal to accommodate and have more students enrolled. South Africa even went as far as to offer social grants and provide feeding schemes - this was to address the issue of children not having enough food at home. These government interventions may have been well meaning, but the recurring social issues facing students is a call for concern. There is a need for further research and investigation on the subject of poor academic performance as a result of social issues faced by students on a daily basis; hence, the investigation of this study to identify, analyse, and contribute to the mitigation strategy.

2.6 SOCIAL ISSUES AND THEIR EFFECTS IN SCHOOLS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE - INDIA

India, like South Africa and Kenya, is considered a developing country with a growing potential to reach the “developed country” level. India, unlike South Africa and Kenya, is the world’s sixth largest economy by nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with an average economic growth of 6 to 7% annually after economic liberation in 1991; South Africa on the other hand has a fluctuating economic growth, with declines, year to year from 2015 to present (Gupta *et al.*, 2018). India records over a million graduates annually, mostly from the Information Technology and Engineering faculties, but in contrast, it still faces barriers and failures in implementing adequate delivery in their education system.

For the most part, in the history of India, foreigners have always ruled over the country and have, independence gained political powers and right to rule over the country. As with South Africa and Kenya, the Indian government after independence has mandated to ensure adequate quality education and increased government spending on education every year (Lall *et al.*, 2005). In ensuring access to education, India allocated 6% of its GDP on education and amended government policies to support and cater for a quality provision of education (Lall *et al.*, 2005). India has the second largest education system, with over 200,000 secondary schools, and the government together, with other state and private organisations, have promised to provide quality

secondary education following an enrolment ratio observed in upper primary school to secondary schools. India recorded a ratio of 3:1, with the enrolment of primary students recording 96% and 76% for secondary students (Pranav *et al.*, 2018).

India has over a million elementary schools and just over 200,000 secondary schools, meaning that the number of secondary schools is only 20% of elementary schools, which then raises the question of accessibility (Pranav *et al.*, 2018). The country, unlike others, has a youthful population, with 35% of the population being under 15 years of age. In considering the number of youths, the question remains how secondary schools house the number of students coming from elementary schools (Gupta *et al.*, 2018; Lall & House, 2005).

According to Pranav *et al.* (2018), the following were identified as issues facing the education system in secondary schools in India:

Table 1.2: Secondary school issues in India

Students	• Low achievement of learning outcomes • Lack of family support for learning (Financial and non-financial) • Lack of focus on Holistic Development • Lack access to technology and high-quality content • Poor Health of students in many schools • Low Motivation • Lack of accountability
Teachers	• Low competence • Reluctance to innovate and come up with new ways of teaching • Lack of professional training
Infrastructure	• Inadequate infrastructure including school buildings, classrooms, compound walls, separate toilets for girls and boys, drinking water facility, playgrounds. • No Science lab/Poorly established Science Lab/math lab • Inadequate transport vehicles

	• No Computer lab/Poorly established Computer Lab • No library/Poorly established library • Poor accessibility to schools • Inefficient school management (vision for school, teaching and administrative experience of principal, leadership training undergone) • Lack of competent and qualified academic staff • Ineffective School Development Management
Community	• Low degree of involvement (attending Parent-teacher meetings) • Parents are less skilled at holding officials accountable, reviewing financial statements, and even feeling confident that they can ask questions

Source: Adopted from Pranav *et al.* (2018)

In addition to the above education system issues in India, there is a huge gap to fill in the education system in India, because students are not only faced with social issues, but many other issues and challenges pertaining to their home situations and way of life where they reside. The Indian government, together with its stakeholders, put in effort to ensure that every person has access to education, but despite this commitment, there are still a high number of students without access to schools (Lall *et al.*, 2005). It has been estimated from a report on the study by Lall *et al.* (2005) that students aged between 6-14 years, making up a population of more than 35 million, are not attending school. The school dropout rate and non-attendance are not only a product of the issues presented in Table 2.2, but are also a result of other solution issues. In the same study, Lall *et al.* (2005:4) state that India has no “common school system”, which explains that students are enrolled based on their ability to pay for tuition and their social status. This then indicates that there are a higher number of students from poor families, orphans, and streets kids with no access to school because of their financial position and social status. The situation in India is similar to that of South Africa and Kenya, with the distinction that India links education to social and financial status. The social issues faced by these students, which later affects

their academic performance, are the same for most developing countries, as many still live below the poverty line and earn below minimum wage.

Singh (2016) states that even though the government has made amendments and tried to provide quality education for every student, students still find themselves in harsh situations and dilemmas, as one-third of India still live on less than minimum wage, which pushes them to find the means to support their families while going to school. Despite the government offering free education, some children living below the poverty line will choose to go out to work and drop out as they try to fill up the financial void in their families. He further states that a family's financial stability is the driver in attending school. To add onto the issues surrounding a random student from a poor family, the means to make money can sometimes lead to illegal dealings or drug use, which then contributes to the social issues these learners are exposed to. Although even children from well-off families go through social issues, the severity may not necessarily be the same.

Among some of the social issues affecting Indian secondary students, Mohamedayupkhan *et al.* (2014) highlight the issues that affect the academic performance of students in secondary schools in India and are:

- child labour
- child marriage
- untouchability
- discriminatory treatment to women
- violation of human rights

With the following to be addressed to tackle the above-mentioned social issues and other unknown issues:

- Strengthening national and social cohesion in a diverse and plural society,
- accelerating the process of economic growth,
- improving the life of the downtrodden and the people living below the poverty line,
- removing the widely prevalent ignorance, superstition, and prejudices from the masses,

- Inculcating scientific temper and developing a critical awareness about the social realities of Indian life.

2.7 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In this section, possible solutions are presented on dealing with social issues experienced by learners and impacting on their academic performance.

2.7.1 Student-Teacher Relationship

With all the underlying social issues faced by students, one of the possible solutions is the enhancement of the relationship between teachers and learners. In the Netherlands, like in many other countries, schools have an obligation to promote and better the social interaction and “improve active citizenship” of the learners (Wanders *et al.*, 2020). The improvement of the learners’ social interaction influences the activeness and participation of the learners in society and contributes a lot to their welfare (Wanders *et al.*, 2020). Teaching by creating a safe environment for learners to feel free and confident will go a long way to fast-tracking the issues as a whole, not limited to society but all underlying issues that learners face in and out of school, this may be during their high school lives or later on as adults. Wanders *et al.* (2020) highlight that learners who have and enjoy the relationships they have with their teachers, will most likely be open to discuss and engage their ideas and thoughts with teachers and will for sure be open to discuss societal issues. To combat the social issues in schools, students need to first engage in conversations about the issues they face on a daily basis, then adequate measures can later be taken; this can be made easier from the relationship between the students and the teachers.

2.7.2 Navigating the Good in an Environment

One of the possible solutions, although the hardest, is a student finding ways to only be influenced by the “good” from the environment they live in. Tempting as it is to fall prey to bad behaviour and influences in an environment, one needs to always have morals that guide them. Although Hassan (1987:4) argues that, “the environment can affect the appreciation of one's moral values”, it is not impossible to always stick by and appreciate the morals one has set for them. It is a personal matter influenced by

the end-goals to be achieved. As an example, a student who comes from a poor background with all the tempting bad behaviour can make it out perfectly by simply always sticking to their morals and working towards achieving their goals, in essence completing their studies and being successful. Teh *et al.* (2018) highlight some of the key aspects that contribute to a student's behaviour in a given or certain environment; he provided insight on the following aspects:

- The effects of social environment on a student's behaviour
- Parental guidance and parental influence
- Influence from peers/friends/school mates
- The influence from school and teachers
- The influence of mass media

The above-mentioned aspects in a given setting consider the environment one resides in that could have an influence on students. For instance, given different demographics where the highlighted aspect is considered for a student from a well-off neighbourhood (suburbs) and a student from a poor neighbourhood (rural areas), the results will potentially be different. The student from a well-off neighbourhood will most likely have support from parents in all aspects of their lives (financially and mentally). However, a student from a poor background in most cases have to make amends to ensure that in pursuing their studies, they also try to contribute financially to their families, and also have to deal with most life challenges by themselves at a young age. Therefore, to ensure that students from different demographics are not affected as much by the mentioned issues, teachers, the government, the community, and the students need to thoroughly evaluate the issues and make amends to manage and or address the underlying issues as they present themselves.

2.7.3 Offering Support Systems

Education is important and essential to everyone, and as people learn things on a daily basis, it helps uplift their knowledge, confidence, and welfare. Education has proven to be a driving force of the economy and in bettering people's lives, but some negative effects stemming from it are mostly neglected. Teachers and parents wish for their children to do well in school, to be great achievers, and advance through life. However, most importantly is the attention and focus on the mental state this pressure to perform

puts yourself and other students live you on. A research survey conducted by Mohamedayupkhan *et al.* (2014) state that 10-20% of students are suffering from psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders and diseases.

Governments and education stakeholders should implement a strategy that deals with the resulting mental frustration faced by students from the pressure they undergo while competing, as the schools judge students based on their academic performance.

2.8 KEY FINDINGS

- The colonial regime has restructured the education system only in the favour of the colonisers
- The government intervenes but its intervention is not adequate to eradicate all the issues, barriers, and challenges faced in the education system
- Poor people have a more challenging setting and tend to fall prey to bad behaviour and habits, which affect their academic performance or school lives
- The top prevalent social issues faced in schools are pregnancy, crime, bullying, prostitution, and early parenthood.

2.8.1 Other Contributing Issues

Table 2.3 below lists other contributing social issues under the socio-economic, environmental, and psychological headings. These are issues experienced in Kenya, India, and South Africa. It should be noted that not all social issues listed are applicable to South Africa.

Table 2.3: Contributing socio-economic, environmental, and psychological issues

Socio-economic	Environmental	Psychological
Lack of electricity at home	Tribal intolerance	Stigma related to sicknesses due to HIV AIDS and other deadly diseases Learners' stress from lack of parental support

Lack of proper medical care and access to medical or health facilities	Stereotyping	Learners' attitude and view towards learning and attending
Child labour	The ratio between learners and textbooks	Stigma of diseases
Lack of funds to afford school requirements and extra educational help	The high use of drugs by learners and residents	Learners' anxiety towards the living conditions
Inadequate or lack of enough food at home	The ratio between learner and teachers	Learners' self-esteem
	Indiscipline high number of learners	Mental readiness of learners
	Damaged classrooms and lack of other resources needed for learning	

2.9 CONCLUSION

The literature disclosed and presented underlying social issues in the education system, specifically in the primary and secondary schools. The literature reveals that education is considered the driving force of self-development of people in all nations, hence the implementation of free education by the government in most countries. However, even with the mandates and policies set out to reform the education system that was once redirected to promote and practice inequality within races, there are still barriers that prevent its full implementation. This results in school dropouts or poor academic performances - social issues being some of the barriers. A collection of some of the social issues has been identified in the study, which include bullying,

poverty, teenage pregnancy, lack of proper medical care, and lack of enough food at home. The next chapter, through the methodology, reveals how this study set apart from what has been reported in literature.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methods, techniques, and procedures adopted in the study to achieve the research objectives and formulate solutions to the questions. The chapter comprises of a discussion and justification on the choice of paradigm, approach, design, and methodology, population and sampling, data collecting methods, and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research took an epistemological approach as per the paradigm, which in general is the assumptions derived from knowledge, whether it is from intuitive knowledge (knowledge based on intuition, beliefs) or empirical knowledge (knowledge based on proven facts) (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). These assumptions may constitute valid, acceptable, and legitimate knowledge to an area of study (GuhaThakurta & Chetty, 2015). Rehman *et al.* (2016:52) describe epistemology as “the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated”. This particular philosophical approach paves the way for the research method, as the quantitative study is based on positivism in a sense that positivism is approached through data collection and developing of hypothesis, which is later tested and confirmed to answer the research question. It also catered for a qualitative study as it considered people’s knowledge, subjective meaning, and social phenomena through the interpretivism approach.

The research comprised of two research approaches (qualitative and quantitative). The two approaches were used as tools to collect data, which were later analysed and used to formulate a solution to the research problem. The qualitative approach was conducted by means of interviewing the selected participants, while the quantitative approach took a simulation approach, which was conducted to gather information from the identified sample.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

This section provides definitions and descriptions of the research approach and design, as well as what is meant with reference to a research methodology. Justification of the choices made for this study is also provided.

3.3.1 Research Approach

The research employed an epistemological approach, then narrowed it into two philosophical aspects namely positivism and interpretivism; positivism focusing on the objective knowledge which was derived from the empirical nature of study, backed by facts and quantifiable observations, and interpretivism focusing on the subjective knowledge derived from people's perspectives and understanding (GuhaThakurta *et al.*, 2015). This particular research approach works in a sequential manner with the research approaches and methods structured in the study. The quantitative study was based on the concept of a positivist approach through a method of collecting primary data, and involves the development of research questions and objectives, which were later tested and confirmed with data to answer the research problem. It also catered for the qualitative study, as it considers people's knowledge, subjective meaning of things and social phenomena through the interpretivist approach (GuhaThakurta *et al.*, 2015).

The selection of the epistemology approach was also to cater for the research methods, as they work in a sequential manner. Because of the nature of the epistemological approach, to account for both the positivism and interpretivism concept, an incorporated mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) were introduced to link the two approaches (positivism and interpretivism) with the two methods (quantitative and qualitative). Furthermore, it was applied for collecting accurate and reliable information to be analysed and ultimately used to formulate a solution to the research problem.

Mixed methods in research refer to the combination of both qualitative and quantitative elements for a broader insight into a study (Schoonenboom *et al.*, 2017). Although the two research methods could be compatible in most research, there needs to be careful consideration to avoid contradicting findings. Because of the distinct

nature of the methods, some data was subjective and the other objective; hence, the decision to employ both research methods in the study. Although mixed methods may seem like an easy route for a researcher to meet the objectives, both the methods have advantages and disadvantages (Daniel, 2016).

The advantages of mixed methods are closely related to the disadvantages in a sense that an advantage in its subjective form yields a disadvantage as well. For example, one advantage of a qualitative study may be that it is subjective, meaning it is based on a participant's feelings, experience, and/or knowledge that the researcher could fully agree and relate to. This would allow him to produce rich data and relevant findings based on the similar perspectives of the participant; this also allows him an advantage to reiterate the theories as he sees fit (Daniel, 2016). Related to the mentioned advantage, the subjective form of the research could cause conflict of interest and dishonesty in a case where the researcher's beliefs, knowledge, and experiences do not align to those of the participants. The basis put by the subjective nature of this approach could disallow the researcher to generalise findings, as it is based on personal feelings and experiences, which are sometimes not practical, tested, scrutinised, or verified as opposed to what is factual, based on observations or statistical tests (Daniel, 2016).

The decision to employ mixed methods was influenced by the need to produce reliable, relevant, factual, and relatable findings. To ensure the findings as mentioned above, the method's purpose was to serve the subjective and objective nature of the research, where the subjective side of the research was generated through qualitative methods, approaches, and tools, and the quantitative allowed objective findings.

3.3.2 Research Design and Methodology

Akhtar *et al.* (2016) describe a research design as a platform or a base that allows all the research elements to combine for a particular aim, meaning it is an outlet that allows a combination of methods and approaches to achieve a research goal and objectives.

The research was designed in a way that it catered for all aspects of research to ensure consistency in conducting the research and in the findings. The research was

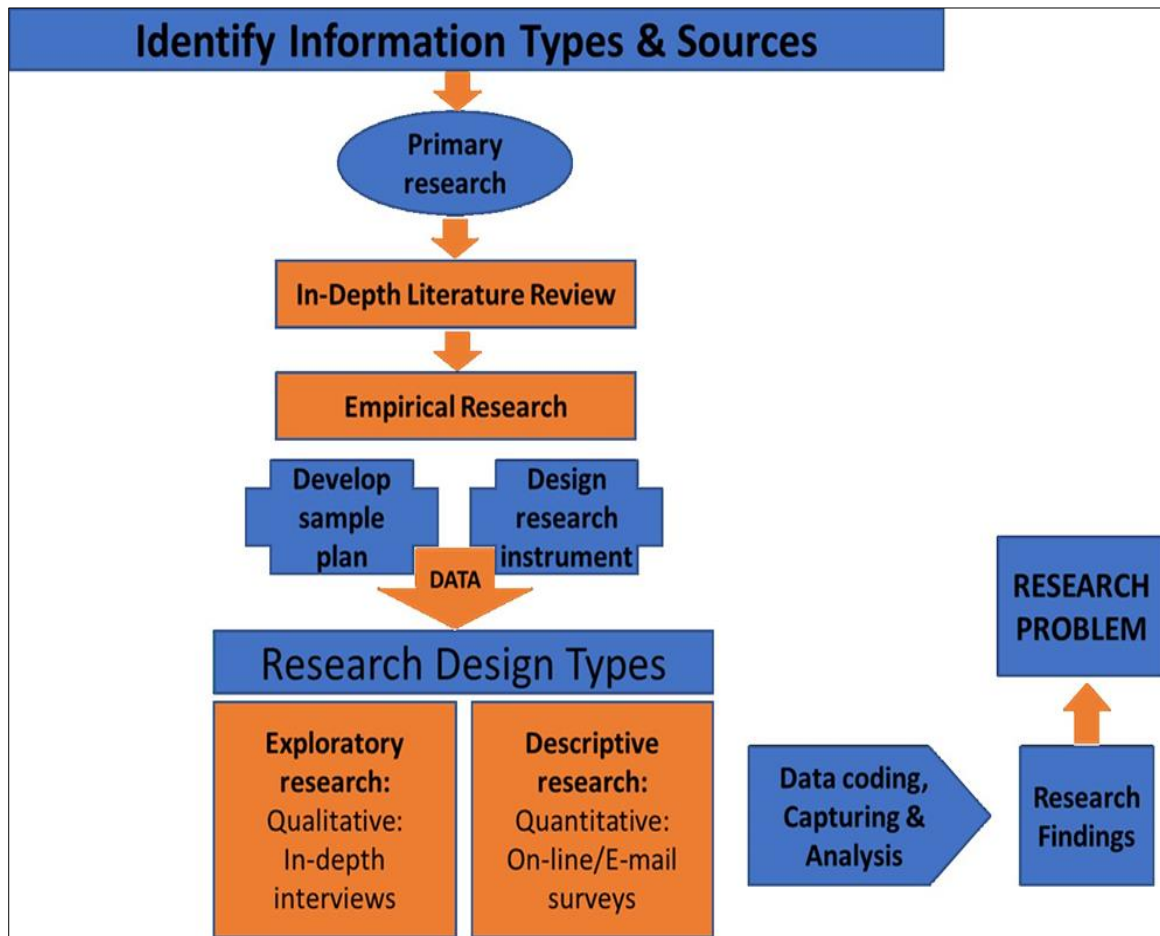
designed to link the research philosophy, approach, methods, and tools all together to ensure compatibility in the steps taken to conduct this research.

The epistemology approach catered for both the positivism and interpretivism concept which then introduces the adopted mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative methods), then from the mixed methods, the research tools, interviews and questionnaire surveys were introduced, which were later filtered through and interpreted for recommendations and to draw conclusions (GuhaThakurta *et al.*, 2015). The reason behind the employment of the epistemology philosophy in this study was to ensure that the study is set apart from most of the previous literature reviews/papers as most of them only employed research philosophies that allowed the study to follow only the qualitative or quantitative route. The employment of mixed methods was to cater for all the subjective and objective data for further interpretation to answer the research question, aims and provide conclusions and recommendations on the topic of social issues affecting the academic performance of secondary school learners.

The qualitative method was ideally employed to allow participants to voice their experiences from the real world to cater for the description and interpretation of the study problems. Another reason for the decision behind the qualitative method was to ensure that the researcher produces insightful holistic and in-depth data from the participants (Nyarado, 2013). For further data scrutiny, the quantitative method was employed to better interpret the data in support of what was reported on the transcripts generated in the qualitative study. Graphical representation after coding and examination of the data was generated to further allow for thorough descriptions and interpretations made that facilitated rich findings and recommendations for the study.

A research methodology of a study can be defined as a channel or route used in research to guide the researcher to find solutions and answers to a research problem, it may be from following a framework, the research onion, or any flow chart (Kumar, 2011). To account for the research problem, a route is followed in an attempt to find answers and deal with the research gap in a study, with the aim of seeking answers. The study adopted the research process below that was developed by Tustin *et al.* (2010).

Figure 3.1: Research process



The methodology in relation to the research process above:

Initially, the study employed a meta-synthesis approach, which helped in identifying the research gap, research problem, and research questions; then a population of interest and a sample size was developed. Furthermore, by choosing to employ mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative methods); in-depth interviews were used to conduct exploratory research, and an online survey for descriptive quantitative research. From the collecting data, analysis was done, and solutions and recommendations could be provided for the research problem.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

In the section below, the target population of the study, as well as the sampling method and techniques used in this study are discussed and the choices explained.

3.4.1 Population

Saunders *et al.* (2019) define population as a sub-group within a larger group to which the results of a study or research will apply. For this study, as per topic “The Impact of Social Issues on learners’ academic performance in Education within the Limpopo Province (Waterberg District, Palala circuit-Senior Secondary Schools)” restricts the research to focus on a specific population, in this case the education sectors, and specifically secondary schools in the Palala circuit. The study only focused on people directly affected by social issues, who are the learners and teachers. The selected population included HODs and principals.

The Palala circuit is divided in 2 groups, the south and north divisions. The population of interest for the study focused on a number of schools from each division of the secondary school in the Palala circuit. The study was conducted at five schools from each division of secondary schools in the Palala circuit of which a number of principals, teachers, and learners were part of the data collecting stage. The study was also conducted with the HODs (head of department), specifically those under the Department of Social Sciences, and a Life Orientation teacher. Lastly, three learners of different FET grades (Grade 10-12) from each school, also participated in the study.

The selection of the participants was to ensure that rich and reliable data was gathered in the data collecting stage, as social issues faced by different people from different households may potentially differ.

3.4.2 Sampling

Mujere (2016:108) in his study writes, “a sample provides needed information about the population”. To ensure that the needed information was provided in this study about the selected population, the research employed mixed methods where questionnaire surveys and interviews were the tools used to collect the data. The sample size was drawn from the identified population. The sample size for this study was secondary school principals, teachers, and learners from the Palala circuit division of the Waterberg district in Limpopo. The research tools, interviews, and questionnaire survey were used to generate data from the identified sample size.

Due to the unavailability of some of the participants, the sample decreased to 56. In essence, the study was conducted as follows:

Table 2.1: Sampled participants of the study

Participants	No of participants
Principals	9
Head of department (Department of Social Sciences)	10
Life Orientation teacher (1 per schools)	7
Learners of different FET grades (Grade 10-12;1 per grade)	30

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Saunders *et al.* (2009) developed a research onion that describes and shows stages leading to the development of an effective research methodology. The study followed the research onion structure in sequence, where steps towards conducting the research were taken. The study employed a mixed method, questionnaire surveys were distributed to the participants, and interviews were conducted.

For the collection of data, the research collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data from surveys and in-depth face-to-face and online interviews and secondary data from previously published journals; however, the primary data was used in the analysis stage, then a comparison was made based on the results from the primary data conducted and the secondary data to produce accurate and rich recommendations. The use of both the primary and secondary data was to use both the quantitative and qualitative research to validate the findings and have accurate solutions to the research problem.

Online interviews were conducted from some of the participants filtered as part of the population, as well as the distribution of the questionnaire survey to some of the participants. Devices such as cell phones, tablets, and a laptop were used for the online interviews whereas some were held face to face with the selected participants. For the questionnaire survey, a paper designed data collection sheet was used to generate answers under the survey to produce quantitative data.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis stage involved a thorough analysis and evaluation of the distributed questionnaire surveys received back from the respondents. Before the editing and analysis of data, the questionnaires were checked for compliance with the criterion designed for the questionnaire, and checked if the required questions were completed. This gave the researchers a chance to deal with any incomplete survey by not including it in the analysis for accuracy and reliability. The incomplete surveys were either not included for analysis or respondents were asked to re-attempt the survey and answer all the required questions.

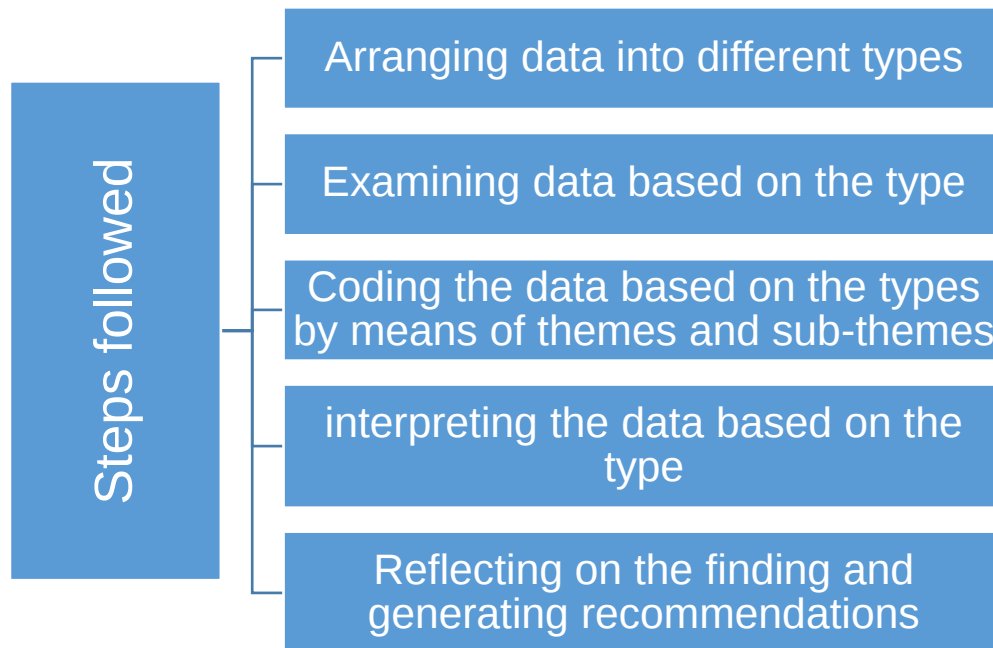
The aim was to do central editing, which involves the process of checking for completed questionnaires and wrong answers that do not necessarily answer the research questions to achieve the research objectives (Tustin *et al.*, 2010). The questionnaires returned from the respondents were further checked, edited, and analysed to generate a percentage feedback based on the questions asked in the questionnaire surveys. The data analysis was conducted under a quantitative approach, where respondents are given ranking options to select the most appropriate answer. This technique helped the researcher to understand which of the social issues have a bigger impact on learners' academic performance, while providing solutions in secondary schools in South Africa, particularly in the Palala circuit division of the Waterberg district in Limpopo. The results were presented using various methods such as tables, graphs, frequency graphs, and percentage calculation.

3.6.1. How data was analysed

As mentioned, the study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods; semi-structured interviews was the qualitative tool and a questionnaire survey was the quantitative research tool/method. By means of coding, categorising, and interpreting the data, a thorough analysis was done through the qualitative responses that allowed the participants to narrate their experiences and provided rich and insightful information that was thoroughly examined through the transcript from the analysis. The same techniques were employed on the quantitative data collection, where structured questionnaire surveys were distributed amongst respondents and upon

receiving them, they were coded, categorised, and interpreted by means by graphical charts and graphs.

Figure 3.2: Steps on how the data was analysed



From generating the data, the first step involved arranging data in different types with qualitative and quantitative data. Secondly, the data was read through and checked for completion (questionnaires). Thirdly, the data was coded by generating themes and sub-themes as per the overall general sense of the information for analysis. The themes catered for both types of data, where qualitative transcripts and quotations of responds were quoted, and where quantitative graphical illustrations were presented. The last step comprised of interpretation of the different types of data, which also supported the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

3.7 DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS

The term trustworthiness was coined by Lincoln and Guba in 1985 for qualitative content analysis as a similar concept to validity and reliability in quantitative research. The trustworthiness of qualitative analysis is often presented by using terms such as

credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity (White *et al.*, 2012).

The study accounts and provides ownership of secondary information by means of referencing any author's work, even if it is direct quotation marks, knowledge drawn from their study, or any of idea generated from using their work. To further ensure the trustworthiness of the study and data, the distribution of surveys and conducting of interviews addressed issues of bias answering and duplicating one another's survey. This was done to avoid duplication and inaccurate data that is used to form a conclusion on the research topic.

To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the following were addressed by Nowell *et al.* (2017):

Creditability: To ensure creditability the researcher shared their experiences and knowledge drawn from the findings with the participants to allow them to provide their subjective, individual, and shared experiences.

Dependability: In ensuring dependability, after a thorough evaluation of the received data from participants, a comparison was made of the trend from what was previously published, to check if there is consistency in the trend between the issues raised previously and in the study.

Conformability: The researcher, to avoid dishonesty and inaccurate conclusions, neglected their personal experience and bias and solely focused on the collected data from the interviews and survey to draw conclusions and interpretations.

Transferability: Because of the nature of the study, the reader will most likely want to conduct more studies based on the findings from this study. In ensuring transferability, the collected data was analysed, interpreted, and presented to be accurate and relatable to the ever-growing concern of social issues affecting learners in schools.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Dictionary of Psychology defines ethics as "what is deemed to be acceptable or unacceptable in human conduct". Tustin *et al.* (2010) emphasise that in research, as

it is a complex phenomenon, plagiarism, dishonesty, misconduct, and theft of work still stands as an issue, hence the unethical behaviour in research.

The intensity of research is rather challenging and testing, but for the validity and accuracy of the research, there are certain aspects to abide by, which is being ethical and good practice. The research taking a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) route will comprise of primary and secondary sources, which will be acknowledged and referenced.

For this research, the aim was to mitigate all the possible unethical conduct risks by:

- Not to tempering, altering, or falsifying any information from participants
- Maintain participants' confidentiality
- Not disclosing any information to third parties
- Not to benefit in any way from the information received from participants other than in an academic manner
- Not to overstate the benefits of the findings

3.9 CONCLUSION

The research design and methodology selected for this study were presented and each selection was justified. The study used a mixed method by conducting a survey and individual interviews with the same participants to ensure accurate data was collected as well as subjective data to gain an understanding of how teachers, learners, HODs, and principals experience the social issues that impact on learner performance. The selected research methods showed to be trustworthy, and ethical steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of the participants were honoured. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations on what steps could be taken to address the social issues influencing learner performance in secondary schools.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter 3, the research methodology and methods were thoroughly explained and discussed. In this chapter an analysis and representation of the data is done. The results of the study are presented in accordance with the research aim and objectives, while addressing the research questions and gap. The investigation of the study was on the impact social issues have on the academic performance of secondary school learners. This chapter presents a thorough, holistic, and insightful view into the schooling and learning experiences of secondary school learners in terms of social issues and other barriers that have an impact on their academic performance.

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study according to main themes and sub-themes that emerged. The results and the analysis of the data are then presented and discussed according to identified themes and sub-themes of the issues and the impact of the study. The intention of the study was to obtain information from the 10 selected secondary schools in the Palala circuit division of Waterberg district. The discussion of the data is based on the qualitative and quantitative tools in terms of themes and sub-themes identified in the data analysis.

The researcher should enable the reader to follow the thinking that led to the reported themes; this implies that the reader needs to be provided with sufficient and precise details from the participants' voices. Themes and sub-themes were developed and supported with quotes from the semi-structured interviews, and the ratings from the questionnaire survey conducted with both teachers and learners.

In doing the analysis, the research objectives and question are addressed. To remind the reader, the research objectives and question are as follows:

4.1.1 Main research question

What are the known social issues and how do they affect the academic performance of learners in secondary schools?

4.1.2 Sub research questions

- What are the prominent well known social issues faced by learners in schools?
- From the identified social issues, which of them are relevant to South African Secondary School?

4.1.3 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study was to provide a comprehensive review of the different literature and practices within the education system in Limpopo. The research objectives include:

- To understand and examine the effects of social issues on the academic performance of secondary school learners
- The impact does the social issues possibly play on the future of learners
- To outline how the education system can address social issues in secondary schools

Both the aim and objective of the study was to identify, analyse, and provide possible recommendations for addressing and managing the social issues affecting secondary school learners in South Africa. The overall objective of the study was to provide a holistic study on the impact of social issues within the education system in Limpopo and to formulate possible recommendations for addressing, managing, and implementing in secondary schools to combat social issues. The following steps were employed and followed:

First step: This step involves reading the transcripts a number of times and listening carefully to the interview recordings, because knowing the data enables the researcher to deliver a more enlightened, insightful, and complete analysis, to understand the significant information that the participants were giving. The information was used to summarise, paraphrase, and notice contradictions as well as to identify the similarities and differences and to make relevant comments.

Second step: This involves the use of the comments made by the participants to develop meaningful constructs or themes of what was said in the responses. The

researcher used expressions that allowed theoretical connections based on the specific responses of the interviewee when generating the themes.

Third step: A list of themes and sub-themes of the social issues was compiled, below is the table indicating the themes and sub-themes of this study:

Table 3.1: Themes and sub-themes of the social issues

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Poverty	• Lack of resource • Inability of parents to afford school requirements • Parents/guardian unemployment
2. Pregnancy	• Teenage pregnancy
3. Socio-economic issues	• High prevalence of drug abuse • Alcoholism
4. Environmental issues	• Bullying
5. Psychological issues	• Pupils' self-esteem • Low motivation
6. Possible solution and strategies	• Indolent of other stakeholder • Navigating the good in the environment
7. Offering support systems	• Involvement of different stakeholders

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The description of the participants is provided below, indicating the profession and experience of the sampled teachers and the genders and age of the learners.

Table 4.2: Biographic description of the participants: principals

DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION OF PRINCIPLES		
Participant interviewed	Years of experience	Longest grade taught
1. Principal 1	16 + years	Grade 12
2. Principal 2	16 + years	Grade 8, 9 &12
3. Principal 3	16 + years	Grade 12
4. Principal 4	16 + years	Grade 11
5. Principal 5	10-15 years	Grade 12
6. Principal 6	16 + years	Grade 12
7. Principal 7	16 + years	Grade 12
8. Principal 8	16 + years	Grade 12
9. Principal 9	16 + years	Grade 12

Table 4.2 above indicates the level of experience and the longest grade taught by the principals who contributed to the study. The information in the table indicates that all the principals taught FET grades (Grade 10-12) with eight having taught these grades for over 16 years, and only one of them having taught these grades for 10-15 years. All principals have taught FET grades for over 10 years. These principals were considered because of their level of experience and knowledge from working in secondary schools many years.

Table 4.3: Biographic description of the participants: Head of department (HODs)

DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION of HODs		
Participant interviewed	Years of experience	Longest grade taught
1. HoD 1	16 + years	Grade 8-12
2. HoD 2	16 + years	Grade 11
3. HoD 3	10-15 years	Grade 8-12
4. HoD 4	16 + years	Grade 8-12
5. HoD 5	10-15 years	Grade 8-12
6. HoD 6	16 + years	Grade 11
7. HoD 7	16 + years	Grade 12
8. HoD 8	16 + years	Grade 10-12

9.	HoD 9	6-10 years	Grade 10-12
10.	HoD 10	16 + years	Grade 12

Table 4.3 above indicates the level of experience and the longest grade taught by the HoDs (Head of Department) teachers. The information indicates that all the HoDs taught FET grades (Grade 10-12), with seven of them having taught these grades for over 16 years, 2 having taught these grades for 10-15 years, one having taught for 6-10 years. With nine of the 10 HoDs having taught FET grades for over 10 years, only one has less than 10 years' experience. The researcher considered these particular HODs because of their level of experience and knowledge from working in secondary schools.

Table 4.4: Biographic description of participants: Life orientation teachers

DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION OF TEACHERS		
Respondent interviewed	Years of experience	Longest grade taught
1. Teacher 1	1-5 years	Grade 8 & 9
2. Teacher 2	1-5 years	Grade 10
3. Teacher 3	1-5 years	Grade 9
4. Teacher 4	1-5 years	Grade 12
5. Teacher 5	1-5 years	Grade 9
6. Teacher 6	1-5 years	Grade 8,10,11 &12
7. Teacher 7	16 + years	Grade 12

Table 4.4 outlines the information on the years of experience and the longest grade taught by the Life Orientation teachers that formed part of the study. The table reflects that seven Life Orientation teachers attached in secondary schools formed part of the study. The table also reflects that only three teachers from seven teachers have taught the FET phase for a long time, with only one having taught the FET phase learners for over 16 years, and six for 1 to 5 years. The table shows that most of the Life Orientation teachers in the study are new teachers or have been deployed to educate the Life Orientation subject within the past 5 years. The researcher considered these particular teachers because of their level of experience and knowledge from teaching Life Orientation as it covers the context of the study when taught in class.

Table 4.5: Biographic description of the participants: FET Grade learners (Grade 10, 11, and 12)

Gender		Age			
		15 years	6	18 years	5
Male	13	16 years	6	19 years	3
Female	17	17 years	6	20 + years	4

Table 4.5 indicates the biographic information of learners in terms of gender and age, with 30 secondary school learners forming part of the study. Amongst the learners, 43% of them were male and 57% were females, which support the statement that there are more girls in South African schools (Modise, 2018). The table also categorises the learners by age with 6 learners being 15 years old, 6 learners being 16 years old, 6 learners being 17 years old, 5 being 18 years old, 3 being 19 years old, and 4 being over 20 years old. The ages of the learners shows that some learners failed along the way because in a school setting pupils complete their high school or secondary education at 18 years old, so any age beyond 18 implies there were issues that affected grades of some learners.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The interview questions were structured in such a way that in responding, the research objectives and questions are addressed. Participants from the interviews were audio recorded and their recorded responses formed part of the analysis in this study. The participants interviewed were 30 FET phase learners, 7 Life Orientation teachers, 10 Head of Department (HoDs), and 9 Principals; however, the initial sample involved 60 participants, of which 4 were not interviewed due to their unavailability during the scheduled interview days. The responses captured are presented below, under the qualitative and quantitative analysis. A questionnaire survey was used to generate data and was distributed to the same participants who were interviewed; thus, every participant who completed the questionnaire was interviewed. The analysis is presented below on the relevant interview and survey questions.

4.4 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The biographic section provided information on the participants. The interview questions and questionnaire both included background questions, schooling experience and touched on the social issues known to learners and their teachers. The interview questions allowed participants to elaborate thoroughly where they could, while the questionnaire allowed them various answering options ranging from multiple-choice questions to closed-ended and open-ended questions.

The first section presents the qualitative analysis, which involved semi-structured interviews between the researcher and learners and teachers. The participants interviewed were 30 FET phase learners, 7 Life Orientation teachers, 10 HoDs, and 9 Principals; in total 56 participants.

4.5 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The next section provides a discussion on the six main themes and related sub-themes identified from the data analysis.

4.5.1 Theme 1: Poverty (The Impact of Poverty on Academic Performance)

When asked about the issues related to poverty, it emerged that the learners who live in poverty are extremely stressed, vulnerable, have low self-esteem, and low academic self-concept. The respondent gave various experiences followed by teachers' responses. When asked the following questions the following were observed.

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Learners interview responses:

Question: Do you enjoy coming to school?

Learner 3: *"Yes, I do enjoy coming to school because I get to interact with my friends and get to learn new information each and every day".*

Learner 1: *"Yes, I enjoy coming to school because it is the place where I gain knowledge".*

Learner 29: *“Yes, I enjoy coming to school to avoid stress and pressure at home because I am staying with my sister and her 5 kids who always run around and make a lot of noise, whereas at school, I get to study in peace and also enjoy working together with my friends on classwork and homework”.*

The responses from learners indicated that they enjoy coming to school because they get to interact with their peers, they learn new things, and they get uplifted and gain knowledge as opposed to when they are at home. This shows that despite the social issues, learners still enjoy going to school.

The learners who indicated that they do not enjoy coming to school (3%) cited the following:

Learner 4: *“No, I enjoy my own company more than anything, so at school I am forced to socialise”.*

A similar question was asked during the interview, asking if learners were finding school easy and some of the responses were expressed as follows:

Learner 12: *“Not really, because since the pandemic has started, we are coming to school part times and you’d find that teacher spent a day without attending a class, that is a big turn off because we get delayed in terms of education progress and you’d find learners writing tests and exams without any understanding because of lack of education”.*

To support the survey results of 27% of the learners that are currently not performing well, a learner expressed some of the reasons behind his personal academic performance. The learner expressed that teacher tend be absent from classes, which then affects their academic performance, as they at times get to write tests and exams without adequate knowledge on the content being asked in exam, resulting in their poor performance.

Question: What are you doing as a teacher to help learners with these issues? (Intervention by the teacher?)

Teacher: *“As a teacher personally what I normally do is, I first of all try to identify these learners who are having social issues; the only problem is there are many such*

learners. Then, try to find out the types of social problems that they are having at home, then where possible intervene like maybe bring the parent here at school and discuss issues raised by the learner”.

Teacher: “Few months ago, there’s was a learner who complained that the food at school are not enough and when I asked how was that possible because other learners hardly complain about food not being enough and that the government made sure that the quantities they receive is enough, the learner then said that his guardian always tell him there is no food for him to eat after school since he had food at school. I then called in the parents and spoke to them about this problem and that’s when I realised that these learners are sometimes bullied by their own parents”.

“Learners always complain that I need to talk to their parents because they give them a lot of work and they don’t have time to study because they are always directed to do this and that, so there no time for schoolwork. My intervention here is I try and talk to the parents, if possible, to minimize the chores they give these learners”.

The responses indicated that the majority of the learners involved in the study had similar understandings and experiences. Most learners indicated that the school is the only place where they are provided with sufficient food that lasts them throughout the whole day. While some teachers highlighted that, the feeding schemes improved the learners’ concentration and their educational performance; it had a positive effect on the attendance and the dropout rate. They further indicated that the feeding scheme reduces financial pressure to unemployed parents and those with a low income. Literature reveals that there are measures put in place such as social grants and feeding schemes, but these are somehow insufficient. In terms of feeding schemes, learners get their meals during lunchtime, meaning that some of the poor learners come to school having not had breakfast and have to wait until lunchtime. They then have to wait for the next day for another meal at lunchtime, their weekends and school holidays are spent on empty stomachs (Mafugu, 2021). These situations have the potential to cause mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, further leading to substance abuse. Schools and the government should identify parents in low-income households and encourage their involvement in their children’s education. (Mafugu, 2021:10) expresses that “School meal programmes provide meals in schools or as take-home rations after attending school. Such programmes are implemented to

fill gaps in macronutrient and micronutrient deficiencies for the children. Moreover, school meals boost student learning, increase enrolment and school attendance. More than 360 million school children worldwide benefit from such feeding schemes”.

4.5.1.1 Sub-Theme 1: Lack of resources

The other observation made under the poverty theme was as follows.

When asked about the inability of parents to afford scholastic materials, it was found that most of the learners from child-headed families, poor backgrounds, and/or disadvantaged families had no proper and clean uniforms. The uniforms were torn and worn out or it did not fit them properly (old uniform).

Learners and teachers expressed their frustrations about the uniform. One of the teachers indicated that, *“Learners without proper uniform tend to feel insecure and has low self-esteem. They wear torn clothes without jerseys during winter; these negatively affect their school performance”*.

The answers showed that there is a link between academic performance and challenges that affect learners from performing academically. This is evidenced by 33% of the responses who said that there were some social issues affecting their studies, and 27% of the 33% stated that they are not performing well. This suggests that even though some were affected by some social issues at home or school, they believe that they are performing well in their studies. It is clear, according to Chinyoka (2014), that the home economic situation affects learners academically and parents cannot afford to support them in their education.

4.5.1.2 Sub-Theme 2: Inability of parents to afford school requirements

When participants were asked a question based on scholastic material, some of them responded that they had serious challenges with uniform. During the course of the interview with teachers and the principals, the following were mentioned by the participants:

Principal 3: *“We have an influx number of learners who we have to allow to wear clothes that are not our school uniform because they don’t afford to buy school uniform. Sometimes, we as teacher even go house-to-house to the home of learners who just*

completed matric and ask if they can donate their uniform as they will no longer wear them. We also try to contribute where we can by buying school uniform and provide those from extremely poor families.”

Teacher 4: *“As a teacher I have come to realise that most of learners from poor families struggle with doing well in school and I think it is because they feel that they don’t belong in school; it could be because they are ashamed that they don’t have proper school uniforms like other and can’t even afford. I once asked one of the learners, what it is that I can do to help, and I discovered that the learner didn’t have a simple calculator and he also raised that they cannot afford study guides that some of the learners have. It is really painful to watch learners not perform well because of their situation at home, I just wish the government can intervene and ensure that all the equipment’s learners need are provided for to these learners.”*

In analysing the data from the participants, it was found that teachers believe that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds have no proper uniforms, it is either the uniform were torn apart and not fitting properly, or they just did not have a uniform at all. Some teachers stated that some learners do not even have calculators, which would mean that they would have a hard time solving some of the problems during examinations and tests, because learners are not allowed to speak to each other let alone borrow a calculator from another learner during the course of the assessments. This shows that the inability of parents to afford scholastic equipment has a straining effect on how the learners ultimately perform. The study done by Mafokwane (2017) expresses that parental inability to support their children with school needs is a challenge to most of the learners.

4.5.1.3 Sub-Theme 3: Parents/Guardian unemployment

This sub-theme presents the responses and analysis on the impact of parents and guardian that are unemployed.

Question: Do you mostly have food to eat before school and after school?

Learner 5: *“No. sometimes you would find that at home, there is not enough food, but I’m used to coming to school with an empty stomach. I figured that sometimes when*

u have eaten, I become lazy at school, so I made it a habit so that I may not be stressed a lot by the poverty that is at home”.

Learner 1: *“I always have breakfast to eat, but sometimes there isn’t enough food to eat after school”.*

Learner 9: *“No, there is nothing to eat at home except soft porridge and sugar which sometimes makes me lose appetite, so I usually don’t eat at home and eat enough here at school”.*

Learner 2: *“No, I don’t eat breakfast because I don’t have time as I have to wake up early in the morning to prepare my siblings for school, so I only eat at school during lunch time”.*

Learner 7: *“No, I only eat during break times at school and after school at drop-in centre because I am staying with my grandmother who is sick, and unable to prepare food for us. In the morning I sometimes fail to concentrate waiting for break time so that I can eat”.*

Most of the learners asserted that it is difficult to have breakfast because of their economic status at home. The participants further indicated that given their poor background, they are extremely stressed and vulnerable, which affects their academic self-concept. This is an effect of unemployment, as parents without jobs struggle to provide food for learners, which then affects the concentration span of the learners, as they have to learn and go through the day with empty stomachs. It is also related to the above sub-theme that gives insight on the inability of parents to afford scholastic material. It is also an effect resulting from unemployment, as parents who only receive a social grant get only enough to sustain their lives in terms of food, not so much on the scholastic material.

Poverty is proving to have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of learners. All the sub-themes under poverty show how it is affecting the learners’ lives on a daily basis. It is showing that a serious intervention from the government and other relevant stakeholders is urgently needed to try to improve the living standards of those stricken by poverty and their academic performance. Mafokwane (2017) states that parental involvement is also one social issue of importance, it has been shown

that students who have positive support and involvement of their parents in their education tend to perform better, and parents from poorer environments are unlikely to have the time and money to provide academic assistance to their children. Parent illiteracy poses a problem for parent-teacher involvement, as these parents rarely invest in their children's education, which could discourage their children, causing them to perform poorly in school or even dropping out (Mafokwane, 2017). This shows that the inability of parents to assist their children financially and academically affects their performance.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Pregnancy (The Impact of Pregnancy)

Teenage pregnancy is a huge concern in South African schools, and the section below presents the information from the data analysis.

4.5.2.1 Sub-Theme 1: Teenage pregnancy

The interview responses from the data analysis on teenage pregnancy, and the impact it has as a social issue on the performance of learners are presented below.

INTERVIEW RESPONSE

The study showed that poverty is one of the main factors that lead to teenage pregnancy. Out of all the female learners who were interviewed in the study, 8 highlighted that they had children, while one was pregnant during the course of the study. Records on pregnant learners from the 10 selected schools confirmed that most of the learners who fell pregnant were from poor families or child-headed families.

The following comments were made by learners during the interview:

Learner 18: *"I am staying with my grandmother who is unemployed and there is no one supporting us, so I ended up falling pregnant to get the grant to be able to put food on the table; that is the reason I ended up falling pregnant."*

From the statement above, girls from vulnerable families are at risk of falling pregnant as they try to make ends meet. Therefore, pregnancy has a perpetual role in increasing the cycle of poverty. Mogotlane (2020) agrees that poverty-stricken learners tend to follow any possible route for finances. Children, for instance in child-headed homes,

because of their financial crisis, girls end up falling prey to older men, who exploit and take advantage of them sexually and later provide money for food and other necessity, while boys mostly get involved in pickpocketing and crimes as a way to get money for basic needs.

It is concluded that learners who fall pregnant early in school performs poorly. Many failed to meet the requirements and had to repeat grades, which then led some of them dropping out.

Teachers also commented and highlighted insightful information regarding pregnancy of learners and the affect is has on their academic performance and wellbeing. During the interviews, the following were discussed:

Question: What are the impacts of pregnancy in schools?

Teacher 1: *“Learners are not ready to deal with demands of being a parent and when it does happen, it becomes too much for them and if they have to come to school, they drop in terms of performance altogether.”*

Question: Which social issues do you think affects learners the most?

Teacher 5: *“In our areas there are two social issues that affect learners the most and they are drug abuse and teenage pregnancy.”*

Teacher 2: *“Pregnancy. This one mostly results from family background where most learners are left alone in their family (child headed families), where learners would engage in different activities and some of them unfortunately becomes pregnant.”*

Teacher 6: *“Pregnancy mostly. In terms of pregnancy, learners who are pregnant have to visit the clinic frequently, which means they absent themselves from school. After giving birth, some of them give birth through caesarean section, so they stay at home for a long time before they could fully recover and come back to school. Those who give birth naturally, come back to school after 2-3 days, but they are normally not in a good condition, so it impact a lot into their studies in a negative manner.”*

Question: What are the impacts of social issues towards learners' performance?

Most teachers indicated that, *"There is a very serious decline in the abilities and the performance of the learners due to these social issues. For example, you'd find that a learner is performing quite good in their studies then they become pregnant at an early age and automatically the poor child's performance will drop; even the boy that impregnates a girl at an early age, he ends up bullying other learners and their performance drops"*

Question: Between boys and girl, whom do you think is heavily affected by these social issues?

Teacher 2: *"Let me be honest. In our area, both boys and girls are affected equally. You look at teenage pregnancy, people might look at it as if girls are the only ones affected, but immediately when a teenage boy impregnates a girl, they become confused on whether they are still boys or men because he would want to provide to both the teenage mother and the child, so he opt for other things like theft. When a girl is pregnant, they become emotionally stressed. Even in class the aftermath of parenthood to these learners affects their academic performance negatively."*

Question: How is the current performance of learners?

Teacher 4: *"We have ups and downs. Prior to covid-19, the performance of learners was improving and coming right but since this lockdown, there is a moral decay; the performance is very low. I can even mention that the results of the trial exams were 43% pass rate, which is really bad. If we look at what affect their performance, you would find that it is due to pregnancy and the use of drugs. All these learners who are not coming to school are parents at home, even when they come to school, their performance does not improve, and it has dropped drastically."*

From the observations based on the above questions, pregnancy is viewed as a detrimental issue to the performance of learners, as most teachers highlighted that in most cases, when a teenage girl falls pregnant, their academic performance is negatively affected, and in most cases leads to learners dropping out. De Wet, Amoo and Odimegwu (2018: 88) support most of the comments mentioned by the teachers and states that, *"the impact of teenage pregnancy on academic performance included*

poor academic performance after the pregnancy, increase dropout because of pregnancy related issues and negative feeling on schooling.” He also mentioned that among many other factors, the key factors contributing to teenage pregnancy include lack of parental care and control, lack of some material needs, poor peer guidance, lack of sex education, and the influence of alcohol and drug abuse.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Socio-Economic Issues (The Effects of Social Issues)

The theme of socio-economic issues is presented in this section, and the effect it has on learner performance, with specific focus on drug and alcohol abuse.

4.5.3.1 Sub-Theme 1: High Prevalence of Drug Abuse

Drug abuse among learners was identified as a sub-theme that impacts the performance of learners, and is discussed in the next section, with supporting comments from the participants.

INTERVIEW RESPONSE

The following comments from the interviews on the impact of drugs on the academic performance of learners were made by teachers as follows:

Question: Which Social issues do you affects the academic performance of learners?

Teacher 1: *“Engaging in drugs, drinking alcohol and lack of support from their parents. Basically, these are the ones affecting them the most.”*

Teacher 4: *“In our area, there are two social ills that affect learners the most and they are drug abuse and teenage pregnancy.”*

Question: Would you say social issues directly affect the academic performance?

Teacher 2: *“Yes because they ended up not performing well. Those who are taking drugs they perform poorly. Those with diseases absent themselves a lot, so absenteeism is too high. Those who are taking drugs they have that thing of ill-*

disciplined, we cannot discipline them because we fear that they may come with dangerous weapons to school, so disciplining them is not easy.”

Question: Between boys and girls, whom do you think are heavily affected by social issues?

Teacher 3: *“Once they are under the influence of drugs, they are very dangerous. They fight and start bullying other children. In class it is difficult to even look into their eyes because you don’t know which weapon, they are in possession of at that time, so rather just keep quiet; we are scared as teachers”.*

Question: Are you as a teacher affected by any social issues?

Teacher: *“Everybody living in any community is affected by social issues; that is why even when you are a teacher you are also affected. For example, when the learners are not performing well, the teacher is to blame; we are highly affected. The same unsupportive parents are the ones who fight us for their children’s poor performance. When a child is pregnant, we must run up and down to help them when they have problems relating to that pregnancy at school; you cannot ignore them as their teacher or as an adult. For example, one of the recent incidents, I can explain as a result of the use drugs. There was a learner here at school that was heavy on drugs on a particular day at school. Seeing his condition, I had to rush him to the hospital; it is unfortunate that within a week that learner died. His passing affected me very seriously because that boy was good in his academics but because of drugs, he died.”*

Teachers mentioned the use of drugs and the impact on the academic performance of learners. Dankano (2017) states that learners or youth who use drugs are socially and academically underdeveloped and are often not considered impactful under any social development or any development in general, because the use of drugs affects their academics and degrades their morals and integrity. He further mentions that learners who use drugs are disobedient to their teachers and parents. This supports the statement by one of the teachers who mentioned that they are scared of learners who use drugs, because they do not know how they would react if they are questioned, and because these learners are usually troublesome, they do not know whether they have harmful weapons at their disposal to hurt teachers or anyone who resists listening to them.

The use of drugs, considering the statement from teachers, is proving to be a setback in the academic view and social view of any person, especially learners. The results from the use of drugs are very dangerous, as they do not only affect the academic performance of the user, but also disturbs the learning outcomes of other learners. It creates a tense classroom atmosphere as the disobedient drug users in the classroom are normally feared by the teachers and people from the community, including their own parents. The passing of a learner from drug abuse was raised by one of the teachers and is alarming, because it is proving to show the harmfulness of drugs not only in a school setting, but also generally in our daily lives, as we live among people who use drugs and cause problems within the community.

4.5.3.2 Sub-Theme 2: Alcoholism

The influence of alcoholism as a social issue on learner performance is presented below.

INTERVIEW RESPONSE

The following comments from the interviews on the impact of alcohol abuse on the academic performance of learners were made by teachers:

Question: Between boys and girls, whom do you think are heavily affected by social issues?

Teacher: *"Boys, I think boys are the ones who are heavily affected by social issues, especially alcoholism because even performance wise boys are below girls."*

Question: Are other teachers affected by social issues?

Teacher 3: *"Our young teachers, looking at the situation around us are affected in terms of drinking alcohol. Nowadays drinking alcohol seems like is a fashionable thing, so they join in because it is as if it is luxury, but we are trying to motivate and guide one another so that we are not victims."*

LEARNERS' RESPONSES

Learner responses on the issue of possible drug and alcohol abuse revealed the following:

Question: Do you know of learners who keep on absenting themselves from school? If so, what might be the reason?

Learner 6: *“Yes, sometimes I think the reason might be alcoholism. Learners in my class love to party, so I don’t think they take their schoolwork serious enough to not attend those parties and taverns”.*

Balsa *et al.* (2011) report that the use of alcohol during adolescence affects the academic attainment of learners by reducing the likelihood of completing school, and by increasing the number of years to complete school. He further stated that it does not necessarily stop them from completing school, but it affects the quality of learning and academic performance. This means that alcohol use has the potential to degrade the quality of education but not necessarily the attainment of education or completion of grades or schooling.

Some of the teachers mentioned that alcoholism affects their learners’ academic performance and contribute to the frequent absenteeism of both learners and teachers. It affects the academic outcomes of the learners, because if a learner is absent frequently, they miss out on the content being taught on the days they were absent, and when a teacher is absent, all learners are affected because they would not be taught on that day. Therefore, from the observations in the study, alcoholism is proving to be an issue as it leads to hangovers, absenteeism, and decreased learners concentration in class. Also considering what another learner mentioned about learners frequently attending parties and are then frequently absent, it shows that it is an alarming concern, which affect the academic performance of learners.

4.5.4 Theme 4: Environmental Issues (The Effects of Social Issues)

Environmental issues were identified as a theme that impacts the performance of learners, with focus on bullying as a social issue.

4.5.4.1 Sub-Theme 1: Bullying

Bullying has increased dramatically in South African schools, and has a huge impact on learners and their performance, as it instils fear.

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The following responses were collected from teachers on the social issue of bullying:

Question: What is the impact of social issues towards learners' performance?

Teacher 5: *"There is a very serious decline in the abilities and the performance of the learners due to these social ills. For example, you'd find that a learner is performing quite good in their studies then they become pregnant at an early age and automatically the poor child's performance will drop; even the boy that impregnates a girl at an early age, he ends up bullying other learners and their performance drops."*

Question: What are you doing as a teacher to help learners with these issues? (Intervention by the teacher?)

Teacher 6: *"As a teacher personally what I normally do is, I first of all try to identify these learners who are having social issues; the only problem is there are many such learners. Then, try to find out the types of social problems that they are having at home, then where possible intervene like maybe bring the parent here at school and discuss issues raised by the learner. Few months ago there's was a learner who complained that the food at school are not enough and when I asked how was that possible because other learners hardly complain about food not being enough and that the government made sure that the quantities, they receive is enough, the learner then said that his guardian always tell him there is no food for him to eat after school since he had food at school. I then called in the parents and spoke to them about this problem and that's when I realised that these learners are sometimes bullied by their own parents."*

LEARNERS' RESPONSES

The following responses were collected from learners on the social issue of bullying:

Question: Do you know of learners who keep on absenting themselves from school? If so, what might be the reason?

Learner 5: *"I think it is because they have family issues, or they are being abused; I think those are the reasons."*

Question: What do you think causes other learners to drop out?

Learner 7: *"It is because some learners forget who they are and what they want in life and the cost of living. Sometimes they come from abusive and toxic homes where they don't get academic support from their parents; they are bullied by other learners and that affects their self-esteem."*

Question: Have you ever been violated at home or at school?

Learner 3: *"At school, yes. At times when the teacher is attending one of the school programs meetings, they would ask us to go through certain topics, so this one time, we were attending mathematics and the teacher had left for a meeting, so I went to the chalkboard to discuss with my classmates, so one of the learners insulted and when I tried to respond him, I think he was trying to please his friends, he came to the front and slapped me in front of everyone and that made me lose confidence."*

On a global scale, bullying is referred to as a social problem that affects many people. From the statements of the learners, one indicated that they have been violated in class, and one of the teachers believe that some learners resort to bullying because they see themselves as a parent due to teenage pregnancy, and they feel that they are now older than learners without children, so they tend to bully them. Another teacher is of a different view, and stated that learners are sometimes bullied by their parents, judging from an incident they experienced with a learner who was not provided with food at home, as they have been fed at school from the feeding scheme programme. In support of these statements and their experiences, it was found that children become bullies due to numerous reasons, some being that they have personal problems at home such as abuse (Zuma *et al.*, 2019), or they themselves are used to being bullied. This supports the statements by teachers and learners that some learners are bullied because they suffer abuse at home or they have been bullied before. Marx (2018) states that bullying can traumatise the victim, causing changes in their behaviour, personality, and self-esteem. Victims could develop depression, anxiety, and withdrawal.

Violence in schools is not only directed to learners; teachers also experience violence at the hands of their learners, which could lead to teachers being stressed out, leading to absenteeism (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). One of the teachers also mentioned that they

fear being bullied by learners who use drugs because they do not know how they would react if questioned. This implies that these learners get away with bad behaviour, and because they are feared, they resort to bullying their teachers, and this eventually affect the academic performance of learners.

4.5.5 Theme 5: Psychological Issues (The Effects of Social Issues)

The psychological issues and effects of social issues were identified, and includes self-esteem and low motivation.

4.5.5.1 Sub-Theme 1: Pupils' Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a real social issue that could have a huge impact on learner performance, and is discussed below.

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The responses from teachers on the issue of self-esteem are presented and discussed below.

Question: what impact does lack of scholastic materials have on learners?

Teacher 6: *"If learners do not have uniforms and stationery, they are undermined by their peers. The peer pressure becomes too much for them and ultimately, they do not cope in school. They do not get acceptance from their groups of friends/peer groups, ultimately, they have low self-esteem. The struggling with coping, they would rather drop out of school".*

Nyaradzo (2013) supports the above-mentioned statement but on the case of children in child-headed homes that they suffer from the process of adapting to living with minimal resources for survival and also academically. He further mentions these children "suffers from psychological challenges which include becoming withdrawn, passive or developing sadness, anger, fear and antisocial behaviours. Such children experience additional trauma from lack of nurturing guidance and a sense of attachment which may impede their socialization process through damaged self-confidence, social completeness and motivation". It shows that not only are children who lack scholastic material are faced with low self-esteem but psychological

challenges as they fail to adapt with the living conditions surrounding them and unsupportive society, as society tends to mock and undermine families with poor backgrounds.

LEARNERS' RESPONSES

The responses from learners on the issue of self-esteem are presented and discussed below.

Question: Are you aware of any social issue that might affect your academic performance?

Learner 4: *"Yes, pupils' esteem. I think that lack of self-esteem is affecting me in my studies because I don't really believe in myself and sometimes, I am even scared to ask teacher for help when I don't understand some topics".*

From the research, it was found that poverty is a contributing factor, normally to learners' self-esteem. It is unfortunate that some households are child-headed, where the children must find the means to get their basic needs such as clothing and food, and seldom have time for their schoolwork. These learners have a higher potential of dropping out of school before completing Grade 12 to find employment (Zuma *et al.*, 2019), thus allowing the cycle of poverty to continue in the family. In this regard and relating to the comment made by the teacher about children without proper school uniform and resources, it shows that poverty also plays a role in affecting a learner's self-esteem, which in most cases affect their attitude towards learning. To save them from embarrassment, they drop out or have low self-esteem as a result from feeling belittled because of their home situation.

To some learners it may not be linked to poverty. Some other unknown factor may be contributing to the low self-esteem of these learners; hence, a learner from the interview stated that they have low self-esteem only because they are scared to interact with teachers. It was also discovered from literature that parent illiteracy poses a problem for parent-teacher involvement, as these parents rarely invest in their children's education, which could discourage their children, causing them to perform poorly in school or even dropping out (Mafokwane, 2017). The parents not attending meetings to get feedback on their children's performance is another cause for concern

(Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). Children who go through most challenges in life by themselves are most than likely to feel discouraged in their studies; hence, they have low self-esteem when facing almost every life-challenging situation, including academics (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013).

4.5.5.2 Sub-Theme 2: Low Motivation

Low motivation is a social issue experienced by many learners, and this impacts on their ability to perform.

Question: What are your future plans in ensuring that learners perform well in their studies?

Teacher 3: *“I think learners lack motivation, so I think we must invite motivational speakers that will come to our schools and show these learners the positive side of life. Also, if these learners could get extra work, they won’t get a chance to roam around the streets and do things that will lead them astray. This will reduce the time for them to go to taverns or play around.”*

Teacher 2: *“Parents can play must be empowered on how to assist their children and motivate their children and we need to encourage parental involvement as teacher.”*

To account for the statement by the teacher above, Mafokwane (2017) states that parental involvement is also a social issue of importance, it has been shown that learners who have positive support and involvement of their parents in their education tend to perform better. Parents from poorer environments are unlikely to have the time and money to provide academic assistance to their children. Parent illiteracy poses a problem for parent-teacher involvement as these parents rarely invest in their children’s education, which could discourage their children, causing them to perform poorly in school or even dropping out (Mafokwane, 2017). The parents not attending meetings to get feedback on their children’s performance is a cause for concern (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). One of the interviewed teachers stated that parents need to be the in the frontline when it comes to their children’s education. Some teachers also suggested that motivational speakers should be brought in to talk to learners and try to motivate them so that they can see the importance of education to improve their performance.

4.5.6 Theme 6: Possible Recommendations and Strategies (Offering Support Systems)

Support from teachers, parents, and other stakeholders could go a long way in assisting learners with the social issues they experience. In the section below, some solutions presented by teachers and principals are discussed.

4.5.6.1 Sub-Theme 1: Involvement of other stakeholders

Everyone is a stakeholder in the teaching and learning of our children. Below are suggestions of stakeholders and actions they could take to support learner performance.

INTERVIEW RESPONSE

Teachers' responses on stakeholder involvement are presented below.

Interview questions linked to the above quantitative survey question, and teachers and learners were asked who the relevant stakeholders are to help with social issues and how can they help in this regard.

The following questions were asked to the participants (learners and teachers) and the following answers were provided:

Question: What are you doing as a teacher to help learners with these issues? (Intervention by the teacher)

Teacher 3: *"We have a school-based support team. We are trying to identify learners who are affected by these issues and from there, try to address it to the parents and look at other support structures like churches and people in the community to try and help such learners."*

Teacher 2: *"I either call the parents, some I personally accompany to the clinic for social development session with social workers, unfortunately the social workers with our area are never there; I've gone there 5 times, I didn't find anyone until I ended up explaining to the learners that we have sick learners who cannot cope, also considering the family background, learners have their own background issues."*

Teacher 7: *"We came up with awareness campaigns, we also engaged social workers where possible and other stakeholders from other sectors to come and assist."*

Teacher 4: *"As a teacher personally what I normally do is, i first of all try to identify these learners who are having social issues; the only problem is there are many such learners. Then, try to find out the types of social problems that they are having at home, then where possible intervene like maybe bring the parent here at school and discuss issues raised by the learner. Few months ago, there's was a learner who complained that the food at school are not enough and when I asked how was that possible because other learners hardly complain about food not being enough and that the government made sure that the quantities, they receive is enough, the learner then said that his guardian always tell him there is no food for him to eat after school since he had food at school. I then called in the parents and spoke to them about this problem and that's when I realised that these learners are sometimes bullied by their own parents. Also learners always complain that I need to talk to their parents because they give them a lot of work and they don't have time to study because they are always directed to do this and that, so there no time for schoolwork. My intervention here is I try and talk to the parents, if possible, to minimize the chores they give these learners."*

Teacher 1: *"In terms of my plans in ensuring that learners perform well, is to start preparing them from lower grades. You would find that teachers tend to focus more on grade 12s, even the district people when they visit our school, their focus is on grade 12s; they disregard other grades, so my plan has always been that we must start motivating these learners from lower grades, so that when they get to grade 12 somehow their level of motivation is a bit higher than when they are in lower grades. All the extra curriculum we extend for grade 12s must also be offered to them so that when they are in grade 12, I know this aspect won't be an issue since they would know that on Saturday they have to come to school."*

Teacher 5: *"There are a number of things that we are trying to do; the first one is to advice the learners. We are working very hard to advice the learners; we are working very hard to co-opt other people who are related to these specific jobs, for example social workers. We have been engaging with social workers due to this problem of teenage pregnancy; we are also engaging the local clinic in order to advice and then the other thing we have also engaged with the nearest police station that where we*

have even opted an officer so that he could assist in advising these learners, so that they must not become victims of social ills that preferably I'm looking at, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy which are very high in our area."

Question: What further intervention do you think is need?

Principal 3: *"The other intervention which I think we should go into is trying to find other structures within the community to try and help them. Even from the school as I have said, we have a school-based support team, but we must also look at other structures within the family and with the immediate relatives so that they may be able to help such learners, so they can get counselling or whatever! Even from the government's side, coordination of all these helping structures so that ultimately the child is helped."*

Teacher 6: *"I think it needs other stakeholders, police maybe. I don't know which programme the department can bring because Life orientation is already there but I think the role it is playing is not enough. It teaches them about all the abuse of drugs and alcohol, and entertainment affects then because you would still find that a learner did not come to school on the weekend for extra lessons because there is a tournament somewhere. They choose entertainment over class."*

Teacher 2: *"We need to have people who have got the ability and skills that can assist and go further with advising these learners so that they can perform better. If possible, each school must have a social worker and this social worker must work on the moral of the learners."*

Question: What could parents possibly do to ensure that learners are coping at school?

Teacher 1: *"If parents just play their part by supporting learners and try to give them just basic needs and where it is impossible try and cry for help."*

Teacher 3: *"Parents should regularly check their children's books, communicate with teachers and the principal, and also attend school meetings to get all the updates from the school."*

Principal 2: *"Parents need to be very much involved and supportive to these learners. Even if the learner may have been exposed and fallen into these social issues, the*

parents need to support them. For example, you would find that a child at the age of 14 with a baby and that child must still come to school and before coming to school, the teenage mother needs to first take the child to the crèche, so I am saying parents need to be supportive even though that particular child may have fallen into these social issues. These learners need parental care and parental support.”

From the observation of the statements and the survey, it is evident that both learners and teachers believe that parents and teachers could bring change and help combat the social issues facing learners. This is supported by statements from the teachers in the interview, where one of the teachers stated that parents need to be involved their children's education and be supportive, although some could have been exposed already and fallen victim to social ills, so in hindsight the involvement shows concern and could potentially help redirect these learners, and eventually their academic performance could improve.

Literature also reports that teachers are head of subjects and learners depend on them for knowledge, skills, and experiences. Teachers play a vital role in learners' upbringing, knowledge, development, and behaviour to some extent; learners believe the teacher over any other available source (Mohamedayupkhan *et al.*, 2014). The quality of the content from a teacher has the potential to build a learner, so if the teacher is not properly equipped to educate teenage learners in secondary school, there could be a possible decline in the learners' academic performance.

It is also reported that given the different circumstances, children from poor families mostly reside in the rural areas and have many barriers and challenges to perform in school. However, learners in urban areas have all the facilities and amenities that allows them to get extra help in their studies, and get access to things easily. Considering how a parent views education, there is a close link to how their children eventually perform in school (Nieuwenhuis, 2018). Because of a parent's social inferiority or lack of social impact and access of funds for school programmes, the parent, given their poor educational level, may not value education as much, which in turn affects the children's readiness for school (Nieuwenhuis, 2018). It is important to remember that a child's first education and knowledge is adopted or provided at home, and if the home situation does not allow or provide a conducive space for a child to learn, then the child may develop at a slower rate than a child from a well-off family

(Chinyoka, 2014). Furthermore, parents who fail to attend school meetings to get feedback on their children's performance, is another cause for concern (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). Unfortunately, some households are child-headed where the children have to find means to get their basic needs such as clothing and food, and seldom have time for their schoolwork; these learners have a higher potential of dropping out of school before completing Grade 12 to find employment (Zuma *et al.*, 2019). With what is being reported in literature and the results from the study by the participants, it is important that teachers and parents, who were believed to have an influence on the academic performance, have to ensure that they seriously intervene and provide effective recommendations in the education of these learners, by means of supervision and giving additional help to ensure improvement in the learners' academic attainment.

4.5.6.2 Sub-Theme 2: Navigating the good in the environment

Below are some measures proposed by teachers that could prevent learners from being impacted by social issues.

Question: What measures can be taken to ensure that learners are not affected by social issues?

Teacher 3: *"Bringing in all the stakeholders because for instances, in terms of alcoholism, tavern owners contribute and in terms of absenteeism, parents are involved, so there is a need for regular meeting with the stakeholders. As a school, we discuss with the stakeholders' ways to minimize those issues."*

Teacher 5: *"The most important aspect in eliminating this is to have social workers that are well trained. We need to be self-disciplined; we need to bring public awareness. For example, the dating of learners need to be stopped, also the drinking of the learners because they will still be time for them to do all those things when they are well matured."*

Teachers believe that one of the solutions to solve social issues that has a dire impact on the academic performance of learners, could be the involvement of social workers, including the community. They believe that social worker can help with the social development of these learners, as it is a contributing factor to the performance of

learners in school. A nurtured learner, who is aware of all social issues surrounding them, will most likely know the right solutions or platforms to resort to thrive academically. Therefore, advice and motivation, together with education programmes offered by social workers, can go a long way in helping learners with the social issues affecting their academic performance Wanders *et al.* (2017:2) report that, *“If educators understand the diversity among students, they will have an improved chance of meeting the learning needs of the students capturing the interest and attention of students to ensure learning engagement”*. This would then help social workers come up with a framework that works for learners from different backgrounds, and who presents different personalities, with different attitudes towards education. The involvement of both the community and the social workers in preventing some of these social issues can help with improving the academic performance in schools.

4.5.7 Theme 7: Offering Support Systems

An effective and efficient support system is critical for learners whom are impacted by social issues. Some suggestions below by principals and teachers are presented.

4.5.7.1 Sub-Theme 1: Involvement of different stakeholders

A fully functional support system requires stakeholders from other spheres of the community, and include teachers, parents, psychologists, and social workers to ensure optimal learner performance. Some suggestions are discussed below.

Question: What support system is needed to ensure that learners perform well?

Principal 5: *“Firstly, the learner needs to be helped psychologically, emotionally and even physically, because there are physical needs. Even religiously, I mean all other systems, that is why I am trying to touch all these systems because they are relevant to try and help a child.”*

Teacher 2: *“I think some of the learners need psychologist because when you need advices from social workers, they say the learner is over aged, also people from social development say some learners are over aged and return them home.”*

Principal 6: *“Parents. The way I see it, the major role player here should be the parents. Because if the parents can be brought on board, I think I would be easy to monitor the*

situation; the problem is we are not able to monitor what happens outside school and everything that happens outside school affects us here.”

Principal 3: *“I think the school should ensure that there is regular communication between the school and the parent, so that we as a school we highlight the issues we face here at school and the parent would be able to monitor the child.”*

Teacher 1: *“The introduction of this system of advising learners at an early age. In our case for example, we find that when learner is coming from primary school at the age between 13 and 14, some of them are already mothers which means that they have been affected at an early age. So the department should introduce the advisory committee which will advise these learners from an early age related to these social issues. The other thing that is needed in this regard is community awareness. The community in which we are living is not much participating in preventing these social issues like the selling of alcohol and drugs and the misuse of underage learners. You’d find sometimes on the streets a 13-year-old girl and an older boy standing on every corner in the village with adult watching passing by saying absolutely nothing and they will only be amazed when the poor child is pregnant.”*

Teachers mentioned all the support systems that they think could help these learners with the impact of social issues and potentially improve their academic performance. The following were mentioned as the relevant support system structures to help in this regard:

- Teachers
- Parents
- Psychologists
- Social workers
- The community

After defining school as a group of active people where educators provide formal education. Katamei *et al.* (2015) further mention that a school, whether private or public, involves a set of stakeholders who take responsibility for different activities in schools to ensure that there is an attainment of quality education. They mention that stakeholders of a school are people with a vast interest in academics and can be

teachers, parents, students, the society, and proprietors who strive to ensure education is provided. The stakeholders, considering the context of a school, can provide “Student support programmes, behaviour modification, life skills programmes, parental involvement, and capacity building are some intervention strategies to enhance learners’ performance” (Katamei *et al.*, 2015:1).

In view of the concerns mentioned by some educators (teachers and principals), stakeholders such as teachers, parents, psychologists, social workers, and the community can intervene and come up with strategies and approaches that can cater to resolve social issues affecting the academic performance of learners. Some correlation was found on the strategies and approaches reported by participants in this study with those reported in literature. These included parental involvement, student support programmes, and a vast group of professionals that can, within their means, ensure that proper and adequate strategies are implemented to control and eliminate these social issues that negatively impact the academic performance of secondary school learners.

4.6 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The following section presents information from the qualitative part of the study.

4.6.1 Poverty (the effects of poverty on academic performance)

Learners’ responses

Question: Do you enjoy coming to school?

The figure below illustrates the responses of learners for the abovementioned question.

Figure 4.1: Survey respondents

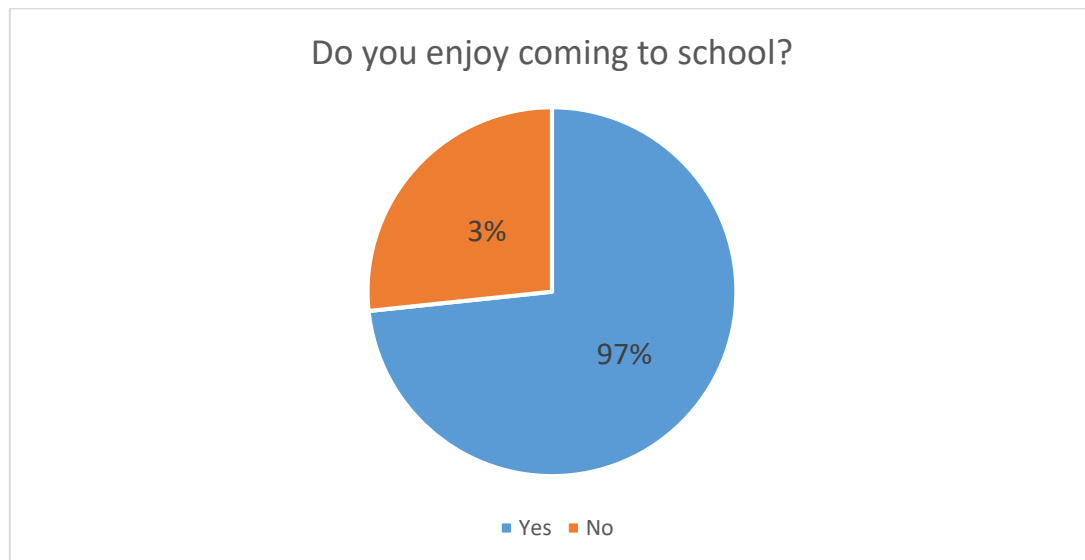
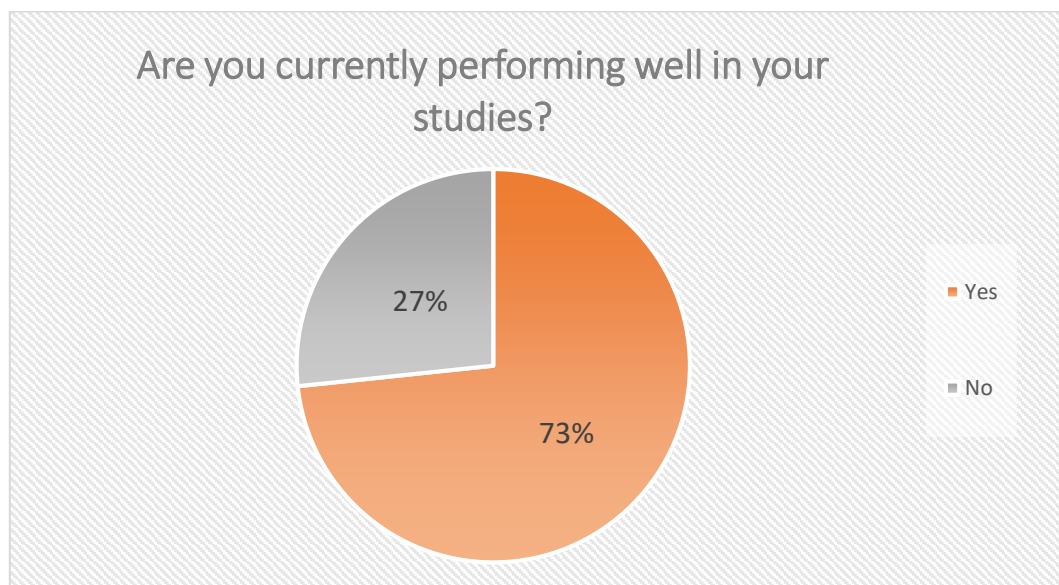


Figure 4.1 illustrates that 97% of the learners indicated that they enjoyed coming to school, whilst only 3% does not enjoy coming to school. From the interviews, the learners explained their reasons for their response, explaining why they enjoy coming to school and why they do not enjoy coming to school. When asked in question 4 whether they were currently performing well in their studies, 73% of the respondents indicated that they were performing well, whereas 27% indicated that they are not.

Figure 4.2: Current performance of learners



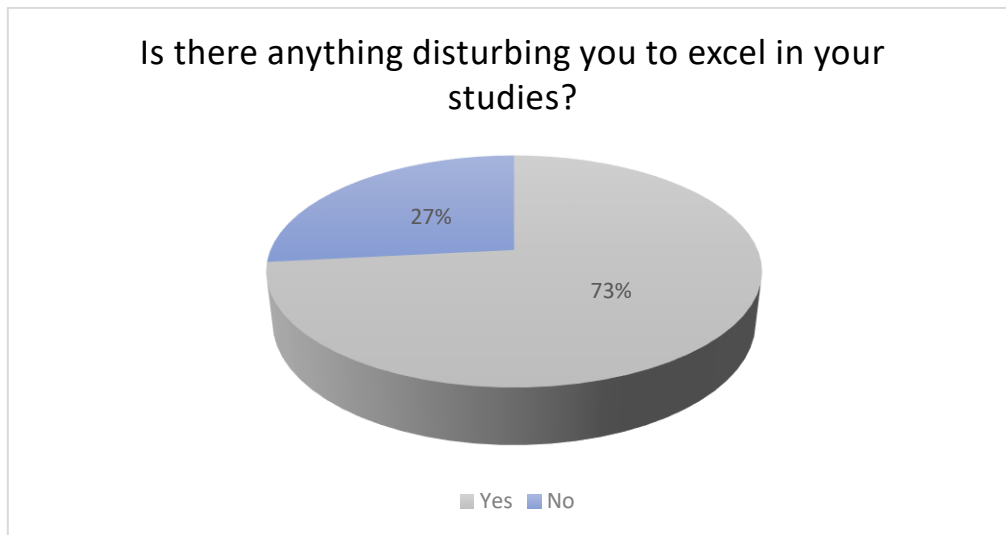
Question: Is anything disturbing you to excel in your studies?

From this question, 67% of learners answered No, indicating that there is nothing disturbing them from excelling in their studies, whereas 33% responded “Yes”, meaning that there is something disturbing them from excelling in their studies.

4.6.2 Pregnancy (the impact of pregnancy)

The section and figure below present the learners’ response to the impact of pregnancy on performance.

Figure 4.3: Barriers disturbing learners to excel in their studies



The question was open-ended where respondents were given an option to explain why and what is disturbing them from excelling in their studies, provided they answered “Yes” to the question. From their reasoning, the following answers were highlighted from the 33% that answered “Yes”.

- Lack of educational facilities
- Lack of resources
- Not understanding some teachers
- Not giving books enough time
- Low teaching strategies
- Too much work to do at home with little time and there is too much noise at home (Yelling)

- The chores at home and load shedding

4.6.3 Socio-Economic Issues (The Impact of Social Issues)

The section and figure below present the learners' response to the impact of socio-economic issues on performance.

4.6.3.1 High prevalence of drug abuse

Learners were asked to choose the relevant social issues from a list of identified social issues and the responses were observed.

The question was a closed-ended question that provided the mentioned social issues In Table 4.6 below. Respondents had to indicate the relevance of the mentioned social issues to the academic performance of secondary school learners. The survey results were as follow:

Table 4.6: List of social issues affecting learners' academic performance

Social issues	Relevant	Not Relevant
1. Crime	85%	15%
2. Pregnancy	96%	4%
3. Bullying	88%	12%
4. Prostitution	54%	46%
5. Early parenthood and/or teenage pregnancy	96%	4%
6. Poverty	96%	4%
7. Inability of parents to afford school requirement	88%	12%
8. Parents/guardian unemployment	85%	15%
9. Tribal intolerance	46%	54%
10. Stereotypes	62%	38%
11. High prevalence of drug abuse	81%	19%
12. Alcoholism	85%	15%

13. Pupil to teacher ratio (lack of teachers)	81%	19%
14. Lack of education facilities	85%	15%
15. Pupils' stress emanating from poor parental support	81%	19%
16. Pupils' anxiety prior to and during exams and stress because of poor health and nutrition	73%	27%
17. Pupils' self-esteem	88%	12%
18. Pupils attitude to attending classes	88%	12%
19. Mental preparedness of pupils	85%	15%
20. Stigma related to sickness due to HIV/AIDS and related sickness	73%	27%
21. Lack access to technology and high-quality content	81%	19%
22. Low motivation	77%	23%
23. Lack of competent and qualified academic staff ineffective school development management	46%	54%
24. Child marriage	38%	62%
25. Discriminatory treatment to women	38%	62%
26. Violation of human rights	38%	62%

It was observed that from the 30 learners, 81% selected that the high prevalence of drug abuse is among the relevant social issues faced that has a negative impact on their academic performance.

4.6.4 Environmental Issues (The Impact of Social Issues)

The section and figure below present the learners' response to the impact of environmental issues on performance.

4.6.4.1 Bullying

Learners, considering the exposure of social issues, were asked in the survey to select the relevant social issues that affect their academic performance, and the results conducted were as follow:

Figure 4.4: Common social issues affecting learner's academic performance

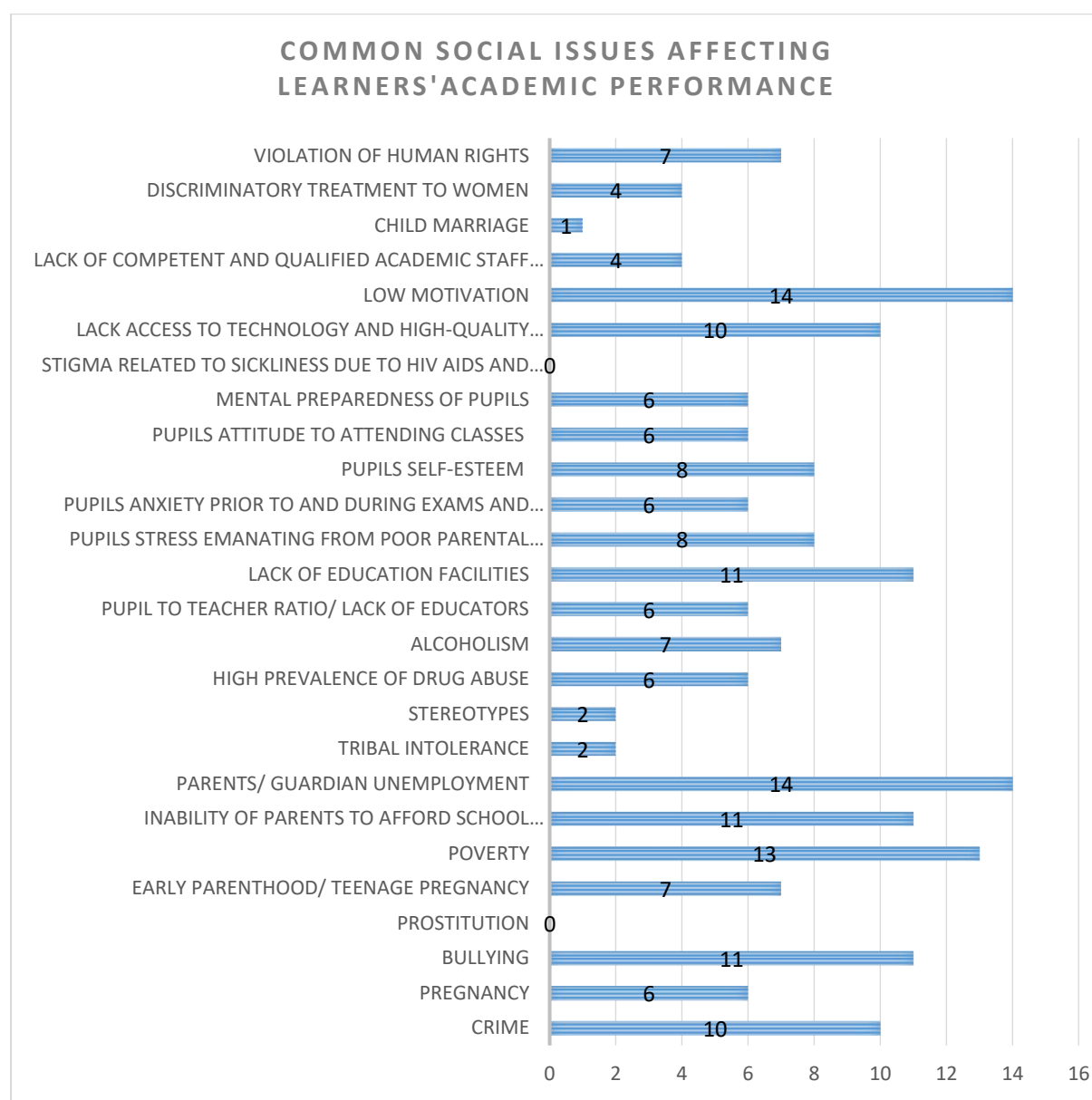


Figure 4.5: Top five social issues affecting the academic performance of learners and their day-to-day lives

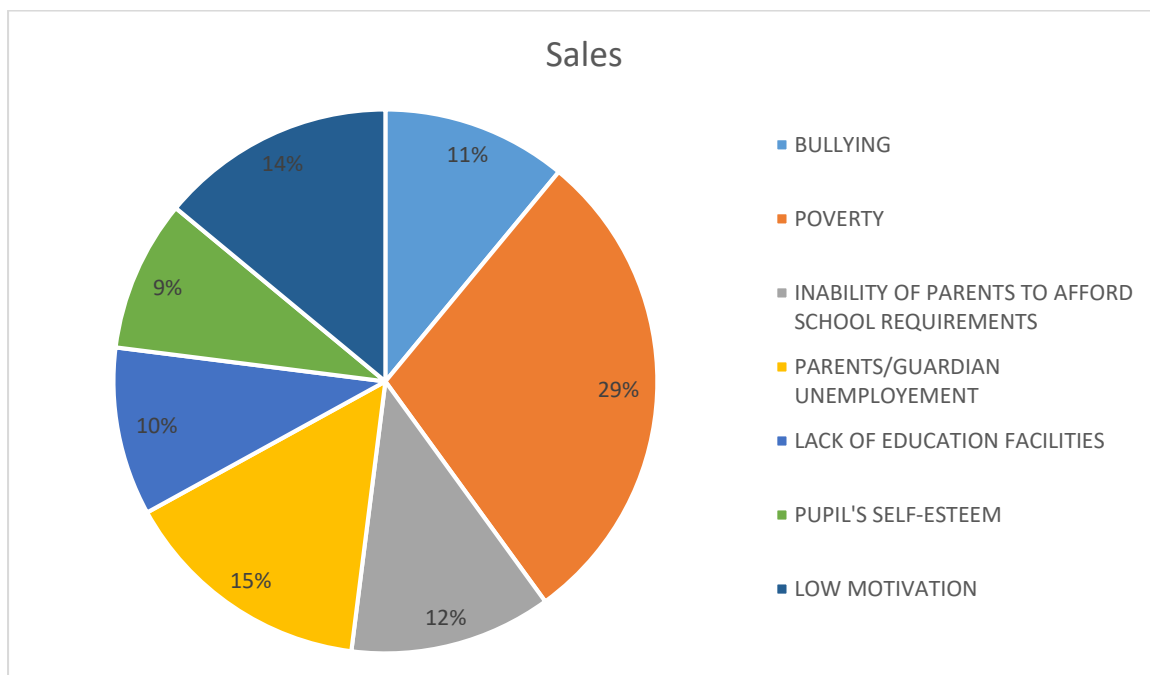


Figure 4.5 above show the most common social issues that have an impact on learners' academic performance. Learners were asked to choose five from the common social issues: Poverty chosen by the majority of the respondents (29%), followed by Parents/Gaudian unemployment at (15%), followed by lack of education facilities at (14%), inability of parents to afford school requirements at (12%), low motivation at (11%) and pupils' self-esteem at (9%) bullying, inability of parents to afford school requirements, and pupil's stress emanating from poor parental support at 11 (37%). The lowest social issue indicated was prostitution and stigma related to sickness due to HIV/AIDS and related sickness at 0%.

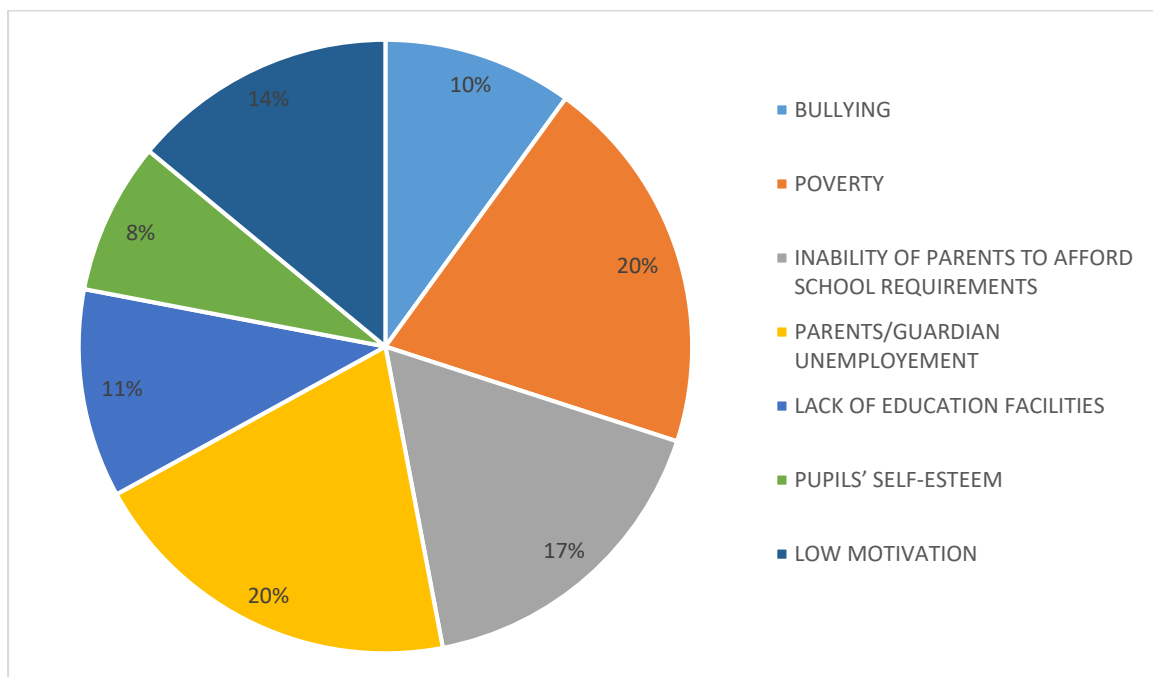
Poverty was ranked number one in all common social issues from the list provided to learners, meaning that it is among the most prevalent and exposed social issues that learners face, and has a detrimental effect on their academic performance.

4.6.5 Psychological Issues (The Effects of Social Issues)

The section and figure below present the top 5 social issues that emanated from this study.

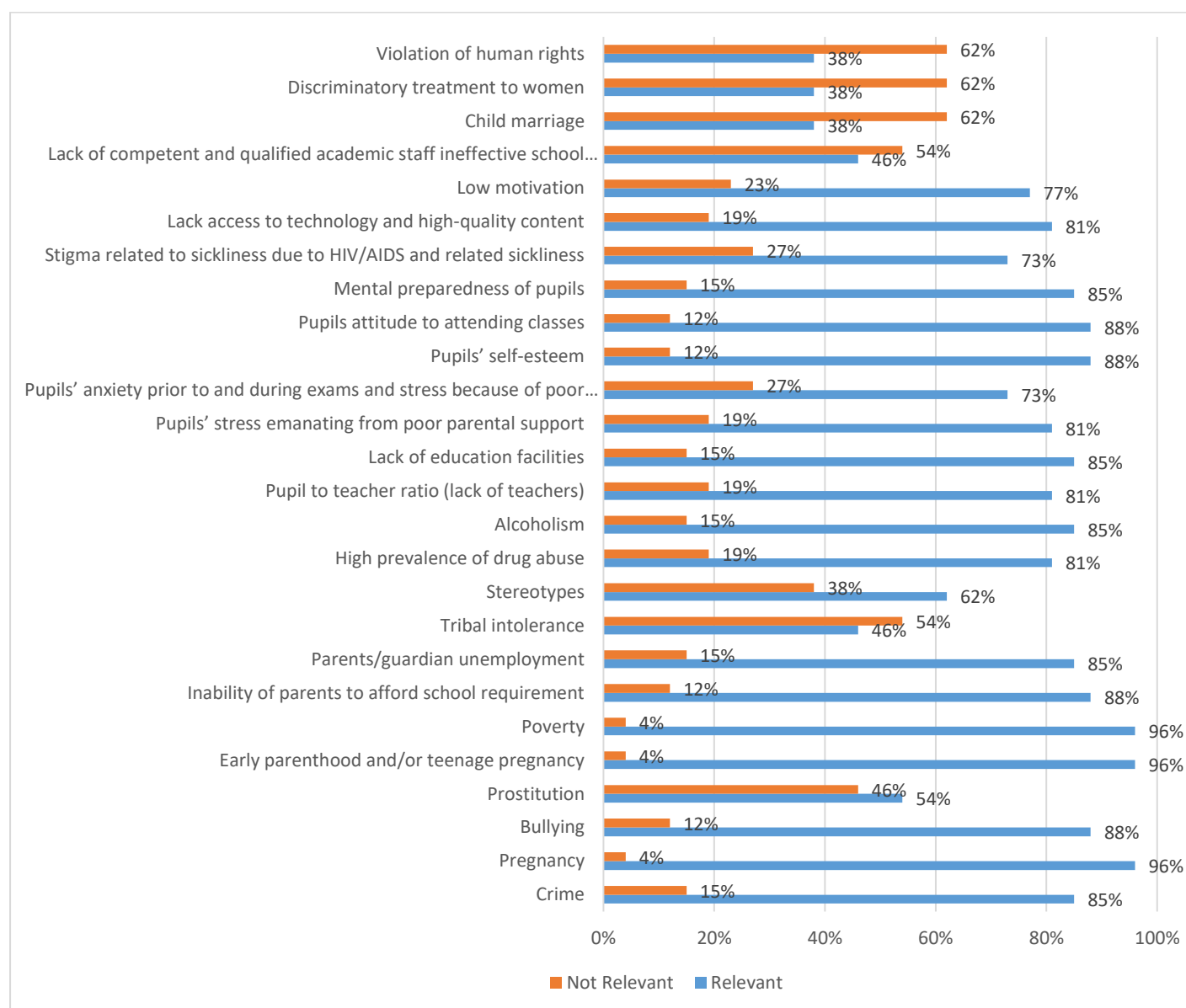
4.6.5.1 Pupils' self-esteem

Figure 4.6: Top five social issues affecting the self-esteem of learners and their day-to-day lives



From Figure 4.6, Poverty and Parents/Guardian unemployment were ranked number 1 on the top seven social issues affecting the academic performance of learners with a 20% each selection compared to other social issues, which were ranked below 20%. This implies that Poverty and Parents/Guardian unemployment are other issues that affects the academic outcome of secondary school learners.

Figure 4.7: Relevant social issues affecting the academic performance of secondary school learners



From the table above, pregnancy, poverty, and early parenthood seems to be the most pressing social issues affecting learners' performance in secondary schools. Bullying, parents' inability to afford school material, low self-esteem, and learners' poor attitude towards school and attending school scored second highest. Crime, unemployment, school facilities, and mental unpreparedness of learners also scored in the Top 10. It should be noted that factors such as prostitution, tribal intolerance, child marriage, discrimination against women, and violation of human rights were included based on

the literature from Kenya, India, and South Africa, but were not scored high; thus, these might not be issues prevalent to the South African context or the Limpopo district.

4.6.6 Possible recommendations and Strategies (Offering Support Systems)

The section and figure below present the potential stakeholders identified in this study.

4.6.6.1 Involvement of other stakeholders

A list of potential stakeholders who could provide help and change were presented for learners to choose the relevant ones they think could bring change to the social issues.

Figure 4.8: Learners' perspectives on the relevant stakeholders to bring change and combat social issues

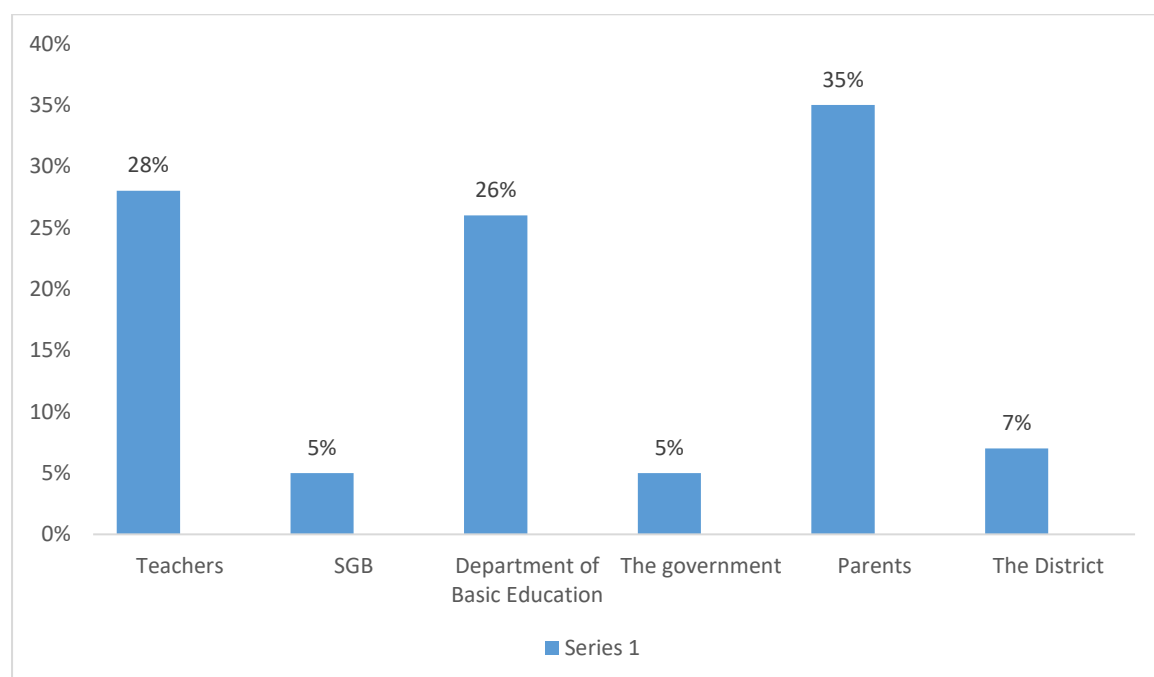


Figure 4.8 shows that learners believe that the parents could bring the most change and combat social issues, followed by teachers and DoE. Furthermore, 35% of the learners believe that their parents are the frontline stakeholders to provide change and help in combating the social issues affecting them, followed by teachers with 28% selection of teachers.

Figure 4.9: Teachers' perspective on the relevant stakeholder to bring change and combat social issues

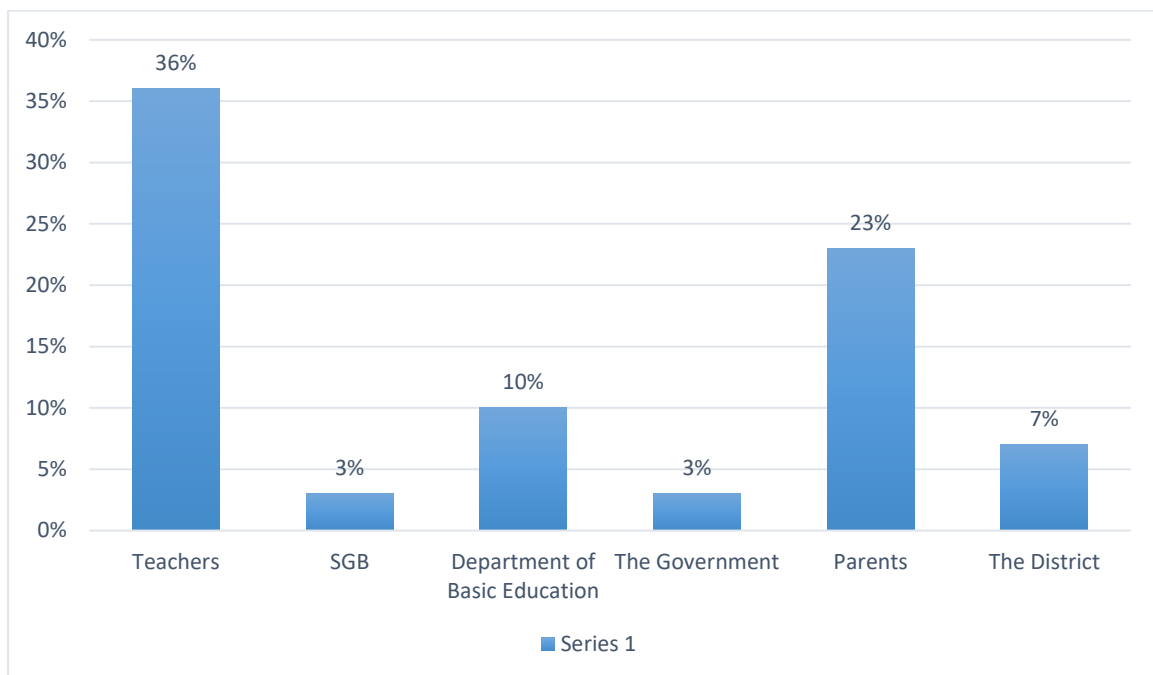


Figure 4.9 shows that teachers believe that they could bring the most change and combat social issues (36%), followed by parents at (23%), DoE(10%), and the district (7%), whereas 3% believed the SGB and the Government could be a leader in combatting social issues faced by learners.

4.6.6.2 Possible solution and strategies

The section and figure below present the potential solutions identified in this study.

Question: To what extend do you agree that social issues are affecting your academic performance?

Figure 4.10: Poll question on the extent of believe of social issues affecting the academic performance of learners

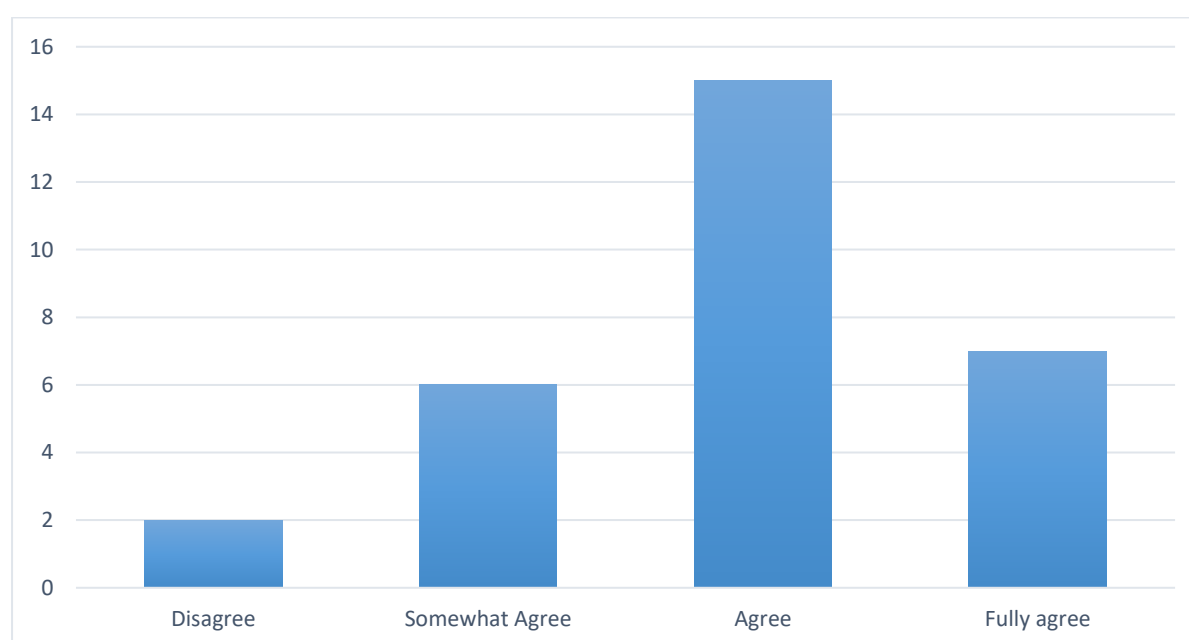


Table 4.7: Likert scale on the social issues affecting the academic performance

OPTIONS	REPONSE (%)
Disagree	7%
Somewhat Agree	20%
Agree	50%
Fully agree	23%

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.10 above shows that 50% of learners agree that the social issues affect their studies, followed by 23% that fully agree, and 20% that somewhat agree and lastly, only 7% disagrees that social issues affect their studies.

4.7 FINDINGS

The top 5 social issues identified in the study is discussed below.

4.7.1 Top Five Social Issues

Figure 4.5 presents the top five social issues affecting the academic performance of learners and their day-to-day life. From the representation above, it shows that amongst all other identified and relevant social issues, Low motivation is affecting learners the most at 47%, followed by inability of parents to afford school requirements at 40%, then bullying at 37% followed by poverty, parents/guardian unemployment and lack of education facilities at 33% and pupils' self-esteem at the fifth position at 30%.

The top five social issues were ranked as follows:

1. Low motivation at 47%
2. Inability of parents to afford school requirements at 40%
3. Bullying at 37%
4. Poverty, Parents/guardian unemployment and lack of education facilities at 33%
5. Pupils' self-esteem at 30%

Amongst some of the raised social issues by both the teacher and the learner, the above-mentioned were found to be the most impactful social issues towards the decline in the academic performance of learners.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research findings were formulated and integrated with what was reported in literature to account for the research questions and objectives of the study. The findings suggested that the social issues exposed to both learners and their teachers have a negative impact on the overall academic outcome of the learners. The findings further suggested that these social issues co-exist and correlate with one another to present yet another issue; this is generated from the resulting issues of poverty forcing some learners to resort to pregnancy, alcohol, drugs, and crime, which are other social issues affecting not only learners and teachers. This study proposed

innovative and support system methods to help reduce the challenges of learners to attain good academic results and know how to deal with social issues. Consequently, transcripts were extracted from the raw data collected, which were presented. In the next chapter, the study concludes with a summary of the study and the formulation of recommendations based on these findings.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study in comparison to reported literature, and also makes recommendation based on the emerging findings from the study and lastly presents additional revelations from the investigation. As explained, the chapter first presents a comparison between the findings from the study and the literature reported in chapter 2, and then recommendations are made towards practice and to further study.

5.2 COMPARISON OF REPORTED LITERATURE AND FINDING

The first section presents the comparison between findings from reported literature and findings from the study on the social issues affecting the academic performance of learners.

5.2.1 Reported literature on the social issues affecting learners' performance in schools

The findings of literature from chapter 2 revealed the following based on social issues that have an impact on the academic performance of learners:

- The apartheid regime played a big role in segregating learners of colours, many which now reside in areas stricken by a wide range of social issues, including low socio-economic status, environmental and psychological issue, which are key factors contributing to the known and unknown social issues faced by learners.
- The government has managed to allocate funds including social grants and food schemes in schools with the goal to make studying accessible for those in need, usually the poverty-stricken groups from rural areas.

5.2.2 Diverse backgrounds

- Because of different backgrounds, children tend to have different upbringings, which then contribute and distinguish their behaviour towards life, academics, and other life goals and achievements.
- Learners from suburbs mostly have access to electricity, computers, Wi-Fi, libraries, transport, and other amenities that allow them to enrich and enhance their learning outcomes, as opposed to learners residing in rural areas.

Among some of the living standard differences between learners raised in literature, the following have been identified:

- Learners from rural areas struggle with transport, as public transport is either not available or not reliable. These learners has to walk long distances to get to public transport, which is often unaffordable. The parents of the learners in rural areas are often unemployed and do not own a vehicle and cannot afford public transport.
- Learners in rural areas also do not have access to affordable and reliable internet or electricity, and cannot use the internet for research to assist with homework. Very few schools in rural areas have libraries, and learners cannot afford public transport to the nearest library, which is sometimes located in the bigger towns, 20 to 40 kilometers away.
- Learners in rural areas cannot afford to remain after school hours for extra classes because of their transport issues. The parents of these learners can also not afford to pay tutors for extra classes.
- A learner's background plays a major role in their performance in academics; however, it cannot be concluded that all learners from poor backgrounds do not perform well because of their home situation, as some are not susceptible to their bad environment, while some are badly affected; hence, their poor academic performance.

5.2.3 Parental Issues

- It has been shown that students who have positive support and involvement from their parents in their education, tend to perform better, and parents from a

poorer environment are unlikely to have the time and money to provide academic assistance to their children.

- Some households are child-headed where the children have to find means to get their basic needs such as clothing and food, and seldom have the time for their schoolwork; these learners have a higher chance of dropping out of school before completing Grade 12 to find employment, therefore allowing the cycle of poverty to continue in the family.

5.2.4 Poverty

- In terms of feeding schemes, learners get their meals during lunchtime, meaning that some of the poor learners come to school having not had breakfast, and having to wait until lunchtime. They then have to wait for the next day for another meal at lunchtime, and their weekends and school holidays are spent on empty stomachs. These situations have the potential to cause mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, further leading to possible substance abuse.
- Despite the government offering free education, some children living below the poverty line will choose to go work and drop out, as they try to fill up the financial void in their families.
- Because of a parent's social inferiority or lack of social impact and access of funds for school programmes, the parent, given their poor educational level, may not value education as much, which in turn affect their children's readiness for school because the parent does not necessarily have or even know the correct tools for a learner to perform good in school.

5.2.5 Bullying

- Bullying is a social phenomenon that is recognised on a global scale, and it can come in a physical and mental form; physical in the sense that it causes bodily harm and mental in the sense that it causes emotional damage which could lead to depression, anxiety, and eating disorders to name a few.
- Bullying can traumatise the victim, causing changes in their behaviour, personality, and self-esteem; victims could develop depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and externalising issues.

- Violence in schools is not only directed at learners. Teachers also experience violence at the hands of their learners, which could lead to teachers being stressed out, leading to absenteeism of teachers.

5.2.6 Pregnancy

- In the South African context, pregnant teenagers, especially in rural areas, have to drop out of school even though the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 forbids the discrimination of learners based on pregnancy.
- Even in the more developed areas, the dropout rate in schools is high, due to inability to keep up with their schoolwork. However, there are learners who are able to successfully continue with their academic path.
- Teenage pregnancies are mainly a result of peer pressure, where peers influence each other to engaging in sexual activities. Some children fall pregnant due to rape.
- Rape causes mental health issues and social consequences, even though the schooling system provides lessons regarding sexuality, sex, contraception and rape through Life Orientation, unfortunate circumstances still occur.
- Some of the top prevalent social issues faced in schools are pregnancy, crime, bullying, poverty, and early parenthood.

5.2.7 Other contributing issues are as follows:

The issues experienced in Kenya, India, and South Africa were not all relevant to the South African context. The main socio-economic factors listed are the lack of electricity at home, which is a huge issue in South Africa currently, where the country is going through load shedding on a weekly basis. Lack of enough food at home due to poverty and the parents' inability to fund any additional educational material is also hampering the learners from completing their work. Some learners receive one meal a day at school, which is often the only meal for the day. Child labour and lack of health care did not score high in this study.

The environmental factors that are especially prevalent in South Africa include the ration between teachers and learners, the ratio between learners and available textbooks, and the overcrowding of classrooms, as schools are overprescribed. This

all lead to indiscipline, especially from learners who abuse drugs. Tribal intolerance and stereotyping did not score high in this study.

The psychological factors prevalent in South Africa include the low self-esteem of learners, their attitude towards learning and school attendance, and the anxiety about their home environment. HIV/AIDS, serious illness, and disease were not scored high in this study.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY (FINDINGS PER THEME)

The findings from the conducted study revealed the following based on education and the social issues that have an impact on the academic performance of learners:

5.3.1 Learners and teachers

Learners and teachers revealed the following:

THEME 1: POVERTY

The findings of the sub-themes of Theme 1: Poverty are discussed below.

Sub-theme 1: Lack of resources and Inability of parents to afford school requirement

Learners and teachers expressed their frustrations about the uniform. One of the teachers indicated that, *“Learners without proper uniform tend to feel insecure and has low self-esteem. They wear torn clothes without jerseys during winter; these negatively affect their school performance”*.

Sub-theme 3: Parents/guardian unemployment

Most learners indicated that their parents are unemployed, and it affects their mental stability and academic outcomes, as they do not have funds available to fund extracurricular programmes and resources that can help them attain better academic results.

THEME 2: PREGNANCY

The findings of the sub-theme of Theme 2: Pregnancy is discussed below.

Sub-theme 1: Teenage pregnancy

Poverty is one of the factors that could lead to pregnancy among teenagers. Out of all the female learners who were interviewed in the study, 8 highlighted that they had children, while one was pregnant during the course of the study. Records on pregnant learners from the 10 selected schools confirmed that most of the learners who fell pregnant were from poor families or child-headed families. It was also reported that girls from vulnerable families are at risk of falling pregnant as they try to make ends meet. Therefore, pregnancy has a perpetual role in high rates of poverty. Mogotlane (2020) agrees that poverty-stricken children tend to follow any possible route for finances. For instance in child-headed homes, because of their financial crisis, girls end up falling prey to older men, who exploit and take advantage of them sexually and later provide money for food and other necessity, while boys mostly get involved in pickpocketing and crimes as a way to get money for basic needs. It is concluded that learners who fall pregnant in the early school years performs poorly. Many failed to meet the pass requirement; some were repeating grades, all leading to possible dropouts.

“I am staying with my grandmother who is unemployed and there is no one supporting us, so I ended up falling pregnant to get the grant to be able to put food on the table; that is the reason I ended up falling pregnant”

Considering the comment made by one of the learners in the above paragraph, it shows that it is important that learners should be educated on the dangers of teenage pregnancy, the risks associated with pregnancy such as diseases and the responsibilities of raising a child, which outweighs the social grand. Sex education should be part of life skills education because the majority of girls who were in the study had children or were pregnant.

THEME 3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

The findings of the sub-themes of Theme 3: Socio-economic issues are discussed below.

Sub-theme 1: High prevalence of drug abuse

Teachers mentioned the use of drugs and the impact on the academic performance of learners. Dankano (2017) states that learners or youth who use drugs are socially and academically underdeveloped and are often not considered impactful under any social development or any development in general, because the use of drugs affects their academics and degrades their morals and integrity. He further mentions that learners who use drugs are disobedient to their teachers and parents. This supports the statement by one of the teachers who mentioned that they are scared of learners who use drugs, because they do not know how they would react if they are questioned, and because these learners are usually troublesome, they do not know whether they have harmful weapons at their disposal to hurt teachers or anyone who resists listening to them.

The use of drugs, considering the statement from teachers, is proving to be a setback in the academic view and social view of any person, especially learners. The results from the use of drugs are very dangerous, as they do not only affect the academic performance of the user, but also disturbs the learning outcomes of other learners. It creates a tense classroom atmosphere as the disobedient drug users in the classroom are normally feared by the teachers and people from the community, including their own parents. The passing of a learner from drug abuse was raised by one of the teachers and is alarming, because it is proving to show the harmfulness of drugs not only in a school setting, but also generally in our daily lives, as we live among people who use drugs and cause problems within the community.

Sub-theme 2: Alcoholism

Balsa *et al.* (2011) report that the use of alcohol during adolescence affects the academic attainment of learners by reducing the likelihood of completing school, and by increasing the number of years to complete school. He further stated that it does not necessarily stop them from completing school, but it affects the quality of learning and academic performance. This means that alcohol use has the potential to degrade the quality of education but not necessarily the attainment of education or completion of grades or schooling.

Some of the teachers mentioned that alcoholism affects their learners' academic performance and contribute to the frequent absenteeism of both learners and teachers. It affects the academic outcomes of the learners, because if a learner is absent frequently, they miss out on the content being taught on the days they were absent, and when a teacher is absent, all learners are affected because they would not be taught on that day. Therefore, from the observations in the study, alcoholism is proving to be an issue as it leads to hangovers, absenteeism, and decreased learners concentration in class. Also considering what another learner mentioned about learners frequently attending parties and are then frequently absent, it shows that it is an alarming concern, which affect the academic performance of learners.

THEME 4: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The findings of the sub-theme of Theme 4: Environmental issues is discussed below.

Sub-theme 1: Bullying

On a global scale, bullying is referred to as a social problem that affects many people. From the statements of the learners, one indicated that they have been violated in class, and one of the teachers believe that some learners resort to bullying because they see themselves as a parent due to teenage pregnancy, and they feel that they are now older than learners without children, so they tend to bully them. Another teacher is of a different view, and stated that learners are sometimes bullied by their parents, judging from an incident they experienced with a learner who was not provided with food at home, as they have been fed at school from the feeding scheme programme. In support of these statements and their experiences, it was found that children become bullies due to numerous reasons, some being that they have personal problems at home such as abuse (Zuma *et al.*, 2019), or they themselves are used to being bullied. This supports the statements by teachers and learners that some learners are bullied because they suffer abuse at home or they have been bullied before. Marx (2018) states that bullying can traumatise the victim, causing changes in their behaviour, personality, and self-esteem. Victims could develop depression, anxiety, and withdrawal.

Violence in schools is not only directed to learners; teachers also experience violence at the hands of their learners, which could lead to teachers being stressed out, leading

to absenteeism (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). One of the teachers also mentioned that they fear being bullied by learners who use drugs because they do not know how they would react if questioned. This implies that these learners get away with bad behaviour, and because they are feared, they resort to bullying their teachers, and this eventually affect the academic performance of learners.

THEME 5: PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

The findings of the sub-themes of Theme 5: Psychological issues are discussed below.

Sub-theme 1: Pupils' self-esteem

From the research, it was found that poverty is a contributing factor, normally to learners' self-esteem. It is unfortunate that some households are child-headed, where the children must find the means to get their basic needs such as clothing and food, and seldom have time for their schoolwork. These learners have a higher potential of dropping out of school before completing Grade 12 to find employment (Zuma *et al.*, 2019), thus allowing the cycle of poverty to continue in the family. In this regard and relating to the comment made by the teacher about children without proper school uniform and resources, it shows that poverty also plays a role in affecting a learner's self-esteem, which in most cases affect their attitude towards learning. To save them from embarrassment, they drop out or have low self-esteem as a result from feeling belittled because of their home situation.

To some learners it may not be linked to poverty. Some other unknown factor may be contributing to the low self-esteem of these learners; hence, a learner from the interview stated that they have low self-esteem only because they are scared to interact with teachers. It was also discovered from literature that parent illiteracy poses a problem for parent-teacher involvement, as these parents rarely invest in their children's education, which could discourage their children, causing them to perform poorly in school or even dropping out (Mafokwane, 2017). The parents not attending meetings to get feedback on their children's performance is another cause for concern (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). Children who go through most challenges in life by themselves are most than likely to feel discouraged in their studies; hence, they have

low self-esteem when facing almost every life-challenging situation, including academics (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013).

Sub-theme 2: Low motivation

To account for the statement by the teacher above (Mafokwane, 2017), who states that parental involvement is also a social issue of importance, it has been shown that learners who have positive support and involvement of their parents in their education tend to perform better. Parents from poorer environments are unlikely to have the time and money to provide academic assistance to their children. Parent illiteracy poses a problem for parent-teacher involvement as these parents rarely invest in their children's education, which could discourage their children, causing them to perform poorly in school or even dropping out (Mafokwane, 2017). The parents not attending meetings to get feedback on their children's performance is a cause for concern (Ramulumo *et al.*, 2013). One of the interviewed teachers stated that parents need to be the in the frontline when it comes to their children's education. Some teachers also suggested that motivational speakers should be brought in to talk to learners and try to motivate them so that they can see the importance of education to improve their performance.

THEME 6: POSSIBLE SOLUTION AND STRATEGIES

The findings of the sub-theme of Theme 6: Possible solutions and strategies is discussed below.

Sub-theme 1: Navigating the good in the environment

Teachers stated all the support system structures they think could help these learners from the impact from social issues and potentially improve their academic performance. The teachers, parents, psychologists, social workers, and the community were mentioned as the relevant support system structures to help in this regard.

THEME 7: OFFERING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The findings of the sub-theme of Theme 7: Support systems is discussed below.

Sub-theme 1: Involvement of different stakeholders

From the observation of the statements and the survey, it is evident that both the learners and teachers believe that parents and teachers could bring change and help combat the social issues exposed to learners. This is supported by the statement by the teachers from the interview, for instance one of the teachers stated that parents need to be involved their children's education and be supportive, although some could have been exposed already and fallen a victim to social ills, so in hindsight the involvement shows concern and could potentially help redirect these learners and eventually their academic performance could improve.

Quantitative study

The quantitative study revealed the following:

One of the questions was open-ended; respondents were given an option to explain why, and what is disturbing them from excelling in their studies, provided they answered "Yes" to the question. From their reasoning, the following answers were highlighted from the 33% that answered "Yes".

1. Lack of educational facilities
2. Lack of resources
3. Not understanding some teachers
4. Not giving books enough time
5. Low teaching strategies
6. Too much work to do at home with little time and there is too much noise at home (Yelling)
7. The chores at home and load shedding

Learners were asked to choose the relevant social issues from a list of identified social issues and the above responses were observed. The question was a closed-ended question that provided the mentioned social issues. Respondents had to indicate the relevance of the mentioned social issues to the academic performance of secondary school learners. The survey results were as follows:

The learner respondents were provided a list of multiple answer options of social issues to choose from that they believe is relevant or irrelevant in terms of its effect on academic performance. It was observed that from the 30 learners, 81% of them selected that the high prevalence of drug abuse is among the relevant social issues faced and has a negative impact on the academic their academic performance. Interestingly, 19% of the learners believe the lack of access to technology is not a pressing social issue that affects learner performance.

Learners were asked to choose five from the common social issues. From the survey results, parents/guardian unemployment and low motivation chosen by 14 respondents (47%), followed by poverty at 13 (43%), followed by bullying, inability of parent to afford school requirements and pupil's stress emanating from poor parental support at 11 selection (37%), the lowest social issue indicated was prostitution and stigma related to sickness due to HIV/AIDS and related sickness at 0 indicated (0%).

Bullying was ranked third in all given common social issues from the list provided to learners, meaning that it is amongst the most prevalent and exposed social issues that learners face and which has a detrimental effect on their academic performance.

Pupils' self-esteem was ranked fifth on the top five social issues affecting the academic performance of learners with a 30% selection compared to other social issues, which were ranked below 30%. This implies that learners' self-esteem is the other issues that affect the academic outcome of secondary school learners.

A list of possible stakeholders who can provide help and change were listed for learners to choose the relevant ones they think could bring change to the posing social issues.

Learners believe that the parents could bring change the most and combat social issues, followed by teachers and DoE. With 60% of the learners believing that their parents are the frontline stakeholders to provide change and help in combating the social issues affecting them, teachers with 46% followed.

Teachers believe that they could bring change the most and combat social issues, followed by parents, DoE, and the government at 60%, whereas 65% of the teachers believe that they are the frontline stakeholders to provide change and help in

combating the social issues affecting the, followed by teachers, DoE, and the Government with 60% selection of teachers.

On the survey question based on diverse factors affecting learners from different backgrounds, 50% of learners agree that the social issues affect their studies, followed by 23% that fully agrees and 20% that somewhat agree and lastly, with only 7% that disagrees that social issues affect their studies.

5.4 CORRELATION

A correlation between what has been reported through literature and the conducted study is seen as the respondents selected prominent social issues that affects the academic performance and based on the top five social issues that were selected, literature also includes those selected. The study through quantitative study revealed that the top five social issues affecting the academic performance of learners and their day-to-day life amongst all other identified and relevant are Low motivation at 47%, followed by inability of parents to afford school requirements at 40%, then bullying at 37% followed by poverty, parents/guardian unemployment and lack of education facilities at 33% and pupils' self-esteem at the fifth position at 30%.

Also considering the comments from the participants, it shows how the trends of the social issues interrelate to have a negative implication on the academic outcome of secondary school learners. Learners and teachers revealed all the barriers and challenges they face with the mentioned social issues.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

The pandemic limited the number of participants partaking in the questionnaire survey and interviews as the setting of levels in the country where only a selected few can attend schools and the restrictions of the pandemic affected the number of participants as well.

Answers were limited due to the nature of the respondents chosen, in a way that there is not as much teacher-parent and teacher-learner relationship, the integrity of the answers might be compromised because of lack of interaction to combat these issues.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.6.1 Recommendations to the Education system stakeholders

- Schools should establish functional health, alcohol, and drug committees that will ensure that learners do not use drugs, alcohol, and other substances that could lead to poor academic performance due to consistent absenteeism, bullying, and dropout.
- Inviting learners' role models, social, and former students to give a motivational talk that would show how they themselves addressed challenges when they were still learners and the dangers of not focusing on their schoolwork.
- Establishing all stakeholder forums that will include tavern owners, learner-transporters, and parents to show how each of them contributes to the academic performance of learners.

5.6.2 Recommendations to practice

- Conduct a study that uses a larger samples size to fully substantiate the impact social issues has on the academic performance of high school learners. Various improvements to this study include the inclusion of other provinces and focus on all grades in a secondary school setting.
- Another recommendation would be to include the severity of social issues to not only the learners but to teacher and the community, considering the fact that all these social issues holistically affect a school learner through its affection to the community, parents, and the teachers.
- A further study is recommended to establish the influence of child-grand on teenage pregnancy

5.7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the social issues affecting the performance of secondary school learners in the Palala circuit division of Waterberg district in the Limpopo province. Various issues such as crime, poverty, unemployment of parents, and teenage pregnancy and early parenthood were identified, where some of these issues are not restricted to the South African context only. The objectives of this study were thus met, and the research questions answered. Recommendations on

possible strategies to eliminate these social issues have been made, which require the input and active participation of all stakeholders, especially government, community members, teachers, parents, and the learners themselves.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE WATERBERG DISTRICT

The District Director Private Bag x1040

Modimolle

0510

26 August 2021

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Ramokone Lillian Whyken, Persal no. 91292848 a Master of Education student in the Faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Free State campus. I am a Senior Education Specialist at Waterberg District and as part of my part-time studies. I am expected to conduct a research on the Impact of social issues affecting the academic performance of learners in the District. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct my research in the Palala Circuit, which is under your jurisdiction. The title of my study is **The impact of social issues on the academic performance of secondary school learners in the Palala circuit division of Waterberg District in the Limpopo province.**

The aim of the study is to investigate and provide possible recommendations for addressing and managing the common social issues that affect the academic performances of Secondary School learners, and help learners with combating the alerting social issues exposed to them in their daily school life. The study entails semi-structured individual interview and questionnaire surveys with 10 principals, 10 Head of Departments, 10 Life orientation educators, and 30 learners from the selected 10 schools from the Palala circuit division.

The approximate time that the session will take with the selected participants is about an hour and will not interfere with any professional functions because the interviews will occur from 15H00 to 16H00. Each interview will be voice recorded so that I can later listen to what the interviewee is saying, carefully and thus have an informed view and be able to analyse it.

Please note that during the session, the following will be adhered to:

- Protection from harm
- Participation is strictly voluntarily
- Respect participants right to privacy
- All information obtained will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for educational purposes (educational research and development)
- No financial benefit that participants may accrue

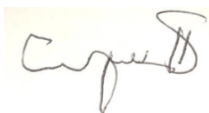
The benefits of this study will be for the advantage of myself, learners in secondary schools, educators, SMTs, principals and the district itself, where the district will be able to support schools in analysing the impact of social issues on the academic performances of secondary school learners and later help in combating the social issues by means of providing solutions and implementing strategies that will help learners with the alerting social issues. The researcher will provide the findings to the district.

For further information on this research project feel free to contact my supervisor Dr Modise at tel: 0579103631, email mamodise@gmail.com

In addition, should you have any queries you can contact me using the following details: Mrs Whyken Ramokone Lillian, cell 082 898 1379, email lilly.yken@gmail.com

Thank you in advance for your co-operation

Yours faithfully



26 August 2021

Whyken R.L.

Date

Student of Central University of Technology (student no. 220049987)

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

WATERBERG

Private Bag X 1040
Modimolle
0510

Ref : 3/5/7/2 (81292848)
Enq : Makhananisa MG
Tel : 014 718 1500

TO : Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. Whyken RL
Waterberg District Office: Curriculum
Private Bag X1040
Modimolle
0510

FROM: HR CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: YOURSELF

1. Receipt of your letter on the above subject is hereby acknowledged.
2. In response thereto, please be advised that permission to conduct a Research study for proposed research: **The impact of social issues on the academic performance of Secondary School learners in the Palala Circuit division of Waterberg District in the Limpopo Province** is hereby granted subject to the following conditions:
 - ❖ That the interviews will be conducted outside school working hours and will also not interfere with teaching and learning in schools.
 - ❖ The research will not have any financial implications for the Limpopo Department of Education.
 - ❖ Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
3. The District appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success on your research.
4. Regards.

2021/09/10

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRES TO LEARNERS

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY			
POPULATION:		EDUCATION SECTOR	
SAMPLE:		LEARNERS	
QUESTION 1: PLEASE INDICATE THE GRADE YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN			
GRADE	10	11	12
QUESTION 2: PLEASE YOUR GENDER			
MALE		FEMALE	
QUESTION 2: HOW OLD ARE YOU? TICK CORRECT OPTION			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20 AND OLDER			

QUESTION 3: DO YOU ENJOY COMING TO SCHOOL?

YES	NO
-----	----

QUESTION 4: ARE YOU CURRENTLY PERFORMING WELL IN YOUR STUDIES

YES	NO
-----	----

QUESTION 5: IS THERE ANYTHING DISTURBING YOU TO EXCEL IN YOUR STUDIES?

YES	NO
-----	----

IF YOU ANSWERED YES, WHAT IS THE THING DISTURBING YOU FROM EXCELLING IN YOUR ACADEMIC?

--

QUESTION 6: DO YOU HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE TERM “SOCIAL ISSUES” IS?

YES	NO
-----	----

SOCIAL ISSUE IS A PROBLEM THAT AFFECTS MANY PEOPLE WITHIN A SOCIETY. IT IS A GROUP OF COMMON PROBLEMS IN PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY AND ONES THAT MANY PEOPLE STRIVE TO SOLVE. IT IS OFTEN THE CONSEQUENCE OF FACTORS EXTENDING BEYOND AN INDIVIDUAL'S CONTROL.

QUESTION 7: FROM RESEARCH IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MOST COMMON SOCIAL ISSUES SORROUNDING

LEARNERS, WHICH OF THEM DO YOU THINK HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUR STUDIES. (TICK THE RELEVANT ONES)

SOCIAL ISSUES	
CRIME	
PREGNANCY	
BULLYING	
PROSTITUTION	
EARLY PARENTHOOD/ TEENAGE PREGNANCY	
POVERTY	
INABILITY OF PARENTS TO AFFORD SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	
PARENTS/ GUARDIAN UNEMPLOYMENT	
TRIBAL INTOLERANCE	
STEREOTYPES	
HIGH PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE	
ALCOHOLISM	
PUPIL TO TEACHER RATIO/ LACK OF EDUCATORS	

LACK OF EDUCATION FACILITIES	
PUPILS STRESS EMANATING FROM POOR PARENTAL SUPPORT	
PUPILS ANXIETY PRIOR TO AND DURING EXAMS AND STRESS AS A RESULT OF POOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION	
PUPILS SELF-ESTEEM	
PUPILS ATTITUDE TO ATTENDING CLASSES	
MENTAL PREPAREDNESS OF PUPILS	
STIGMA RELATED TO SICKLINESS DUE TO HIV AIDS AND RELATED SICKLINESS	
LACK ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT	
LOW MOTIVATION	
LACK OF COMPETENT AND QUALIFIED ACADEMIC STAFF INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	
CHILD MARRIAGE	
DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO WOMEN	
VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS	

QUESTION 8: FROM THE SOCIAL ISSUES YOU SELECTED ON QUESTION 7, WRITE DOWN TOP FIVE SOCIAL ISSUES THAT SERIOUSLY/SEVERELY AFFECT YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIFE AND YOUR STUDIES

1.	
2,	
3.	
4,	
5.	

QUESTION 9: ARE THERE ANY SOCIAL ISSUES NOT MENTIONED THAT AFFECT YOUR STUDIES?

YES	NO
-----	----

IF THERE ARE ANY, PLEASE WRITE THEM DOWN

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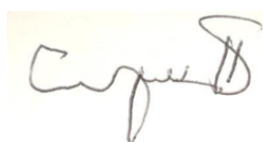
QUESTION 9: WHO, FROM THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK CAN HELP TACKLE/COMBAT THESE SOCIAL ISSUES SURROUNDING YOU AS A LEARNER?

TEACHERS		THE GOVERNMENT	
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)		PARENTS	

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT	
QUESTION 10: TO WHAT EXTEND DO YOU AGREE THAT SOCIAL ISSUES ARE AFFECT YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?			
DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE	
		AGREE	
		FULLY AGREE	
QUESTION 12: IS THE SCHOOL DOING ENOUGH TO MONITOR AND MANAGE THE SOCIAL ISSUES?			
YES		NO	
		I DON'T HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THAT	
QUESTION 14: WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE DONE TO HELP YOU PERFORM BETTER IN YOUR ACADEMICS/STUDIES?			

Learner's signature: _____

Date: _____



Researcher:

Ramokone Lillian Whyken (220049987)

Signature: _____

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRES TO TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY				
POPULATION:		EDUCATION SECTOR		
SAMPLE:		TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS		
QUESTION 1: PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PROFESSION AND POSITION AT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER.				
POSITION:				
EMPLOYER:				
QUESTION 2: PLEASE INDICATE THE NUMBER OF YEARS YOU HAVE WORKED AS AN EDUCATOR.				
1 – 5 YEARS	6 – 10 YEARS	10 – 15 YEARS	16+ YEARS	
QUESTION 3: PLEASE INDICATE THE GRADE YOU TAUGHT FOR THE LONGEST TIME.				
8	9	10	11	12
QUESTION 4: DO YOU HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE TERM “SOCIAL ISSUES” IS?				
YES		NO		

QUESTION 5: FROM THE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, YOU HAVE WORKED AS AN EDUCATOR, DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SOCIAL ISSUES AFFECTS LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

QUESTION 6: DO YO BELIEVE THAT AN INTERVENTION IS NEEDED TO COMBAT THE SOCIAL ISSUES EXPOSED TO LEARNERS?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

QUESTION 7: FROM THE GLOBALLY IDENTIFIED LIST OF SOCIAL ISSUES, INICATE THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS/LEARNERS BY INDICATING EITHER R FOR RELEVANT OF NR FOR NOT RELEVANT.

SOCIAL ISSUES	R / NR
CRIME	
PREGNANCY	
BULLYING	
PROSTITUTION	
EARLY PARENTHOOD/ TEENAGE PREGNANCY	

POVERTY	
INABILITY OF PARENTS TO AFFORD SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	
PARENTS/ GUARDIAN UNEMPLOYMENT	
TRIBAL INTOLERANCE	
STEREOTYPES	
HIGH PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE	
ALCOHOLISM	
PUPIL TO TEACHER RATIO/ LACK OF EDUCATORS	
LACK OF EDUCATION FACILITIES	
PUPILS STRESS EMANATING FROM POOR PARENTAL SUPPORT	
PUPILS ANXIETY PRIOR TO AND DURING EXAMS AND STRESS AS A RESULT OF POOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION	
PUPILS SELF-ESTEEM	
PUPILS ATTITUDE TO ATTENDING CLASSES	
MENTAL PREPAREDNESS OF PUPILS	

STIGMA RELATED TO SICKLINESS DUE TO HIV AIDS AND RELATED SICKLINESS	
LACK ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT	
LOW MOTIVATION	
LACK OF COMPETENT AND QUALIFIED ACADEMIC STAFF INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	
CHILD MARRIAGE	
DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO WOMEN	
VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS	
QUESTION 8: FROM THE LIST OF THE SOCIAL ISSUES, PLEASE RATE THE SEVERITY OF THE RELEVANT SOCIAL ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR LEARNERS, AS LOW SEVERITY [1], MEDIUM SEVERITY [2], HIGH SEVERITY [3].	
SOCIAL ISSUES	1,2 OR 3
CRIME	
PREGNANCY	
BULLYING	

PROSTITUTION	
EARLY PARENTHOOD/ TEENAGE PREGNANCY	
POVERTY	
INABILITY OF PARENTS TO AFFORD SCHOOL REQUIREMENT	
PARENTS/ GUARDIAN UNEMPLOYMENT	
TRIBAL INTOLERANCE	
STEREOTYPES	
HIGH PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE	
ALCOHOLISM	
PUPIL TO TEACHER RATIO/ LACK OF EDUCATORS	
LACK OF EDUCATION FACILITIES	
PUPILS STRESS EMANATING FROM POOR PARENTAL SUPPORT	
PUPILS ANXIETY PRIOR TO AND DURING EXAMS AND STRESS AS A RESULT OF POOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION	
PUPILS SELF-ESTEEM	
PUPILS ATTITUDE TO ATTENDING CLASSES	

MENTAL PREPAREDNESS OF PUPILS	
STIGMA RELATED TO SICKLINESS DUE TO HIV AIDS AND RELATED SICKLINESS	
LACK ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT	
LOW MOTIVATION	
LACK OF COMPETENT AND QUALIFIED ACADEMIC STAFF INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	
CHILD MARRIAGE	
DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO WOMEN	
VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS	

QUESTION 9: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS WOULD BEST DRIVE AWARENESS FOR THE COMBATING OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHERS		THE GOVERNMENT	
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)		PARENTS	
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT	

QUESTION 10: TO WHAT EXTEND DO YOU AGREE THAT SOCIAL ISSUES ARE AFFECTING LEARNERS' PERFORMANCES?

DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		AGREE		FULLY AGREE	
----------	--	-------------------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

QUESTION 11: BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS, WHO DO YOU THINK IS HEAVILY AFFECTED BY SOCIAL ISSUES INTO PERFORMING BAD IN THEIR STUDIES?

BOYS		GIRLS	
------	--	-------	--

QUESTION 12: IS THE SCHOOL DOING ENOUGH TO MONITOR AND MANAGE THE SOCIAL ISSUES?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

QUESTION 13: ARE THERE ANY MEASURES YOU ARE AWARE OF THAT EDUCATION SYSTEM/SECTOR IS TAKING TO SOLVE THESE ISSUES IN THE SHORT AND LONG TERMS?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

QUESTION 14: FROM YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE, HOW BEST CAN THE KNOWN SOCIAL ISSUES BE CONTROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. Which social issues do you think affect learners the most?
2. Would you say social issues directly affect a learner's performance?
3. What are the impacts of social issues towards learners' performance?
4. As a teacher, what are you doing to help learners affected by social issues?
5. What further intervention do you think should be implemented to help learners with these issues?
6. Who do you think should intervene to help learners affected by social issues?
7. What kind of support system is needed in school to ensure that learners perform well in their studies and are not affected by known social issues?
8. What could parents possibly do to ensure that the learners are coping in school?
9. Between boys and girls, who do you think is heavily affected by social issues?
10. How is the current performance of learners?

11. Are you, as a teacher affected by any social issues? If so, which social issues are they?

12. What are your future plans in ensuring that learners perform well?

13. What measures can be taken to ensure that learners are not affected by social issues?

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS

1. Do you enjoy coming to school?
2. Are you finding school easy?
3. Who do you live with at home?
4. Who helps you with your school activities?
5. Is studying at home effective?
6. How do you deal with school pressure?
7. How is your performance at school?
8. Do you mostly have breakfast before school or food to eat after school?
9. Do you receive social grant?
10. Do you have a baby or someone you are taking care of? If yes, how are you coping?
11. What social issues do you know?

12. Are you aware of any social issue that is or might affect your performance at school?
13. Have you ever been absent? If yes, what was the reason behind that?
14. Do you know of any learner that has dropped out?
15. What do you think causes other learners to drop out or to be absent often?
16. Have you ever missed school because you had to work for extra cash?
17. Do you have a good relationship with your parents?
18. How many people work at home?
19. Have you ever been violated at home?
20. What challenges affects your studies?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPAL

1. How is the current performance of learners?
2. Are you aware of the social issues surrounding learners?
3. Which social issues do you think affect learners the most?
4. Would you say social issues directly affects a learner's performance?
5. What are the impacts of social issues towards learners' performance?
6. What are the effects of the following on a learner's performance: • Lack of adequate food • Lack of scholastic materials (uniform, stationaries, etc.) • Pregnancy • Child headed family
7. As the principal, what are you doing to help learners affected by social issues?
8. What further intervention do you think should be implemented to help learners with these issues?
9. Who do you think should intervene to help learners affected by social issues?

10.What kind of support system is needed in schools to ensure that learners perform well in their studies and are not affected by known social issues?
11.What could parents possibly do to ensure that the learners are coping in school?
12. Between boys and girls, who do you think is heavily affected by social issues?
13.Are you, as the principal affected by any social issues? If so, which social issues are they?
14.Are there any teachers affected by social issues in your staff? If so, what are you doing as the principal to help those teachers?
15.What are your future plans in ensuring that learners perform well?
16.What measures can be taken to ensure that learners and educators are not affected by social issues?

APPENDIX H: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Ramokone Lillian Whyken, Persal no. 91292848 a Master of Education student in the Faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Free State campus. I am a Senior Education Specialist at Waterberg District and as part of my part-time studies I am expected to conduct research on the Impact of social issues affecting the academic performance of learners in the district. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct my research in your school which is under your jurisdiction as the principal. The title of my study is: **The impact of social issues on the academic performance of secondary school learners in the Palala circuit division of Waterberg District in the Limpopo province.**

The aim of the study is to investigate and provide solutions to the common social issues that affect the academic performances of Secondary School learners and hopefully at a later stage help learners with combating the alerting social issues exposed to them in their daily school life. The study entails semi-structured individual interview and questionnaire surveys with 10 principals, 10 Head of Departments, 10 Life orientation educators and 30 learners (3 per school on FET phase) from the selected 10 schools from the Palala circuit division.

The approximate time that the session will take with the selected participants is about an hour and will not interfere with any professional functions because the interviews will occur from 15H00 to 16H00. Each interview will be voice recorded so that I can later listen to what the interviewee is saying, carefully and thus have an informed view and be able to analyse it.

Please note that during the session, the following will be adhered to:

- Protection from harm
- Participation is strictly voluntarily
- Respect participants right to privacy

- All information obtained will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for educational purposes (educational research and development)
- No financial benefit that participants may accrue

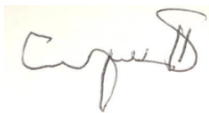
The benefits of this study will be for the advantage of myself, learners in secondary schools, educators, SMTs, principals and the district itself, where the district will be able to support schools in analysing the impact of social issues on the academic performances of secondary school learners and later help in combating the social issues by means of providing solutions and implementing strategies that will help learners with the alerting social issues. The researcher will provide the findings to the district.

For further information on this research project feel free to contact my supervisor Dr Modise at tel: 0579103631, email mamodise@gmail.com

In addition, should you have any queries you can contact me using the following details: Mrs Whyken Ramokone Lillian, cell 082 898 1379, email lilly.yken@gmail.com

Thank you in advance for your co-operation

Yours faithfully



Whyken R. L

16 September 2021

Date

APPENDIX I: EDITING LETTER



Marieta Grundling (MBA)

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

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that the dissertation: **THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ISSUES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN THE PALALA CIRCUIT DIVISION OF WATERBERG DISTRICT IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE** by **Ramokone Lillian Whyken** was edited. The language, presentation, referencing system (both in-text and against the Reference List), were checked and corrected.

M Grundling

9 July 2022